



HOW TO PASS THE NCLEX[®]

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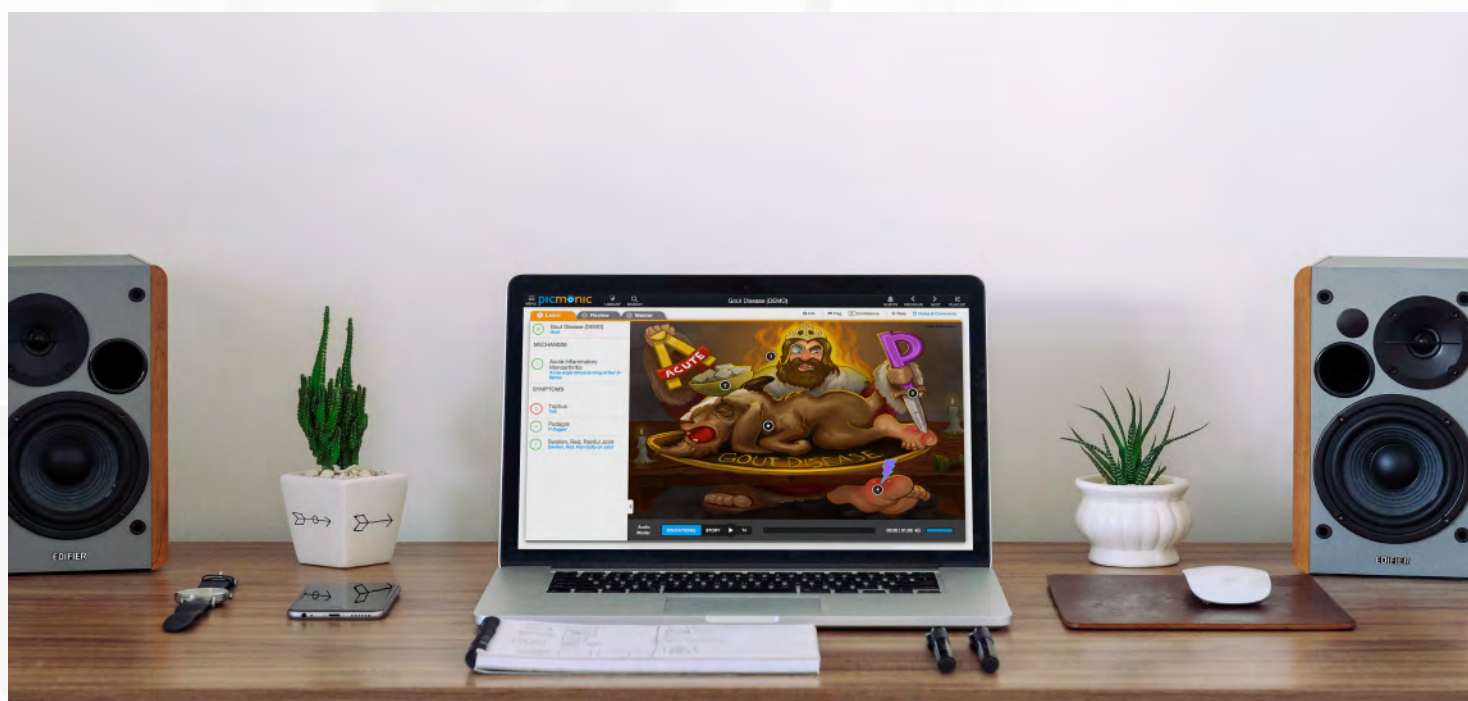


INTRODUCTION

We've developed this free Study Plan to help you tackle your nursing school exit exams like ATI, HESI, and most importantly, the NCLEX®.

At Picmonic, we're masters of memorizing. By using our product along with this plan, you'll be on your way to test success! Keep in mind there's no shortcut for hard work but we've included lots of "Pro Tips" and advice to help you along the way.

Do you have to stick with the suggestions mentioned? Absolutely not. Use this advice to fit your needs and learn from those that have been there before. This plan has been broken down into two sections: **Preparation** and **Master the Questions**. In Part 1 we will discuss some strategies on how to best prepare for the NCLEX®. Part 2 will build off the strategies introduced in Part 1 and will help you when it's time to perform.



MEET OUR NURSING PROS

Kendall Wyatt, RN

Picmonic Instructional Content Strategist



Kendall is no stranger to the world of standardized testing. As he currently holds dozens of certifications, he has run through the gamut of late night studying, stressful cramming and of course, those grueling testing days a multitude of times. Drawing on his expertise as a licensed EMT, RN and having successfully passed his medicine boards, Kendall has been instrumental in helping both nursing and medicine students thrive with his contributions to the Picmonic Learning System.

