

APPRENTICESHIP & CERTIFICATION

Study Strategies and Exam Prep Guide




Newfoundland
Labrador

Apprenticeship and Certification

Study Strategies and Exam Preparation Guide

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Advanced Education, Skills and
Labour
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division

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Introduction

This “Study Strategies and Exam Preparation Guide” helps you prepare to write the Interprovincial (IP) Red Seal or Provincial Certification exam. It provides direction and information on such areas as study habits, test preparation, and test taking techniques.

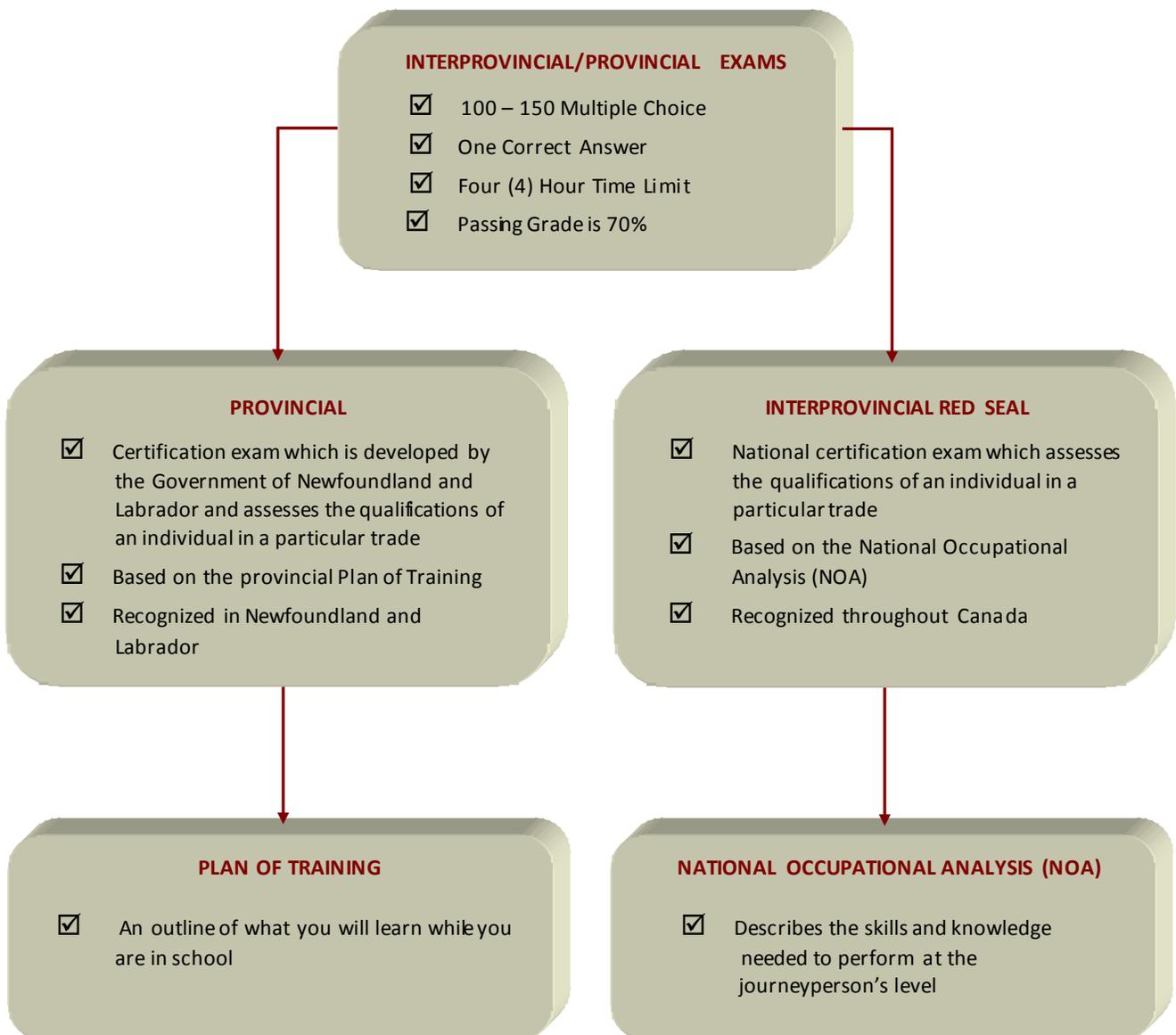


Exams are supervised by the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division. For a list of trades, visit the Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour website at www.gov.nl.ca/app/. If you are approved to write an exam, please contact your regional office for further information and assistance.

