

17 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR STUDYING - DETAILED VERSION

Introduction - Many suggestions will be presented. A student may not do all; the more the better.

1. **Chart your "actual" hours of studying and other activities.**

- A Time Management technique. A way to find more hours for studying. Create a chart listing how much time you expect to do everything (studying, sleeping, socializing, etc.). Then, create a second chart after with how much time you actually spent on each. You will probably realize you spent lots of time not doing much. You can slowly recoup bits of time-time between classes, hours in the late afternoon not watching MTV, etc.

2. **Study at the right time - before or after class.**

- Question: When do you think is the best time to study?
- Answer: It depends. If expect to be called on-study before. Otherwise, study after.

3. **Study one subject in the same way only ONE HOUR AT A TIME.** (You can study for several hours at once, but make sure to switch subjects or switch study methods, such as taking a self-made practice test, then reviewing lecture material.)

- "The learning curve." You learn the most in the first 30 minutes you start studying. It progressively deteriorates. After 4-5 hours of studying the same material in the same way, you are learning virtually nothing.
- Solution: keep switching subjects, study styles. It's like sex-you want to know when to stop doing one thing and start doing another!

4. **Keep a planner to keep track of your assignments.**

- Another Time Management technique. List all classes, assignments, due dates.

5. **Keep all your material for all classes in one notebook.**

- More Time Management. This one helps you to study if you have time between classes 'cause you have everything with you. Also, when groggy in the morning, you can grab your notebook with everything-you don't have to look for a specific class notebook.

6. **Instead of highlighting - use SQ3R (SQ4R): * summarize * question *read *recite *review *'riting**

- Don't highlight. Need to use own words to make material meaningful. It's better to summarize the material in the margins.
 - B. Survey: review chapter, pictures, captions, tables, summaries
 - C. Question: turn subheads into questions

- D. Read: each section, keeping the questions in mind
- E. Recite- answer the questions without looking
- F. Review- check to see if you got it right
- G. 'Riting- write a summary of each section/chapter.
 - Use these summaries later for studying instead of having to reread the book. For an exam, try to further summarize the summaries.

7. **Note-Taking**

- . Cornell Method: note key points on left-side of page, regular notes on right

Divide your page into two columns. R: content. L: key words, concepts. You can also summarize the page in your own words at the bottom.

- A. Mind-Mapping: a visual approach-put ideas in expanding, connected circles

For people who think visually. Put central idea in middle circle. Add additional ideas in circles coming off center circle, like spokes of a wheel.

General note-taking tips: don't take too many or too few notes-look for important points, key phrases, when professor writes material on board or repeats something.

8. **Study Groups - everyone can bring sample quizzes or sample questions (with answers).**

- Especially for those who are people persons. Studying alone can be boring. By explaining to another, your mind processes the material more.

9. **Cramming - avoid!**

10. **Find previous exams, especially from the same professor, and use for practice tests.**

11. **Where to study.**

- . If possible spend some time studying in same room as exam. Reason: your mind makes connections. Looking at the wall where you studied helps to remind you what you studied. The mind is made of neurons that connect. The more connections the better.
- A. Also study in a variety of different places and over as long a period of time as possible. Reason: more places for your mind to connect. Longer periods allow for more firm connections.
- B. During the exam-when stuck, think about the place(s) where you studied.
- C. Study under the same conditions as when you will take the exam, especially if taking a practice test.

12. **Use visualization to imagine success, think about past success, and/or imagine the test as a contest.** As you study, imagine yourself in the classroom, taking the test,

and feeling confident and knowledgeable. Also, you can view the exam as a friendly contest (you vs. the test-maker); this may help to increase your motivation.

13. Learn material from as many different ways and places as possible.

- Another way to make more connections. Study in different ways: study groups, quiz yourself, write what you know, say what you know, explain what you know. Use flashcards. Involve your senses.

14. Make information personally meaningful. Attach it to what you already know.

- Ties current info to what is in your long-term memory. Memorizing something that you believe has nothing to do with you will be harder than if it is connected. Find a connection. If studying biology and atoms- imagine they are like planets in Star Wars- or whatever works for you. Attach new material to your own ideas.

15. Method of Loci/Pegword System - attach lists to be memorized with other linear objects (such as what you might see as you walk across campus)

- Ex- List of recent presidents with buildings on campus.... Kerr: Nixon. Prkg lot: Ford. Trees: Bush; Snell: slow like a Snail, Carter; Waldo: Where's Waldo?- Reagan, Library- books, like CIA- Bush, MU- something for everyone- Clinton, etc...
- Also: can use song lyrics or poetry and tie each piece of info to a line.
- Also, you can use numbers, i.e., if had to memorize 1,0,6,6, you can recall that 1066 was the year of the Battle of Hastings.
- Use mnemonics, i.e., for an essay you want to write about the social, organizational, applied, and political reasons for a war- think of "s-o-a-p."

16. Quiz yourself frequently and in the way you will be tested.

- You remember more when you have tried before to remember. If multiple choice exam, make a multiple choice sample quiz...

17. Get help when struggling (tutors, disability assistance if needed, academic &/or personal counselors).

- Academic Resource List (on web)
- Check with Professors, Advisors, Department
- Office for Student with Disabilities (learning disorder, ADD, dyslexia)
- Advisors can help
- Counseling Center for personal issues