

**Quick
Study®**
ACADEMIC

Keys to

High School Success

In Classroom

Taking Notes

BASICS

- Clear, concise notes are more effective than long, complicated notes
- Instead of using a spiral, use a loose-leaf notebook divided into class sections
- Make all notes on loose-leaf paper; in an upper corner, title and date each sheet as it is used
- Rewrite and combine your old study and lecture notes into a new single set of notes or outline; use them as a replacement for your old notes in the loose-leaf binder

LECTURE NOTES

- Sit near the front of the class to avoid distractions
- **Be a good listener** - focus and concentrate on the main points of the lecture; get them down on paper; you'll put them into your own words later along with your study notes; pay attention to the instructors' clues to what they consider important

- If there is something you don't understand, **ASK!**
- For fast classroom access to key information on major topics, use **QuickStudy®** products, if available
- Immediately after a lecture, without looking at your notes, try to recall on a separate paper as much as you can about what you have heard and learned; then, review your actual lecture notes to confirm and/or supplement your memory
- During your next study session, quickly recall again on paper what you learned; then, review and reorganize your lecture notes in your own words
- **Repeat the recall process** several times over several days to commit the new information to memory!

Your listening skills, note taking and ability to manage your sessions will help determine your success in college!

Balancing Work & School

IF YOU WORK AND GO TO SCHOOL...

- Keep in mind that **SCHOOL IS YOUR PRIORITY!** Without education, you will probably be stuck in a low paying job that you hate; your time is valuable, and you must manage it well; however tired you might be after a long day of school and work, you must make time to study
- If your job is impairing your performance in school, quit the job!
- Never let an employer force you to take a work schedule that interferes with your studies
- If possible, find a job that provides enough free time to get all your studying done
- And remember that employment makes time-management skills even more valuable



Study Strategies

Time Management

- **LEARN TO SAY NO!** Balance social time and study time
- **DO NOT STUDY FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS AT A TIME**
- **TRY TO STUDY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS**
- **USE TWO SCHEDULES**
 - Using your class schedules as a guide, block out specific times each day for study and all other activities
 - Create a semester schedule showing midterms, finals, due dates, and other important events; Weekly, review both schedules and allow more study time as needed; a good schedule keeps you from wandering off course
- **PRIORITIZE:** List what you need to study each day; prioritize and set times for each item and stick to it
- **USE THE 30-3-2 SCHEDULE**
 - Study for 30 minutes
 - Take a three-minute break; let the break be a time to think about other things
 - Upon returning, take an extra two minutes to mentally review what you have just read and do a quick preview of what is coming up next

Study, Study, Study!

STUDY - BREAK - REVIEW - PREVIEW - STUDY

- **ATTEND** as many academic support activities and workshops as possible
- **STUDY!** This may be a case of stating the obvious, but you would be surprised how many students don't bother
- **STUDYING WITH SOOTHING MUSIC** in the background (contrary to popular opinion) can enhance your concentration
- Studying in a soft chair or on a cushy bed may not be the best strategy
 - Active learning may require walking around the room or sitting on the edge of the chair
- **STUDY SPACE:** Your regular study space should be as quiet and comfortable as possible, and large enough to have easy access to everything you need for studying (text and reference books, paper, pencils, rulers, etc.)
 - Libraries, study lounges, or private rooms are ideal
 - Get rid of clutter; clear the desk or table of all materials not related to the current project
- **TUTORING IS NOT A BAD THING!** Get help early, before the academic damage is irreversible; many schools offer free tutoring in a variety of subjects
- Study groups are great, but in general, studying alone is more effective

Goal Setting

- Set realistic goals within a specific time frame (in writing)
- Goals should be specific and clear
- Determine the purpose of your goals and their achievement benefits; write them down next to your goal
- Set specific strategies for accomplishing each goal (in writing)
- Set target dates for self-evaluation
- Periodically visualize your goal, as well as your strategies for accomplishing the goal
- List potential obstacles to attaining the goal
- List strategies for overcoming obstacles
- Follow through on all strategies

Exam Strategies

Preparation

- Learn the exam format: e.g. objective (true/false or multiple choice) or subjective (essay)
- Review course outline, notes and **QuickStudy**® products
- Review previous tests; check at departmental office
- Summarize highlights on single sheet

MEMORY DUMP

At the beginning of the test, write down on a piece of paper everything you remember—formulas, facts, names, etc.; scan the test questions; then, do a second memory dump and begin the test.

