**Advice from Mr. Acre**

So I’ve noticed that students don’t really know HOW to study for midterms. Here, some helpful general study tips to make studying easier and more productive:

1. **Study in Chunks.** Don’t cram everything into one night. Study intensely in 20- to 50-minute increments with five-minute breaks between sessions. Try not to peek at your social media during those breaks. Five minutes on Snapchat can quickly become an hour!

2. **Listen to Mozart.** Certain types of music have been shown to activate both the right and left sides of the brain. Listening to classical music while studying can increase the likelihood that you will retain relevant information.

3.**Move Your Study Space.** Rather than sticking to one study spot, switch things up when reviewing for exams. Try spaces indoors (dining table), outdoors (local park or boat marina) or even retail space (think quiet coffee shop).

4. **Drink Cocoa or Water (NOT Coffee).**The cocoa bean is packed with antioxidants (healthy stuff) and cognitive enhancers (thinking stuff). Best recipe: a spoonful of organic cocoa in a mug of hot milk with a splash of cinnamon. Though it may seem contradictory, coffee is not the best study drink. While it temporarily helps you focus, it ultimately interrupts sleep patterns. Make sure to drink lots of water and have a small snack before you study. This will stimulate your brain and will help you memorize and work on your math concepts.

5. **Form a Study Group.** Study group members can hold you accountable when it's hard to get motivated. Divide and conquer the definition of terms and explanations of concepts. Share resources.

6. **Prevent Test Anxiety.** To remain calm and prevent "blanking out" during a test, imagine yourself acing the test in the days and hours leading up to it. If you do have a moment of panic during the test, take deep breaths with long exhales. Do power poses beforehand. Focus on what you know, answer those questions first, and keep things in perspective.

7. **Exercise.** Did you know that twenty minutes of cardio each day can help improve your memory?

8. **Manage Your Time.** Make a realistic study schedule, including breaks. Prioritize according to which class requires the most studying for you. Ideally, you should begin prepping for midterms once the calendar turns to December. Do not wait!

9. **Check in with Your Teachers.** Make sure you receive all review materials. Do not miss any review sessions that are offered. Ask for extra help if you discover that you really have not mastered a concept or skill.

10. **Approach Each Class Differently.** Studying for English is not the same as studying for math. Make sure you know how to study for each exam. If you don't, review #5 and #9.

11. **Build on What You Know.** Review what you know first, then add more difficult or recent material as you proceed.

12. **Make It Interesting.** Use mnemonic devices (PEMDAS – order of operations in math), acronyms based on personal experiences, or put a list of information to music to bring test material to life.

*Now for some specific math tips for acing a midterm:*

1. **Solve problems.** In this way, you have the tendency to understand and realize the formulas and the given problems. You can solve the problems that have been given to you. Solve some problems even if you don't know the answer and let someone check it for you.

2. **Come** to the review session(s) **with SPECIFIC questions**. Stating that you don’t know how to do a problem isn’t specific. Think about the logic, formulas, etc… needed to solve the problem and get your specific issue cleared up. If you need more help, ask for it. Go to office hours or ask to stay after class.

3. **Create a checklist** of major topics that are likely to be on the exam. **Rate yourself** on each of these topics. While you should still review material that you feel confident with, spend more time **focusing on** the material that you feel are **weaknesses**.

4. **Understand don’t memorize**. Make sure that when you are understanding the math problems, you aren't just doing them. You have to understand them and if you have the slightest doubt, you should ask a teacher. Sometimes the problem is altered slightly, so the steps to solve it will also alter.

5. If motivation is an issue when studying for math, **give yourself incentives** to finish problems. For example, promise yourself you'll treat yourself to some cookies, half an hour of your favorite program, etc. after you finish reviewing 5 major concepts. You could also have contests with your friends if you can manage group studying. You could also speak to your family and decide on a reward if you get over a certain percentage in the exam. That way you have an incentive to do well.

6. Keep calm and **think positive**, be confident that you can do it.

7. Do not rely on your teacher to make you understand a concept or a problem. You will never get it and you might feel that the teacher is being rude by not bringing down the question to your level of understanding. Instead, do it all by yourself, start to finish.

8. Keep all previous quizzes, exams, notes, and so forth to go over!   
  
9. Don't look up the answer as soon as you get stuck on a problem. Struggling with it for some time will be much more beneficial, because you may find a new way to understand the problem. Even if in the end you need to look up the answer anyway.

10. On the day of the test, bring whatever you can to create the most **comfortable environment**. Bring earbuds if the teacher allows it. Bring a watch to help you manage time, as you won’t have access to your phone. Bring a bottle of water to stay hydrated.

11. Start with the problems you feel most confident with. This means a quick scan of the test, before you begin. NEVER start with simply answering in numbered order.

12. **Use a system** by each problem that will help you to remember which problems still need your attention. This can be done with a circle and x and a check mark. The circle means that you still need to do the problem, an x means that you have completed it. A check mark next to the x means that you have double checked your work. If this doesn’t work for you, feel free to develop your own system.

13. **Make a practice exam for yourself** (or better yet, for a study partner): Take it after a delay period - So you won't remember where you got the problems - If you take the exam too soon, you may think you know the material better then you do! (This should be done at least TWO (2) days before the exam - NOT the night before or you'll freak yourself out!)

14. If you need to get some private tutoring for the exam, be sure to set your appointment 2-3 days before exam day. That way you aren’t cramming.

15. **Backwards plan.** Be sure to create a schedule with all of your exams. From there, schedule times each night (we recommend 3-5 fifty minute sessions) to review materials for GAT. You should be finished with this process and the class exam review 48 hours prior to the exam. ☺

16. Many learners are strong visually, so be sure to go back and look at old **graphic organizers** or create your own new ones to help remember key concepts and connect ideas.

Here is a breakdown of the midterm in terms of major categories and number of points (220):

* Sets, Number Sets and Subsets (9 points)
* Intersection & Union (4)
* Volume (8)
* Lines, Angles, Segments, etc… <Geo Vocab> (18)
* Inequalities (8)
* Functions & Composites (6)
* Graphing Lines (7)
* Slope, midpoint, distance, equation of a line (13)
* Quadrilateral Properties (9)
* Conditional Statements (9)
* Truth Tables (16)
* Transformations & Image Formulas (20)
* Composite Transformations (8)
* Special Right Triangles (4)
* Congruent Triangles (10)
* Similar Triangles (11)
* Parallel Lines (11)
* Area of Polygons (24)
* Proof (14)
* Classic Constructions (3)
* Parts of a Polygon (central angle, diagonals, int. & ext. angles) (8)