Study Tips For Students

M.U. Tutoring Services
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## Online Resources (continued)

### General Resources

- **Studying**: [http://studyingforcollege.com](http://studyingforcollege.com)
- **How to Get the Most out of Studying**: [http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/default.aspx](http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/default.aspx)
Online Resources

**Tutoring Help**
Marshall University Tutoring Services:
http://www.marshall.edu/wpmu/uc/tutoring-services/

**English Resources**
MU Writing Center:
http://www.marshall.edu/wpmu/writingcenter/

MLA Documentation:
http://www.writinghelp-central.com/mla.html

APA Documentation:

Harvard Writing Center:
http://www.writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu

**Communication Resources**
Communication Skills:
http://www.newconversations.net

Public Speaking Skills:
http://www.uncommon-knowledge.co.uk/public_speaking.html

**Math Resources**
General Math:
http://www.math2.org

S.O.S. Mathematics:
http://www.sosmath.com/tables/tables.html

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Assessment Checklist for Students

1. **Time Management**
   - Are you well-organized?
   - Are you willing to set up a study schedule?
   - Are you aware of the need to plan and structure study time?
   - Can you achieve a balance between school, work, and personal time?
   - Do you keep an updated calendar?

2. **Note-Taking**
   - Do you take notes in class?
   - How are they organized? Dated? Structured?
   - Are the notes linked to assignments?
   - Are you writing pertinent information?
   - Do you make “flash cards” for important terms and events or have some other kind of memory method?

3. **Reading**
   - Are you a good reader? Do you have comprehension trouble with the material?
   - Do you complete the assigned reading?
   - Do you skim, read, and recite?
   - Do you retain the information after reading?
   - Is the information highlighted in the text?
   - Are there any comments/notes in the margins?
   - Do you look up unfamiliar words or terms in the dictionary?
   - Do you break up reading assignments into more manageable parts?
Learning Strategies For Students

1. Note-Taking Strategies:

1. Read assigned chapters before class and organize your notes. Only write on one side of the page, and write class notes on the other side of the page.
2. Before class, make up a “chapter heading” outline to fill in as the professor lectures.
3. If you are an aural learner, ask the professor if you can record the class lectures.
4. Form a study group for team note-taking comparisons. Meet after class to go over and compare notes.
5. Re-copy and reorganize your notes as a study review.
6. Think before writing; keep notes brief and to-the-point.
7. Jot down questions you may want to ask in the margins.
8. Utilize and write down page numbers from the text.
9. Always write down and define unknown vocabulary in text/lectures.

Did you know that 47% of what you just learned is forgotten in the first 20 minutes? And 62% is forgotten after the first day?

2. Math Strategies:

1. Read the chapter before going to class so the terms are familiar and look carefully at the sample problems.
2. Math is cumulative. Do not move on to the next level until you understand the current level.
3. Complete assignments as soon as possible after they are given so they are fresh in your mind.
4. Learn to properly use your calculator.
5. Show your work. Some professors give partial credit; if not, it will be easier to ask the professor after the test what you did wrong.

Making Decisions (continued)

Step 4: Assess outcomes or consequences - Once you have completed gathering information, you are ready to evaluate each of the alternatives you have identified (assess probability and desirability of each alternative).

Step 5: Establish a plan of action - You should now be able to choose one of the options and begin developing and implementing a plan of action. If you cannot make a choice, you might need to do more research.

Step 6: Refine your goal or objective - Reevaluate your decision; this allows you to make adjustments and see if your desired outcomes are being achieved. Even if you have not achieved your goal, this does not mean your initial decision was “bad.” You may have learned more, or things may have changed so that a different decision is now required.

Adapted from Sukiennik, D. and Bendat, W., and Raufman, L. The Career Fitness Program: Exercising Your Options, 6th Edition
Making Decisions

DETERMINE YOUR DECISION-MAKING STRATEGY

**Procrastinator** – I know I must make a decision, but I will put it off as long as possible.

**Impulsive** – I take the first choice that seems reasonable without looking at other options or collecting information.

