

StudyForge — Flashcards

A Spark & Anvil printable flashcard deck. Quiz yourself on the StudyForge cast's curriculum — one card at a time.

How to use these cards

Fold each sheet down the middle line so the answers are hidden. Read the **question** on the left, say your answer out loud, then **unfold** to check the right side. Testing yourself — then checking — is one of the most powerful ways to remember. Get one wrong? That's the best kind of practice: try it again tomorrow.

Want real flashcards? Cut along the fold line and the rows into cards — question on one side, answer on the other.

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How to use these cards

1. Goal-setting: specific, checkable, learning > performance goals
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3. Testing effect: recall beats re-reading
4. Distributed practice beats cramming
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10. Monitor → adjust → make a study plan

Keep going

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1. Goal-setting: specific, checkable, learning > performance goals

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Breaking a big goal (“ace the unit test”) into smaller ones helps because...	each small goal is doable and you can see progress — Sub-goals are concrete and reachable, and hitting them shows real progress — which keeps you working toward the big one.
Which is the strongest study goal?	“I can solve 10 mixed factoring problems without notes by Thursday.” — A specific, checkable LEARNING goal (what you can do, by when) beats a vague effort goal or a grade-only goal — you can tell as you go whether you're on track.
A learning goal should be challenging but...	realistic — hard enough to stretch you, reachable enough to actually do — Goals just beyond your current level (the edge of competence) drive the most learning; too-easy or impossible goals both stall you.
Why is a learning goal (“I can explain photosynthesis”) usually better than a performance goal (“I’ll get 90%”)?	It points you at what to actually practice, and you control it — Learning goals focus you on the skill and are within your control; performance goals depend partly on the test and others, and don't tell you what to practice.
Which goal is fully within your control?	“I’ll do three spaced review sessions before the test.” — A process goal you can carry out yourself is controllable; goals about rank, others, or the test difficulty are not.
Your goal “finish the chapter” keeps slipping. What’s the fix?	Make it a checkable learning target, like “I can answer the 5 chapter questions without notes” — “Finishing” a chapter can happen without learning it. A checkable learning target tells you when you've actually got it.
Midweek you realize your goal was too big. The self-regulated move is to...	adjust it to something reachable and keep going — Noticing a goal isn't working and adjusting it is exactly what self-regulated learners do — anti-shame, keep moving.
Setting a goal is the FIRST phase of self-regulated learning. What is that phase called?	Forethought (planning) — In Zimmerman's SRL cycle, forethought (goal-setting + planning) comes first, then performance, then self-reflection.
Writing your goal down (vs just thinking it) tends to...	make you more likely to follow through — Writing a goal down is a light commitment device that makes follow-through more likely — and you can still adjust it.
A good study goal is time-bound. What does that mean?	It has a clear deadline (“by Friday”) — Time-bound means the goal has a specific deadline, which turns a wish into a plan you can act on now.

2. Planning, realistic time blocks, if-then plans

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
You have 5 subjects and one evening. The smartest plan is to...	give each a short block, prioritizing what's due soonest / hardest — Prioritizing by deadline and difficulty, then blocking time for each, beats spending it all on one subject or your favorite.
A realistic plan accounts for...	the time things actually take (people usually underestimate) — People tend to underestimate how long tasks take (the planning fallacy), so a realistic plan builds in buffer time.
Planning WHERE you'll study matters because...	a consistent, low-distraction spot makes starting and focusing easier — A consistent, low-distraction place becomes a cue to focus and reduces the friction of getting started.
Scheduling the hardest task when you have the MOST energy is smart because...	hard work needs your best focus; easy tasks can fill lower-energy times — Matching demanding work to your peak-energy times and routine tasks to low-energy times gets more out of the same hours.
Building a short break into your plan does what?	restores focus so the next block is productive — Planned short breaks let attention recover, so the following block is more productive — they're part of effective study, not a luxury.
How long should a focused study block usually be for a teen?	A manageable chunk (e.g. ~25-45 min) with a short break after — Focused blocks with short breaks sustain attention far better than marathon sessions, which lead to fading focus and burnout.
The best study plan uses...	realistic time blocks for specific tasks — Blocking specific tasks into realistic chunks of time makes a plan you can actually follow, instead of open-ended 'study'.
The point of a study plan is to...	make good studying happen without deciding it fresh each time — A plan's job is to reduce in-the-moment friction so the real work — studying with good strategies — actually happens.
A weekly plan should be...	flexible — reviewed and adjusted as the week goes — A good plan is a living guide you adjust as things change — rigidity makes a plan brittle and easy to abandon.
An “if-then” plan (“if it’s 4pm, then I do 25 min of math”) helps because...	it removes the in-the-moment decision, so you just start — If-then (implementation-intention) plans pre-decide when and where, so you don't burn willpower deciding in the moment — you just start.

