

# Skills and Habits for Academic Success

Activities to improve

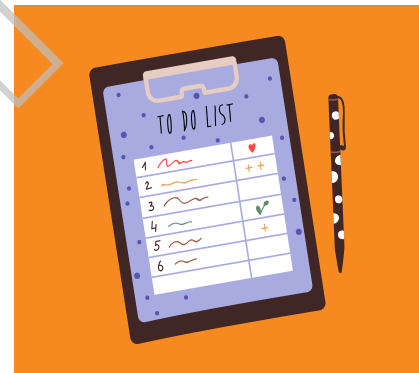
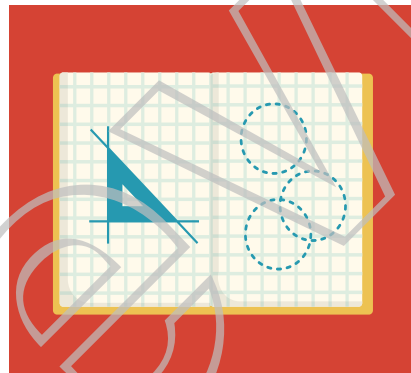
Organization

Time Management

Class Success

Study Skills

Test-Taking



## Dear Students

---

When you're doing well in your classes and getting good grades, your parents, relatives, and teachers are proud of you, school is more fun, and most importantly, you feel good about yourself. But succeeding in school takes work. It takes showing up every day, doing what you need to do, and trying your best. *It also means having good study skills and habits.*

Whether getting good grades comes easily for you, or you have to work hard for every A or B, this book will help you improve your study skills and habits so that you can be the best student you can be.

# Table of Contents

<b>Academic Success &amp; You</b> .....	2
Think about your skills .....	2
Set goals .....	3
<b>Organization</b> .....	4
Think about your organizational skills .....	4
Use a planner .....	5
<b>Time Management</b> .....	6
Think about your time management .....	6
Create a weekly schedule .....	7
How do you spend your time? .....	8
Create to-do lists .....	9
<b>Class Success</b> .....	10
Think about your class success .....	10
Stay engaged in your classes .....	11
Get along with your teachers .....	12
Take good notes .....	13
<b>Study Smart</b> .....	14
Think about your study skills .....	14
Create a daily study plan .....	15
Do your homework .....	16
Use memorization strategies .....	17
Read to learn .....	18
Write great papers .....	19
<b>Test-Taking</b> .....	20
Prepare for tests .....	20
Think about your test-taking skills .....	21
Use test-taking strategies .....	22
Reduce test anxiety .....	23
<b>Stay Motivated</b> .....	24
Motivation tips .....	24

## Think about your skills

To be a good student, you need to be organized, study smart, be a good test taker, and make the most of the time you're in class. The activities on the following pages will help you do all of these things and more!



### Academic skills assessment

Put a check mark in the column that best describes how you think you're doing in each area.

	Very good	Good	Needs improvement
organization	_____	_____	_____
time management	_____	_____	_____
homework	_____	_____	_____
class participation	_____	_____	_____
taking notes	_____	_____	_____
reading to learn	_____	_____	_____
preparing for tests	_____	_____	_____
taking tests	_____	_____	_____

Choose two of the above areas to work on this year.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

### How is your attendance?

To succeed in your classes and get good grades, you need to be in school every day!

About how many days of school do you usually miss a year?

0-5    6-10    11-20    more than 20

Has poor attendance negatively affected your grades?

yes    maybe    no



*For the top 10 reasons to be in school every day, watch this short video.*



## Set goals

Everyone says that it's important to do well in school, but succeeding in all of your classes and getting good grades takes a lot of work and self-discipline. Having goals to work toward will help you stay motivated and on track.

### Why is doing well in school important to you?

Take a few minutes to think about how doing well in school and getting good grades will benefit you—and about why succeeding in your classes is important to you.

Read through the list and check all that apply.

