

Midterm Fright

- Shanna Smith

The end of January marks the most daunting part of the semester: midterms. For newcomers to the school, midterms seem like an impending nightmare. However, veterans of past midterms know they are not as intimidating as they seem.

The tests are meant to cover everything from the first half of the year, and thus are less in-depth. This plays to the students' advantage. Making sure to understand big concepts while just glancing over the details is a good strategy. Getting bogged down in the little things can be detrimental to successful studying.

Don't cram! There's plenty of time between now and midterms. It's important not to sit down the night before and begin studying. Science has shown that your retention of the information is much better when you spread studying out over intervals.

Some habits that seem strange really do work. Rereading old notes right before going to sleep is a great remembering tool and subconsciously allows ideas to sink in. Another great technique is having a parent, friend, or sibling "test" you by reading out words and asking you to give definitions. Verbally reviewing subjects also helps retention. I have also found that I usually discover that I know the material a lot better than I thought I did, which eases my nerves.

A strategy that many people seem to shrug off is breakfast. Some students blow off breakfast on a regular basis. However, on midterm days it is essential to eat a balanced breakfast. My suggestion would be something with protein in it that covers at least three food groups. There's even extra time before school on those mornings, so eat before you take your first test. Sleep is also integral, to prevent those silly mistakes that trip us all up. Eating a good breakfast, combined with a good night's sleep, can be the difference between remembering an answer and making a careless error.

A final thing to consider while studying for midterms is that it will not be the end of the world if you don't do as well as you'd hoped. If you studied for a good amount of time and put in effort, you did the best that you could; and that is all your teacher is asking for. Even if you do not do as well as you wished on a midterm, life goes on and you will still get into college. Think of it this way: midterms are roughly 20% of your quarterly grade. This means that the midterm for one course is 0.21% of your overall high school GPA. In other words, one midterm does not determine the rest of your life. Happy studying!