3. Testing effect: recall beats re-reading

⌕ Question (fold →)	Answer
A retrieval question is better than re-reading a fact because it...	forces you to produce the answer, not just recognize it — Producing an answer (recall) is harder and more useful than recognizing it on the page — and it matches what most tests demand.
When should you start self-testing on new material?	Early — soon after learning it, then repeatedly — Testing yourself early and repeatedly (not just before the exam) builds durable memory and shows your gaps in time to fix them.
Explaining a concept out loud from memory is a form of...	retrieval practice — Talking through a concept from memory is retrieval practice — and it also reveals gaps you can then fix.
“Brain dump” studying means...	writing everything you can recall on a blank page, then checking — A blank-page brain dump is free-recall retrieval: you pull out everything you can, then check what you missed — strong and simple.
The “testing effect” means...	the act of recalling something strengthens the memory of it — The testing effect: retrieving a memory strengthens it, so self-testing is a powerful learning tool, not just a measurement.
A good low-tech retrieval tool is...	flashcards you answer before flipping — Flashcards force you to recall the answer before checking — that retrieval attempt is what builds the memory.
Why does recalling feel HARDER than re-reading?	because your brain is doing the work that builds memory — Retrieval feels harder because it's effortful — and that effort (a desirable difficulty) is exactly what makes it stick better than easy re-reading.
Which builds memory best?	Closing the book and recalling the material from memory — Retrieval practice — pulling information from memory — is one of the two highest-utility strategies (Dunlosky). Re-reading, highlighting, and copying feel productive but build little lasting memory.
If you can't recall something during self-testing, the best move is...	check the answer, then try to recall it again shortly after — Retrieval works best with feedback: check the answer, then re-attempt recall soon after — the miss pinpointed exactly what to practice.
Retrieval practice is considered a HIGH-utility strategy because...	the research shows it strongly improves lasting learning — Retrieval practice is rated high-utility because a large body of research shows it reliably boosts long-term learning across subjects and ages.

4. Distributed practice beats cramming

⌕ Question (fold →)	Answer
Distributed practice is rated high-utility because...	research shows it improves retention across many subjects and ages — Spacing is rated high-utility because a wide body of research shows it reliably improves long-term retention across situations.
“Spacing” between reviews should ideally...	get longer as the material becomes better known — Expanding the gap between reviews as you master material (spaced repetition) is an efficient schedule — review just as you're about to forget.
Why do students often prefer cramming despite the evidence?	it feels productive and urgent, and spacing takes planning — Cramming feels intense and urgent so it feels effective, and spacing requires planning ahead — but the evidence favors spacing.
Spacing works even when it feels LESS effective in the moment because...	the extra difficulty of recalling after a gap strengthens memory — Spaced practice can feel harder and less productive, but that difficulty (recalling after a gap) is exactly what builds lasting memory.
Spacing pairs especially well with which other strategy?	retrieval practice (spaced retrieval) — Combining retrieval and spacing — recalling material on a spaced schedule — pairs the two highest-utility strategies for maximum effect.
Cramming the night before often fails because...	the memory fades fast without spaced review — Crammed material is learned shallowly and forgotten quickly; spacing the reviews out is what makes it last.
The “forgetting curve” shows that...	we forget quickly unless we review over time — The forgetting curve shows memory drops off fast after learning; spaced reviews interrupt the drop and flatten the curve.
Which schedule remembers material longest?	Several short sessions spread over days — Distributing the same study time across several days (spacing) produces far more durable memory than one massed cram — it's one of the two highest-utility strategies.
For a cumulative final, your plan should include...	periodic review of OLD units, not just the newest — A cumulative final tests everything, so spacing reviews of older units throughout keeps the whole course fresh — not just the latest topic.
The simplest way to start spacing is to...	review a topic today, again in a few days, then a week later — A few reviews spread across increasing gaps (today, in a few days, a week later) is an easy, effective spacing schedule.