Tips: Preparing for Interprovincial or Provincial Exams

Understanding the Examination Process

Certification exams are either Interprovincial (Red Seal - all provinces) or Provincial (Newfoundland and Labrador). Generally, they are multiple-choice and based on the National Occupational Analysis and Plans of Training.



National Occupational Analysis (NOA) - Test Your Knowledge

The National Occupational Analysis (NOA) is a document used for IP Red Seal trades that describes the knowledge and abilities required by a fully competent tradesperson working in that trade. The content for the IP Red Seal exam is drawn from the NOA. NOAs can be found at www.red-seal.ca.

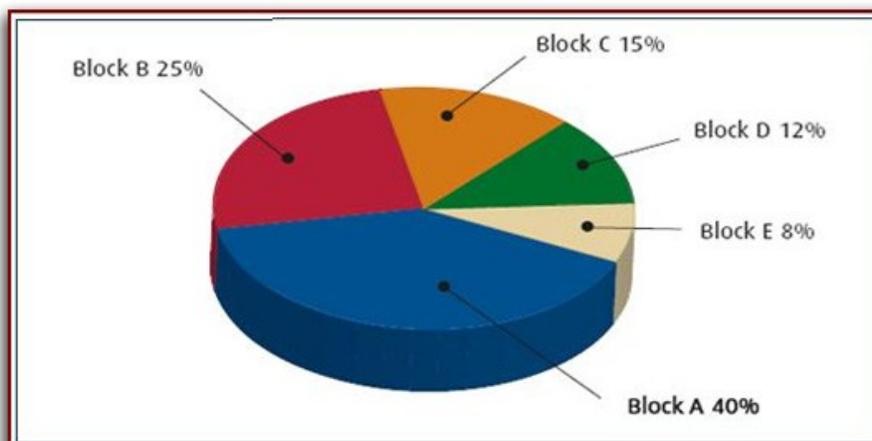
HELPFUL TIP

To obtain a copy of the NOA for your trade, contact the Apprenticeship representative assigned to your file or go to the Red Seal website at www.red-seal.ca/resources/n.4.1.1.3-st-eng.html

1. The NOA material is organized into major content areas called BLOCKS. These blocks are further broken down into TASKS and SUB-TASKS.
2. The IP Red Seal exam is written to test your knowledge and abilities in relation to the sub-tasks in the NOA.
3. Be sure to study all of the material contained in the NOA for your trade, and do not study material that is not contained in the NOA because it will not be on the IP Red Seal exam.
4. Pay attention to the proper names of tools, equipment, and processes, because those found in the NOA will be the ones used in the IP Red Seal exam.

Self-Assessment

In the back pages of a NOA, you will find a pie chart identifying the percentage of IP Red Seal exam questions for each block. It is essential to know these percentages because they help you determine where to concentrate and focus your study time. For example: If the IP Red Seal exam for your trade has 100 questions, based upon the pie chart below, there will be 40 questions from Block A.



Use the NOA to assess your current knowledge of the tasks and sub-tasks. Review each sub-task and place a checkmark (✓) next to those you understand fully. Place more focus on those you do not understand and study them until you are comfortable with the material.

Think of possible questions in that particular content area. The supporting knowledge and abilities identified under each sub-task will provide you with helpful ideas for developing sample questions. Practicing these questions should assist you with the exam.



HELPFUL TIP

Ask the Apprenticeship representative assigned to your file, or your instructor, to tell you the total number of questions on the exam you are writing. This will allow you to calculate the percentage weight for content being tested.

To help you better understand the material, summarize the information in your own way:

- Write brief summaries of major topics.
- Prepare diagrams or charts.
- Sort information in tables.
- Talk about it with others, especially others in the trade who have experience with the tasks contained in the NOA.
- Teach it to others.
- Analyze it.
- Apply the new information in your personal life or in the workplace.

If you find you are weak in areas that contain many of the questions, you may need increased exposure to the tasks and abilities through more practical work experience.