**Agonizing** – I have invested so much time and thought into this decision that I feel overwhelmed and can’t decide.

**Compliant** – I think it’s best if someone else who knows more about the subject (parents, teacher, advisor) makes the decision for me.

**Intuitive** – I will make a decision whenever it feels right.

**Planful** – I will make a decision based on an orderly, rational process that requires solid information and reflection and involves both thinking and feeling.


A DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

**Step 1:** Define the goal - Before you begin gathering information, it is important to have a clear understanding of what it is you are trying to decide.

**Step 2:** Assess alternatives - Prior to gathering information, you need to start identifying some alternatives/options.

**Step 3:** Gather information - After you have completed the first two steps, you should have a list of alternatives that you plan to explore and research in more depth.

Learning Strategies For Students

3. **Reading Strategies:**

1. Look at how the textbook is put together. Is it chronological or topical? If it is chronological, you need to read the chapters that will help you obtain familiarity with the background information.

2. Pay attention to vocabulary. If you don’t know the meaning of a word, look it up in the glossary or in a dictionary. (Keep a dictionary close by as you read, or visit dictionary.com.)

3. Use a chapter reading approach, outlined in the following steps:
   A. Survey the overall assignment.
   B. Try to figure out what information the assignment will cover.
   C. Read the section.
   D. Recite the main points for the section.
   E. Review the entire assignment in the manner suggested by Steps A-D.
   F. Utilize time management skills:
      i. First, become aware of your time management behaviors (such as procrastinating, not allowing time for unexpected events, etc.).
      ii. Learn how much time it takes you to complete different types of tasks.
      iii. Set goals for each reading or studying session, and pace yourself.
      iv. Once you’ve set goals, divide the goals into essential tasks and those that can wait; then, do the most urgent tasks first.
   G. Develop your critical thinking skills:
      i. When reading, learn to weigh arguments for and against a particular position or theory.
      ii. Consider an issue from all perspectives (and do this more than once in the reading).
      iii. Pause in your reading, step back, and examine the information in detail and from many angles or perspectives.
      iv. Consider the accuracy of material presented; compare the material or text with others.
      v. Look for any assumptions the writers are making and be critical of ways the writers may try to persuade the reader to agree with their particular theory.
Learning Strategies For Students

4. Student/Teacher Relationship:
   - Do you talk to your teacher about your individual needs?
   - Do you see the teacher before and/or after missing class?
   - Do you seek out the teacher during his/her office hours?

5. Classroom Performance:
   - Do you participate in class and ask questions?
   - Do you daydream or sleep in class?
   - Do you regularly attend class?

6. Reaction to Low Grades:
   - Do you feel discouraged and want to give up?
   - Do you go over the test or paper with the teacher and ask for suggestions/comments?
   - Do you feel extremely anxious about the next test/paper?

7. Self-Perceptions:
   - Are you aware of your capabilities?
   - Are your expectations above or below your abilities?
   - Do you have realistic expectations for the class?
   - Can you formulate realistic expectations for the class?

8. Test-Taking:
   - How do you feel? Anxious? Unconcerned?
   - Do you repeat the same mistakes on tests?
   - Do you make use of study guides in test preparation?
   - Do you understand the instructor’s expectations on tests?

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Improve Your Listening Skills

Do you really listen when you’re speaking with someone? Or, do you often find that you’re just waiting to talk? Believe it or not, listening is a skill, and—like any other skill—you can improve your abilities in this area. When you’re sitting in class, are you actually listening to the lecture or just “hearing” the words? Hearing and listening are not the same thing. To hear what is said, you simply use your physical sense. To listen, you must be more active in the process.

The first step to improving your listening skills is to become self-aware. Start by practicing “active listening.” In active listening, you make a conscious effort to not only “hear” the words being spoken but also to understand the whole message that is being sent. How do you do this? You must pay careful attention to the speaker, shutting out such distractions as unrelated noise around you, or thoughts of how you will respond to what is being said. Trying to listen but finding the speaker boring? Repeat their words mentally as they say them; this can help you stay focused and will reinforce their message.

