**HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

This document is meant to be a roadmap or template for how you can create your own study guides. You don’t need to copy everything here, but you might find some different strategies contained here help you in your academic journey.

**Parts of a Study Guide**

Below are some key parts to include in any study guide. You **DO NOT** need to include all parts for every test or class, but here’s a general overview of good things to think about:

1. **KEY TERMS/KEY CONCEPTS**
   a. Any special terms/concepts that your professor/textbook highlights should be written down somewhere.
   b. Keeping key terms in glossary form can help you review quickly and in bulk.
   c. Tip: don’t copy the definition word for word; write down the definition in your own words, as doing so will help you practice recall.

2. **CONCEPT MAPS**
   a. Many students are visual learners. Concept maps draw out connections between concepts.
   b. Information organized this way is usually spatial compared to linear.
   c. This may help you in grouping concepts together to better understand them.

3. **DIAGRAMS**
   a. Similar to concept maps, you might be studying a concept that is best understood when drawn as a picture.
   b. Diagrams allow you to visually represent dynamic and changing information, like processes, procedures, stages, or steps.

4. **COMPARISON CHARTS**
   a. Comparison charts to organize information visually so you can see the relationships among categories.
   b. This is helpful if you need to understand differences or similarities among concepts.

5. **PRACTICE QUESTIONS/QUIZZES**
   a. Keep a list of questions from past quizzes, essay/reflection prompts, or textbook practice – especially if you struggle to answer them!
   b. Practice writing and answering your own questions and anticipating the kinds of questions you’ll get.

6. **FLASH CARDS**
   a. Okay, these are technically separate from the study guide itself, but flash cards are a great way to test recall of key terms/vocabulary.
   b. Use the front of the card to write the key term, and the back to define it in your own words.

7. **CONCEPT CARDS**
   a. Have you ever written as small as you can on a 3 x 5 card? Congrats! You’ve made a concept card.
   b. Rather than just reviewing key terms, concept cards have more information on them, usually reviewing an entire concept or process.

**SOME TIPS BEFORE YOU START**

1. Organize your notes first – have an idea of what you know, and what you don’t.
2. Handwrite it at least once – when you write it, you encode it in your brain.
3. Review and add to it every day – even for 15 minutes.
4. Practice with others – if you can teach it, you know it.
Many students benefit when information is presented visually. Concept maps and branching diagrams allow you to organize information spatially versus in a linear outline format. However, you still organize information from the general to the specific.

You can then add details and examples that help you apply the information. Concept maps and branching diagrams are useful for classes in any subject area.
A comparison chart allows you to organize information visually so that you can see relationships among categories or characteristics. It is a very effective format when you need to be able to understand the differences or similarities among facts, theories, theorists, processes, etc.

### HOW TO CREATE A COMPARISON CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information you are comparing</th>
<th>Characteristics you are comparing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXAMPLE (from Psychology class)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of memory</th>
<th>Information stored</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>Duration of info.</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sensory</td>
<td>temporary, senses</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>&lt;1 sec. (vision) few seconds (hearing)</td>
<td>literal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short-term</td>
<td>brief, info. currently being used</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>&lt;20 seconds</td>
<td>auditory &amp; verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long-term</td>
<td>relatively permanent</td>
<td>unlimited (?)</td>
<td>long or perm (?)</td>
<td>semantic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concept cards are “flash cards on steroids”, and you create them using index cards that are 3x5 or larger.

On the **FRONT OF THE CARD**, you write the:
1. Key idea or concept you want to learn
2. Organizing term or phrase (upper right-hand corner). This is the category or term that allows you to see how your key ideas or concepts are organized.
3. Source of the information (textbook page, date of lecture, etc.)

**Example Concept Card**

**Digestive System (stomach)**
organizing term

**Gastric Juice**
concept

*Chapter 22 - p. 491*  
where info. is in textbook

**Concept, term, or problem**

On the **BACK OF THE CARD**, you write what is most important to know and learn about the concept, in your own words. To ensure you do more than just memorize the information, include examples, summaries, and synthesis of main points as well as definitions. Include diagrams, time lines, or other visuals that will help you understand the information at the level your professor expects.

**Gastric Juice:** a digestive fluid that mixes with food and secreted by cells inside stomach

1. hydrochloric acid (concentrated)
2. pepsin (digestive enzyme for proteins)
3. mucus
   *protective coating keeps acid from destroying stomach
   *only released when food is in stomach

**Every 3 days:** stomach lining replaced
Diagrams allow you to visually represent dynamic information such as a process, procedure, stages, and steps. For example, in a geology class, you could create a diagram to describe how rock layers are formed. In a political science class, a diagram can help you understand and learn the process for how a bill is passed into law.

**EXAMPLE 1: physical geography class**

**Local Wind Patterns**
(Along a mountain front)

- Cool Air
- Down Slope Wind
- Warm Air
- Night & Early Morning
- Plains
- Mountains
- Canyon Breezes

**EXAMPLE 2: note-taking cycle**

**Before class**
- preview text
- review last class notes

**After class**
- edit, review notes
- test yourself

**During class**
- record main ideas
- use key words & abbreviations