Yale College expects every course to conclude with a regular final examination or with a substitute for such an examination. The substitute should be in the nature of a final examination in that it requires the student to demonstrate proficiency in the discipline and subject matter of the course. Substitutes may include, for example, an oral presentation or examination, a term essay due at the latest by the last day of the final examination period, or the last of a series of hour tests administered during the last week of classes. Final examinations normally last either two or three hours but, in either case, students are permitted to take an additional half hour before being required to turn in their answers. This additional time is given for improving what has already been written, rather than for breaking new ground.

A final examination in a course, whether or not the course observes reading period, must be administered during final examination period. No take-home final examination may be due during the reading period.