

STUDYSKILLS



Do you study hard and still do not do well on your tests? Are you tired of your teachers calling home about work you did not do in class or for homework?

So what's your problem?

- Do you know how to study?
- Do you repeat what you're trying to remember to yourself over and over?
- Do you waste time when studying (You have just finished reading and have no idea what you just read.)
- Having trouble getting ready to study ("I have to clean the bathroom before I study, I have to watch this one TV show, I have football practice first, etc.")
- Do you have good place to study?
- Do you complete ALL of your homework EVERY day?
- Do you know your learning style? (Visual learners learn by seeing. Auditory learners learn by hearing. Tactile learners learn by feeling. Are you a combination of the three styles?)
- Metacognition. What's that? Do you know what to do when you do not understand an assignment/problem? Then can you go to the next step when your first solution does not work? Do you change what you do depending on the type of test your teacher will give?

Success in school is due to motivation, time management, and good study habits. It basically takes some effort from you. This means that if you want to do well you must be willing to set aside time to study and to do homework. You may have to sacrifice at times. However, believe it or not, you can spend less time studying if you do the right things.

We have ideas and tools that will help you. If you would like to learn more about studying and doing better in school click on any of the following.

- Motivation
- Suggestions
- Effective Reading
- Improving Memory
- General Study Hints

MOTIVATION

Motivation

Motivation is the key to success in school. Although your teachers and parents can provide you with some helpful hints to enhance motivation, they cannot motivate you. You are responsible for your study habits, for seeking resources and assistance, and for managing your time. You have to want to do well enough to put forth the effort.



There are types of motivation. The first one is outer motivation. These are things such as good grades, money, trips, and shopping sprees. You do something good and you get a reward. Self-motivation is doing something because YOU want to and your reward is knowing that you did your best. For example, you are a dedicated basketball player and you practice every day. You work hard and then game day comes around. You score 25 points and have been voted Most Valuable Player at the end of the game. Self-motivation is what made you go to practice everyday and work hard. Outer motivation is the praise, the points scored and winning MVP of the game.


Now, ask yourself if you are doing what it takes to be the MVP in class or at home?





The following suggestions will help you improve your study skills

Remember you do not have to do all of this at once. Learn them and be familiar with the suggestions. Make them a habit one at a time. It will become easier to do your work and you will have to take so much time studying.

 **SET UP A SCHEDULE.**  For classes that are harder, make sure you give yourself more time to study or do homework. Also make time for recreation and social activities; they are just as important as your grades.


 **START STUDYING FOR 10-15 MINUTES AT A TIME AND THEN BUILD UP TO LONGER PERIODS OF TIME.** Start reading/studying for 10-15 minutes. Then build on that by 10 minutes once you become comfortable studying for at least an hour at a time. So work hard, but be realistic. If you can no longer concentrate or remember what you have read, stop. Do not waste valuable time.


 **TAKE BREAKS.** Take breaks when studying. Do not attempt to cram! Study small portions of material, take a break and then study some more. You will retain more information when you break it down into smaller portions that you can manage. You do not want to get burned out.


 **REWARD YOURSELF.** Reward yourself for studying, learning a difficult topic, or completing a project. Go to a movie, spend time with your friends, or do the things you put off in order to study. You are more likely to study again and concentrate if you know there is a reward at the end of completing a task.


 **FIND A GOOD LOCATION.** Where you study can determine how much concentrate. Make

sure the place is comfortable, but not too comfortable. Sitting at a desk or table is best. Avoid lying across the bed. You want to try to study in the same type of situation that you will be testing. This helps with remembering the things you studied for the test.

 **USE THE SAME PLACE FOR STUDYING.** This will help you with your memory when it is time for a test. It will also help you to concentrate better, because you will be in a routine or habit of studying in the same place.


 **MAKE SURE IT IS A QUIET PLACE.** Having a quiet place to study is also important. Playing your favorite CD, or radio station, or even the TV will get in the way of you concentrating on your studies.

 **ELIMINATE THE OBVIOUS DISTRACTIONS.** Talking on the telephone is a major distraction when you are trying to study. Other distractions that you should look out for are the radio, TV, video games, family talking around your study area. Even seeing your books for another class can distract you. So put them away until you are ready to study for the next class. Once you get rid of, as many distractions as you can you will improve your study skills.


 **EMOTIONAL MOODS.** Try studying in a similar emotional mood you have during a test. This also increases your memory during testing. When you are too relaxed during studying it does not match the same level of emotions as when testing. This also works in reverse. If you are too psyched-up or tensed during your test, you will not be able to remember what you studied. This is why it is important that you learn to calm yourself down during tests.



Effective Reading

 If you know how to read a textbook, you will understand and remember what you have read.

There are 3 simple tools that you can do to read more effectively.

 **SCAN:** Scan the chapter in the book. Look at the boldface terms, charts, graphs, headings & subtitles, maps, photos & illustrations, summary, and review questions. Scanning provides you

with information in a short amount time. You get a quick view of the information and it prepares you for what you are about to read. It makes it easier when more understandable when you actually do read.