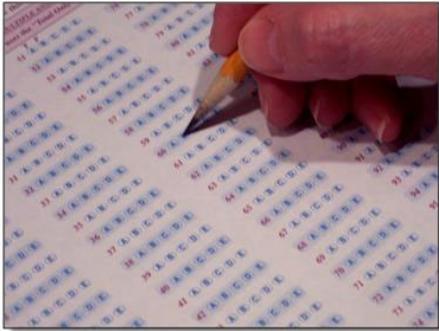


HELPFUL TIP

Ask a friend or co-worker who has written the IP Red Seal Exam for your trade to identify study materials and resources they found helpful.

SOURCE: www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4m.2@-eng.jsp

The Exam: Answering Multiple Choice Questions



A multiple choice question consists of a stem (a complete question) followed by the options (a, b, c, d). The stem contains all the information necessary to answer the question. The options consist of the correct answer and three “distracters.” Distracters are incorrect.

REMEMBER: One question may ask you to recall facts while another may ask you to apply facts to a situation to test your ability to problem solve.

SAMPLE 1

Stem asks a direct question and you choose one correct answer.

If 5 litres of paint cover 20 square meters, how many litres are required to cover 400 square meters?

- a. 40 litres
- b. 52 litres
- c. 80 litres
- d. 100 litres



SAMPLE 2

Stem appears to identify a false (no true) statement. In this case, the negative word (**NOT**) will be in bold letters.

Which of the following is **NOT** personal protective equipment?

- a. hard hat
- b. safety glasses
- c. contact lenses
- d. ear protection

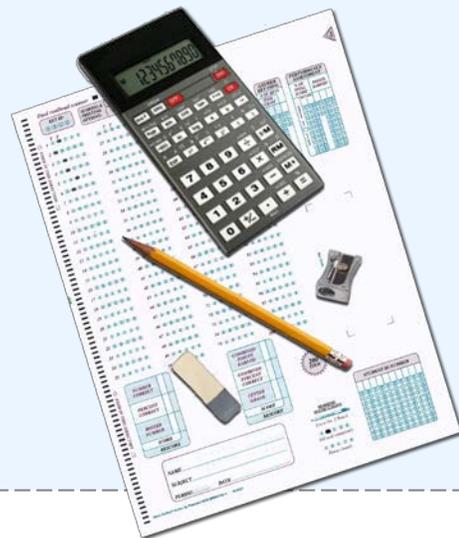


Note:

Negative questions are not often used on certification exams; however, they can appear from time to time.

During the Exam

- Arrive early.
- Listen carefully to instructions given by the exam coordinator.
- Read directions carefully, then re-read.
- Be clear on what the question is asking.
- Answer what you know first.
- Don't spend too much time on one question; however, do not rush through the exam.
- Focus on your own exam, as individuals may write an exam differently.
- When choosing your answer go with your instinct. Don't second-guess yourself.
- Read all options before choosing.
- Use the process of elimination; treat each OPTION as a true/false.
- Re-read, very carefully, all questions containing negative wording such as "not" or "least" to ensure you understand it fully.
- Check for qualifying words such as "all, most, some, none"; "always, usually, seldom, never"; "best, worst" or "smallest, largest." These words can cue a statement as true or false.
- If you encounter a question that you think you can't answer, leave it to be answered last; BUT never leave it unanswered.
- Check over your exam, and then check it over a second time. Make sure you have answered all questions.



Essential Skills

Essential skills refer to skills needed for work, learning, and life and provide the groundwork for learning all other skills. They help people grow with their jobs while adapting to workplace changes. These essential skills include: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills, and computer use.

Test your essential skills. Check out these two websites for sample problems used in TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills):

www.towes.com/media/7478/towes%20sample%20booklet.pdf AND
www.towes.com/en/home/home

Successful Study Plan

A study plan provides a roadmap to help you learn. It takes into account your strengths and weaknesses while establishing study habits you can follow. Follow the steps below to make your own study plan:

1. Define the content areas.
2. Determine your strengths and weaknesses.
3. Identify resources such as your textbook, your instructor, the Internet, local libraries, etc.
4. Create a study schedule and stick to it.