He currently resides in sunny Phoenix, Arizona where he works alongside renowned author JoAnn Zerwekh EdD, RN, and the Picmonic Team on a variety of projects that have benefitted nursing students across the U.S.

Marlee Liberman

Picmonic Nursing Content Scholar

As a recent nursing grad, Marlee understands the struggles that nursing school throws at you - not to mention the overwhelming pressure preparing for the NCLEX®! Marlee brings a unique skill set to Picmonic, with her previous degree in broadcast journalism. Her blend of talents provides her with the knack for simplifying complicated concepts and demystifying the world of nursing.

Marlee splits her time between the Arizona desert and the Canadian Rockies, and she hosts Picmonic's awesome YouTube channel and webinars alongside Kendall.



PART 1 - PREPARATION

Imagine walking out of the NCLEX® testing center wondering what question 76 would have been. 75 questions and the test shut off. Before you know it, you're out of the center and walking to your car with your head held high. You just accomplished the final milestone, and you don't know who to call first or how you're going to celebrate. You just know that not long from now you will be off to your new career as a registered nurse!

You've come so far to get here.

Now imagine another scenario: you weren't counting, but the questions just kept coming and coming. You may have noticed others leaving the testing center long before you did. You weren't sure if you were facing that dreaded "Select All That Apply" question more than you actually were. Suddenly, that all too familiar feeling of doubt hits. You begin to ask yourself if you studied the right material, or worse, if you studied enough. You start kicking yourself for not making more time to study.

You begin to wonder, *"What's going to happen next...retest?"*

Obviously, we want to roll with scenario one and if you're reading this, then there is still time to prevent scenario two. (Or, if you've already lived through scenario two, to make sure it doesn't happen again.)

Let's go back to scenario one. Visualize test day. Visualize and really capture the essence of that victory. Go wild! Close your eyes and imagine the relief you'll feel when all is said and done. Are you ready and willing to work as hard as you need in order to make that happen? Now is the time to be honest with yourself.

If you are willing to put in the work, then let's press forward! As we do so, hold onto that vision you created. Test day will be here before you know it, and understand that with hard work and due diligence, that vision will become reality.



UNDERSTAND HOW THE NCLEX® WORKS

Your mission: pass the NCLEX® the first time (so you can see the letters “RN” behind your name). It’s a daunting task for sure, but we’re here to give you the edge you need for your big day by addressing some common questions about the exam itself (also, check out the NCSBN web page on [The Night Before the Exam](#)).

1. *How many questions will I get?*
2. *When will my exam end?*
3. *How long do I have for the exam and what about breaks?*
4. *What types of questions should I expect to see?*



Q: How many questions will I get?

A: 75 - 265

We want you to pass with 75 questions, but make sure you aren’t going to have an anxiety attack at question 76. Remember the ultimate goal: **passing**.

To pass with 75 questions, you will need to answer more difficult and complex questions correctly like “Select All That Apply” (SATA). Trust us, we hate those too! The key here is to be a master of the content! Picmonic is great at helping you remember all of the gritty details.

Don’t freak out on question number 76, or even 77. It’s not over! Take a break and gather your head. Sit back in your chair, and close your eyes for a moment. See yourself as a nurse, and once you’ve taken a few deep breaths, get back at it. This just means the exam will ask you some less difficult or less complex questions to make sure you have the “minimum level of knowledge.”

In 2012, the average number of items (questions) administered per candidate was around 119 on the NCLEX®-RN and 117 on the NCLEX®-PN.

Reference: [NCSBN](#)





Q: When will my exam end?

A: The exam will end at one of three scenarios:

1. *When the adaptive testing determines you are at a sufficient level to pass the exam in each subject area (using a 95% confidence rule)*
2. *When a maximum of 5 hours of testing is reached*
3. *When a maximum of 265 questions have been answered*

You'll need to be at a passing level in **EACH** subject area. Have you had an instructor say that the NCLEX® will find your weaknesses? Well it's true!

Don't forget to review other subject areas like psychology and obstetrics. If you're weak in OB/GYN, then you're less likely to get the SATA questions correct.

Do not rush! We repeat: **DO NOT RUSH!** Don't be worried about running out of time. Feel free to read a question twice. Spending another few seconds to get a question correct rather than guessing and feeling pressured for time will likely end in better results.

Did we mention don't rush? If you run out of time, the system will analyze the last 60 questions you answered to help determine whether you pass or fail. Put your best foot forward on each question.

Don't sweat it. If you don't know a question, make your best guess and move on.

