

Surrounded by books and black coffee, Judy Thomas, Altus junior, begins her studying for an 8 o'clock history final, the first in a series of five.

TESTS & TENSION

No one who has ever taken finals will forget the agonizing reappraisal that is necessary before quiz is passed.

Finals—a process of mental revulsion—descends on the O.U. student twice each year. With genuine reluctance, the student begins to concentrate on *X* and irregular verbs and Chaucer just as he intended to 16 weeks before when books were new and minds uncluttered. Invariably, the student discovers there is far too much material to learn at the last minute. But each is aware that to procrastinate now is suicide.

So, study becomes the order of the day. Books are bought, no-doze pills become standard equipment and young men and women assume the status of martyrs in the cause of academic achievement. To some students, finals are a chance to review what they have learned and solidify its worth in their minds; to others, it is a desperate effort to make up for lost time. Whatever the motive, each student discovers a new capacity for study.

The week of "cramming" is not without its humor, drama or pathos. For many it is a crisis, a literal "do or die" effort to stay in school. And when the week is over and every question has been answered, the student walks with a peculiar sense of release, as if he had experienced a scholastic catharsis of sorts. He blinks his eyes once, and heads for the Union. Finals are over, and the story of a semester has drawn to its close.

The week of final examinations at O.U. began with "stop day" on Friday, January 13, and ended a week later. The stop day is a one-day period before finals start and is a godsend for Sooner students. With the second semester just underway, May finals seem to be a long time away, but as some self-styled sage is forever saying, "They'll be here a lot sooner than you think."

Tension and strain mount to a crescendo as history prof hands out a list of questions.

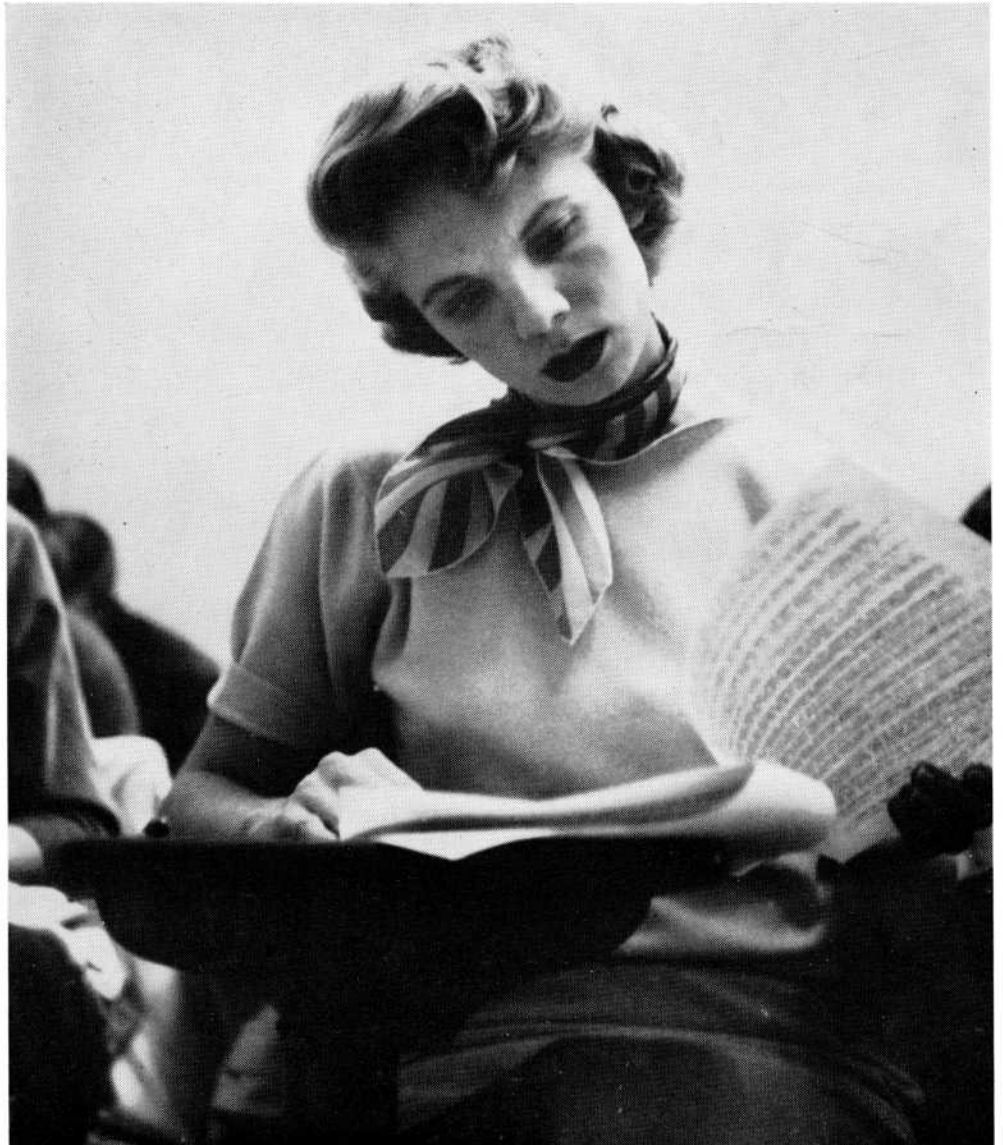




A mask of concentration settles into place as Judy considers a question she isn't sure of.



Judy is completely absorbed and her hands find relaxation in this typically feminine gesture.



"Well, I'm on the last page now. Where in the world did he get these questions? Oh well, I'll probably pass it."

Tests and Tension



The test is over and relief sparkles on Judy's face as she walks toward Union.

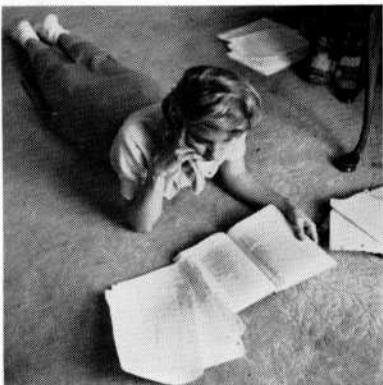


The quick ecstasy of relief begins to subside and fatigue takes over. Eyes veiled by hours of concentration look tiredly at the noisy Union clientele.

Like a sensitive mirror, Judy's mobile face records the gamut of emotions that an O.U. student experiences during a week of mental strain and stress.



The rest is over. Tomorrow brings more tests. Time to start next study session.



A cycle is complete and only the position changes as war of learning starts anew.

