

# Developing Your Study Skills

## 1 COMPLETE THE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFORE CLASS

A lot of times your teacher will build his/her lecture off of the readings

By completing the reading before you go to class, you will pick up important key terms and concepts and will have a better understanding of the topics when they are discussed in class

## 2 FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT THE TEST WILL COVER

Ask your instructor questions like

- What material will the test cover?
- Which topics are most important?
- Will there be a test review?

## 3 FIND A GOOD PLACE TO STUDY

Assign yourself a specific place to study and set a regular time to study each day

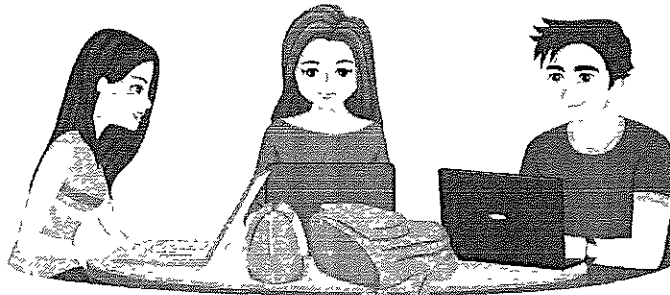
Make sure that your study place is comfortable and free from distractions

## 4 CREATE YOUR OWN STUDY GUIDES

After each class and after you read each chapter in your textbook, write down three to five questions (per chapter) that you think your teacher may ask on the exam

By the time your test rolls around, you will have a great study tool for preparing for your test.

## Helpful Study Tips



## 5 GO TO CLASS AND TAKE GOOD NOTES

There is no substitute for being present in lecture and taking your own set of notes

Most exams will focus on lecture material.

Therefore, a complete set of useable lecture notes is your most important study tool

## 6 CREATE FLASH CARDS

Flash cards are easy to make. On one side write a key term or a question, and on the other side write the definition or the answer. Flash cards are a helpful tool that will allow you to quiz yourself as you prepare for your tests

## 7 STUDY WITH OTHER STUDENTS

Find a study partner the first week of class and make it part of your weekly routine

## 8 ACCESS ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASS

Usually these resources have study guides, review questions, flash cards, and concept maps already developed for you. Take advantage of these tools to help you be successful as you study.



# Developing Your Study Skills

- Not getting the help they need when they need it
- Not going to class or taking good notes
- Not doing the readings required for the course
- Not doing the homework
- Waiting until the last minute to start studying



## Know Your Learning Style

### VARK Activity

Complete the online [VARK Questionnaire](#), and complete one of the activities below to practice your preferred learning style. If you score high in more than one style, select more than one activity.

### Your Scores



**V**ISUAL

Make a flowchart to show how you will proceed *before*, *during* and *after* the next test in one of your most challenging classes. Personalize the chart to show exactly what you will actually do.



**A**URAL

Talk to yourself as you study for an upcoming exam that will challenge your test-taking knowledge and skills. Ask yourself questions that you predict will appear on the exam and answer them aloud.



**R**EAD/WRITE

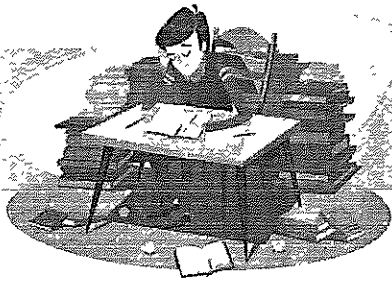
Summarize all the information that will be covered in your next exam, into single-paragraph summaries or even single sentences. Include all major topics.



**K**INESTHETIC

Create a challenging practice test for an upcoming actual exam, and time yourself while taking it (to pretend the stress you will face during the exam)

Your Learning Preference is: \_\_\_\_\_



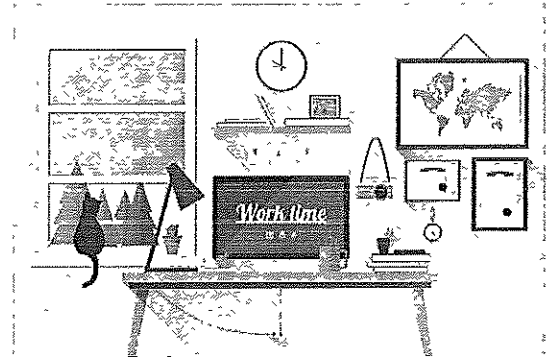
# Managing Your Time

**Time management alone is not enough! Part of managing your time is managing your attention!**

## TIPS

When studying at home or school, try these tips to help you stay focused

- Turn off your phone before you start a study session
- Work offline whenever possible.
- Allow for two minutes to organize your work area
- Have a plan for your study session.