READ: When you read, have a purpose. This helps you to stay focused and understand what you have read. Ask yourself questions as you read. “What does this word mean?, Why is this event important?, etc.” You are a detective while you read. Looking for answers to your questions while you read. When you finished reading you should have answered all of your question and the review questions.

REVIEW: Once you have finished reading, take the time to go one set further. Go through the scanning process again and look at the bold words, italicized words, charts, pictures, headings, etc. Make sure you understand what you have read. You can even make flash cards of the different headings or events that took place in your reading. You will be amazed how much you remember when it is time to review for the test.



Improve Your Memory

- If you want to improve you memory, here are some tricks you can learn.
 - **Acronyms:** Acronyms is when you make a word from the first letter of each word to be memorized is used. For example, HOMES for the Great Lakes (**H**uron, **O**ntario, **M**ichigan, **E**rie, **S**uperior).
 - **Acrostics:** Acrostics are phrases or poems in which the first letter of each word or line functions as a cue to help you recall the words that you are trying to remember. For example, “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally” is used to remember the order of operations

in Math.

- **Narrative:** Make up a story with the list of words throughout the narrative helps with memorizing.
- **Rhymes:** Rhyming can help retention of information. Remember the phrase “I after E except after C”?
- **Imagery:** Draw or imagine a picture of what’s being studied, or find one in a book. Mentally refer to the picture when you are testing.
- **Visualization:** Use graphic organizers to help organize and remember information.
- **Flash Cards:** When information is written out on cards you have access to studying at any time.



General Study Hints (Motivation and Organization)

- ✓ **BE AWARE WITH CLASS MATERIAL INTERFERING WITH EACH OTHER.** When memorizing information, be careful of class material interfering with each other. What happens is that you may forget the old material while trying to learn the new material. Try memorizing material for each class on different days. Review the night before, or a few hours before, the test. (time management)
- ✓ **GO TO CLASS.** If you want to do well in school, attendance is important. If you miss class, you miss what the teacher thinks is important; hence, what is most likely to end up on the test. (motivation)
- ✓ **PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.** In order to learn more in class it helps to participate in class discussions. Asking questions to clarify and maintain eye contact with your professor can increase your participation and your focus during the class discussion. Listen to your teacher and then try to guess what he or she is going to say next. If the material is difficult, it helps to read the material before you go to class. This helps you follow along in class. (motivation)

- ✓ **IF YOU NEED TO MISS A CLASS.** If you have to miss class, let your teacher know. It is very helpful to have a reliable classmate from whom you can get the notes. Exchange telephone numbers (with someone who is passing the class) in case of an emergency. (organization)
- ✓ **TAKE GOOD NOTES.** Try not to write down everything. All you need are the main points and put in your own words. Write unfamiliar terms. Review your notes as soon after class as possible. You can fill in details that you missed and review the material while it is still fresh on your mind. (organization)
- ✓ **USE YOUR TEXTBOOK.** Some teachers follow the book closely. In this case it is helpful to take the book with you to class and write down topics or terms and write notes from the book. (organization)
- ✓ **TALK TO YOUR TEACHER.** If you are struggling in class, talk to your teacher. He or she may be able to give you more help or tutor you before or after class. Most teachers have little sympathy for students who become concerned about failing during the last few weeks of the grading period. (motivation)
- ✓ **FORM STUDY GROUPS.** Get students together who are motivated to do well in the class. Make sure that everyone is familiar with the material, because you do not want to spend time re-teaching material to people who do not understand. Be careful! Sometimes group session can become chatting sessions. Set yourselves on a goal and then once completed, then have your chatting session. (motivation)
- ✓ **START AT THE BEGINNING.** Start studying; from the first day you make the change or better yet, the first day of school. It's never too late, but you have to make the decision to make the change. (motivation)
- ✓ **KEEP ORGANIZED.** Try to keep your backpack, folders, and locker neat. You should be able to locate papers at any moment when a teacher requests them. Also, keep in mind that some classes require more effort than others. For example, Math and foreign languages are subjects, which require daily work. These subjects build on materials from the day before, so you have to keep up in these classes. (organization)



Effective studying is an active process. Studying involves a progression to mastering the course material. It requires time management, which in turn may reduce your actual time spent studying.

Effective studying can produce a sense of understanding, happiness, and mastery. Just think about it. By you studying in an effective way you not only get good grades, but you will also please your self, parents, and teachers. You also do not miss out on your social life. It is a win win situation.



WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT STUDYING?

If you would like to learn more about Study Skills, your guidance counselor has a variety of resources to help you. Stop by the student affairs office and make an appointment to talk with your counselor. The Student Affairs Office is located in the main building.

✓ FROM INFINITY AND BEYOND...

The majority of college success is due to motivation and time management. Anyone who tells you that they can get through college without studying, or that they make great grades without studying is pulling your leg. Success in college takes effort.



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The Help Screens (HS) & the Counseling Center Help Screens (CCHS) were created by [Carlos P. Zalaquett, Ph.D.](#)

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