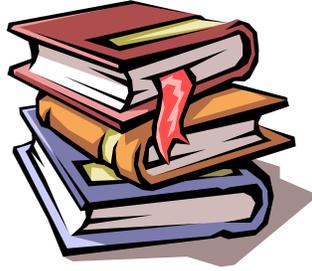


# STUDY SKILLS



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

This means that if you want to do well you must be willing to set aside time to study. You may have to sacrifice at times. However, effective time management will allow adequate time for school as well as a social life or free time to do the activities that you most enjoy.

We have ideas and tools that will help you manage your time more wisely:

- Motivation
- Problem Areas
- Suggestions
- Reading Effectiveness
- Improving Memory
- General Study Hints

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## MOTIVATION

Motivation is the key to success in school. Although we can provide you with some helpful hints to enhance motivation, we cannot motivate students. 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.

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## Five major problems for students who study

- Not studying enough
  - Wasting time when studying
  - Having trouble getting ready to study
  - Finding a good place for studying
  - Using a good learning strategy
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### The following suggestions will help you avoid these problems

- **SET UP A SCHEDULE.** Allocate more time for the most difficult classes. Make sure that you allot time for recreation and social activities. (You need to reward yourself for your hard work!)
- **START STUDYING FOR 10-15 MINUTES.** Most study skills programs suggest reading for 10-15 minute increments your freshman year, 20 minutes your sophomore year, 25 minutes your junior year, and 30 minutes your senior year. Remember to be realistic, if you can no longer concentrate or remember what you have read, stop. There's no sense in wasting your valuable time.
- **TAKE BREAKS.** Take breaks when studying. The average attention span for one task is approximately 20 minutes. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CRAM!** Study small portions of material, take a break and then study some more. We retain a great deal more if we learn in small manageable portions, than when we attempt to learn a great deal of information at once.
- **REWARD YOURSELF.** Reward yourself for studying, learning a difficult concept, or completing a project. You are more likely to study again and concentrate if you know there is a reward at the end.
- **FIND A GOOD LOCATION.** Where you study can influence your concentration and your study habits as well. Make sure you are comfortable, but not too comfortable.
- **USE THE SAME PLACE FOR STUDYING.** This will help you associate a location with studying and will facilitate concentration.
- **ELIMINATE THE OBVIOUS DISTRACTIONS.** Some of the more common distractions are telephone calls, having the television on, or friends and family stopping by to chat. Even the sight of a textbook from another class can serve as a reminder of how far behind you are in another class, causing you to waste time worrying.

- REMEMBER THAT MEMORY IS “CONTEXT DEPENDENT”. Studying in a physical situation similar to the one in which you will be tested increases your chances to recall information.
  - MEMORY IS “STATE DEPENDENT”. Studying in an emotional mood similar to the one you experience during tests increases your chances to recall studied information.
  - INCREASE YOUR READING EFFECTIVENESS. The following are two effective methods for reading text material. Choose the one that is best for you.
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## SQ4R METHOD

- ✓ SURVEY: Briefly survey the chapter. Your aim here is not to go into detail but to develop a general idea of the structure. Read any summary. This will remind you of what is important in the chapter.
  - ✓ QUESTION: Formulate questions about the chapter. If questions have already been formulated, such as questions from a homework assignment or at the end of the chapter, use those. Otherwise, formulate questions as if you were the teacher making up a test. This accomplishes two tasks; one, it facilitates concentration and two, it helps you prepare for the test.
  - ✓ READ: Read carefully and try to answer questions you have been asked or asked yourself. Textbook reading requires a lot of concentration and retention. So read actively with involvement. This increases your understanding of the material.
  - ✓ WRITE: As you read, when you find answers to your questions, write the answer down immediately.
  - ✓ RECITE: Recite to yourself what you have read by reading over the questions and your answers again, as well as, recalling main headings and ideas in the chapter. This form of rehearsal increases the likelihood that you will retain the material.
  - ✓ REVIEW: Reviewing is the key to figuring out what you know and what you need to concentrate on. The best times to review are right after reading while the material is still fresh on your mind and again before the test.
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## PQ4R METHOD

- ✓ **PREVIEW:** Survey the chapter to determine the general topics being discussed and identify the sections to be read as units.
  - ✓ **QUESTIONS:** Make up questions about the sections or use ones that have been supplied by the teacher or chapter itself.
  - ✓ **READ:** Read the sections carefully answering each questions as soon as you find the necessary information to completely answer them.
  - ✓ **REFLECT:** Reflect on the text as you are reading, try to understand it, to think of examples, and to relate the material to prior knowledge.
  - ✓ **RECITE:** After finishing a section try to recall the information contained in it. If you cannot recall enough read the portions that you had trouble remembering.
  - ✓ **REVIEW:** After you have finished the chapter go through it mentally recalling its main points. Try again to answer all your chapter questions.
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## IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY

Some students find that using particular memorization tactics can improve their memory. Here are a few of the popular memorization strategies.

- ❖ **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 recall. Example, Please excuse my dear Aunt Sally. This acrostic is used to remember the order of operations in math.
- ❖ **Acronyms:** Acronyms are words formed out of the first letters of a series of words you are trying to remember. Example, Roy G. Biv. This acronym is used to recall the order of colors of the spectrum.
- ❖ **Narrative:** Some find making up a story with the lists of words throughout the narrative aids retention.
- ❖ **Rhymes:** Remember the phrase “i before e except after c”?

- ❖ Imagery: There are two methods of imagery which enhance retention of material.
    - LINKING: This involves linking items together visually in your mind.
    - METHOD OF LOCI: This involves taking an imaginary walk in your mind through a familiar path along which you associate items you are trying to remember.
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## SOME GENERAL STUDY HINTS

- **BE AWARE OF THE “INTERFERENCE” PHENOMENON.** When memorizing, also keep in mind that interference can occur. In fact, learning new material can interfere or cause you to forget old material. This is why it helps to review the night before, or a few hours before, the test.
- **GO TO CLASS.** Attendance is crucial. Studies have found a positive correlation between class attendance and grades. In fact, the higher the attendance rate, the higher your grades are likely to be.
- **PARTICIPATE IN CLASS.** In order to learn more in class it helps to become involved by participating in class discussions. Asking questions and maintaining eye contact with your instructor will increase your involvement and enhance concentration of the class discussion.
- **TAKE GOOD NOTES.** Proper note-taking skills can facilitate understanding of lecture material and increase concentration in class.
- **USE YOUR TEXTBOOK.** Some teachers follow the textbook closely and ultimately get information from it for tests and homework.
- **TALK TO YOUR TEACHERS.** If you are struggling in your class, talk to your teacher as soon as possible. They will be able to assist you or send you in the right direction to get the help you need.
- **FORM OR JOIN A STUDY GROUP.** Get a study group together. Choose those students who seem interested in the class. It helps if these study groups serve to review material already learned or to clarify problem areas.
- **START AT THE BEGINNING.** Start studying from the first day, so that you will not get behind in the reading material.
- **KEEP UP IN AN ORGANIZED FASHION.** Some classes require more work or effort than others. Certain classes require knowledge of basic material which then builds on knowing the previous material, such as math or a foreign language.