Handout 3-D: Prep Plan

Session 4 · about 35 minutes

Work backward from the date. Put the exam or deadline at the bottom of your calendar, then place three spaced sessions and one practice test (or a draft review for an assignment) ahead of it. Each session names its topics, a retrieval method, and an if–then start.

Exam or assignment: …

Date: …

What it covers: …

Session	Date and time	Topics	Retrieval method	If–then start
1	…	…	…	…
2	…	…	…	…
3	…	…	…	…
Practice test (or draft review)	…	…	…	…

Backup time if a session gets bumped: …

After-action review prompts

Answer these after the exam or submission.

- What did I miss, and why?
- Which prep session helped most?
- What will I do differently next time?

Notes

- **If the date is weeks away,** use the Day 1 / 3 / 7 pattern first, then lengthen the gaps. See Handout 2-B.
- **If you have no upcoming exam,** use an assignment, a certification test, or a skill goal from your SMART goals sheet (Handout 1-D).

Options

A paper calendar, a spreadsheet, or index cards for each session.

Worked example

Exam: Statistics midterm. Date: Friday the 20th. What it covers: chapters 4–6.

Session	Date and time	Topics	Retrieval method	If–then start
1	Tue 10th, 7 p.m.	Chapter 4	Blank page, then check the chapter	If it's Tuesday after dinner, then I'll clear the table and set a 5-minute timer
2	Fri 13th, 4 p.m.	Chapter 5, plus a quick retrieval of chapter 4	Practice questions	If it's Friday after class, then I'll open the practice questions before checking my phone
3	Mon 16th, 7 p.m.	Chapter 6, mixed with chapters 4 and 5	Flashcards, then mixed problems	If it's Monday at 7, then I'll shuffle the flashcards first
Practice test	Wed 18th, 6 p.m.	Chapters 4–6	Timed, closed-book practice exam	If it's Wednesday at 6, then I'll put my phone in another room and start the timer

Backup time if a session gets bumped: Thursday the 19th, 7 p.m.

After-action review prompts

What did I miss, and why? Which prep session helped most? What will I do differently next time?