

## How To

# GET ORGANIZED

Being organized makes your day run more smoothly and saves you time. When you're organized, you also have less stress and feel more in control of your life.



Being organized will not only make you a better student, it will help you succeed in your career and in life.

## ORGANIZATION TIPS

### Use a planner

Take a planner to every class. Record assignments, tests, quizzes, special events, and appointments. Also use your planner to break large assignments and projects down into more manageable parts.

### Have a system for organizing papers

Whether you use folders or binders, the important thing is that you have a system for organizing all of your papers—handouts, homework, and class notes. *Have a specific place for every paper.*

### Develop routines

Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start and a nighttime routine that includes getting everything ready for the next day.

### Eliminate clutter

Throw out what you don't need. Put the papers you want to keep in a home file and keep your study area clean and neat.



VIDEO

For 10 ways to improve your grades, watch this quick video.

## How To

# SUCCEED IN CLASS

Showing up for class isn't enough. To succeed in your classes, you need to be engaged and involved.

When you're engaged, you are more likely to learn and remember what's being taught, the time goes faster, and you have a lot less to learn on your own.



## CLASS SUCCESS TIPS

### 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 be determined 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. It is, therefore, important to have notes that are organized, complete, and neat to study from.

Taking notes also helps you pay attention and stay focused—when you're taking notes, you don't have time to think about or do anything else. *For tips on how to take good notes, watch this short video.*



VIDEO

## How To

# TAKE GOOD NOTES

Taking notes in class helps you stay focused on the information being presented. And because tests usually cover material that's been discussed in class, having good notes to study from can significantly improve your test grades.



## GET READY

### Create a notetaking system

Whether you use three-ring notebooks, binders, or spiral notebooks for your class notes, the important thing is that you have a system for organizing your notes that works for you.

### Format your notes

- ▶ Start a new page for each day and class. At the top of the page, write the name of the class, date, page number, and the topic of your notes.
- ▶ Use only one side of the paper and skip lines between ideas/topics. This will give you space if you want to add something later.

### Be an active listener

When you're actively listening in class, you aren't just hearing the words. You are also thinking about and trying to understand the information being presented. Teachers often give verbal cues so you'll know what information they think is important. Listen for these cues: louder or slower speech, repeating information, and the use of phrases such as "the main point."



VIDEO

For more class success tips, watch this quick video!

## How To

# STUDY SMART

The key to success is not studying a lot. It's studying smart.

Students who "study smart" know how to make the most of their study time.



## GET OFF TO A GOOD START

### Get started.

Getting started on your studying is often the hardest part. Don't put it off until later, don't make excuses, and don't wait until you're "in the mood."

Set a time to start studying and stick to it. If you have a hard time getting started, begin with something you can finish quickly or a subject you like.

### 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 supplies you need (e.g., paper, pencils, pens). Turn off the TV and *silence your phone*.

### Create a study plan.

Before you begin studying, decide exactly what you want to get done and the order in which you're going to do it. Be specific, and start with the things that are the most important.

### Break large assignments down.

Large assignments and projects can be overwhelming. Break them down into smaller, more manageable parts, and start on them early.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick video!

## How To

# READ TO LEARN

To do well in your classes, you must be able to understand and remember the information you read.

To comprehend and retain more of what you read, follow these three steps:

- 1) SURVEY
- 2) READ
- 3) REVIEW



## SURVEY

Before you begin reading an assignment, take a few minutes to survey it. This will give you a quick overview of what you'll be reading. To survey an assignment, do the following:

- ▶ Read the section headings and everything in **bold** and *italic* print.
- ▶ Look at the pictures, graphs, and charts.
- ▶ Read the introduction, summary, and review questions.

## READ

To improve your comprehension, use all the learning tools the author provides, and read with a purpose.

**Learning tools** – Textbook authors use the following learning tools to make it easier for you to understand the material they're presenting: headings, subtitles, **bold** and *italic* print, pictures and graphs, chapter summaries, vocabulary lists, review questions.

**Read with a purpose** – To help you stay focused, turn each section heading into a question. Keep your question in mind as you read, and when you're finished reading, see if you can answer it.



VIDEO

For more, watch this quick video!

## How To

# MANAGE YOUR TIME

We all have the same amount of time each day. How we use this time is time management. When you use your time well, you have time for the things you need to do *and* the things you want to do.



## BE ORGANIZED

### Use organization tools

Use a planner to keep track of assignments, tests, and appointments. Use a wall or phone calendar for events and project deadlines.

### Make to-do lists

- ▶ Each day, make a list of all the things you need to do. Rate each item as an A (*must do*), B (*should do*), or C (*want to do today, but it can wait*).
- ▶ Take all of the As and rank them in order of importance (1, 2, 3...). Do the same with the Bs and Cs. Rewrite your list with the As at the top (in order of importance), followed by the Bs and Cs.
- ▶ Cross things off as they get done. At the end of each day, take the tasks that didn't get done and put them on the next day's to-do list.