Sample Study Plan

Workplace Skills

Content Covered	Content Description	How Well do I Know the Content?	What Resources do I Need to Access?	Study Date
Worker's Compensation (WHSCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ describe the aims and regulations of the WHSCC⇒ explain the internal review process	Strong	Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Regulations Manual	
Employment Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ explain the insurance regulations⇒ describe the application process⇒ explain the appeals process	Weak	Labour Standards Act, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manual	
Gender Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ explore gender issues in the workplace⇒ explore stereotyping issues in the workplace	Average	Video	

Study Skills

Performance on exams is determined to a great extent by the nature of your preparation. The way you prepare for an exam is much more important than the length of time you prepare. The following eight areas are suggestions to help you improve your study habits.

Start NOW!

Check off one or two techniques from the list below that you can commit to this week:

- Define clear goals. Make sure your expectations are reasonable.
- It is difficult to concentrate 100% of the time, so minimize distractions. Organize your workspace. Be comfortable. Sit in a comfortable chair with plenty of light.
- Do your most important tasks when you are most energetic, and then you can get them over with first.
- Make material you are learning or reading as interesting as you can by using association. Associating content with personal or work experiences can help you understand.
- Study in small time blocks instead of long time periods. This will help you retain information. It is a good idea to change the subject or task every hour. Take breaks when needed.
- Study, repeatedly, pieces of information over and over again. Studies indicate that individuals only retain a small amount of the information they hear or read. You can learn successfully through repetition as opposed to just reading something once.

SOURCE: www.StudyTechniques.org/studying-with-a-practice-exam.html

- Review your notes at the end of the day and again at the end of each week.
- Reward yourself when you have completed a goal.



Getting the Most from Your Study Material

It is important to thoroughly read your study materials. They provide more information on topics learned in class as well as a better understanding of the theory to be applied outside the classroom.

Below is a five-step reading strategy commonly called SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), which helps you sharpen your reading skills and makes it easier to remember what you read and study.

<p>Survey the chapter before you read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Think about the title. Guess what will be covered in the chapter. <input type="checkbox"/> Read the introduction. These main ideas will help you make sense of the details. <input type="checkbox"/> Read the main headings since these are the main ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Read the summary. It will help connect all the main ideas. <input type="checkbox"/> Read the questions at the end of the chapter. These repeat the main points.
<p>Question what you are reading</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Write down your questions so you can go back to them later. <input type="checkbox"/> Turn titles, headings, and sub-headings into questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Keep in mind what information your instructor focused on in class.
<p>Read</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read only a section at a time. <input type="checkbox"/> Read groups of words, one at a time. Look for answers to your questions. <input type="checkbox"/> Reread difficult portions of the chapter. <input type="checkbox"/> Sort out information and decide what is important.
<p>Recite after you read a section</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words, what you read. <input type="checkbox"/> Take notes from the text, but put it in your own words. <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight important points. <p>Note: If you <i>can't</i> answer the questions or summarize the section in your own words, read the section again. If you <i>can</i> answer the questions, you are ready to move to the next section repeating the question, read, and recite process.</p>
<p>Revise to make sure you have memorized the information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review your questions and see if you can answer them within 24 hours and again within a week. <input type="checkbox"/> Review is an ongoing process; do it often.

SOURCE: www.studyqs.net/texred2.htm

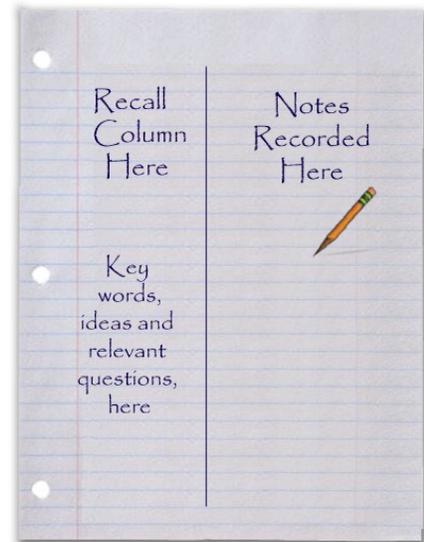
Getting the Most from Class: Listen, Take Notes and Learn

During class, the instructor discusses important information which is likely to be included on exams. Good note taking and listening skills are critical.

