

Recommended Study Tips From Don Kim

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General Study Tips:

1. The exam is neither real hard, nor easy. Remember you only need 61% to pass, but it is definitely not a walk in the park to obtain that score. In general, it is better to over prepare, then under prepare but don't stress about so much that you burn yourself out!
2. The PMBOK is boring as heck to read, but from my research and own experience, I agree with the common consensus that you should read this at least 2-3 times. I would read it once to get a good overview, then read the study books recommended below and when you read it again, it will make more sense.
3. If there is one thing I would recommend above all else, is to really understand the 5 processes, 9 knowledge areas and the 44 individual processes that comprise it and know it inside out. But I **DO NOT** recommend memorizing these, but rather to have a deep understanding of how they work, inter-relate and drive a project from initiation to closing. The PMBOK as well as most of the test prep books and courses follow the knowledge area in this regard, but I would look at these from the perspective of the 5 processes of Initiation, Planning, Execution, Controlling/Monitoring, and Closing. This is because it, in my opinion, follows how a real project actually functions and makes it easier to understand, study and relate to.
4. Definitely do some practice exams. The CD that comes with your coursework for this class is sufficient. In my opinion, don't waste too much money on this. For example, many people I know who I took the class with in Spring that also purchased the Rita FastTrack CD, felt it was a waste. Taking 4 full exams is sufficient, and any more may burn you out, stress you out, or confuse you. The Achieve CD is all I used and I passed quite comfortably. But if you need more, there are some good online resources both free and for pay that is more reasonable than Rita's \$300 CD.
5. One good way of understanding the ITTOs (Input -> Tools and Techniques -> Output) is to write them out on flash cards, since 1) writing them out is an active way to study them as well as reinforcing the understanding process, and 2) is great at forcing you to see how I/Os are usually things like plans, change requests, corrective actions, etc., and tools and techniques are the analysis, methods, skills and systems used to feed inputs into outputs. Because of my development background, I put all the ITTOs into a database, then created a web front end to retrieve the ITTOs based on process or knowledge area which you can access on my website here: <http://www.donkim.info/pmbok/>
6. I also placed additional resources on that link to help you prepare for the PMP.

Prep Books:

I read all of the following books at least once, and used a few extensively:

1. ***PMP In Depth: Project Management Professional Study Guide for PMP and CAPM Exams (In Depth)**, by Paul Sanghera. ISBN: 1598631772

- I highly recommend this book, and recommend you read this as an introductory text for the PMP. Unlike the other books out there, this one structures the material based on the 5 processes, instead of the knowledge areas. This facilitates a better understanding of the PMBOK material and in addition, is completely self contained.

2. ***Head First PMP: A Brain-Friendly Guide to Passing the Project Management Professional Exam**, by Andrew Stellman and Jennifer Greene. ISBN: 0596102348

- Innovative book that uses lots of quirky visuals and other non-traditional methods to make

studying for the PMP less tedious. This helps to reinforce and better retain topics important from the PMBOK that would otherwise require grinding repetition to retain in a more traditional textbook.

- May not be to everyone's taste, but for me, it helped break the tedium of studying the other more traditional prep books. I think it's best used in conjunction with another prep book, but the book is stand alone in that you don't have to reference the PMBOK to fully understand the text.

3. PMP Exam Prep, Fifth Edition: Rita's Course in a Book for Passing the PMP Exam, by Rita Mulcahy. ISBN: 1932735003

- Probably the most well known of the prep books. The book is really focused on getting you to pass the exam, and really pushes memorizing and test taking techniques. Not as self contained as the above two text, as you are referred to the PMBOK quite often.
- Personally I found the tone of her text too threatening, in that she makes the PMP exam sound harder than it is in my opinion. Also, the book seems best suited to be used in conjunction with her prep classes, rather than to be read by itself.

4. The PMP Exam: How to Pass On Your First Try (Test Prep series), by Andy Crowe. ISBN: 0972967311

- Like Sanghera's text, this is a good introductory book to read to ease your way into studying for the PMP, but unlike Sanghera's book, it is not self contained. Has to be read in conjunction with the PMBOK for full benefit. Also, found some of the ITTO listings to be incomplete and the explanations not too in-depth.

5. *Achieve PMP Exam Success PMBOK Guide -- 3rd Edition, by Margaret Y. Chu, Diane Altwies, and Edward Walker. ISBN: 1932159509

- The book your using in this class. Found this best used in the class, and especially as a review the last couple weeks before the exam. In fact, I used it extensively for that and also found the CD with sample questions extremely helpful.

The following books, while not specifically geared to preparing you for the PMP exam can and will be quite helpful:

1. The Fast Forward MBA in Project Management, Second Edition, by by Eric Verzuh. ISBN: 0471692840

- Excellent introductory book on PM. Has good diagrams, graphs, checklists and notes.
- Found the book to be structured to and around many of the core topics from the PMBOK, with good clear explanations of topics such as WBS, network diagrams, and organizational structures.

2. Information Technology Project Management, Fourth Edition, by Kathy Schwalbe. ISBN: 0619215267

- The book is structured by all 9 PMBOK knowledge areas, and while not specifically a PMP prep book, covers all the topics of the PMBOK and does so from an IT project management viewpoint.
- Gives very detailed, though somewhat text bookish (is used as a college text on IT project management) definitions, discussion questions, exercises, and suggested readings of PM techniques and methodologies, and is great for seeing how one would use PMBOK-like techniques from an IT industry viewpoint. In addition, has many relevant and real-world case studies.

3. Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling, by Harold, Ph.D. Kerzner. ISBN: 0471741876

- Probably the most comprehensive book on PM. The latest 9th edition was written with the PMP/PMBOK preparation in mind, and each chapter concludes with questions and answers.
- Chapters 11-20 go into the heart of project management such as planning, scheduling, cost control, estimating, procurement and quality. These chapters are indeed "hard-core" project management tools and techniques that are systematically discussed in depth. But this is where much of the meat of project management is discussed and where all the major PMP exam subjects are covered. Particularly relevant are these chapters:

- 11 - Planning
- 12 - Network Scheduling Techniques
- 14 - Pricing and Estimating
- 15 - Cost Control
- 17 - Risk Management
- 19 - Contracts and Procurement
- 20 - Quality Management

- Was told in the Spring 2007 class, that though considered the "Bible" (which it is!) on PM, that it is a big scary book. I read it from cover to cover, and did not find it to be so at all. Definitely easier to read than the PMBOK in my opinion!