### Make a weekly schedule

Using an hour-by-hour schedule will help you organize your time after school. First, write in all appointments, practices, chores, and meal times. You will then be able to see when you have blocks of time for homework and studying—and when you have time for relaxation and social activities.



For more, watch this quick video!

## How To

# STAY ENGAGED

When you're engaged in your classes, you are more likely to learn and remember what's being taught.



## KEEP YOUR MIND ENGAGED

### Come to class prepared

Have all of your homework done. It's very hard to stay engaged when you don't know what everyone is talking about. Also, be well-rested, alert, and ready to learn.

### Eliminate distractions

If students are allowed to have cell phones in class, turn yours off and put it away. To help eliminate all distractions, put away anything that isn't directly related to what you are doing in class.

### Get involved in your learning

Try giving yourself a reason to focus and pay attention. Challenge yourself to take notes that are good enough to share with others—or imagine that you will have to report on what's being taught.

### Participate in class

Don't be afraid to ask questions about something you aren't clear on or want to know more about. (Just make sure your questions relate directly to the current discussion.) When your teacher asks questions, raise your hand to answer, and try to be actively engaged in class discussions.

Want more tips for succeeding in class?  
Watch this short video!



## How To

# WRITE A PAPER

To succeed in school, you must be able to clearly communicate your thoughts and ideas in writing.



## THE WRITING PROCESS

Following these steps makes writing a great paper easier and less stressful.

### 1. Choose a topic

Choose a topic that you're familiar with, or want to learn more about. Make sure that your topic isn't too broad and that there's plenty of information readily available.

### 2. Gather information

Create a system for organizing your information. Use 3x5 cards, a notebook, and/or printouts from online sources. Be sure to record details (title, author, page number, URL) for each source you use.

*When writing a paper, it's important that you do your own work and cite your sources. To learn more, watch this video on academic integrity.*



### 3. Organize your ideas

Before you begin writing, make an outline or diagram of your ideas. Put the main ideas in the order you want to present them, and write your supporting ideas under each main idea.

### 4. Write the first draft

Expand your outline ideas into paragraphs. Don't worry about making mistakes at this point.

## How To

# PREPARE FOR TESTS

Whether you're studying for a quiz, test, or exam, there are simple test-prep strategies that can help you improve your grades and test scores.



## TEST PREP STRATEGIES

### Create a study plan

Have all textbook reading done early and create a study plan that spreads out your studying.

### Make flash cards

Write any information you need to remember on index cards. Take these with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes (for example, when waiting for a ride).

### Explain it to a mirror

You really know something if you can explain it in your own words. Stand in front of a mirror and "teach yourself" what you need to know.

### Study class notes and review sheets

Because most test questions come from information that's been presented in class, your class notes are your best test prep resource. Highlight any key information in your notes. If you've been given a handout or review sheet, know everything on it.

### Review often

When you review, you move information from your short-term memory to your long-term memory. **Review is the key to learning anything.** Review early and often.

## How To

# DO GROUP WORK

Being able to work as part of a group is an important skill. It's also a skill that colleges and employers value—and one that will help you succeed in school and beyond.



## GROUP ROLES

Group members take on a variety of roles. Some roles are positive, and some are not.

### Positive roles

In successful groups, members take on these positive roles to help the group complete their task.

- ▶ **Leader** – takes charge of the group
- ▶ **Secretary** – records the group's ideas and plans
- ▶ **Encourager** – supports and helps group members stay positive
- ▶ **Contributor** – offers new ideas and ways to complete task

### Negative roles

Unfortunately, people sometimes take on negative roles that make group work more difficult.

- ▶ **Blocker** – opposes every idea, but doesn't offer suggestions
- ▶ **Disrupter** – uses group time to play around or be in the spotlight
- ▶ **Non-participant** – doesn't contribute or do their share of the work

*Think about the roles you've assumed in the past. Are there things you can do to be a more positive and productive group member in the future?*

## How To

# IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

Attendance is the #1 school success factor! To succeed in school, you need to be there every day. Even if you miss just a few days here and there, your grades are likely to suffer.



## WHY REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

### Better grades

The better your attendance, the higher your grades.

### Less stress

When you miss school, you have lots of assignments to make up—and that can be very stressful.

### Learning is easier

Learning a little every day in class is much easier than having to learn everything you missed on your own.

### Time with friends

When you are at school, you're able to spend time with your friends—and make new friends.

### Personal development

Regular attendance means you learn more. And the more you learn, the more intelligent, interesting, and capable you become.

### Help and support

Your school is full of people who can offer you advice and guidance, like your teachers and counselor. If you aren't in school, you can't develop relationships with the people who want to help and support you.

## How To

# TAKE TESTS

Doing well on tests involves more than just studying the material. You also need to be a smart test-taker.