Objective Exams

- Scan the exam to determine types of questions
- Always read and follow directions!
- Determine the exam's scoring rules and use them to your advantage; if wrong answers are penalized, don't guess unless you can reduce the choices to two
- Answer easy questions first
- Mark difficult questions and return to them later
- **True/False Questions:**
 - Pick out key words or those on which the meaning of a statement hinges
 - If any clause in a statement is false, the statement is false
- **Multiple-choice questions** are essentially true/false questions arranged in groups
 - Usually only one alternative is totally correct
 - Eliminate obvious false choices
 - Of the remainder, pick the alternative that answers most fully all aspects of the question

Essay Exams

- **Planning your time when answering essay questions is more important than in objective type tests!**
- **Read through the entire examination first**
 - Get a feel for the questions you are expected to answer
 - If the exam allows you to choose from a number of questions, be sure to number your answers exactly to match the questions
- **Follow directions carefully:**
 - Pay attention to the key words in the question; Words such as "list," "describe," "compare and contrast," and "outline" require different types of answers
 - **Don't "write around" the question, but answer it directly and concisely**
- **Outlining**
 - After scanning the list of questions, choose those about which you know most
 - On scrap paper, quickly prepare an outline of important ideas and facts to be included in your response
 - Your opening statement summarizes what you are going to write; the following sentence should support your opening statement
 - Your conclusion should show how your body text supported your opening statement
- **It is absolutely essential that your ideas can be read and understood:** Print neatly and use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling

Themes & Reports

Reducing Writing Anxiety

- **GET A CALENDAR OR ACADEMIC PLANNER**
 - Follow tips in Time Management on page 1
 - First, write down the due date of the paper; next, count backwards: How many days will you need to write, edit, re-write, revise, take notes, research, read, select, and narrow the topic?
 - Now you know what day you will need to begin the paper
- **BE SURE YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOUR INSTRUCTOR EXPECTS**
- **DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPRESS A UNIQUE OPINION:** The key is to document and support your ideas in an organized and clear manner
- **WHEN PROOFREADING TEXT,** start at the end of your paper; read one sentence at a time and work your way to the beginning; by reading from end to beginning, the pattern is broken and you will find more errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- **DO NOT RELY ON SPELLCHECK:** Remember "principle" and "principal" are both correct spellings; other biggies—"to" and "too," "it's" and "its"
- **PLAGIARISM MEANS TAKING ANOTHER PERSON'S WORDS OR IDEAS AS YOUR OWN:** Be careful to always cite your source whether you quote directly or paraphrase; **remember, if it's not common knowledge or your original idea, you must cite the source**

Library Tips

- **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOUR FIRST RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT TO SCOPE OUT THE SCHOOL LIBRARY**
 - Many libraries offer tours
 - Determine the library's resources, as well as its limitations, as early as possible
 - Learn now to use library computers and card catalogs to find books by subject or author
 - Practice using every machine in the library (i.e., microfiche, CD Roms, etc.)
 - Use the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* (available in book form and online) for magazine articles; encyclopedias (book form, online or CD-ROM) for general information on most topics; almanacs (book form or online) for facts, lists, charts, tables, etc.; atlases and/or Internet for maps and geographical facts/statistics; ask the librarian for instructions and/or how to access the most up-to-date information on the topics you are researching
 - Be sure to **cite all research properly**, whether you use periodicals, books, the Internet or other sources!
- **KNOW COPIER RULES AND PROCEDURES IN ADVANCE**
 - Where are copiers located?
 - Does the copier require cash or some sort of copy card?
- **CHECK OUT LOCAL COMMUNITY AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES** They may house the one obscure article or book you need to earn that "A"

