

## Do-It-Yourself Study Guides



**QUESTION:** What do you do when your professor doesn't hand out a study guide before a big exam? **ANSWER:** You do it yourself!

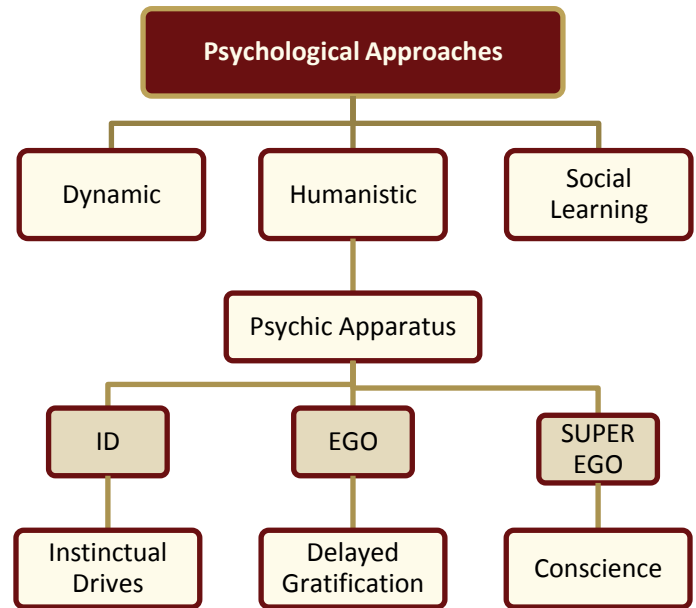
Study guides are a great way to organize lecture notes and textbook material when preparing for an exam. Concise study guides help to increase your memory of large amounts of information, and, if done right, can also improve your comprehension of the subject.

### Concept Map

This is a tool that helps to organize information that is not sequential or chronological. Concepts are organized from the general to the specific, and then details, examples, and information regarding "real life" application are added.

**EXAMPLE:** The following is an excerpt from Personal Adjustment: The Psychology of Everyday Life by Derlega and Janda. Read the passage and refer to the concept map developed from the information.

We will examine three of the major psychological approaches to personality: the **dynamic**, **humanistic** and **social learning** approaches. The dynamic approach is also called the psychoanalytic view, based on the work of Sigmund Freud. One aspect of Freudian theory is that a persona is continually in a state of conflict. Humans are caught between opposing forces, which results in their being in conflict between those forces. The source of the opposing forces lies in the **psychic apparatus**, which can be divided into three parts: the id, the ego and the superego. The **id** consists of **instinctual drives** a person possesses at birth, such as hunger, thirst, sex and aggression. The **ego** provides the capacity for **delayed gratification**. The **superego** is thought of as the "**conscience**."



### Comparison Chart

A comparison chart helps to organize information into categories and explain relationships between categories or characteristics. With this tool, it is easier to see the differences and/or similarities between facts, theories, theorists, processes, etc.

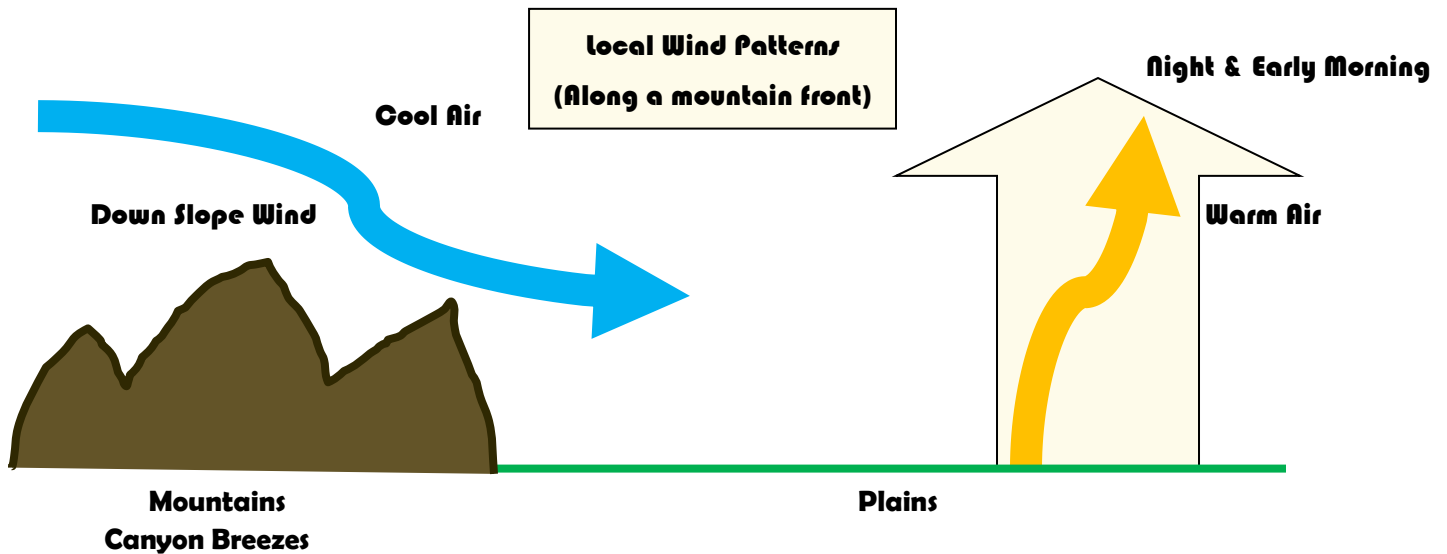
*Information Processing Comparison Chart (for a psychology class)*

| Memory Type       | Information Stored               | Capacity      | Duration of Info.                      | Format            |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--|-------------------|
| <i>Sensory</i>    | Temporary; senses                | High          | <1 sec (vision); few seconds (hearing) | Literal           |
| <i>Short-term</i> | Brief; info currently being used | Limited       | <20 seconds                            | Auditory & verbal |
| <i>Long-term</i>  | Relatively permanent             | Unlimited (?) | Long or perm (?)                       | semantic          |

## Process Diagram

A process diagram allows you to visually represent methods, processes, steps or stages that describe how events occur. For example, in a geology class, you learn about how rock layers are formed. In a nutrition class, you learn about the digestive process. In a political science class, you learn how a bill is introduced and passed into law. In a human development class, you learn the stages of child development. **Process diagrams take complex information and visually represent it to make it easier to learn and remember the important concepts and facts.**

**EXAMPLE:** A process diagram of wind patterns (for a geography class).



## Informal Outline

An informal outline provides a study tool that allows you to organize information to show how ideas are related to the topic and lists information in relative importance. This is the format most often used by students for note taking.

**EXAMPLE:** An informal outline of psychological approaches to personality (for a psychology class).

### *Three Major Psychological Approaches to Personality*

1. Dynamic (also called psychoanalytic)
  - a. Characteristics  
Person continually in conflict; opposing forces  
Source of forces =psychic apparatus
2. Psychic Apparatus
  - a. ID: Instinctual drives possessed at birth such as hunger, thirst, sex, and aggression; the most important drives (per Freud).
  - b. EGO: Reconciles demands of id with “real” world; moderates and guides basic instincts in line with society’s norms; provides capacity for delayed gratification.
  - c. SUPER EGO: Conscience (“internalized parent”) shaped by social forces such as school, church and close acquaintances.
3. Humanistic
4. Social Learning