#### I want to do well in school in order to:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> go to college.         | <input type="checkbox"/> be able to take advanced classes.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make my parents proud. | <input type="checkbox"/> be proud of myself.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be smarter.            | <input type="checkbox"/> get a better paying job.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> enjoy school more.     | <input type="checkbox"/> earn the respect of classmates and teachers. |

### Set academic goals.

Goals help you determine where you want to go and what you want to accomplish. They give you focus, direction, and purpose.

Take a minute now to set some academic goals for yourself. In the chart below, list the courses you're currently taking. In the "Grade" column, write down the highest grade you think you can realistically earn in each course this grading period.

	Course	Grade
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Think of these grades as your academic goals for this grading period. *Believe in yourself, and believe that you can achieve your goals!*

## Think about your organizational skills

Being organized saves time, helps your life run more smoothly, and makes you feel like you're on top of things.

Put a check in the boxes that **best** describe you.

	Almost always	Sometimes	Hardly ever
1. I have what I need when I go to class (book, pencils, paper).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I keep my papers (notes, homework, handouts) organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I use a planner/agenda to keep track of my assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I create a study plan when I have a lot of homework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I get everything ready for the next day before I go to bed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I regularly back up and organize my computer files.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I make to-do lists when I have a lot to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I keep my backpack and locker neat and organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Survey results:** Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you're probably pretty organized. Keep it up! If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly ever** and work on improving those organization strategies.

What can you do to be more organized this year?

---

---

---



*For some tips on staying organized, check out this short video.*



VIDEO

# Organization

## Use a planner

A planner is your most important organization tool. It will help you keep track of what you need to do, and ensure that you get your assignments completed on time.

### Use your planner to record the following:

- ▶ daily assignments
- ▶ social activities
- ▶ important dates
- ▶ large assignments
- ▶ tests and quizzes
- ▶ appointments
- ▶ deadlines
- ▶ weekly goals

Here is an example of how one student successfully uses their planner to stay organized.

<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Monday, October 12</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td>✓ Study for quiz - Tues</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Eng</td> <td>✓ Read Story Due Tues</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Art</td> <td>✓ Do sketch Due Wed</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Early Dismissal</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Guitar Lesson 4:00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Subject	Monday, October 12	Math	✓ Study for quiz - Tues	Eng	✓ Read Story Due Tues	Art	✓ Do sketch Due Wed		Early Dismissal		Guitar Lesson 4:00	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Tuesday, October 13</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sci.</td> <td>✓ Read pages 75-80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td>★ Math Quiz</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>✓ Read pages 5-10 Due Wed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hist.</td> <td>✓ Study for test - Thurs</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Soccer practice 4:00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Subject	Tuesday, October 13	Sci.	✓ Read pages 75-80	Math	★ Math Quiz	English	✓ Read pages 5-10 Due Wed	Hist.	✓ Study for test - Thurs		Soccer practice 4:00
Subject	Monday, October 12																								
Math	✓ Study for quiz - Tues																								
Eng	✓ Read Story Due Tues																								
Art	✓ Do sketch Due Wed																								
	Early Dismissal																								
	Guitar Lesson 4:00																								
Subject	Tuesday, October 13																								
Sci.	✓ Read pages 75-80																								
Math	★ Math Quiz																								
English	✓ Read pages 5-10 Due Wed																								
Hist.	✓ Study for test - Thurs																								
	Soccer practice 4:00																								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Wednesday, October 14</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hist.</td> <td>✓ Study for test - Thurs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>✓ Do research for paper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td>Do prob on p 26 Due Th</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Soccer practice 4:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>John's birthday</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Subject	Wednesday, October 14	Hist.	✓ Study for test - Thurs	English	✓ Do research for paper	Math	Do prob on p 26 Due Th		Soccer practice 4:00		John's birthday	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Thursday, October 15</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Health</td> <td>Watch video</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hist.</td> <td>★ History Test</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td>Do prob on p 28 Due Fri</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>Do outline for paper</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Soccer game 7:00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Subject	Thursday, October 15	Health	Watch video	Hist.	★ History Test	Math	Do prob on p 28 Due Fri	English	Do outline for paper		Soccer game 7:00
Subject	Wednesday, October 14																								
Hist.	✓ Study for test - Thurs																								
English	✓ Do research for paper																								
Math	Do prob on p 26 Due Th																								
	Soccer practice 4:00																								
	John's birthday																								
Subject	Thursday, October 15																								
Health	Watch video																								
Hist.	★ History Test																								
Math	Do prob on p 28 Due Fri																								
English	Do outline for paper																								
	Soccer game 7:00																								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Subject</th> <th>Friday, October 16</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Sci.</td> <td>Write report Due Mon</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English</td> <td>Write rough draft</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Math</td> <td>Do prob on p 30 Due Mon</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Football game 8:00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Subject	Friday, October 16	Sci.	Write report Due Mon	English	Write rough draft	Math	Do prob on p 30 Due Mon		Football game 8:00	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Sat/Sun, October 17-18</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>Finish English paper Due Mon</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>School Dance 8:00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"><b>Notes</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Clean bedroom</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Call Julie</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Sat/Sun, October 17-18			Finish English paper Due Mon		School Dance 8:00	<b>Notes</b>			Clean bedroom		Call Julie		
Subject	Friday, October 16																								
Sci.	Write report Due Mon																								
English	Write rough draft																								
Math	Do prob on p 30 Due Mon																								
	Football game 8:00																								
Sat/Sun, October 17-18																									
	Finish English paper Due Mon																								
	School Dance 8:00																								
<b>Notes</b>																									
	Clean bedroom																								
	Call Julie																								