Reference: [NCSBN](#)



Q: How long do I have for the exam, and what about breaks?

A: Total length: Up to 5 Hours

Per the NCSBN [website](#), you will be given a scheduled break after approximately two hours, followed by another one after three and a half hours have passed by.

To maintain a level head during the exam you should take the breaks! Remember, breaks take away from your total test time, so don't spend all day relaxing.



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Q: What types of questions should I expect to see?

- A:**
1. *Multiple Choice (ONLY 4 choices 1,2,3,4)*
 2. *Place the sequence in order*
 3. *Select All That Apply (SATA)*
 4. *Fill in the blank (usually math)*
 5. *Drag and drop charts*
 6. *Hotspot (place the cursor over the area on the diagram that does the selected action)*
 7. *Chart/Exhibit*
 8. *Graphic Option*
 9. *Audio*

There are several different question format types that you should expect to see on exam day, so make sure you thoroughly read the question before answering. Don't get fooled!

We recommend practicing with a question bank before your exam in order to get more comfortable with the question formats.

SET A GOAL

Pick a week to take your exam- and stick to it! After you pick your date, work backwards to create your personalized study plan.

Our study plan is designed to help you master the content and reinforce it with a question bank of your choosing. We've estimated this should take you between 4 and 6 weeks based on how many hours per day you put in and your knowledge level. The time is budgeted accordingly based on feedback from students like yourself who have been there.. Can you go through it quicker? That's all on you. Need to miss a day? Life happens. Adjust and adapt as needed. You can find it under our Resources section at www.picmonic.com or simply request a copy by sending an email to feedback@picmonic.com.

Whether you utilize our study plan or another resource, stick with it!



Don't procrastinate on taking your exam. Students who wait a long time to take board exams after graduating school often do worse. The information doesn't stay fresh in your brain. You've come so far, just get it done!



KNOW YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

You've completed or are about to complete nursing school, and it's possible you have a few weaknesses. Gather your exit exam score sheets, take a look at your exam scores or even your course grades. If you know your weak areas before you start studying, you'll be better able to make sure those don't trip you up on exam day.



Don't skip high yield content and hope you don't get questions about it. You probably will, and we want you to stay calm. Besides, there's probably a Picmonic for that.

ALLOCATE TIME

Your daily study time can vary greatly. Our Study Plan is designed to cover nearly all areas of nursing, but you may find yourself already a master of certain topics. If this is the case, simply skip ahead, but use gained time wisely.

Our study sessions last anywhere from 30 minutes to just over 3 hours. It's all about versatility here. Can you stack days on top of each other? Absolutely. Should you? Well, that's on you. If the content is too much or you feel burnt out, maybe it's time to take a break or call it a day. The main idea is knowing what to expect time commitment wise and plan ahead. This way, you're not cramming until 3am the night prior. As with any deadline, the sooner you begin, the easier time you'll have.



Get sleep. Depriving your body of needed sleep and recovery time is detrimental to any kind of effective studying.



GET PREPARED

You'll be amazed how much more productive you can be with organization. Ever heard the saying: "a messy bed means a messy head"? It's amazing how little things add up. The following are just a few suggestions to help ensure that the ball isn't dropped come test time.

- ***Make sure you have enough gas in your vehicle or that you have a reliable means of transportation.***
- ***Need your lucky shirt? Can't take a test without it? Make sure it's laid out and ready to go so you're not spending time trying to find it.***
- ***Have all registration necessities in order like proper forms of ID. Last thing you want to do is get to the testing center and not be able to test!***



Make sure you have the right ID on exam day! [Click here](#) to read an article about what will be accepted and what won't be.

The more you think ahead, the more smoothly things will go for you. Your focus and challenge for the day is the NCLEX®. Nothing else.



PART 2 - MASTER THE QUESTIONS

CONDITION YOURSELF TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

At Picmonic we love pie, and to make an amazing pie you need a great recipe. Learning how to answer NCLEX® questions is no different. If you follow a recipe as you answer questions you'll be eating the pie you really want. Success pie. There are several different strategies for answering NCLEX® style questions, and here's our recipe for success.

- **Read the question entirely. Read the entire thing! Every bit!**

You should always read each question. Don't get into the habit of skipping ahead because you could miss out on an important sentence.

- **Ask yourself: Which part of "The Nursing Process" is this question asking me?**

Assessment, Analysis/Diagnosis, Planning, Implementation or Evaluation. If you aren't immediately sure, you can rephrase the question in your own words.



Don't add to the question. NCLEX® doesn't care about "that one time at the hospital I saw a..." Adding personal experiences to questions will often only get you into trouble on the NCLEX®.

