

# Exam Preparation: Think Like a Professor

Effective exam preparation involves more than strategizing for particular test formats, such as multiple-choice or essay. Commonly referred to as “**Bloom's Taxonomy**,” the framework outlined at right has remained popular with teachers and students alike since the publication of *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in 1956 and its revision in 2001 as *A Taxonomy for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment*.

Use the table as a guide to assess your comprehension of readings, lecture notes, and other course materials. By creating and answering questions from a variety of categories, you can better anticipate and prepare for all types of exam questions

Question Category	Purpose	Study Methods
<b>Remember</b>	For recall of foundational or factual information: names, dates, formulas, definitions, components, or methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make flashcards</li> <li>• Draw diagrams</li> </ul>
<b>Understand</b>	To demonstrate knowledge at a deeper level; typically this requires a significant investment of time, thought, or a varied approach to a subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss content with a partner</li> <li>• Consider the underlying objectives of homework, not just the answers</li> <li>• Focus on “why” questions</li> </ul>
<b>Apply</b>	To recognize or use concepts in real-world situations. To address when, where, or how to employ methods and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek concrete examples of abstract ideas</li> <li>• Work practice problems and exercises</li> </ul>
<b>Analyze</b>	To break a topic or idea into components or examine a subject from different perspectives. To shift from “whole” to “parts.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate a list of contributing factors</li> <li>• Take alternate approaches</li> </ul>
<b>Synthesize</b>	To consider individual elements together for the purpose of drawing conclusions, identifying themes, or determining common elements. To shift from “parts” to “whole.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalize information from lectures and readings</li> <li>• Condense and re-state content</li> <li>• in one or two sentences</li> <li>• Compare and contrast</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluate</b>	To form an opinion, assign value, develop an argument, or judge merit. Often there is not a clear or correct answer to this type of question. What do you think and how do you <i>support</i> your position?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make note of your reactions</li> <li>• as you read and study</li> <li>• Decide if you like, dislike, agree, or disagree with an author or a decision</li> <li>• Consider what you would do if asked to make a choice</li> </ul>
<b>Create</b>	To design, invent, offer alternative solutions, or combine elements into a new pattern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a model</li> <li>• Design an experiment</li> </ul>

## Practice

Classify each test question below by the type of question described in the table. Assume that lectures and course materials didn't supply direct answers to questions 1-6. Answers are on the left side of this page.

1. \_\_\_\_\_:

Explain the effects of inflation, political instability, and recession on the price of gold.

2. \_\_\_\_\_:

Do you consider the protagonist a hero? Defend your answer.

3. \_\_\_\_\_:

Using natural selection theory, explain why we might not see any new Puriri trees in the future.

4. \_\_\_\_\_:

Outline an alternative system to the electoral college. Your proposal must be original.

5. \_\_\_\_\_:

Why does the federal government collect taxes rather than print money as needed?

6. \_\_\_\_\_:

What do stage theories have in common?

7. \_\_\_\_\_:

What is an oligopoly?

Answers: 1. analyzing, 2. evaluating, 3. applying, 4. creating, 5. understanding, 6. synthesizing, 7. remembering



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