Five elements of active listening are (1) pay attention; (2) show that you are listening; (3) provide feedback; (4) defer judgment; and (5) respond appropriately. To put these elements into practice, try the following:

1. Pay attention—look at the speaker. Squash competing thoughts; don’t spend your time rehearsing your argument to the speaker’s points! Listen to the speaker’s body language as well as words. If you are in a group setting, don’t carry on side conversations.
2. Show that you are listening—make your posture open, inviting. Smile as appropriate; nod occasionally.
3. Provide feedback—Paraphrase the speaker (Sounds like you’re saying . . .; So, you think . . .). Ask questions if you need to clarify something.
4. Defer judgment—Resist the urge to interrupt; wait for the speaker to finish before presenting your counterargument.
5. Respond appropriately—Make sure your responses are honest and candid. Practice the golden rule; treat the speaker as you’d like to be treated.
Email/Telephone Etiquette

Did your last email to your advisor look like this? *Hi . . . Just checkin in; tried to schedule classes and woudnt let me Can you lift my hold? Thx jim*

If it did, you could use a few tips on how to compose and send an email. This example is fine if you’re texting with friends; however, it just doesn’t cut it for an “official” contact with your advisor (or professor, etc.). What’s wrong? Plenty! First, you should use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation for a school- or business-related email. Provide all needed information. Are you the only Jim (or James) your advisor works with? Wouldn’t providing your last name and your 901 number be helpful? Also, did you email the advisor using your official MU email account? Or did you send from your personal account? Remember that MU offices use your secure MU account. Even if your advisor knows which “Jim” you are, they will still have to look up your 901 information, as well as your MU email (and even perhaps your telephone number).

To improve your email, first write a subject line that clearly summarizes the content of your message. (example: Advising hold question) Next, remember to use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation and to clearly state your question, problem or request. Then, sign off by including your name (first and last), your 901 number and your telephone number. Lastly, don’t forget to use your MU email account (or to at least include the MU email in your signature).

Now, your email should look more like this:

*Subj: Lifting advising hold*

*Dear Ms. Gallagher, I thought I’d done everything I needed before registering for my classes, including the appointment with you to go over possible classes. However, when I tried to register for classes on myMU, it wouldn’t let me. Can you check on this for me? Thanks, Joe*

*Joe Smith, 901-xx-xxxx, 304-555-5555, smithx@marshall.edu*

**NOTE:** Responsibility for academic success or failure belongs to you, the individual student!

If you are satisfied with “just getting by” in school, that is probably what you will do—just get by!

### High School versus College

<table>
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<th>In high school:</th>
<th>In college:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers give reminders about tests, usually lots of them.</td>
<td>Want a reminder? You’re it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeup and extra credit work abound.</td>
<td>Extra unusual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory and free.</td>
<td>Voluntary and expensive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good grades can come easily.</td>
<td>“A”’s require studying.</td>
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**Employers Seek Following From Job Applicants:**

1. Ethics and integrity
2. Experience such as internships, part-time work, etc. (so don’t party away all your summers and weekends!)
3. “Soft” skills (writing, teamwork, communication—both verbal and nonverbal)
4. Ability to think and analyze problems
5. Ability to understand numbers and statistics
6. An understanding of science and technology
7. Reliability and responsibility (just try coming in late to your job and see if the boss is as understanding as that professor in your 8 AM class!)
Do I Really Need to . . . ?

Do I really need to read the syllabus for each of my classes?

Yes, you really should! Why? This document is your “rule book” or “survival manual” for the class. Smart students do, indeed, read the syllabus for each of their classes. By doing so, they know that they can find out everything their instructor expects them to know and do during the semester. Instructors also use the syllabus to inform you of their rules for the class, important dates and deadlines, and absence (and other) policies. Your instructor has every right to expect you to know and follow the syllabus, whether you actually have read and know it or not!

Do I really need to go to every meeting of every class?