Assessment: Make sure you have always gathered all of the assessment data before doing an intervention. Even if the patient will "eventually" be getting said treatment or intervention you must have a complete assessment before moving ahead.



You can only skip ahead in the nursing process in a few scenarios. The main one: If I don't do something now, this patient will be in immediate danger or face serious health threats. Don't kill your patients! Example: Your patient is cyanotic and in obvious respiratory distress. Do you continue to assess? Nope. You sit them up, give them oxygen, etc. As a general rule: Skipping ahead in the nursing process is the wrong answer.



- **Find the keywords.**

Determine the style of the question: Positive or Negative

Positive Questions: Ask something that you SHOULD DO or is BEST. Look for Keywords: appropriate, most essential, highest priority, safe, therapeutic, accurate, next, first, best, indicated.

Negative Questions: Ask what you need to AVOID, or NOT DO. Look for keywords: Not, never, contraindicated, false, least, except, unlikely, all but, inconsistent, inappropriate, lowest priority, atypical, incorrect, avoids, unsafe, re-teach.

- **Rule out answers.**

If you are sure answers are not correct, mark them off your list of possible answer choices.

- **Use critical thinking**

You'll need to use critical thinking to apply the information you've learned. We've included many tips above, but you'll need to think about each answer and then prioritize the answers. Remember:

<i>ABC Airway, Breathing, Circulation</i>	Prioritize patients based on which one is most critical. Airway. Airway. Airway. Wait. Did we say airway?
<i>The Nursing Process</i>	Never skip ahead in the nursing process. (Read our blurb above, then read it again).
<i>Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs</i>	Prioritize patient based on importance of needs. A patient without physiological needs like food and water is more important than one without love. (Sorry guys).



Are you stumped? Think you should call the physician? Imagine it's 3AM on a Friday night. That's all fine and good, but **MAKE SURE** you have gathered all of the information prior to calling.



HAIL MARY!

OKAY. YOU'VE READ THE QUESTION AND YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

Here are some tips to help you improve your odds at, well... guessing.



Find similarities in the answers. Then choose the odd ball. When all else fails, this just might help!

Example: A nurse is determining which of the following activities would be best for the patient who just started prednisone therapy.

1. Take her daughter to the state fair.
2. Begin yoga classes at her gym.
3. Painting at home.
4. See the latest movie at the theater.

Even if you didn't remember that prednisone causes immunosuppression and you should avoid crowds, you should be able to figure out that choice 3 involves the least amount of people and also involves her staying at home.



You are sure two answers are likely correct. Ohhh NCLEX®... why must you make us choose the "most correct" answer? In these scenarios you must use critical thinking. In implementation questions, the answer is likely the easiest and quickest to implement.



HAIL MARY



PRACTICE IT ALL WITH QUESTIONS

Imagine that the NCLEX® is a marathon. A marathon of questions. Should you run a marathon without first conditioning? Probably not a good idea. As far as NCLEX® goes, you'd be crazy not to practice some questions after we have given you all of these juicy deets.

We suggest selecting a practice question bank that allows you to separate questions into subject areas. You'll need to practice as many questions as possible before your exam date and we suggest doing intervals of 50-55 questions each day.

If you aren't killing the questions, you may need to do as many as 2,500-3,000 before you're ready to go.



PICMONIC QUESTION OF THE DAY

Introducing our Nursing Question of the Day! Every day we post a new NCLEX® style question for you to test your knowledge.

[CLICK TO SEE TODAY'S QUESTION](#)

app.picmonic.com/question-of-the-day/



If you miss a question, don't get discouraged! Now is the time to make mistakes. Just say to yourself, "Well, at least I didn't miss it when it matters!" and carry on. Review the question you missed later, learn from your mistakes, and you'll be acing those same topics in no time.



CONCLUSION

You've spent hours on end in nursing school, and you've put in the time studying when you could have been doing something MUCH more fun. You may have second guessed yourself multiple times, but remember scenario 1. Remember the feeling of success you'll have when it's over and better yet, picture your name with "RN" at the end. If it feels good to imagine now, just wait until it's reality!

You've come so far. What's a little test like the NCLEX® going to do to get in your way? Don't let it.

We're so glad you've decided to use our study plan as a tool to help you achieve success and we wish you the absolute best.

Before your exam, don't forget to...

- Assess your weaknesses
- Find YOUR study location
- Eliminate ALL possible distractions
- Incorporate exercise
- Eat healthier foods
- *SLEEP*

Best of luck, and let us know how you did!

The Picmonic Team

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P.S. - Picmonic offers a 100% FREE trial!

TRY NOW!