## Keep a Calendar or Planner

An inexpensive, pocket-size calendar is easy to carry with you and handy for scheduling commitments, such as classes, labs, and work for the entire semester.

### Weekly

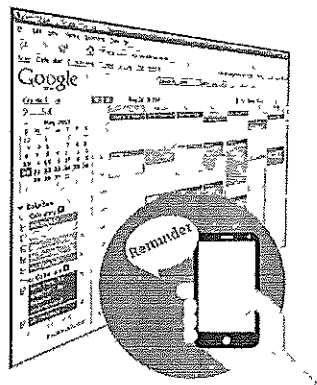
Review your calendar each week and list top priorities, due dates, and important school, work, and family activities.

### Daily

Each day review urgent priorities that must be done by a deadline, such as paying fees, dropping a class, returning a library book, paying taxes, etc.

Consider using your cell phone or email calendar instead of a paper calendar (i.e. Google Calendar).

There are many free online tools and apps to help you. You can even create different calendars and share them with friends or classmates!



## Create a Daily To-Do List

Some people like to create a to-do list for the next day, taking some time at the end of a day to review briefly what they want to focus on for the next day. Others like to create their list in the morning at breakfast or when they first get to school or work.

- Create your list. list the tasks you need to accomplish during the day, and map them out on a daily calendar.
- Prioritize your tasks...you may want to circle or place a number one by the most important priority to make sure it gets done that day.

## Complete Difficult Tasks First

You will feel a sense of accomplishment as you tackle your tough tasks first. Start out with your most difficult subjects, while you are fresh and alert.

Start projects when they are assigned. Do not procrastinate.



# Managing Your Time

## Organize the Tasks

Divide big projects into smaller tasks and group similar tasks together

## Prioritize your Tasks and Time!

Focus on your important priorities and say no to activities that do not support your goals.

- Carry note cards with you to review formulas, dates, definitions, facts, and important data.
- Bring class notes or a book with you to review during the 5 or 10 minutes of waiting between classes, for the bus, in

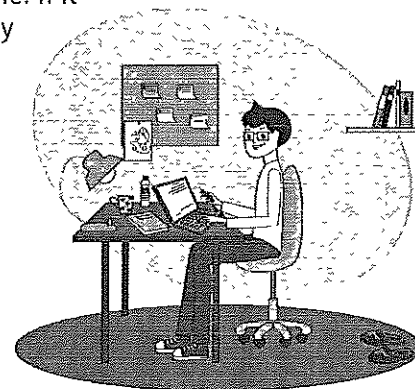
## Study during your High Energy Time

Studying in short segments is much more effective than studying in longer sessions.

## Keep your eye on the final goal – Be Patient and Persistent

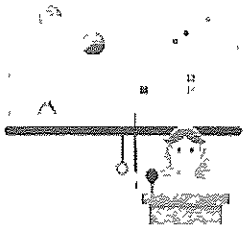
Do not try to make too many changes at once, and do not get discouraged if a strategy does not work for you. You are striving for excellence, not perfection

Change certain aspects until a strategy fits your style. If it works, do it. If not, try something new.



## Most Common Students' Time Wasters

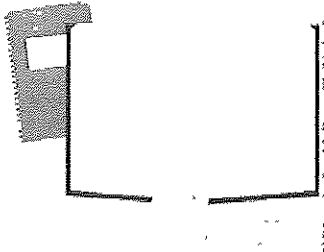
- Hanging out with friends/family
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- MySpace
- Texting
- Video games
- Laziness (or lack of motivation)
- Television shows
- Concerts
- Partying
- Sleeping too much
- Talking on the phone
- Lack of planning
- Movies
- Surfing the internet
- Shopping
- Computer games
- Email
- Visitors
- Not getting enough sleep



# Study Skills

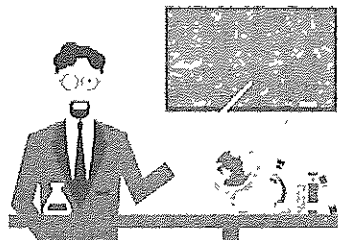
## Tips and Tricks for Note Taking

### PREVIEW THE MATERIALS



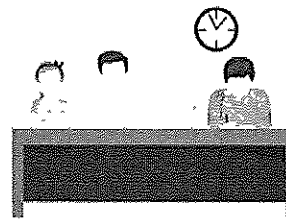
- Go to class prepared, even if you have only a few minutes to prepare the night before or right before class
- Skim textbook chapters for main ideas, general themes, and key concepts
- Skimming is a simple strategy that helps prepare your brain to process information efficiently and effectively
- Keep the handouts that you receive in class
- Put a question mark next to anything you don't understand, so that you can ask about it later

### BE ON TIME AND SIT UP FRONT



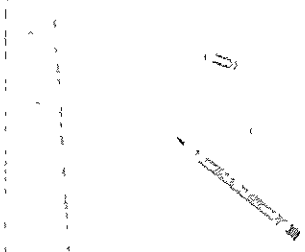
- Being late to class indicates an attitude that class is not important to you and disrupts the teacher and other students.
- Set your phone (or watch) 5 minutes ahead and arrive early enough to preview your notes and get settled.
- Sit in the front of the class. It will help you be more alert, and you will see and hear better
- Plus, you will also be more likely to ask questions and less likely to doodle or talk with other students.