1. Prepare for class by reviewing any readings and material.
2. Listen actively by sitting near the front and paying attention.
3. Take notes by putting in your own words what is covered in class.
4. If you are missing something or don't understand what you wrote, go over your notes with the instructor or a classmate.
5. Within 24 hours of attending the class, review your notes, spending at least ten minutes on each set of class notes.
6. Organize your notes so you can effectively study.
7. Use a large, loose leaf notebook. Use only one side of the paper.

Draw a vertical line about 2 inches from the left side of your paper. This is the **recall column**. Write key words, phrases, or ideas from your class. Your notes would be taken to the right of this margin.

Record notes in paragraph form. When you review, cover up the right hand portion of your notes and go over the ideas of the lecture from the recall column.



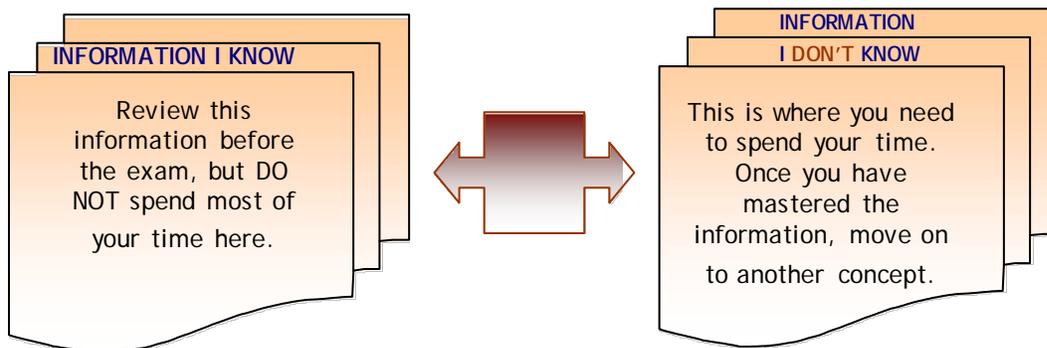
Getting the Most from Studying: Prepare For Exams

Understanding, not memorizing, is the basis for learning. The goal is to understand and then remember what is important. Give yourself lots of time to study for exams. Study early and often.

1. Start well in advance, break your study into chunks, and review often.
2. Review your learning objectives (such as those found in the Plan of Training) before you begin to study. Then review your notes and text. This will help determine how much you have to study and you can organize your time.
3. Study using the “top down” method by beginning with the course’s main ideas, then following with the sub-topics and supporting information.
4. Decide which study technique would work best for you such as forming study groups or flash cards.
5. Test yourself often.
6. DO NOT learn any NEW material the night before the exam. You want to build confidence by reviewing what you know rather than worrying about what you don’t know.

Review

When reviewing, always try to divide your information in two sections:



This ensures you do not waste time by practicing and reviewing what you know.

REMEMBER: You should not try to learn new material the night before an exam. At that point, you should review what you know and not worry about what you don’t know.

Flash Cards

Flash cards can be constructed from index or file cards, which can be purchased in any office supply store in a variety of colours. They can be used to study *vocabulary, facts, formulas, and events.*

When making flash cards:

- Write only one question along with its answer on each flash card.
- Write the question on one side and the answer on the other side.
- Use point form. Put information into your own words.
- Add diagrams and examples to the answer side.

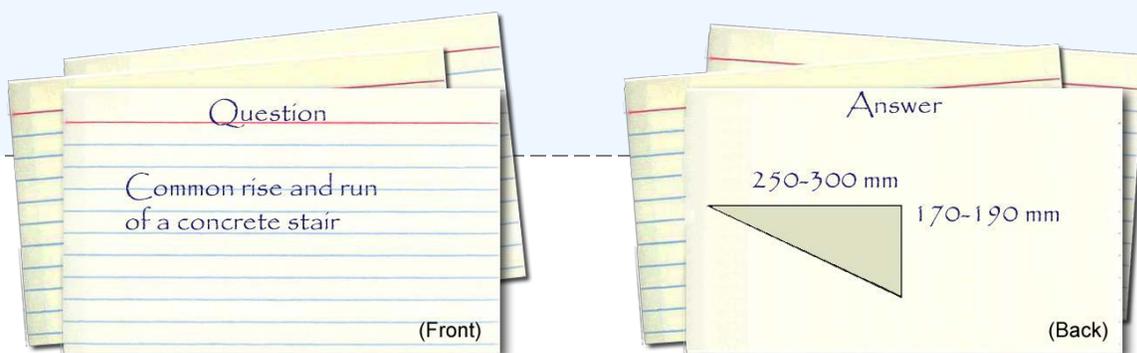
When studying flash cards:

