#7 Trap

“I’m gonna stay up all night until I get this.”

Solution: Avoid mental exhaustion.
- Take short breaks often when studying.
- Before a test, have a rested mind.
- Lack of sleep plus stress causes your body to produce a chemical that actually blocks information retrieval.
- Before you go to sleep the night before the test, don’t think about academics. Relax and unwind (mentally and physically).
- Take care of yourself before an exam. Eat healthy, sleep, and get enough exercise.
- Try not to study in the classroom right before the test, instead, relax, take a deep breath, and know that you’ve done everything you can to be prepared.
- Cramming=short term retention. The more you cram, the more you lose for your future career.

#8 Trap

“But I like to study in bed.”

Solution: Use context.
- Recall is better when study context (physical location, as well as mental, emotional, and physical state) is similar to the test context.
- The greater the similarity between the study setting and the test setting, the greater the likelihood of recall.
- Find a study location that is all your own and isn’t where you sleep, eat, or play.

#9 Trap

“Cramming before a test helps keep it fresh on my mind.”

Solution: Space it out.
- Start studying now. Keep studying as you go along.
- One week before the exam study at least an hour or two a day, then increase daily study time as the exam approaches.
- Recall increases as review is spread out over time.
- Repeated review of the material over many days and weeks develops neural pathways to the stored information in your brain so you can retrieve it when you need it on the exam.

#10 Trap

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#1 Trap
“I don’t know where to begin.”
Solution: Take control. Prioritize!
- Make a list of all the things you have to do.
- Break your workload into manageable chunks.
- Schedule your time realistically. Plan out how you are going to use your study time over the course of the week prior to the exam.
- DON’T SKIP CLASS as you may risk missing review sessions.
- Use the hours between classes to review notes.
- Interrupt study time with planned study breaks.

#2 Trap
“I’ve got so much to study ... and so little time.”
Solution: Preview the information.
- Review your syllabus, reading material, and notes.
- Identify the most important topics emphasized and areas still not understood.
- Previewing saves time, especially with non-fiction reading, by helping you organize and focus on the main topics.
- Adapt this method to your own style and study material: but, remember, previewing is not an effective substitute for reading.

#3 Trap
“This stuff is so dry, I can’t even stay awake reading it.”
Solution: Attack!
- Get ACTIVELY involved with the text as you read.
- Ask yourself, “What is important to remember about this section?” Then write it down.
- Take notes, underline key concepts, or make flash cards.
- Discuss the material with others in your class.
- Write down any vocabulary and questions at the end of the chapters. Look for definitions and answers as you read.

#4 Trap
“I read it. I understand it. I just can’t remember it.”
Solution: Elaborate and repeat.
- We remember best the things that are most meaningful to us.
- As you are reading, try to elaborate upon new information with your own examples.
- Try to integrate what you’re studying with what you already know.
- Link information to something that’s already meaningful to you.
- Don’t just go over it once. Repeating and reviewing information helps you remember it later.

#5 Trap
“I guess I understand it.”
Solution: Test yourself.
- Make up questions about key concepts in your notes or reading.
- Examine relationships between concepts and sections.
- Change section headings to questions. For example, change the section heading “Incidents that led to the Civil War” to “What are the causes?” or “What are examples of causes that led to the Civil War?” and see if you can answer the questions.

#6 Trap
“There is too much to remember.”
Solution: Organize.
- Information is recalled better if it is in an organized framework making retrieval easier.
- Write chapter outlines and summaries; emphasize relationships between sections.
- Group information into categories or hierarchies.
- Make charts to organize and interrelate material.