5. Calibration: judge honestly what you know

⌕ Question (fold →)	Answer
Explaining an answer WITHOUT looking is a self-test because...	it shows whether you truly understand or just recognize it — A closed-book explanation forces production from memory, revealing real understanding versus surface recognition.
If a self-test shows a topic is weak, you should...	spend more time on that topic — The value of self-assessment is redirecting effort to weak spots — studying what you already know wastes the information.
“Calibration” in studying means...	how well your confidence matches what you actually know — Calibration is the match between how confident you feel and what you truly know; self-testing improves it.
Self-assessment is part of which SRL phase?	Self-reflection (judging your performance and adjusting) — Self-assessment lives in the self-reflection phase: you judge how it went and adjust your next plan.
“I feel ready” is an unreliable signal because...	familiarity can fool you into thinking you know more than you do — Feeling ready often reflects familiarity, not mastery — poor calibration. A self-test replaces the feeling with evidence of what you actually know.
A good self-test uses questions that are...	like the ones you’ll actually face (similar format/difficulty) — Self-tests that match the real format and difficulty give accurate calibration; too-easy questions inflate confidence.
The honest way to know what you know is to...	take a practice test or explain it closed-book — Self-testing (a practice test or closed-book explanation) gives honest evidence of what you know, unlike a familiarity feeling or time-spent.
Self-testing is high-utility partly because it does TWO jobs. They are...	it builds memory (retrieval) AND shows what to study (calibration) — Self-testing both strengthens memory (the testing effect) and reveals your gaps (calibration) — two high-value jobs at once.
Overconfidence before a test is dangerous because...	you stop studying material you haven’t really mastered — Overconfidence leads you to stop studying too soon on material you haven't mastered — self-testing catches the gap in time.
A practice test is most useful when taken...	early, so you have time to fix the gaps it reveals — An early practice test doubles as retrieval practice AND a map of what to study — taken too late, you can't act on what it shows.

6. Mix problem types to sharpen discrimination

⌂ Question (fold →)	Answer
"Interleaving" means...	mixing different problem types together while practicing — Interleaving mixes different problem types in one session, unlike blocking (all of one kind, then all of another).
Interleaving is LESS useful when...	you're first learning a brand-new skill (block a little first) — When first acquiring a new skill, a little blocked practice builds the basics; once you have them, interleaving sharpens discrimination.
Interleaving is a "desirable difficulty" because...	it feels harder in practice but improves real learning — Interleaving adds useful difficulty — the effort of choosing the right method each time is what strengthens learning and transfer.
Students often avoid interleaving because...	it feels harder and less smooth than blocking — Interleaving feels harder and less fluent, so learners avoid it — even though it produces better results than smooth blocked practice.
Blocked practice (all type A, then all type B) FEELS better because...	it's smoother in the moment — but that smoothness hides weaker learning — Blocking feels smooth and easy, creating an illusion of mastery; interleaving feels harder but produces better transfer to a mixed test.
A good way to interleave math practice is to...	shuffle problems from several topics into one worksheet — Pulling problems from several topics into one mixed set is a simple way to interleave and train method selection.
Interleaving helps most with...	learning to tell WHICH method a problem needs — Interleaving trains discrimination — recognizing which approach a given problem needs — which is exactly what a mixed test requires.
If your test mixes problem types, your practice should...	mix them too — Practicing in the mixed form you'll be tested in builds the method-selection skill the test demands.
The core idea of interleaving is that variety in practice...	builds flexible skills that transfer to new problems — Mixing practice builds flexible, transferable skills — you can handle novel, mixed problems rather than only rote sequences.
Interleaving pairs naturally with...	retrieval and spacing (mixed, effortful, spread out) — Interleaving, retrieval, and spacing all add productive difficulty and combine well into strong, varied practice.