Writing the Paper

- Make/use index cards (put the topic at the top of each card), notes, bibliographies, summaries, reports and reviews as part of your preparation process to organize your materials
- **PREPARE A WRITTEN OUTLINE**
 - Don't make the mistake of trying to keep everything in your head
 - Make your outline in the form of main headings or ideas with sub-headings fleshing out the flow of the paper; this will establish the paper's content and conclusion
- **WRITE THE PAPER**
 - Use the outline as a guide and stick to it
 - Write in your own natural style
 - **Reread, rewrite, revise and edit until the paper says exactly what you want to say, the way you want to say it**
 - Use correct punctuation and grammar, and run spellcheck
 - Cite all sources, including Internet searches

Reading Skills

Skimming & Scanning

• WHEN TO USE:

- To determine main idea
- To locate facts quickly
- To answer test items
- To answer chapter questions



• HOW TO SKIM & SCAN:

- Fix intent for reading (or facts sought) clearly in your mind
- Scan table of contents, chapter headings and subheadings
- Quickly move eyes over reading material, focusing upon page headings and subheadings, discarding information that is obviously not related to reading intent
- Skimming should be twice as fast as average reading speed

Locate as quickly as possible the key or topic sentence of each paragraph (usually, but not always, the first sentence)

- Selectively omit portions of reading material
- Practice skimming and scanning to locate information; repeated practice will increase speed
- Read the last paragraph carefully for summary information
- Carefully review tables, charts and side boxes

The SQ3R+Reading Method

• SURVEY

- Preview the assignment/material to be studied by scanning the text quickly to discover the central concept
- From your preview, formulate an **overall picture** and the purpose of what you're going to study

• QUESTION

- What you need to learn in terms of **what, why, how, when, who and/or where, to support the central concept**
- Write these questions in the margins of your textbook or at the top of your lecture or study notes

• READ

- Read specifically to answer the questions
- Most paragraphs contain one or more main ideas in support of a concept; locate and highlight them with a marker; make notes in the margins, summarizing key points; pay special attention to **bolded or italicized type** and to tables, **graphs and illustrations** which may explain an idea more thoroughly than text

• RECALL

- **Pause** periodically (every 15 minutes or so) to **recall** in your own words a summary of the **important ideas you have read**; write on notepaper as much as you can recall about what you have read and learned!
- Each mini-review is a knowledge builder and memory reinforcer

• REVIEW

- Did you answer your questions, understand the new material and accomplish your goal?
- **Reread** difficult parts; work a few more problems

Staying Healthy

BEWARE OF FAST FOOD, SUGAR AND CAFFEINE!

- Gallons of coffee or cola are not the way to survive mid-terms or finals
 - **Sleep and study in small shifts**
 - **Exercise often during exam weeks**
 - **Choose foods that provide natural and sustained energy:** pasta, peanut butter, non-sugary cereals, yogurt, fresh fruits, lean protein

FIND A GOOD EXERCISE PROGRAM

- Whatever you choose—swimming, running, going to the gym—make sure it's something you'll stick with ongoing
- Especially during times of stress (exam time and/or when papers are due), exercise is important—it **reduces stress and makes you feel better!**

STRESS MANAGEMENT

- What works for managing stress is different for everyone
- Sometimes, regular exercise and healthy eating are enough
- Other times, you need more—think about taking a yoga class with a friend or starting a crafts project
- Journals and blogs offer great ways to unwind and de-stress, too
- Listen to music—it helps everyone relax
- Whatever you choose, remember, **SCHOOL IS YOUR #1 PRIORITY!**
- If you ever feel that stress or pressure are more than you can take, talk to your **parents, a teacher, a guidance counselor, or any adult you can trust—don't feel like you have to handle all your problems by yourself**
- Also, find out what kind of counseling programs your school, local youth center, or house of worship may offer—many organizations offer one-on-one counseling as well as support groups that can be very helpful
- Everyone goes through rough times; **YOU'RE NEVER ALONE!** Reaching out to others can make all the difference, whether you're helping or being helped