- Test yourself by dividing the cards into two piles: "I know it" and "I don't know it."
- Test yourself both ways: once asking the question, and once asking the answer.
- Stop practicing only when all of the cards are in the "I know it" pile.
- Review all cards regularly to ensure you know them all 100% for your exam.

Organizing your cards:

Store cards in a recipe/index card box. Dividers can be purchased so that cards can be organized by subject.

- Cards can be colour coded. If you purchase several colours, each subject can be a separate colour.



Memory Techniques

Memory and understanding are crucial to learning. In order to relate information you have learned to the exam, you must have instant recall of information *along* with an understanding of that information. Memory techniques are clues that help you to relate the information you need to remember with a visual image, a sentence, or a word. The following are some techniques you can use when you need to recall information:

Sentences

Use the first letter of each word you are trying to remember to make a sentence. For example: You want to remember the mathematical order of operations which are *multiply and divide* before you *add and subtract* so take the first letter of each of the four operations M, D, A & S. Now make a sentence such as: “My Dearest Aunt Suzie.”

Now if you were given a multiple choice question and asked the correct order of mathematical operations, it may be easier to remember that simple sentence. The first letter of each word will help you remember that the correct order is: multiply (The M in My), divide (The D in Dearest), add (The A in Aunt) and subtract (The S in Suzie).

Chunking

Use this technique to remember a long number or a long list of items. Chunking is based on the idea that short-term memory is limited in the number of things it can hold. A common rule is that a person can hold between five and nine *items* or *chunks* in short-term memory. Have you ever wondered why a telephone number is, on average, seven numbers?

When you use *chunking* to remember, you decrease the number of items you are holding in memory by increasing the SIZE of each item. For example, the number 64831996 are eight numbers individually. Try thinking about the number as 64, 83, 19, and 96. Now, instead of eight individual numbers, you are remembering four larger numbers. Sometimes, it may be helpful to form *chunks* that are meaningful or familiar to you; so instead of 64, 83, 19, and 96, you may remember the whole number as 64, 83, and 1996 because 1996 represents a year and is more easily remembered.

Rhymes and Songs

Rhythm, repetition, and tune can all help with memory. Many children learn the letters of the alphabet to the jingle of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Other examples include “*i* before *e*, except after *c*” to help you remember how to spell words like “brief” or “receive” OR “spring ahead, fall back” to remember Daylight Savings Time.

Using this technique can be fun especially if you are imaginative. Rhymes and songs draw on your acoustic memory (hearing) and may be particularly useful for those who can learn tunes, songs, or poems.

REMEMBER: Don’t spend too much time creating rhymes and songs.

First Letter

This strategy involves the use of first letters in a list of information or from a group of words to form a NEW word. This is useful when you need to remember words in a specified order. *First letter* is very common in ordinary language and in many fields. Some examples of common *first letter* include NBA (National Basketball Association), MUN (Memorial University of Newfoundland), USA (United States of America), and WIST (Women in Skilled Trades). The *first letter* examples help you to remember a much longer group of words. Can you think of any?

Here is an example of using this technique to remember a list of key items relating to workplace safety. As you know, workplace safety depends upon Awareness, Common Sense and Training. As you can see the first letter of each item spells the word “ACT.”

REMEMBER: All the above techniques are meant to help you recall information not understand it.

Time Management

Start NOW!

Observe how you use your time and decide how you can make changes.

Check off one or two techniques from the list below that you can commit to this week:

- Make a daily “to do” list and prioritize it.
- Create a Monday to Friday file system:
 - Prepare five folders, one for each day (Monday to Friday)
 - Work needing to be done for a particular day should be placed in the previous day’s folder
 - Review and update daily
- Use a weekly planning schedule. Allocate specific periods each day for your study.
- Balance and control time spent on the telephone, television, and computer.
- Organize your study materials, clothes, and lunch the night before.
- Make class attendance a priority. Be punctual.
- Set up a regular routine of eating, sleeping, exercising, and studying. Develop a good balance.
- Break major tasks down and take one small step at a time.
- Set false deadlines. Make the deadline for final completion of a task at least one week in advance of the actual deadline.
- Avoid putting things off. Every time you do another activity instead of working on your goal, you are rewarding yourself for procrastinating.



