

Study tips to sail through your exam

It's only natural that you'd be a bit worried about sitting for your real estate licensing exam. After all, it could be the beginning of a whole new life! But try to relax — nervous testers do not make good testers. "Relax?!" you ask. "How can I relax?!" The best way is to be so prepared that taking the exam is a cakewalk.



Don't take studying lightly. You'd be surprised at the number of people who think they can just whiz through the materials and then pass the exam. This does not happen! Rigor is built into the exam to weed these people out. You have to study — consistently and a lot. There is no getting around that.

Create a study space. Devote one area to studying for the duration of your coursework. This will help you get into the learning "zone" and focus.

Study every day. Just a little studying each day helps keep you in the study groove, and it is far better than trying to condense your studying into a few huge cram sessions. Your brain can only absorb so much at a time. Study every day for a half-hour to an hour, and hold a bigger review session each week. Schedule your study time into your planner so it doesn't get pushed off.



Take the field trips, watch the videos, and read the handouts. In your coursework, you'll find we've included a lot of "extra" material. These extras are there to help you access the content in new ways. Something you see in a video or read in a handout may help illuminate a concept that eluded you before it "clicks". Take advantage of every resource we've provided!

Write out notes as you study, especially for content that is unfamiliar to you. There is something kinesthetic and visual about writing out content in your own handwriting that helps to "implant" it into your brain. This will help your recall tremendously. Because it is so effective, you might want to write your notes multiple times, but be sure you don't memorize only one way of explaining something. If the exam question is phrased differently, this could trip you up.

Color-code your notes. If it's a vocabulary word, highlight it in blue. If it's a concept, green. Formula? Yellow. Choose the colors you like, one for each type of content. This will help you recall information during the exam — it will be easier for you to picture a word or concept if you know the color you gave it.

Create your own flowcharts and diagrams, especially if you're a visual learner. Just the act of creating them will help with your understanding of the content. They also make easy review tools.

Record yourself. Record any difficult memorization-type content in your own voice and play it back in the car or before you go to sleep.

Match your study actions to the subject.

Math is not something you read, as you would concepts. You need to actually work the problems. Make up your own math problems and work through several until it's so familiar you could do it in a timed race. If you're studying vocabulary, create your own flashcards and have someone quiz you.

Review your notes before you go to sleep.

Your brain will "work" on the vocabulary, math, and concepts while you sleep.

Use mnemonics. For content that requires memorization, such as unfamiliar vocabulary words, use wordplay. Take, for example, the word alluvion, which means the increase of land due to soil being deposited on it through the action of water. Picture yourself on your own land at the edge of a river when a ship named the "S.S. Alluvion" arrives and dumps a gigantic load of soil near you, increasing the size of your land.

Use word association. For instance, an exclusive right to sell listing agreement means that the listing agent gets a commission no matter who SELLS it. An exclusive agency listing agreement means that the listing agent gets a commission no matter which AGENT sells it (so if the buyer is found by another agent, the listing agent is paid, but if the seller finds the buyer, the listing agent is not paid).

Write your own study guide, made up of the content you find most difficult. Review this anytime you have a few moments.

Discuss what you're learning with friends.

When you've finished a section of your course, "teach" it to a friend, family member, or even your dog! This will show you how well you've absorbed the material and identify any gaps in your understanding.

Take your final exam from The CE Shop when you feel ready, and note any areas where you were uncertain or missed questions. Then go back and review these areas.

Create your own exam. Take any concepts, vocabulary, or formulas that you find especially difficult, and create your own exam questions. Use a variety of testing methods (flashcards, multiple choice, fill in the blank) and test yourself until it's very familiar to you.

Act it out. For any particularly difficult content, turn it into performance art. It may sound silly, but trust us: movement added to auditory input can help implant the information in your brain. Example: do jumping jacks while reciting the essential elements of a valid contract.

Record your notes on your phone, leaving room for you to repeat after yourself, and/or fill in the blanks, and play them while you go for a jog or walk. For instance:

Your recorded voice



"An emblem is a [pause]"

You



"An emblem is an annual crop that belongs to the person who planted it."

PAUSE



Your recorded voice



"An emblem is an annual crop that belongs to the person who planted it, such as a tenant or former owner."



One Week Before

Visualize yourself taking the exam. If you can, visit the space where the exam will be held so when you do your visualization, you can picture yourself in that exact location. Note the materials that will be provided for you.