7. Single-task; manage distraction

⌕ Question (fold →)	Answer
The simplest high-impact focus move is to...	put the phone in another room during a study block — Physically removing the phone beats relying on willpower — you can't glance at what isn't there.
"Multitasking" while studying actually means...	rapidly switching tasks, which hurts performance on both — What feels like multitasking is fast task-switching; each switch has a cost, so both tasks suffer.
The evidence on distraction says that...	even the PRESENCE of a phone can lower your available attention — Studies find that merely having a phone visible can reduce available attention, so putting it away — not just not touching it — helps.
Focus is best thought of as...	the setup that lets your learning strategies work — Focus is a manageable setup and skill — protect the block first, and your retrieval/spacing/interleaving can actually do their job.
Single-tasking helps because...	your full attention makes study strategies actually work — Retrieval, spacing, and the rest only work when you're actually attending — single-tasking gives them your full focus.
If your mind wanders during study, the best response is to...	gently notice and return to the task, without self-blame — Minds wander; the skill is noticing and returning without self-blame — harsh guilt just adds a second distraction.
Background music with lyrics during reading tends to...	compete for the same language attention and hurt comprehension — Lyrics draw on the same language processing as reading, so they often compete for attention and reduce comprehension.
A focused study block should protect against...	notifications, open tabs, and background noise you can control — Protecting a block means removing controllable distractions (notifications, tempting tabs, noise) so attention stays on the task.
A short break BETWEEN focus blocks should ideally...	genuinely rest your attention (move, look away), not scroll — A restorative break (moving, looking away) refills attention; scrolling keeps the same system busy and doesn't restore focus.
Checking your phone "just for a second" during study costs...	far more than the glance — it takes minutes to refocus — Each interruption leaves 'attention residue' and refocusing takes minutes, so a quick glance costs far more than the seconds spent.

8. Own-words encoding, not transcription

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
The best notes are...	in your own words, capturing the idea — Rewriting ideas in your own words (encoding/elaboration) forces understanding; verbatim copying can happen without learning anything.
Between two students, the one who learns more usually...	processes ideas actively (own words, questions, connections) — Active processing — own words, questions, connections — drives learning far more than the volume of passive copying, highlighting, or re-reading.
Asking “why is this true?” while reading is called...	elaborative interrogation (a strong encoding strategy) — Elaborative interrogation — asking and answering 'why?' — deepens encoding by connecting facts to reasons.
Good encoding turns information into...	something meaningful and connected in your own mind — Encoding is about making material meaningful and connected in your mind — that's what makes it retrievable, not the length or neatness.
The “generation effect” says you remember better when you...	produce the answer yourself rather than just read it — The generation effect: information you produce yourself is remembered better than the same information simply read or copied.
“Elaboration” as a study strategy means...	connecting new material to what you already know and explaining why — Elaboration connects new ideas to existing knowledge and asks how/why — building a richer, more retrievable memory.
Summarizing a page in one or two sentences works because it...	forces you to find and phrase the main idea yourself — Writing your own brief summary forces you to identify and express the key idea — an active encoding step, not passive copying.
“Teach it to someone” works as a study method because...	explaining exposes gaps and forces clear understanding — Explaining to someone (the protégé effect) forces you to organize and clarify, and quickly reveals what you don't yet understand.
Copying notes neatly can be a trap because...	it feels productive but your brain can copy without understanding — Neat transcription looks like studying but can happen on autopilot — understanding requires processing the idea, not just reproducing it.
A concept map helps encoding because it...	shows how ideas connect, forcing you to organize them — Building a concept map makes you organize ideas and show their links — active organizing that deepens understanding.