Yes! You may have heard the saying, “Half the battle is showing up.” Never miss a class unless you have no choice. Instructors may vary widely in their actual requirements for class attendance (with some taking a laid back attitude and others penalizing you for absences); however, you should always strive to be in class, on time and prepared, for every class meeting. By attending all class sessions, you will have more opportunities to be involved in your classes, to ask questions about material that is confusing or unclear, and to have thorough and complete notes before test days.

Do I really need to devote as much time and effort as the “experts” keep pushing in order to be successful?

Well, you might get lucky and win the lottery one day. But, in the real world, those who succeed are those who have put forth the time and effort to gain the knowledge and skills that make them competitive. High expectations, unless coupled with high effort, will lead nowhere. So, don’t kid yourself; if you’re only putting forth minimal effort, you’re only going to get minimal results.

Do I really need to devote two hours outside of class for every hour I’m in class?

Yes and no. If the class is an easy one for you, you may not need to follow this formula in order to do well in the class. However, if you

Setting Goals

Ten Year Goal:

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

Twenty Year Goal:

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________


“To achieve happiness, we should make certain that we are never without an important goal.” (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

“A goal properly set is halfway reached.” (Abraham Lincoln)

“The most important thing about goals is having one.” (Geoffry F. Abert)

“All successful people have a goal. No one can get anywhere unless he knows where he wants to go and what he wants to be or do.” (Norman Vincent Peale)

“Winning isn’t everything, but wanting to win is.” (Vince Lombardi)

“If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else.” (Yogi Berra)

“In the absence of clearly defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily acts of trivia.” (Anonymous)
NOTHING GREAT JUST HAPPENS. If you want something great to happen in your life, you are going to have to make it happen! Wishing, hoping, daydreaming, and even writing down goals—all that is nice, but as Einstein said: “NOTHING HAPPENS until there is action.”

Sooner or later you are going to realize that your life is in your hands, for better or worse. No one is going to come along and create the life you want. So, if you want to achieve your goals, you have to determine what steps are necessary to get from here to there and start moving.

Many people do not know the precise steps to take them to the realization of their goals. BUT, by moving forward, in the DIRECTION of their goals, they start to find the path—or step—that takes them where they want to go.

In the space below, take a few minutes to write down two or three goals. This is private. You do not have to turn this in or share with anyone.

**One Year Goal:**

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

**Five Year Goal:**

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Do I Really Need to . . . ? (continued)

are struggling in the class, you may need to devote more than two hours to reading, studying and homework for that particular class. On average, however, you should plan to spend at least two hours for each class on outside-of-class readings, homework and studying. If, at the end of the semester, you receive a poor (or failing) grade, one of the first questions you should honestly answer is: Did I really devote enough time to this class?

Do I really need to meet with my advisor? All they do is just lift my hold.

Yes, you really should meet with your advisor at least once a semester. Remember, you will get the most from these meetings if you are prepared and expect more than just to have a hold lifted. Do you have questions about certain classes, or even your major? Your advisor will be happy to give you more in-depth advice if you let her/him know that you need it. And, also remember, your advisor is a great resource for other campus referrals. So, if you need help, all you have to do is ask for it!

Do I really need to read all this stuff my professor keeps assigning?

The answer is (I’ll bet you’ve guessed it!) yes. So you’ve committed to reading the textbook assigned for the class (geez, what more could they expect, huh?!) and think the professor is expecting just a bit too much if s/he thinks you’ll read all these “extra” things?! If they are assigned readings, they are not “extra.” They are part of the requirements for this class. What? The professor only “suggested” them and said you didn’t really “have” to read them? I’ll bet the professor also suggested that, for those who “choose” to read them, it will be easier to get a higher grade. So, in effect, the professor is telling you what you can do to “get by” versus what you need to do to “excel.” So, if—after choosing not to do the extra reading—you end the semester with just an average (or worse!) grade, remember you also “chose” that outcome.
Writing a College Paper

General advice:

1. Write in three stages: Research, First Draft, and Revisions (plural).
2. Don’t procrastinate! Sketch out a writing schedule – note in your calendar (paper or electronic) any due dates (drafts & final paper). Also make personal goals of when to have research materials collected and various stages of drafts done.
3. Clearly understand the purpose of the paper and the parameters of the assignment (e.g. number of pages, font, title page, reference style, footnotes or endnotes, extent of original research versus summarizing other’s work, etc.). If you have any doubts, consult your instructor ASAP.
4. Do NOT plagiarize! Professors often can recognize when the style shifts from a student’s personal style to another style (even if it is not necessarily any better). And, don’t ask your girl/boyfriend to write your term paper. More and more professors are using software such as TurnItIn, which matches student work against much of what is in public circulation. Don’t be fooled into the scam that the Internet offers “A+” quality papers on the cheap; most studies of these “services” have found they offer mediocre papers at best.
5. First stage (Research):
In some cases you are given a very specific topic and you can immediately begin research. Other times you are given wide latitude in your subject choice. If possible, choose something that you have an interest in and/or have some background experience with. Even if you are “stuck” with a specific topic (e.g. “Abe Lincoln”) try to come up with an original approach rather than rehashing the basic facts or standard stories (e.g. “Could Abe Dunk?”). Invest a “significant amount” of time in selecting a topic. This choice can largely determine the success of the paper. It is well worth spending several hours exploring alternative topics.
6. Second stage (1st Draft):
Do whatever it takes to start getting something down. You don’t necessarily need to become well versed in the related literature or research to begin writing. It may be “junk,” but better to begin with something than to have a blank page. If need be, speak your initial thoughts into a recorder and copy them down later. Be careful not to use research or phrases that you are not familiar with (e.g. rather than

Setting Goals

Some people set vague goals (e.g., “to do better in school this upcoming semester”). Goals like that never seem to work. What exactly does “better” actually mean? A goal should be precise (e.g., “to improve my GPA to _____”). And, a goal should have an end date (e.g., “by no later than the end of May, I will have _____”).

If you want to maximize the probability of achieving your goals, you need to be precise as to exactly what it is you seek to accomplish and by when. Adding precision to the equation helps your mind process what needs to get done by when.

There is no standard for defining a long- or short-term goal. For the purposes of this exercise, think of a short-term goal as an objective that can be achieved within one year or less, and a long-term goal as everything else.

You should also be careful about what you consider to be a goal. A goal is something you need to strive for over a period of time and that will challenge you to some degree. Distinguish between a “task,” a “chore,” or even an “obligation.” These latter descriptions are more appropriate to items you would put on a daily or weekly to-do list. Tasks go on To-Do Lists. Goals go on Mission Statements.

There are no right and wrong goals. What is important to you is all that matters. When you write your goals, it is a time to let your mind fly. Forget for the moment what is practical, even perhaps what is realistic. Goal-setting is your time to “create”—at least on paper—your dreamscape, the ideal life you would like to live. In order to create effective goals, you need to be specific about what you are going to accomplish and by when.

Consider keeping your goals to yourself. No one knows you better than you know yourself. If you open up to others about what your long-term goals are, they may have comments that are not conducive to your achievement of your goals.
Setting Goals

Psychologists distinguish between external values and intrinsic values. External values are those dictated by others—society in general: the obtaining of money, power, respect, and fame. Internal values are more about you: What personal beliefs are fundamental to who and what you are?

Studies have shown that when people put all of their energy toward obtaining goals founded on external values rather than on internal beliefs, the likelihood of goal achievement decreases. Yes, many of us want money, fame, power, and respect. But the pursuit of these goals must align with our most fundamental beliefs, or the probability of success is low. In other words, to be as successful as possible in achieving your dreams and goals, you cannot divorce your goals from your most basic values.

Thinking about how you define “success” will tell you a lot about yourself. If you were to fast-forward twenty years, what would you want your life to look like? That is how you define “success.” There is no right or wrong answer about how you define success. There is nothing wrong with wanting material success. What’s more, material and spiritual success are not mutually exclusive.

