



10 STUDY TIPS

Get the most out of your time in and out of the classroom by using the study tips below. If you find you are struggling with studying or other academic skills, contact the Counseling and Testing Center by calling or visiting our website to learn more about the many services available, such as an appointment with an Academic Specialist.

1. **Make studying a habit.** Everyone knows how hard it is to break a habit. The key to being an effective student is to establish good study habits early on. One such good habit is to study specific times every day. A quick review of a lecture right after you get out of class is a great way to start the learning process. This studying is more focused if you study in a place where you are not easily distracted. That study place should probably be somewhere besides your dorm room or apartment. Where do you go to study when you need to get results?

2. **How much time? Who cares!** So you think you spend a lot of your time in class? Well, consider that the recommended amount of study time is two times the number of hours you are in class. That means that for a 15-hour credit load you should put in 30 hours of study time per week. That may not be necessary every week, but if you do not study consistently for each class, it will be very difficult to keep up with all the material. But just when we suggest a measurable guideline for how much time you should spend studying, I'm going to tell you 'nobody cares'! What matters is how well you do on the assignments and tests. So judge your study time not on the quantity, but rather on the quality. Your instructor will measure you largely on the quality of your testing effort.

3. **Set Goals.** This is just another way of saying where's your "To Do" list? Whether daily, weekly, or for the semester, how can you schedule your study time if you don't know what you have to accomplish? College demands long-term planning for midterms, finals and projects.

4. **Get involved with learning.** Have you seen these statistics? You remember 20% of what you hear 75% of what you see, and 90% of what you do. Use your senses to learn: See it (reading), hear it (reciting out loud, or getting an explanation from an instructor/tutor), and touch it (writing down key points in your own words).

5. **Prepare yourself to go to class.** Just getting to class is not enough! Look over your previous day's class notes, preview the chapters that correspond to the lecture, and come with questions you want answered. This curiosity will go a long way in keeping your focus on the lecture. Create interest in a topic by asking yourself: What do I already know? What do I want to know? What do I have to know?
6. **Get the big picture.** Have you ever tried to set a puzzle without knowing what the finished picture looks like? That is what you're doing when you don't prepare yourself to study a text chapter. Get that bird's eye view of a chapter by reading the introduction, turning bold headings into questions, focusing on visual aids, and closely reading a conclusion or the key concepts. You will learn the main points and the details—dates, names, and terms—more easily, if you can see how the material relates.
7. **Review, review, review.** Early, often, and actively are the keys to learning. Review for short periods of time, but do it frequently. With the hardest material make flashcards, create your own acronym or catchy jingle, and use instructors, tutors, classmates to get varied explanations. Continually sift out the learned material so you can concentrate on the hardest “stuff”; if not, you dilute your effectiveness.
8. **Study in a group.** Group study can get results. Find two other students who have done their homework and are ready to review. By taking turns in a question and answer session, you get to show off your knowledge and get other perspectives on the topic. All that reinforcement is the best review. This will give you a better idea of how well you are prepared for the actual exam.
9. **How to cram (if you must).** A rule of thumb for your available study time is to spend 25% learning new material, and 75% drilling yourself. If you only try to learn new material and spend no time on review, you will not remember much of anything. Your brain is a computer that stores lots of bits of information. But like a computer, information is worthless if you don't know how to analyze and use it.
10. **Relax.** During the test, relax and let your knowledge show. Practice slow breathing and relaxation techniques so your brain can do its thing.