Be Careful!

Postponing or putting off something is a learned habit and can be unlearned and replaced with more productive actions.

Wrap Up

The Study Strategies and Exam Preparation guide has been developed to help you prepare for the IP Red Seal and provincial exams. Its intention is to help you understand the organizational process of studying for an exam. It offers many tips, techniques, and tricks. We hope after using this guide, you will feel much more comfortable and confident and be better prepared for writing your exam.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions please feel free to contact one of the following regional offices for further information:

Department of Advanced Education, Skills and
Labour

Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division

Toll Free: 877-771-3737

www.aes.gov.nl.ca/app/

<p>Corner Brook</p> <p>1-3 Union Street Aylward Building, 2nd Floor Corner Brook, NL A2H 5M7</p> <p>Telephone: (709) 637-2366 Facsimile: (709) 637-2519</p>	<p>Grand Falls-Windsor</p> <p>42 Hardy Avenue Grand Falls-Windsor, NL A2A 2J9</p> <p>Telephone: (709) 292-4215 Facsimile: (709) 292-4502</p>
<p>Clarenville</p> <p>45 Tilley's Road Clarenville, NL A5A 1Z4</p> <p>Telephone: (709) 466-3982 Facsimile: (709) 466-3987</p>	<p>St. John's</p> <p>P.O. Box 8700 1170 Topsail Road Mount Pearl, NL A1B 4J6</p> <p>Telephone: (709) 729-2729 Facsimile: (709) 729-5878</p>
<p>Happy Valley – Goose Bay</p> <p>163 Hamilton River Road Burse Building Happy Valley – Goose Bay, NL A0P 1E0</p> <p>Telephone: (709) 896-6348 Facsimile: (709) 896-3733</p>	

We welcome any feedback and/or recommendations pertaining to the usefulness of the Study Strategies and Exam Preparation Guide. The feedback form at the end of this guide can be used for this purpose.

Appendix A: Resources

Below you will find a list of study materials and resources to aid in the process of studying. You should also look for practice questions in study materials. You can contact the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division for a list of study materials for your trade. Try to visit the college library, public library, and the Internet. Additional materials may be available for purchase.

The Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour does not endorse or account for the validity of these resources. They have been provided merely as additional resources. The following links will direct you to a variety of sites and resources that could be beneficial. Please note, however, that sample exam questions may or may not be applicable to Newfoundland and Labrador or Red Seal.

- Brain Teasers
www.brainle.com/index.php
- Flashcard Program
www.flashcardexchange.com/
- How to Study Model
howtostudy.org
- Felder's Index - Assess Your Learning Style. It is a 44 question survey that assesses your study habits.
www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html
- Five Day Test Preparation Plan
www.keene.edu/academics/departments/aspire/study-skills/
- Learning Strategies
sim.kucri.org/strategies
- Reducing Anxiety
cmhc.utexas.edu/stress.html AND cmhc.utexas.edu/anxiety.html
- 6 Steps to Effective Self Learning
<https://www.pickthebrain.com/blog/6-steps-to-effective-self-learning/>

Feedback Form

Please answer the following:

- (1) This Study Strategies and Exam Preparation Guide helped me understand study strategies.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (2) The topics contained in the guide are arranged in a logical order.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (3) The design and format of the guide caught my attention.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (4) The instructions throughout the guide are clear and to the point.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (5) The resources listed in "Appendix A" are suitable and valuable.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (6) The graphics, hints and tips were clear.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree
- (7) The guide should contain more information.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Suggested information to include:

- (8) The Study Strategies and Exam Preparation Guide was helpful.
 strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

COMMENTS: _____

Please complete this form and return via fax or mail to the following:

Department of Advanced Education, Skills and
Labour
Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Division, Standards and Curriculum Unit
45 Tilley's Road
Clareville, NL A5A 1Z4
Fax: (709) 466-3987

