

Want to Ace That Test? Cheer Up!

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Research shows positive moods lead to better performance on tests.

Studying for a stressful exam can sometimes put us in a bad mood. The last thing we want to do is put on a happy face, but research suggests cheerfulness may help us perform better. A study published in [*Psychological Science*](#) found that being in a positive mood can improve performance on certain cognitive tasks.

Volunteers were asked to watch a YouTube video that was found to elicit either a positive, neutral, or negative mood; then they completed learning tasks on a computer. Volunteers who were in a positive mood performed better at tasks that involved selecting rules and testing hypotheses than the volunteers who were put in a neutral or negative mood.

Researchers explain that positive moods lead to greater cognitive flexibility and therefore, better performance on these tasks. So the next time you have a big assignment coming up, don't forget to watch some funny YouTube clips or your favorite episode of *Seinfeld* before you work on it.