Don’t be influenced by what you think others expect of you. Decide what success will be for you. Once you do that, you can then work backwards in crafting a plan for getting from where you are today…to where you eventually hope to be.

Goal achievement is, to some degree, about visualization—about the ability to project an image several years ahead to see what and how you are living “into the future.” Webster’s Dictionary defines “goal” as:

1. The line or place at which the race, trip, etc. is ended.
2. an object or end that one strives to attain; aim.

Although the second definition seems more like what we are discussing, the first definition is also important because it reminds us that a goal should be finite. In other words, there should be an end date in mind.

In order to create effective goals you need to be specific about what you are going to accomplish and by when.

Writing a College Paper

saying “controlling for heteroscedasticity using kalman filtering…” just say “sophisticated statistical techniques were applied…”. Keep a scratch page or use the back of a notebook in case an idea or phrase comes to you when you are not sitting down to write. Work on the core of the paper first. Some writers begin with the story’s climax or last chapter and then write up to this conclusion.

Revisions (2nd thru 6th Draft):
Yes, even legendary writers compose multiple drafts. Think of two (2) or three (3) as a minimum. You may have sketched an outline as part of the first draft. Try to do so again, noting the logical connection between sections. Create a table of contents even if you won’t include this in the final version. For reports longer than a page or two, use section headers to denote major breaks in the paper (e.g. introduction, literature review, etc.). Go through and note in the margin the purpose of each paragraph. The Writing Center can help by reviewing your draft, usually within 48 hours. Or, consider using a peer review to see how the content could be improved from the perspective of someone who is in the class.

Use the power of technology. Save new drafts under a numbering (draft_1.doc) or date (draft_Oct_8.doc) system. This relieves the worry of deleting some of your work only to decide later that it was pretty good. Save your work often—save to two independent machines (e.g. your hard drive, CD, flash drive, V Drive, and/or email it to yourself). Number the pages. Use footnotes and endnotes as necessary.

Learn how to create graphs (pie-charts, scatter plots, etc) in Excel. Use a balanced combination of graphs and tables. Some people can efficiently revise online. For others it is a good idea to print it out and make corrections/edits from there.

Be sure to use Word’s spelling and grammar tools (you’d be surprised how many students turn in work with obvious typos). In some cases it can be a good idea to see if the instructor will review your work, or a portion. Be sure to carefully cite sources. The library webpage has resources (e.g. MLA guide) that tell you exactly how to reference materials.
**Personal Learning Styles**

**VISUAL:** You want to see the whole picture. You are often swayed by the color, layout, and design of information.

**AURAL:** You prefer to have directions and assignments verbally explained. Written words are not as valuable as those you hear.

**READ/WRITE:** You like words and lists. You believe the meanings are within the words, and you prefer to learn through reading.

**KINESTHETIC:** You want to experience the material so that you can understand it. Ideas are only valuable if they sound practical, real, and relevant. You need to DO things to understand.

**MULTI-MODAL:** You might do well with a combination of two or three learning styles; try strategies from each area to see which fit your learning preferences.
SEMANTIC WEB/MAP METHOD
OF NOTE-TAKING

In his book on Mind Maps, Tony Buzan suggests using these guidelines for creating Mind Maps:

1. Start in the center with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colors.
2. Use images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout your Mind Map.
3. Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
4. Each word/image is best alone and sitting on its own line.
5. The lines should be connected, starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the center.
6. Make the lines the same length as the word/image they support.
7. Use multiple colors throughout the Map, for visual stimulation and to encode or group.
8. Develop your own personal style of Mind Mapping.
9. Use emphasis and show associations in your Mind Map.

Keep the Mind Map clear by using radial hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches. This list is (unlike prose) a more concise version of the Mind Map; the Mind Map illustrated on the next page is intended to be more memorable and quicker to scan than either the prose or the list.

