

Open Book Exam

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What is it?

At an open book exam, you are allowed to use course materials during the exam. The open book exam focuses on understanding, interpretation, analysis, application, and/or critical evaluation of the learning content. Usually, facts, formulas, or definitions are not asked.

How can I prepare?

Do not underestimate this exam format. There is no need to know the learning content by hard, but you must understand everything, be able to make connections, and understand the learning content. This takes time as well. Open book exams test how you can use the learning content within a certain time. During the exam, you will not have the time to reread entire passages from the coursebook.

- Make sure you know what (study) materials you can bring and use during the exam (syllabus, coursebook, notes, handouts, calculator, electronic appliances, etc.)
- Use the table of contents as framework, make sure you really know this.
- Structure the course materials, so you are able to find everything quickly during the exam.
- Use post its or another system that helps you find chapters and important sections.
- Create a mind map or summary where you can see the entire syllabus in one glance.
- Highlight important words.
- You can make a list with important words and write down the numbers of the pages where they are explained.
- Carefully go through the learning content and make sure you understand everything well. Carefully study the outlines of the course.
- Absorb the learning content by looking for connections between the several chapters, with other courses from your programme, or experiences from your environment. Draw up diagrams to visualise these connections, explain technical terms in your own words, search for examples, redo exercises, etc.
- Test yourself. Formulate questions about the content, make flash cards with important concepts or theories, and use these to practice, explain the learning content to yourself, a family member, or friend.

Examples of types of exam questions

- Exercises where you have to do a calculation.
- Cases where you have to apply theory from the syllabus.
- Compare ... with ...
- Link ... with
- Substantiate a statement with parts from the course.
- What is meant with ...
- Give examples of ...

How do I get started?

- Take all materials you can use to your desk.
- Do not lose any time searching for things you actually know. Have faith in your own knowledge!
- Do not copy fragments on your exam, but show that you understand the materials, that you are able to explain in your own words, that you can apply something, give examples, use your own notes to substantiate statements.
- Start with a draft. Write down briefly everything you want to include in your answer. Next, you can write or type this out on your exam form.

How can I pay attention to my language?

- Pay attention to your language, especially in longer answers. Try to formulate a well-structured and coherent answer. Answer to the point. Respect the basic rules for correct and appropriate language use: write full sentences, use capitals and punctuation marks, avoid abbreviations.

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