

Exam errors usually indicate knowledge gaps or errors in test-taking strategies. Performing an “Exam Autopsy” on returned tests can help you understand why you made errors and facilitate adjustments in your study and review techniques to improve your performance on later exams.

Check what you did before the exam:

<input type="checkbox"/> Read and highlighted/underlined the textbook.
<input type="checkbox"/> Combined notes from the text with lecture notes.
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepared a test study guide.
<input type="checkbox"/> Studied with other students from class.
<input type="checkbox"/> Got assistance from the TA or Professor.
<input type="checkbox"/> Got ample sleep the night before the test.
<input type="checkbox"/> Previewed the assigned reading before class.
<input type="checkbox"/> Attended all lectures.
<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed previous notes before the next lecture.
<input type="checkbox"/> Attended SI sessions or tutoring.
<input type="checkbox"/> _____

Check what you did during the exam:

<input type="checkbox"/> Glance through the exam before doing any work.
<input type="checkbox"/> Read the instructions carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the easiest questions first.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for clarification of unclear questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Underlined key words in questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Outlined my answers to essay questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Became so anxious that it affected my performance.
<input type="checkbox"/> Budgeted my time based on question weight.
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the exam questions in order.
<input type="checkbox"/> Skipped hard questions to return to them later.
<input type="checkbox"/> _____

So now what do I do with all of this???

Look at where you had the most difficulty from the Exam Autopsy Worksheet. Were most of your missed questions because of *insufficient information*? Or were they a result of *careless mistakes*?

Identifying where you struggle the most can help to pinpoint specific tactics for you to use either in preparation for or during the test. Based on where you struggle the most according to the worksheet, try some of the following approaches to improve before your next exam!



If your professor does not hand tests back, ask to view them in his/her office. Your professor is an under-used resource than can give you feedback on your returned exam. Discuss how you figured out your answer, and the professor can identify your knowledge gaps as well as help you prepare for the next exam.

Insufficient Information or Lack of Test Wisdom:

- ❖ Attending tutoring, S.I. or study groups.
- ❖ Keep up with the material – falling behind can make you feel overwhelmed and even less motivated!
- ❖ Clarify concepts by asking questions during lecture and participating in class discussions.
- ❖ Visit the professor’s office hours.
- ❖ Review idea sheets on:
 - ❖ Getting it Write – Lecture Note Taking.
 - ❖ Book It! Textbook Tactics.
 - ❖ Reading Worksheet.
 - ❖ Hear What?! Active Listening.
 - ❖ Remember What? Memory Improvement.
 - ❖ 168 Hours – How will you use them?

Test Anxiety or Careless Mistakes:

- ❖ Underline key words in questions so you can keep track of important information and directions.
- ❖ Skip difficult questions and return to them later – your brain may need more thinking time to process the information before you answer it!
- ❖ Ask for help during the exam for clarification.
- ❖ Review idea sheets on:
 - ❖ Essay Test Tactics.
 - ❖ Objective Test Tactics – M/C & T/F
 - ❖ Learning Styles.
 - ❖ Test Anxiety.
 - ❖ The Study Cycle.