

Pre-Exam

- ❖ CREATE STUDY AIDS – such as condensed CANS, case charts, and summaries – which bring the entire term’s materials together. Look for the connections between cases and concepts.
- ❖ CONSIDER MAKING A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY OR FLOW CHART(S). The creation process, in which you condense and synthesize the material, will test your understanding of the concepts and familiarize you with the material.
- ❖ PRINT AND USE YOUR CANS PRIOR TO THE EXAM. Learn your CANS by using them; this will help you to locate particular points quickly and efficiently as well as further familiarizing you with the concepts.
- ❖ PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. Set aside time to write out practice exam answers under realistic—i.e. quiet and timed—exam conditions.
 - Don’t just spot the issues and imagine how you would analyse the question; it’s not practice unless you write out a full answer.
 - The goal is to hone your exam writing technique so that when you step into a real exam, you will focus on the actual questions asked, rather than worrying about the shape your answers should take.
 - Exam writing is a skill, so practicing helps.
 - Consider writing a practice exam at the same time of day as your exam is scheduled.
- ❖ IDENTIFY YOUR EXAM WEAKNESSES and write reminders on the front page of your CAN.
 - E.g. “Remember to read the entire question,” “Make sure to stick to the time limits,” etc.
- ❖ Ensure that your CANS are tabbed, that your key points are highlighted, and that you are thoroughly familiar with your Table of Contents (it’s useful to scan your Table of Contents while “issue-spotting” on an open book exam).
- ❖ SEEK HELP if you do not understand something—and make sure to do so while you are CANning rather than waiting until exams begin.
- ❖ Study for an open book exam as you would for a closed book exam.

- ❖ GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP the night before your exam. Setting aside some "down time" in the evenings, as well as scheduling breaks during the day to exercise and/or rest your brain and eyes, will help ensure that you sleep well and consistently during the exam period, and keep you relaxed and focused generally.

During Exam

- ❖ At the start:
 - Scan the entire exam before you begin writing.
 - Sort out your timing. Calculate how much time you have for each question, and stick to the time allowance. DO NOT spend more than the allotted time on each question – it never helps!
 - Consider the order in which you will respond to questions. It is often confidence-boosting to start with the "easy" question, or a question which centres on issues you are familiar with; this may also help you to get into the "flow" for the remainder of the exam.
- ❖ Read the first question, reread it, and then prepare an outline.
 - HIGHLIGHT/UNDERLINE KEY INFO in the question.
 - "Jot" down your thoughts as you read; your outline will flow more easily.
 - Outline your answer (each person will do this differently – an outline may be written out or just based on notes/jottings).
 - Ask whether there are any facts you have not considered; exams rarely contain irrelevant facts.
 - Scan your CAN's Table of Contents to ensure you haven't overlooked any issues.
- ❖ Answer the Question
 - Clearly identify each issue. It is helpful to structure your outline by setting out the issues in the order in which you will address them.
 - Consider using headings in your answer.
 - Remember to analyse. Having set out the law or rule, apply the test/rationale/rule to the facts given; in the process, you will likely compare the facts and probable application of the test/rationale/rule to precedents. Your answer might also include a critique of the test itself.
 - Imagine someone is looking over your shoulder and saying, Why are you saying that?
 - If possible, reserve a few minutes at the end of the exam to review your answers and add any necessary clarifications or modifications.

- ❖ Heed the following time-saving tips:
 - Do not repeat a section of legislation by reproducing it verbatim in your answer.
 - Do not write out the full case name or citation; you can use one-word monikers such as *Hadley* or *RJR MacDonald*
 - Don't begin with superfluous introductions. Get straight to the issue.
 - Do not cite secondary sources, unless they are part of your course materials and directly relevant to the issue at hand.
 - If you are running out of time, don't spend extra time on the question. Put down a few thoughts in point form. If you find yourself with a few minutes at the end, you can always go back.

- ❖ Miscellaneous suggestions:
 - Ear plugs
 - Water or fruit juice
 - Quiet (not crackly or crunchy) snacks
 - Multiple writing instruments
 - A watch (you may not be allowed to keep your phone beside you)
 - Make sure your exam is easy to read – double spaced and legible.
 - Sit somewhere you will be comfortable.
 - If you panic (it happens): take a minute to sit back and take a few deep breaths in order to relax and refocus; consider taking a bathroom break. If panic persists, skip the question, leave a few blank pages, and plan to come back to it. Alternatively, if you feel frozen, you could just start writing – your instincts are probably a good place to start.

Post-Exam

- ❖ DO NOT DISCUSS your exam with others, however tempting it might feel! It will always make one person feel anxious—possibly everyone. If it does make anyone feel better, it's often at the expense of someone else's morale.

- ❖ Take a break to relax and marshal your resources before plunging into the next bout of studying; no matter how you feel you did, give yourself and your friends a pat on the back for having gotten through one or more.