Community Resources

- **MAKE YOURSELF AWARE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES, ESPECIALLY** if you are in a new town; be aware of support services
 - Religious institutions
 - Support groups
 - Counseling centers
- **REALIZE THAT YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE TOTAL COMMUNITY**
 - Do some volunteer work each semester. It's great to put on college applications and gain practical experience, plus it feels good!

Brain Power

Can You Remember?

- **MEMORIZE FROM GENERAL TO SPECIFIC:** Study the big picture, then learn the details

- **CRAMMING DOES NOT WORK!** Cramming for an exam only commits the information to your short-term memory

- **FOUR BASIC REASONS WE FORGET PIECES OF INFORMATION:**

- Don't use the information
- Confuse it with other information
- Decide the information does not match what you already believe
- Never really learned the information in the first place

- **KEYS TO REMEMBERING:**

- **Be interested:** Pay attention; consciously choose to remember; establish a **need** to remember.
- **Visualize:** Picture in your mind what you wish to remember
- **Relate:** Relate and form associations between the new ideas and information you wish to remember and information, ideas, persons,

things, etc., **that you already know**

- **Repeat:** Even though something is initially learned, it will more than likely be forgotten if not **over learned**; be sure to repeat information in your own words
- **KEY IDEAS:**
 - **Highlight** them in your textbooks and outlines
 - Give extra attention to **bolded words or phrases**
 - Make up acronyms or mnemonics to recall (i.e. **GIGO = Garbage In; Garbage Out**) or (**Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally = Parentheses first, then Exponents, then Multiplication, Division, Addition and Subtraction**)
- **MAPPING**
 - Make a mental image of your notes, outlines, **color-coded QuickStudy®** guides, etc. and where facts are located on them in relation to other topics; these images (fact maps) and their data can often be recalled during tests

Critical Thinking Skills

- **Learn to evaluate everything you see, read, or hear; decide for yourself what to believe**
- **Critical thinking is important in order to:**
 - Enhance common sense
 - Filter emotion
 - Categorize experiences
 - Select references
 - Understand the "experts"
 - Sort fact from opinion
 - Learn to express yourself in a clear and interesting manner
- **Critical thinkers are:**
 - Able to resist manipulation
 - Able to overcome confusion
 - Able to perceive connections between subjects and events
 - Able to base judgments on evidence and facts
 - Able to realize that the "truth" is never simple; grey or foggy areas always exist

TIPS FOR FRESHMEN

I wish someone had told me...

- **GO TO CLASS:** Class attendance really does correlate with your grade
- **COMMUNICATION IS KEY**—especially when dealing with roommates and professors
- **BE ON TIME TO CLASS:** Walking in late distracts both the professor and other students
- **DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP**
- **COLLEGE IS NOT A CONTEST:** You don't have to compete with anyone for your grade; *learn at your own pace and don't feel inferior if you don't understand something the first time around*
- **DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY FACULTY AND STAFF:** The bureaucracy of higher education is overwhelming; stay calm, ask questions, and be sure you know the name of the person you are talking to
- **SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SURVIVAL:** Make friends; talk to everyone
- **EXPECT TO FEEL LONELY, FRIGHTENED, AND ISOLATED:** But also remember—you are not the only person experiencing these emotions, and it all gets better with time
- **READ EVERYTHING!** Read your mail!
- Don't take policy advice from other students; check with offices on campus
- **JOIN IN ALL THE ACTIVITIES YOU CAN**
- **USE YOUR COLLEGE CATALOG:** You have to open it in order to reap the benefits of what is inside
- Get a copy of your school's code of ethics (honor code); a simple mistake could cost your degree
- **MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE,** be a good listener, stick to your own convictions, and follow your dreams

