

THE STAR 28/06/2018 MS. 12

Smart cramming to ace exams

DO you have finals next week? Here are some tips that will help you learn quickly.

Survey

Skim through the textbook and highlight the most important ideas. This should consist of headings, subheadings and certain images, not actual blocks of text.

For example, if you are studying ancient Egyptian history, you might highlight the Nile, the Pyramids, the Cleopatras and the Pantheon of Gods.

Turn the highlighted parts into exam questions

Basically, you imagine what the essentials are. Do not bother with identifying answers yet; just think about what is likely to come up.

For the Nile, questions might

include: How long is it? Where does it flow? What is special about this particular river?

Look at the text

Take a look at the text and find answers to your questions. Highlight them and then move on.

For example, you would be looking at information that says the Nile is 6,853km long, moves through 11 countries and overflows its banks once a year, depositing rich soil that helped Egypt become a huge agricultural power in the ancient world.

Convert your highlighted text into notes

Make cards, but write in bullet notes and make mnemonics so that it is easy to remember all the points.

For the Nile question, you need an image of the Nile with 6853, so that you can remember the length.

On a separate card, you need the 11 countries: Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and Egypt.

Reduce it to first letters and you get: TURB CK KEE SSSE.

Go through the cards

Now take your cards and go through them. Sing, memorise or give speeches to an imaginary class on the subjects.

As you repeat this over and over, the facts will sink into your brain and you will start to think about the actual content.

This will help you link information and then you can start plugging in your own ideas. That last bit is what gets you the A.