Strategies for Different Learning Styles

If you are a VISUAL learner, you might:

- Make drawings of information.
- Create diagrams and graphs.
- Picture the textbook pages in your mind.
- Practice turning visuals back into words.
- Replace words with symbols.
- Reconstruct images in different ways—try different spatial arrangements.
- Convert your lecture notes—make them into flow charts.
- Underline/highlight using different colors.
- Set up notes with lots of white space.

If you are an AURAL learner, you might:

- Imagine talking with the instructor—listen to your voice and write it down.
- Spend time in a quiet place to recall notes.
- Practice verbalizing answers to yourself.
- Discuss topics with others.
- Use a tape recorder to capture lectures.
- Remember and recite interesting examples.
- Describe the overheads, pictures; lecture to someone who was not there.

If you are a READ/WRITE learner, you might:

- Write out possible exam questions/answers.
- Practice with multiple choice questions.
- Write lists in a.b.c. or 1.2.3. order.
- Write words again, and again.
- Read and re-read your notes silently.
- Rewrite the ideas in other words.
- Organize any diagrams or charts into statements.
- Arrange your words into hierarchies and points.
Strategies for Different Learning Styles

If you are a KINESTHETIC learner, you might:

- Role play asking and answering practice questions.
- Talk about your notes with another kinesthetic person.
- Use pictures, drawings, and photographs to help you illustrate ideas.
- Recall hands-on experiments, techniques that help learning.

If you are a MULTI-MODAL learner, you might:

- Incorporate suggestions from the other different learning styles, try them, and continue to use the ones that seem best suited to your personal style.

General Tips for Studying
(Or, HOW NOT TO CRAM!)

1. Keep a master calendar: put all your scheduled assignments, papers, and tests on it, and keep it near your study area.
2. Plan ahead and know when you will read, study, and review materials for each of your classes.
3. Keep up with your reading! Avoid massive catch-up reading before major assignments.
4. Give yourself frequent small rewards for staying on task.
5. Schedule a concentrated review session for each class periodically. If you have kept up, a review session the night before an exam should be sufficient.

Study Skills Checklist (continued)

4. ___ Y ___ N I usually try to study with the radio and TV turned on.
5. ___ Y ___ N I can’t sit and study for long periods of time without becoming tired or distracted.
6. ___ Y ___ N I go to class, but I usually doodle, daydream or fall asleep.
7. ___ Y ___ N My class notes are sometimes difficult to understand later.
8. ___ Y ___ N I usually seem to get the wrong material into my class notes.
9. ___ Y ___ N I don’t review my class notes periodically throughout the semester in preparation for tests.
10. ___ Y ___ N When I get to the end of a chapter, I can’t remember what I’ve just read.
11. ___ Y ___ N I don’t know how to pick out what is important in the text.
12. ___ Y ___ N I can’t keep up with my reading assignments and then I have to cram the night before a test.
13. ___ Y ___ N I lose a lot of points on essay tests even when I know the material well.
14. ___ Y ___ N I study enough for my test, but when I get there my mind goes blank.
15. ___ Y ___ N I often study in a haphazard, disorganized way under the threat of the next test.
16. ___ Y ___ N I often find myself getting lost in the details of reading and I have trouble identifying main ideas.
17. ___ Y ___ N I rarely change my reading speed in response to the difficulty level of the selection or familiarity with the text.
18. ___ Y ___ N I often wish that I could read faster.
19. ___ Y ___ N When my teachers assign papers, I feel so overwhelmed that I can’t get started.
20. ___ Y ___ N I usually write my papers the night before they are due.
21. ___ Y ___ N I can’t seem to organize my thoughts into a paper that makes sense.

Answering Y (yes) to most of these questions indicates that you have somewhat poor study habits and could benefit from some study skill reminders. If you answered Y (yes) to the questions 1 – 6 and question 15, you have problems with concentration, time scheduling, priority setting and procrastination. Use the guide below to determine what areas you need to work on outside of class.