If visiting is out of the question, see if there are photos online of the place, and check them out. At least know the format of the exam: Online? On paper? When you return to your study space and for the next week, take a few moments each day to close your eyes and picture yourself calmly and confidently working through the exam. Create feelings of happiness when you visualize the exam. Picture yourself receiving thunderous applause for acing the exam! Do a second visualization before you drift off to sleep each night.

Create an affirmation for yourself, in your own words, and repeat it over and over throughout the days leading up to the exam. Example: "I find test-taking, easy and I am always successful." Or even, simply, "I've got this."

Keep hydrating!

The Day Before

Review your materials. Start by studying what seems "hardest" to you, then review the easier content, especially if you haven't reviewed it in a while. Sometimes people study so hard on the content they don't know that they forget what they do know!

Wear an outfit that's comfortable, and plan to repeat it for test day. When you review your materials the day before you go, wear the same clothes you intend to wear to the exam. It sounds odd, we know, but recreating your studying environment as much as possible helps with recollection.

Memorize the formulas you'll need. We've provided a cheat sheet for you to review.

Prepare your clothes and the items you will need to bring so you don't have to search for them the following day.

Get a good night's sleep. You've earned it! Set your alarm if you're not 100% sure you'll wake up in time.



The Day of the Test

Don't cram on test day! This is a day you should get into your zen. Take a walk just before the exam. It helps calm you, improves circulation, including blood flow to the brain, and helps take the "charge" out of the exam itself.

Eat lightly, but don't get light-headed. Stick to your traditional diet (if it's healthy) but don't overdo it or try anything new. This is not the time to discover you're allergic to kumquats. Protein over sugar, for sure!

Bring your supplies. Grab everything you're allowed to bring: a calculator, pencils, etc.

Hydrate, but not just before you go into the exam. You'll want to enter the exam with an empty bladder, so take care of that before you walk in.

Visualize. Just before you head into the exam, run through your visualization again, either in your car, or seated in the hallway outside of the exam. It should only take a few moments, and who cares if people stare? They don't have to pass your exam — you do.

Meditation is becoming more common, and most people will know to leave you alone.

Arrive early. Give yourself a few minutes to gather your thoughts before starting the exam. This means you should plan to be in the exam room five to ten minutes before the exam starts.

At the Exam

Before beginning your exam, take a moment to close your eyes and repeat your affirmation silently to yourself.

Smile. It will send endorphins to your body, creating a state of well-being.

Immediately write down the formulas you've memorized (and anything else you've had to commit to memory) on the provided scratch paper. Take your time. There is no rush.

Make it a goal to be the last person to finish the exam. You likely won't be, but if this is your goal, you will avoid that competitive rushed feeling that may occur when you see people getting up to leave and you're only halfway through. Trust us: The people who leave the earliest will likely fail! Often, they are leaving because they realized they do not know the content and there is no point in continuing. You don't get extra points for being first to finish, and you won't get any points docked by being last. Use all of your allotted time.

Read all exam questions carefully. Some testing authorities like to use oddly or negatively phrased questions or over-complicate questions with unnecessary information in order to add an extra challenge to the exam. Take the time to really read the questions so you know what answer they're looking for.



At the Exam (Cont.)

Examples of Negatively-Phrased Questions

- » Essential elements of a valid contract do not include:
- » Which of the following statements about buyer pre-qualification is false?

Example of an Overly Complicated Question

Melissa has been licensed for three years and has completed 26 transactions. She typically keeps 60% of her commissions, and her Broker keeps the remaining 40% (unless the client is a repeat client, in which case she keeps 75% of the commission). Melissa has just closed a transaction with a client who came to her through a cold-calling campaign. If the total commission she received is \$2,500, how much does Melissa's Broker keep?

Begin the exam by answering questions that you know for sure. Skip any that confuse you and go back to them if you have time — and you will likely have plenty of time, so don't rush.

Don't panic if nothing seems familiar at first. If you feel yourself tensing up, close your eyes, take a deep breath, repeat your affirmation, and you might want to add, "This is easy. I've got far more time than I will ever need."



Will you need to take all of these steps?

Probably not. Pick the ones that seem to work for you, and leave the rest. But be at least 20% more prepared than you think is necessary. When it's time to sit for your exam, you will never regret being too prepared!