### GO TO EVERY CLASS AND PAY ATTENTION

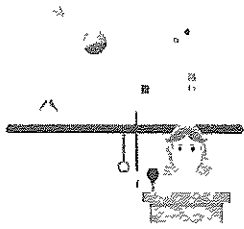


- The most important part of being prepared is to attend all of your classes
- You can't take effective notes if you are not there
- It is important to pay attention and to be mentally alert

### ORGANIZE YOUR NOTES

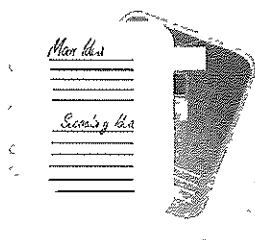


- When taking notes, use large, bold headlines for main ideas and large print for keywords, important points, facts, and places.
- You may want to use a binder for each class to organize notes, handouts, tests, and summaries
- Leave wide margins and plenty of space to make note corrections, or to clarify, or summarize
- Try not to crowd your words, so they will be easy to understand



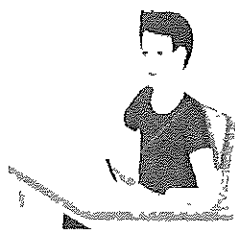
# Tips and Tricks for Note Taking

## RECORD INFORMATION IN AN ORGANIZED WAY



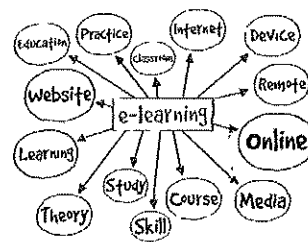
- Don't try to write down everything the teacher says. Jot down only main points and key words.
- Illustrations, filler statements, stories, introductions, and transitions are important for depth, interest, and understanding, but you don't have to write down every word.
- Create your own system for note taking, such as abbreviations and symbols that will help you remember the information.

## MAKE NOTE TAKING ACTIVE & PHYSICAL



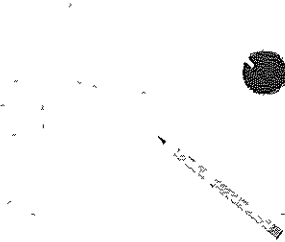
- Pay attention to how you hold your pen, and how your back feels against the chair.
- Sit up straight; slouching tells your brain that this activity is not important.
- When you're taking notes and you feel your energy dip, take a walk, stretch, do deep knee bends or head rolls.

## LINK INFORMATION

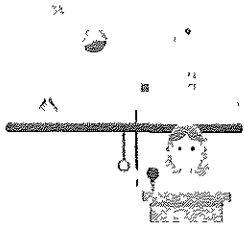


- Connect ideas and link similar information.
- Look for patterns and information that is different.
- Compare and contrast.
- Find similarities and differences.

## USE NOTE CARDS



- Use index cards to jot down key words, formulas, definitions, and other important information.
- Note cards and flash cards help you use your learning style(s).
- Write down key words and main points, refer to your cards throughout the day, and to review for tests.

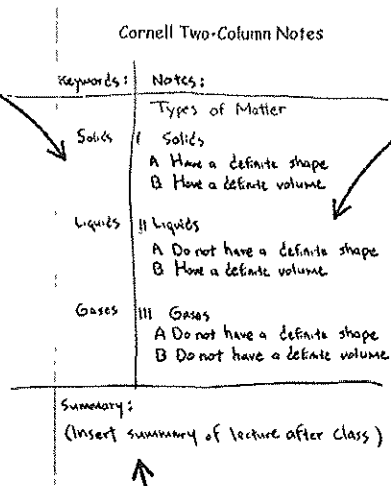


# THE CORNELL SYSTEM

## The Cornell System

### How to Use It

- Write relevant questions or keywords in the cue column
- Jot down your questions as soon as possible, so that the lecture and questions will be fresh in your mind



