

APR EXAM STUDY TIPS

These exam study tips have been gathered and validated from successful candidates immediately following their APR Exam experience. Good Luck in your journey! When you are successful let us hear from you on what you wish you had known, but didn't, going in to the exam. Daily_michael@bah.com

1. Jump around from section to section in each of the tested areas, as you near your exam date, starting two weeks ahead of the exam; focusing on case applications of the concepts.
2. Memorize and understand key terms and, particularly, processes.
3. Approach analyzing and understanding questions based on case studies (PRSA Silver Anvil Cases are particularly helpful in this regard
<http://www.prsa.org/awards/silveranvil/#.VD7MBnkcTxg>)

When reviewing the cases pay close attention to:

- Prioritizing and Segmenting Publics
 - Research techniques-not just what they are by why they were favored/ selected over other possible choices
 - Evaluation techniques-directly connected to the objectives and how they were used to show ROI
4. All exam answers are correct to some degree; there are no "Mickey Mouse" or throw away answers.
 5. The question format is difficult; usually the best 3 of 4 answers types of responses. One trick is to find the wrong choice first.
 6. Know RPIE inside and out
 - Know how to select an accurately written objective (the component parts)
 - During the exam read over the question carefully to see if it asks for a certain type of research technique-formal, informal or primary/secondary
 7. Read the APR STUDY GUIDE. It is very good. If you haven't already done so, download and study it during your final push toward the exam.
<http://www.praccreditation.org/resources/documents/apr-study-guide.pdf>
 8. Read the Legal Notes portion of the AP Style Guide- there is new information there that will help on the exam. (Review this the night before the exam)
 9. Read over the PRSA Code of Ethics and pay close attention to the examples of violations.

10. **If possible try not to skip questions while taking the test.** Usually your first answer is correct; try not to overthink or change your answers unless you are REALLY certain. Use the “Mark” button like you would on a paper exam to mark items you want to return to. At the end of the exam you can click a button and go back just to look over the items in your “marked” list. When you go back, you may be able to correct a few mistakes because you came across material later in the exam that helps you with earlier questions that seemed difficult.
11. Know and understand the applications of Walter Lippmann’s Communication Barriers.
As noted in EPR (Broom, 2009, p343), Walter Lippman, author of Public Opinion published in 1922, described several communication barriers:
 - Artificial censorship
 - Gatekeepers in the media
 - Shrinking news holes
 - Limitation of social contact
 - Meager time available for paying attention
 - Distortion from compressing events into short messages (Sound bites in today’s terms)
 - Difficulty expressing a big, complicated world in short messages
 - Fear of facing facts perceived to threaten established routines
12. You will need most of the exam time allotted so plan to take the exam without any breaks.
13. Remember to draw from your work experiences when reading the exam scenarios. From previous events to working relationships with key publics and management, this will help make wise decisions on the exam.
14. While the all of the books on the short reading list are valuable, the favorite 3 continue to be: Effective Public Relations, Strategic Planning for Public Relations and the AP Style Guide Legal and Ethics Section.
15. **BE RESTED**...get a good night’s sleep...recommend no reviewing the morning of the test.
16. Have some light nourishment with vitamins before going in to the exam, but minimize the liquid.
17. Pick your best test time of the day (AM or PM), but there has been a bias toward the mornings for this particular exam.
18. This is an exam of understanding, analytical and application skills; much like a medical diagnostician. So, applying key concepts, best practices and general principles is key to your success.
19. You have plenty of time for the exam, but try not to spend more than 2.5 minutes per question.
20. Don’t over prepare for exam areas that don’t count for much (i.e. PR History). Pay attention to the areas that count for the most percentages on the exam (i.e. RPIE)

21. Study cases in multiple industries (health, Travel), not-for-profits (Red Cross, Charities, etc.) and Public (Government Organizations).
22. Enroll in the APR On-line Preparation course, and participate in the accompanying cohorts. <http://www.online2learn.net/APR/APR-CourseMap.pdf>. The investment in the disciplined study approach for both the exam and the Readiness Review is well worth it
23. Look for opportunities to study the material in groups, like the online cohort for example.