

Instant Study Skills

TIME MANAGEMENT

Set Goals

It is important to be clear about your reasons for attending college. Goal setting helps you focus your attention and directs your actions.

Evaluate Your Time

Find out how you are currently spending your time. You must not only know how you are presently spending your time, but you must also know things you have to accomplish. On a calendar, write in all deadlines and important dates.

Prioritize

Make a list of the things that you want to accomplish and prioritize your time in order of importance. Do the items that are most important or pressing first.

Avoid Procrastination

Be aware of your tendency to procrastinate. Ask yourself why you are putting off doing something and determine ways to prevent procrastination.



STUDY ENVIRONMENT

At Home - Develop a Study Routine

Try to establish a regular study schedule, studying in the same place every time. Remember that lighting and temperature are very important and affect how you feel while you are studying. You should choose a place to study that is comfortable but not too comfortable. Your bed is not a good place to study. Decide when you concentrate the best and try to study during that time. Before you begin to study, write down a goal for the study session. By doing this, you will have a way to measure when your study time is up. Otherwise, how do you know when you are done?

In Class - Sit Up Front

In class, sit as close to the instructor as you can. The closer you sit, the fewer visual distractions there are. The fewer the distractions, the easier it is to listen and take notes.

LECTURE NOTES

Preview

Good note taking begins before you ever go to class. Before coming to class you need to preview the material that will be covered. This includes the readings, your previous class notes, and any PowerPoint slides the professor posts. By doing this, you can refresh your memory and formulate questions about material that may be unclear.

Writing

Copy down everything on the board, despite how meaningless it may seem. Whiteboard "scribble" may be a clue to an exam item. It may also help to jog your memory about the lecture. Good lecture notes should indicate the main points of the lecture, show the relationship of the details to the main points and include enough detail to enrich the content. Use ink. Page number and title all of your notes, include the date. Write only on one side of the paper and begin a new page for a new day's lecture.



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The 4 R's: Record, Reduce, Recite, Review

You will record the main points from the lecture during class. Soon after class, condense and summarize your notes and create potential test questions. Write these in the left-hand margin of your paper. Cover your notes and using the questions and keywords in the left-hand margin, recite the information in your notes. You may then summarize each lecture in the space you have left at the end of that day's notes. Repeat the "Recite" step every two weeks.

2. "REDUCE"	1. "RECORD"
3. "RECITE"	

TEXTBOOK STUDY

PBID: Purpose, Background, Interest, and Difficulty

Use the PBID strategy before reading, to improve your comprehension and to develop a plan for how to read assigned material. Identify your purpose for reading the material, background information about the subject, interest level about the topic and the difficulty of the text. (Please see the Idea Sheet on Pre-reading Strategies: PBID for more information.)

SQ3R: Develop an organized system for study reading. (Please see the Idea Sheet on SQ3R for more information.) This strategy is especially helpful for difficult reading assignments and when course exams are based on details from the text.

Underlining or Highlighting

Underline **after** you have read the material. Go back and pick out a few words that summarize the author's main point. Never underline a whole sentence. If you do, you will not be forced to select the material that you feel is important.

TEST TAKING

Preparation

Find out what will be covered. What kind of test will it be? Know what you are allowed to bring. Review before the test: daily reviews, weekly reviews, and major reviews. Predict test questions. Develop a study plan. Avoid procrastination. Reduce test anxiety by being prepared.

Strategies

Some strategies are common to all types of exams while other strategies are particular to specific types of tests.

For all exams:

- Arrive early (but not too early – waiting more than a few minutes for the exam to begin can increase test anxiety).
- Listen carefully to all instructions.
- Avoid friends and panic-stricken people (panic and anxiety can be contagious!).
- Sit near the front and in a well-lit, quiet spot.
- Look over the entire exam, paying particular attention to point values.
- Read all directions.
- Do the easy questions first (this builds confidence).
- Use the entire time, look over your answers (but only change the answers that are **obviously wrong** – it is best to **go with your "gut"** instinct if you are **unsure** of an answer).
- Ignore students who finish early (they generally don't do as well as students who take their time).

For Essay Exams:

- **Write down something for every question.** Don't leave an item blank; you can only get a zero for the question. Write down any ideas or details you remember, even if you cannot link them together into a paragraph.
- **Be neat.** Do the best you can to make your handwriting neat and clear. Your instructor has many papers to read and will view yours more favorable if it is legible.
- **Organize your answer.** The form of your essay can affect a reader. Keep it simple. Restate the question in the introductory sentence. Then explain your answer. End with a concluding sentence.

4. "REVIEW"