### Note Taking Area

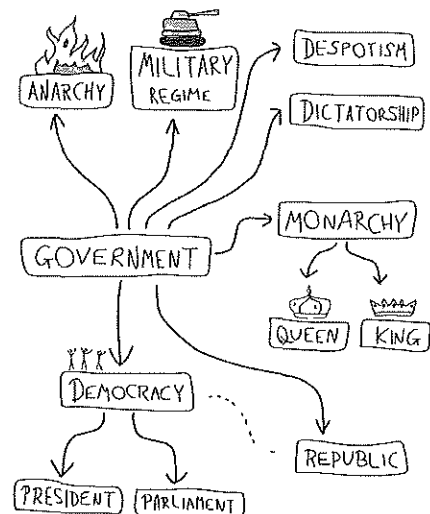
- Write down the main ideas of the text or lecture in the note-taking column
- Paraphrase long sentences and use symbols or abbreviations instead

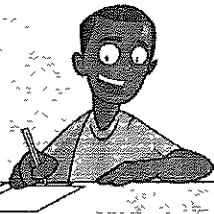
### Summaries

- Within 24 hours of taking the notes, revise and write questions
- Write a brief summary in the bottom five to seven lines of the page. This helps you increase your understanding of the topic
- Use your own words to summarize the notes so that you can describe the information in a way you understand it

## Mind Maps

- A mind map is a visual, form of note taking that helps you see the big picture, as well as connections to the main idea
- Mapping starts from the main idea of the lecture, placed in the center of a page, and branches out with subtopics through associations and patterns
- You may find that mapping helps you increase your understanding, creativity, and memory.
- Mind maps are most useful for brainstorming ideas for speeches or papers, serving as a framework for recalling topics, and reviewing a topic





# Test Taking Strategies

## Write down right away what you don't want to forget

When you first receive your exam, turn it over and jot down everything you want to make sure you remember.

## Start with what you know

Don't waste time early on struggling with the more difficult questions

## Read the instructions carefully

Misreading or skipping the directions altogether can be a lethal mistake. Slow down and make sure you understand what you're being asked to do.

## Change your answers if you know you're wrong

In one study, less than 10% of student made changes that decreased their scores, while 74% made changes that increased their scores.

## Plan for time to review

When you're finished, go back over all your answers. Look at your work critically, as if you were the instructor. Careless errors can be costly.

## Screen the entire exam

Circle key words and strike through answers you want to eliminate.

## Plan your time accordingly

Allocate your time wisely, don't wrestle with one question for several minutes.

## Read the questions thoroughly and carefully

Sometimes skipping over a word in the sentence will cause you to jump to a false conclusion. several minutes.

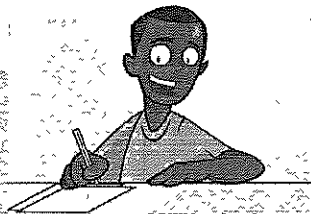
## Ask for clarification

If the exam appears to have an error, or if you have a technical question or a question about the test-taking process, don't be afraid to ask!

## Don't give in to peer pressure

Take as much of the allotted time as you need. Everyone works at a different rate.





# Test Taking Strategies

## Tips based on Exam Type

### Fill-in-the Blank Questions

- Answer the questions you know first.
- Watch for clues. Make sure that your choice fits in grammatically and logically
- If more than one answer comes to mind, write both in the margin. Come back later and choose the one you want.
- Answer all of the questions.

### True/False Questions

- Pay attention to extreme modifiers such as always, all, never and every, which tend to make the statement false
- Look for any other factors that will make the statement wrong. For the statement/question to be true, the entire question must be true.
- Unless there is a penalty for wrong answers, answer every question.
- Trust your instincts. Don't change an answer unless you are certain it is wrong.

### Essay Exams

- Read directions and all questions carefully.
- Jot notes or create an outline alongside each question.
- Decide how much time to devote to each question
- Start with the easiest question.
- Include factual details (examples) to support your answer.
- Use all of the available time.

### Matching Questions

- Read the entire list before selecting a match.
- Look for clues to determine the types of items and their relationships.
- Eliminate and cross out items on the second list when you are certain you have a match

### Multiple Choice Questions

- Try to answer the question/statement without looking at the choices first. Then find your answer among the choices given.
- Do not stop at the first possible answer. Read all answers before making a selection, so you can be sure it is the best option.
- If you cannot answer a question within a minute or less, skip it and plan to come back to it later.
- Eliminate or cross out choices that you know are wrong. This will help you narrow down your choices
- When answering an "all of the above" question, if more than one of your choices is true, then it's a strong possibility that "all of the above" is the correct answer
- Look for grammatical clues to help you answer the question. For example, if the question ends with an indefinite article "an," then the correct response probably begins with a vowel
- Take the time to check your answer sheet (or Scantron) before you hand it in.

### Open-Book Exams

- Prepare Prepare Prepare.
- Put markers or flags in your book to indicate important areas. The key to success is to be able to find information quickly
- If allowed, write formulas, definitions, key words, sample questions, and main points on the margin of your book.
- Stay organized with your notes.