

Study Smart

Talent Search
Middle School



Students who study smart spend less time studying, yet they get better grades. This is because they know how to get the most out of their study time.

Here's how you can study smart.

Have a good place to study

Your study area should be quiet, comfortable, well-lit, and have a surface for writing. Equip your study area with the tools you need (paper, pencils, pens, calculator, stapler, and highlighters).

Eliminate distractions

Turn off the TV and silence your phone. By eliminating all distractions, you force yourself to do one thing only—study.

Be smart about when you study

Some students study best at night. Others prefer studying earlier in the day. Try to plan your day so that you study when you're the most alert.

While it's best to have a regular time to study, many students have sports, activities, and/or other responsibilities they must work around. At the end of each school day, think about the time you have available—and the amount of work you have to do. Then make a plan.

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by all you have to do? If so, check out this video.



VIDEO

Improve Your Grades

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Whether you're a student who gets good grades easily, or you're someone who has to work hard for their grades, middle school is a great time to build good study habits—and to focus on ways to get better grades.

Here are some tips for improving your grades.

Succeed in class

Be prepared

When you come to class, have all of your homework done, and bring everything you'll need with you. Be alert, well-rested, and ready to learn.

Eliminate distractions

Put away anything that isn't directly related to what you are doing in that class.

Have a positive attitude

Walk into each class with a positive attitude and the determination to learn as much as you can. Remember, the more you learn in class, the less you need to learn on your own.

Take good notes

Most test questions come from information that's been presented in class, so it's important to have notes to study from that are organized, neat, and complete. Taking notes also helps you pay attention and focus on what's being discussed in class.

To learn more about how to take good notes, watch this short video.



VIDEO

Stay Motivated

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To succeed in middle school, you need to stay interested in your classes and motivated to do your best. Here are some tips to help you stay motivated in middle school, and beyond.

Practice positive self-talk

We all have an "inner voice," and when things aren't going well, that voice can be negative and critical. You can help yourself stay positive and motivated just by changing your self-talk. Replace "I'm terrible at math" with "I'm smart—I can do this." Changing how you think will change how you feel and act.

Figure out what motivates you

Turn what competes with your schoolwork into a motivator. For example, reward yourself with social media or video game time once your homework is done.

Set goals

Goals give you focus, direction, and purpose. Having a goal can also help you come up with a plan of action. For example, if your goal is to get an A or a B in your math class, there are specific things you need to do to make that happen.

Have a list of both short-term goals (*have your paper done by Friday*) and long-term goals (*go to college*). For more on goal-setting, watch this video.



VIDEO

Career Exploration

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Even though high school graduation is several years away, it's not too early to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate, and what kind of career you would like to have.

Here are some ways you can start exploring careers today, and begin to plan for your future.

Read and research

There are lots of great books and websites to help you learn about the careers you're interested in. For example, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* has excellent information on hundreds of careers. An online edition of this book is available at bls.gov/ooh.

Talk to people

Talk to the adults in your life about their careers—what they like and don't like, how they got into their career, and whether they have any advice for you. If possible, job shadow an adult for a day. This is a great way to find out what it's like to work in a specific career.

Expand your horizons

Think about your interests and skills and look for opportunities to develop them. Get involved in school and community activities, and try classes and activities you haven't considered, or that are outside of your comfort zone. You never know what you might enjoy!

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Why Go to College?

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As a Talent Search student, you know that going to college is important, and that it takes hard work to get there. But because you're in middle school and college seems so far away, you may find yourself wondering if you need to be thinking about college this early.

The short answer is **yes!** Here are some reasons why going to college is a goal that is definitely worth working toward—starting today!

More career opportunities

A college education can open doors and prepare you for a career that will be right for you. Don't know what that career is yet? College can help you figure that out, too.

More money

Statistics show that four-year college graduates earn almost twice as much as high school graduates. That comes out to \$1,000,000 or more over a lifetime.

Having a higher income provides financial stability. You also have more money for the things that are important to you, like entertainment, travel, and hobbies.

A four-year college isn't your only option. Many students attend a two-year college to prepare for their career. To learn more about your education options, watch this short video.



VIDEO

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College Options

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Most careers require education and/or training beyond a general high school education. Some careers require two or four years of college; others require only one year of training or education.

Here are some things to consider as you start thinking about your college options.

Types of colleges

There are several different kinds of colleges: four-year colleges, two-year colleges, career/trade schools, and specialty colleges. Most of the students who continue their education beyond high school attend a two-year or four-year college.

Two-year colleges

Most two-year colleges are community colleges. These colleges provide affordable programs that make it possible for students to begin their career after two years of college or less. Two-year colleges offer two types of programs.

Career-oriented programs

These programs prepare students for a specific career. Many of these programs are two-year programs; others take one year or less to complete.

University parallel programs

Many students who want a four-year degree start at a two-year college to save money. These students take courses they know will transfer to a four-year college.

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