Registration & Advisement

- **ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT IS CRITICAL!** Visit your advisor on a regular basis to make sure you are on track with your academic program, courses, etc.
- **PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!** If you miss one, it could cost you— not just money but grades as well (ex. drop/add, fee payment, course withdrawal)
- Avoid long lines and high frustration levels; use telephone or computer registration whenever possible
- Be sure to have university or college representatives sign every form dealing with selecting courses, dropping classes, etc.; you may need it to defend a course selection when you apply for graduation or to prove you dropped a class
- **SAVE EVERY GRADE REPORT:** Computers have been known to lose grades, courses, credits, etc.
- Periodically ask for an unofficial copy of your transcript; **BE SURE YOUR RECORDS MATCH THE REGISTRAR'S**
- Select classes based on your own academic capabilities; for example, if science is not your forte, don't take biology and chemistry in the same semester
- Be very careful about taking writing classes during shorter summer semesters; the same holds true for classes requiring large amounts of reading
- **READ THE COURSE CATALOG CAREFULLY**
- Typically, freshmen are the last students to register so **PLAN AN ALTERNATE SCHEDULE PRIOR TO REGISTRATION;** your first choice classes may be filled

Dorm Do's & Don'ts

- **RESIDENT ASSISTANTS ARE A VALUABLE RESOURCE;** be sure to maintain open communication with your RA
- **YOU MUST LEAVE THE BUILDING** when the fire alarm rings
- **CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF:** Avoid roommate problems and bug infestation
- **MANY SCHOOLS OFFER "SPECIALTY FLOORS";** reserve your room early and be honest about special requests; some options are:
 - Quiet study floors
 - Upperclassmen floors
 - Health and wellness floors
 - Chemically sensitive floors
 - Multicultural floors
 - Single-sex or co-ed floors
- **GET INVOLVED IN RESIDENCE LIFE:** Almost every school sponsors some type of residence hall government and community activities
- **LOCK YOUR DOORS**—even when you are in your room! Better safe than sorry
- **PAY ATTENTION TO FEE DEADLINES:** Non-payment of housing fees can result in having to live in your car
- **IF YOUR SCHOOL ALLOWS COOKING IN THE ROOM:**
 - Check to see which appliances are permitted for dorm use:
 - Dorm size refrigerator
 - Microwave
 - Toaster Oven
 - **HOT PLATES ARE RARELY ALLOWED!** All appliances must have enclosed coils
 - Never leave your food unattended
 - Store leftovers quickly and properly
 - Take out the trash every day!
 - Remember, some schools do provide community cooking facilities, but you may need to clean the area before and after you cook

Staying Healthy

- **BEWARE OF FAST FOOD AND CANDY BARS:** Most freshmen gain weight in the first semester
- Gallons of coffee and cola are not the way to survive finals
 - Sleep and study in small shifts
 - Exercise often during exam weeks
 - Pasta, peanut butter, non-sugar cereals, yogurt, and fresh fruit will provide natural and sustained energy
- Check with your school's health services office; it may offer:
 - Free emergency treatment
 - Low cost Ob/Gyn exams
 - Free condoms
 - Low cost dental cleaning and x-rays
 - Low cost or free medications
 - Free AIDS testing
 - Low cost lab work
- **APPRECIATE MUSIC**—it helps everyone to relax

Adjusting to College Life

- **THERE ARE FIVE PHASES OF COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT:** As a freshman, you may experience some or all of the following phases; in any order, some phases may repeat or overlap:
 - Phase 1—Fascination with the new environment
 - Phase 2—Severe homesickness
 - Phase 3—Finding fault with new surroundings; building stereotypes
 - Phase 4—Finding humor in your adjustment
 - Phase 5—Embracing the new culture; it becomes your "normal" environment