If you answered yes to: You may need to study:

- Questions 7, 8, 9: Note-Taking
- Questions 10, 14: Remembering
- Questions 11, 12, 17: Skimming, Scanning Difficult Material
- Questions 13, 19, 20, 21: Writing Papers
- Questions 16, 17, 18: Essay Reading, Reading a Difficult Book
Test-Taking Formats (continued)

Essay Tests
1. When studying, anticipate possible questions and work out the answers
2. Read each essay question carefully
3. Highlight the requested action (for example, compare and contrast)
4. Restate the question in your opening sentence
5. Outline the key ideas you want to cover in the introductory paragraph of the essay
6. Develop the main body of the essay by expanding on the key ideas you have outlined
7. Use humor sparingly, if at all: avoid giving your opinion or making judgments unless asked to do so
8. Summarize your key ideas in the conclusion of the essay; restate the question and thesis if you have time
9. Write legibly; and be sure to proofread your work

Open Book Tests
1. Do not assume you will not need to prepare; preparation is key for this type of test!
2. Place markers in your book and write notes on key ideas
3. Write your main points, formulas, key words, etc. on cards

Study Skills Checklist
Read each statement and consider how it applies to you. If it applies to you, check Y. If not, check N.
1. ___Y ___N I spend too much time studying for what I am learning.
2. ___Y ___N I usually spend hours cramming the night before an exam.
3. ___Y ___N If I spend as much time on my social activities as I want to, I don’t have enough time left to study, or when I study enough, I don’t have time for a social life.

General Tips for Studying (continued)

Suggested Study Schedule
The average attention span for adults is 20-30 minutes. Therefore, study time should be divided into sessions of similar length with different activities or subjects planned to avoid boredom and daydreaming.

When planning a three-hour study session, studying for six half-hour sessions with a break in between each can be much more effective than studying for three straight hours. Consider the following example:

6:00-6:30 PM Review Chapter 1; look carefully at highlighted words and chapter summaries
6:30-7 PM Make flash cards for important terms/concepts
7:00-7:30 PM Use memorization strategies to learn content
7:30-8 PM Reward: Watch favorite TV show or take a walk to refresh yourself
8:00-8:30 PM Review Chapter 2
8:30-9 PM Use memorization strategies to make tree diagram or concept maps for main concepts
9:00-9:30 PM Test yourself

Memorization Suggestions
- Look for “structure” in your instructor’s notes to help you organize the information, or develop a structure of your own.
- Try to reproduce the “structure” without the content material.
- Copy the content into the “structure” you just created.
- Test yourself immediately by rewriting it again on a separate sheet.
- Correct what you were not able to do or did incorrectly.
- Test yourself again.
- Give special attention to errors.
- Continue the process until you can correctly answer all parts.
- Put the material away for a while; then, review again at intervals.
General Test-Taking Tips

- Relax
- Look at the entire test first
- Read instructions twice
- When you get stuck, identify the problem and then move on to the next section
- Learn from the test—test questions themselves may help jog your memory
- Concentrate despite distractions—don’t worry about who gets done first
- Ask for clarification if needed
- Proofread your work before turning in the test
- Consider what you do know and how it might fit into the test

Test-Taking Formats

Multiple Choice Tests
1. Read the test items carefully and completely
2. Strike out obvious wrong answers
3. Mark your answers clearly
4. Change your answers cautiously—your first impulse may be your best
5. Guess—Do not leave any blanks on the answer sheet unless the professor counts off for incorrect answers (Don’t know if this is the case? Ask!)
6. Look for structural clues—Sentence structure may be important (for example, if the word before the answer blank is “an” then the answer should begin with a vowel)

True/False Tests
1. Go with your “hunch” or first prediction
2. Don’t look for answer patterns, but don’t be distracted by them if they occur
3. Honor exceptions to the rule—if you can think of one exception to the statement, the answer is false
4. Analyze qualifying terms such as “always,” “usually,” and “never,” as they are often false

Short Answer/Fill-in-the-Blank Tests
1. Skip questions you do not know but mark them so you’ll remember to fill in later; the answer may reveal itself later on in the test
2. When studying for “terms” tests, practice writing down the definitions/answers; you will remember better
3. When writing definitions, use the word “is” and not “when”