9. Assemble the strategies before a test

⌘ Question (fold →)	Answer
Practicing under test-like conditions (timed, no notes) helps because...	it builds the exact skills and calm you'll need on the day — Practicing in test-like conditions builds the specific recall-under-pressure skill and reduces surprise (and anxiety) on exam day.
A good exam-prep checklist would prioritize...	active strategies (self-test, recall, mixed practice) over passive ones — Prioritizing active, high-utility strategies (self-testing, retrieval, interleaving) over passive re-reading/highlighting makes prep far more effective.
The best overall exam-prep plan...	combines spaced retrieval, self-testing, and interleaving over days — Strong exam prep assembles the high-utility strategies — spaced retrieval, self-testing, interleaving — across several days, not a single cram.
A week before the exam, a smart first step is to...	take a practice test to find your weak spots — An early practice test diagnoses weak areas so you can spend the week targeting them — and it's retrieval practice too.
If you feel anxious before a test, an evidence-based move is to...	do a few minutes of retrieval to confirm what you know, and breathe — Confirming what you know through quick retrieval, plus calming breathing, reduces anxiety more than frantic last-minute cramming.
Making a one-page “brain dump” of everything you can recall helps because...	it's retrieval practice AND shows exactly what you're missing — A blank-page recall sheet is both retrieval practice and a diagnostic of your gaps — a powerful exam-prep move.
The night before a big test, the most helpful choice is usually...	a light review and good sleep — Sleep consolidates memory and sustains focus; a light review plus rest beats an all-nighter, which impairs recall and thinking.
Spacing your exam prep across the week is better than one big session because...	distributed practice remembers far longer than massed — Distributing the same prep time across the week produces much more durable memory than one massed session before the exam.
During the week before, you should spend the MOST time on...	the topics your self-tests show are weakest — Directing the most time to your weakest topics (as self-tests reveal them) is more efficient than reviewing everything equally.
The main goal of exam prep is to...	be able to RECALL and APPLY the material, not just recognize it — Exams demand recall and application, so prep should build those — passive review that only creates recognition isn't enough.

10. Monitor → adjust → make a study plan

⌕ Question (fold →)	Answer
When you notice you learn a subject best a certain way, you should...	use that insight deliberately, while still relying on proven strategies — Applying what you notice about your own learning is smart — layered on top of the proven high-utility strategies, not instead of them.
The healthiest mindset about a bad study session is...	it's useful data — notice what to change, without shame — A rough session is data for adjusting, not evidence of failing — the anti-shame stance keeps you improving instead of quitting.
Being a self-regulated learner mostly means you...	take charge of setting goals, choosing strategies, and adjusting — Self-regulated learners direct their own learning — setting goals, choosing evidence-based strategies, monitoring, and adjusting.
A capstone study plan should be built around...	your goals + the high-utility strategies, adjusted to how you actually learn — A strong plan combines clear goals with the high-utility strategies, personalized by what your self-monitoring shows works for you.
The self-reflection phase of SRL asks you to...	judge how it went and decide what to change next time — Self-reflection is judging your performance and adjusting your approach — it feeds forward into the next forethought phase.
Keeping a brief study log (what you tried, what worked) helps because...	it makes your learning visible so you can improve it — A short log makes your strategies and results visible, so you can spot what works for you and do more of it — self-monitoring in action.
Metacognition means...	thinking about your own thinking and learning — Metacognition is awareness and monitoring of your own learning — noticing what's working and adjusting, the heart of self-regulation.
The single best pair of strategies to rely on is...	retrieval practice + spacing — Retrieval practice and spaced practice are the two highest-utility strategies (Dunlosky); leaning on them is a reliable default.
A study strategy that isn't working should be...	adjusted — try a different, evidence-based approach — Monitoring that reveals a strategy isn't working should lead you to adjust — trying a stronger approach, not just doing more of what failed.
The ultimate point of learning to study well is to...	become able to teach yourself anything, in school and beyond — Self-regulated learning is a durable, transferable skill: mastering it means you can teach yourself new things for the rest of your life.

Keep going

You practiced **100 cards** from StudyForge. Come back to the ones you missed — spaced-out practice makes them stick.

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