

## DIY Study Guides

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. Use these tips the next time you take your class materials and make your own study guides.

### Four Common Types of Information Organizers

Read below for the different types of methods to create a study guide.

Types of Information Organizers

	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
Summary Sheet	Predicts questions Rehearse easily Encourage easily Encourages deeper level thinking	Time consuming More detail
Concept Map	See vocabulary easily Shows organization Shows relationships	More than 1 needed to cover all material
Index Cards	Mixes ideas easily Easily portable Easy to test Separate learned ideas	One card for each concept May tend to be literal
Predicting Essay Questions	Most closely resembles task in exam	

**Summary Sheets:** Simply summarize the underlining and marking both in your text and in your lecture notes. In your summary, use titles that will organize the material in ways meaningful to you. In your own words list the most important facts under each title. Use key words--either in the text or the margin--that will trigger recall without needing a full written explanation.

Advantages:

- The most thorough method of organizing information and the one with which we are most familiar.
- It allows you to include examples and note relationships. Thus, you can study at a deeper level.

**Concept map or graphic overview:** A concept map is a graphical way of organizing your thoughts and showing how concepts are related or different. These graphs are a diagrammed series of "nodes" consisting of linked topics (core concepts) and subtopics (which include examples and evidence for the topics). The map can also be a series of connections labeled by cause/effect, relationships and inter-relationships, differences, or hierarchies.

- This method is best for a visual learner
- You can create one by arranging a chapter's titles and subtitles using geometric shapes such as circles, squares, triangles, radiating lines and arrows to place information in a meaningful pattern.
- Graphic overviews can also be prepared for sections within a chapter.

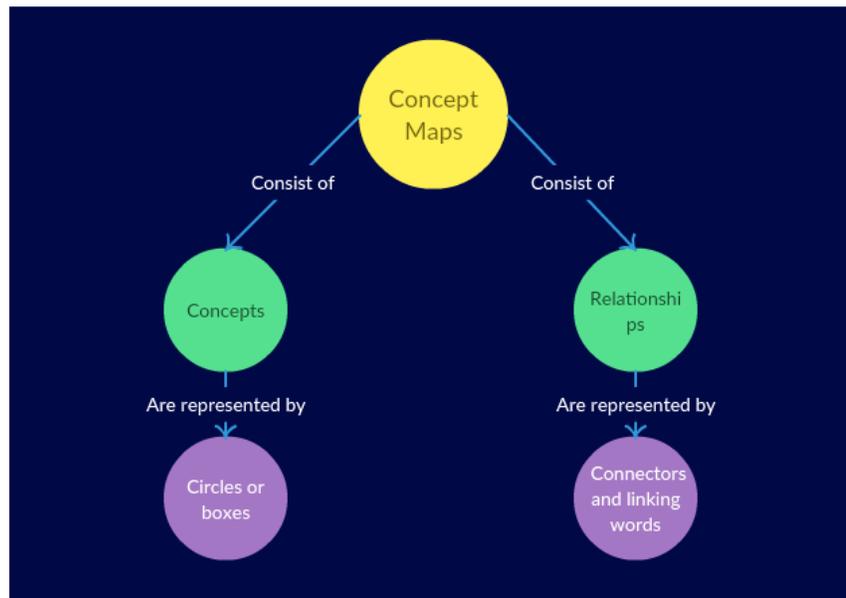
Advantages:

- The relationship and organization of various concepts becomes apparent when looking at a graphic overview.
- It is also easy to test yourself on the vocabulary or key words.

Disadvantages:

- It often takes several pages to include all the keywords in a chapter and very little detail is included.

**Example:**



**INDEX CARDS:** Are an efficient means of organizing information that can be written in a straightforward manner. Students can use index cards to define terms, brief facts or charts, mathematical formulas, and foreign language vocabulary.

**How to use:** Write the title or topic on the blank side. Then write the information to be learned on the back or lined side of the card. Mix them up during your final review session(s) to test recall and understanding.

Advantage:

- You reinforce your learning by making the cards.
- Testing yourself by reciting from the topic on the front of the card is an excellent way of discovering how well you truly know or understand the information.
- Easy to carry and use during short free periods waiting in line or between classes.
- Index cards are time efficient in that you can separate the cards you have learned from those you still need to practice.

Disadvantages:

- You tend to learn information only at the literal or definition level.
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**PREDICTING ESSAY QUESTIONS:** Use common essay question words such as define, contrast, and prove, try to link the subheadings together to accurately predict exam questions.

Advantages:

- By writing and mastering the answers at home, you can go to the exam confident that you will be able to answer similar questions during the exam.
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Recommended apps: We recommend these apps if you would like to implement DIY study guides through a online software. Here are three suggestions for concept maps and index cards.

<p>XMind: A mind mapping and brainstorming software, developed by XMind Ltd. In addition to the management elements, the software can be used to capture ideas, clarify thinking, manage complex information, and promote team collaboration.</p>	<p>Anki: Study flashcards in your downtime. Make flashcards with text, sound, and images, or download pre-made ones. Studying is super efficient, thanks to the powerful AnkiApp Advanced Spaced Repetition™ (SRS) algorithm</p>	<p>MindMeister: MindMeister is an online mind mapping application that allows its users to visualize, share and present their thoughts via the cloud.</p>
		