## TEST-TAKING TIPS

### Get off to a good start...

- ▶ When you go to class, make sure that you have everything you need for the test.
- ▶ While you are waiting for the test to begin, stay calm and think positive thoughts. If you're nervous or anxious, take several deep breaths.
- ▶ As soon as you get your test, write anything you want to remember at the top (such as names, dates, or mathematical formulas).

### Develop a plan

Before you begin answering questions, quickly look over the entire test and decide how much time you'll spend on each section or question. For example, if a test has 25 multiple choice and 2 essay questions, you could plan to spend 10 minutes on the multiple choice questions and 20 minutes on each essay.

### Don't get stuck on difficult questions

Don't spend too much time on any one question. Mark it and come back to it later.

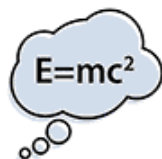
### Check your answers

If you have time, check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may find that you've made a careless mistake. *Always use all of the time you're given.*

## How To

# MEMORIZE

Whether you want to remember facts for a test or the name of someone you just met, memorizing information is a skill that can be developed.



## MEMORIZATION STRATEGIES

### Use all of your senses

The more senses you involve, the more likely you are to remember information. For example, to memorize a vocabulary word, look at it, close your eyes, and try to see it in your mind. Then say it and write it down.

### Look for logical connections

For example, to remember that Homer wrote *The Odyssey*, just think, "Homer is an odd name."

### Create unforgettable images

Take the information you're trying to remember and create a memorable image in your mind. For example, to remember that Pizarro conquered the Inca empire, imagine a pizza covering an ink spot.

### Create silly sentences

Use the first letter of the words you want to remember to make up a silly sentence. For example, to remember the names of the eight planets in order (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), make up a sentence like this one: *My very elegant mother juggled seven ugly neckties.*

### Review often

When you have something to memorize, concentrate on learning it, take a break, and then go back and review it. Keep reviewing until you know it.

## How To

# STAY MOTIVATED

We all get stuck sometimes. When you're feeling less than your best, it's important to keep a positive attitude and find ways to stay motivated.



## HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

### Surround yourself with positive people

In life, we come across all kinds of people. Some are positive influences in our lives and some are not. Try to stay away from people who are negative or critical. Instead, choose to be around people who support and encourage you. These are the people who will help you achieve your goals and realize your dreams.

### Believe in yourself

You have a greater chance of succeeding when you believe in yourself. Whether you're a student tackling a difficult subject, an athlete preparing for competition, or a musician getting ready for a performance, it's important that you recognize the talents and abilities you have, and believe that you can succeed!

### Set goals

Goals give you focus and direction. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do. Set both short-term goals (*get a B on my biology test*) and long-term goals (*graduate from high school with a 3.0 GPA*).

### Move with positive energy

Stand tall and walk with confidence and purpose. *If you act positive, you just may find that you feel more positive.*

## How To

# MAKE PRESENTATIONS

To deliver an outstanding presentation, you must have content worth listening to and be able to present the material with confidence.



## PREPARE THE PRESENTATION

### Start and finish strong

Begin with something that will get everyone's attention—a personal story, a humorous quote, or an interesting statistic. End with a thought-provoking story, quick summary, quote, or question.

### Prepare note cards

While note cards can help keep you on track, you should know your presentation well enough that you don't need to look at your note cards very often.

Write key words and phrases large enough so that a quick glance will provide you with the memory cue you need.

### Include visual aids

Visual aids and props can help engage an audience, but you should use them wisely. Too many props and visual aids can be distracting and difficult to manage. If you're using presentation software, choose an appropriate theme and don't use too many fonts or animations.

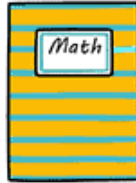
### Practice, practice, practice

Practice talking slowly, speaking clearly, and putting pauses between ideas and sections. Time your presentation to make sure it's the correct length and then record it. Look for ways to improve your presentation and record it again.

## How To

# REACH OUT FOR HELP

There are many people in your life who want to see you succeed, but ultimately, your success is your responsibility. It's up to you to reach out for help when you need it.



## TALK TO YOUR TEACHER

**If you have questions, need advice, or are struggling in a class, talk to your teacher.**

Teachers usually know if you're having trouble in their class, but they may or may not approach you to see what's going on, or to offer extra help. Asking for help is your responsibility.

Teachers are busy during the class period and usually don't have time to talk to students then. If you need any kind of help, talk to your teacher before or after class to schedule a time to meet—and tell them what you want to talk about. You may want to go over the results of a test, ask for help with an assignment, or inquire about earning extra credit.

If you are struggling and feel you need a tutor, ask your teacher for advice on how you can get some extra help. Perhaps there is a teacher or another student who can tutor you after school or during a study hall. The important thing is to not wait. Ask for help at the earliest sign you need it.

*Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of maturity and a desire to succeed!*

**"You are never so strong that you don't need help."**  
Cesar Chavez