What can you do to make better use of your planner?

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

To keep on top of the things you need to do (like appointments, practices, and social events), write upcoming commitments in a calendar that shows the days of the month at a glance. Every Sunday evening, look at your calendar to see what you have going on in the upcoming week.

Use the blocks below to write in the after-school obligations you have next week.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

## Think about your time management

With good time management, you have time for the things you need to do, and you still have time for the things you want to do.

Put a check in the boxes that best describe you.

	Almost always	Sometimes	Hardly ever
1. I use the free time I have in school to start on my homework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have good morning and nighttime routines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have time for hobbies, relaxation, and fun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I make to-do lists when I have a lot to do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am on time to classes, practices, and appointments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I limit time wasters (social media, TV, video games).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I allow enough time for homework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I combine tasks to save time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Survey results:** Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you probably have pretty good time-management skills. Keep it up! If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly ever** and work on improving those time-management strategies.

What can you do to improve the way you manage your time? \_\_\_\_\_

### Control time wasters.

Social media, TV, and video games can all be huge time wasters. Try to schedule small chunks of time for these activities, and stick to your schedule.

What are the time wasters in your life? \_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to control them? \_\_\_\_\_



## Create a weekly schedule

Think about your after-school hours and go through the following steps to create a weekly schedule in the grid below.

- Step 1.** Write in all scheduled activities (practices, lessons, meetings).
- Step 2.** Write in anything that's the same every day (dinner, chores).
- Step 3.** Look at the time blocks that are "open" and write *HW* in the blocks that would be good for doing homework.
- Step 4.** Once the above activities have been filled in, you can see when you have time for relaxation, hobbies, and socializing.



Weekly Schedule					
Week of: _____	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
3:00 pm					
4:00 pm					
5:00 pm					
6:00 pm					
7:00 pm					
8:00 pm					
9:00 pm					
10:00 pm					

Create your own form or find one you like online.

## How do you spend your time?

Effective time management means making smart choices about how you spend your time.

Estimate how much time you spend doing each of the following on a typical weekday.

1. \_\_\_\_ hours – watch TV or movies
2. \_\_\_\_ hours – spend time online
3. \_\_\_\_ hours – do homework, study, read a book
4. \_\_\_\_ hours – play a sport or spend time on a hobby
5. \_\_\_\_ hours – hang out with friends
6. \_\_\_\_ hours – listen to music
7. \_\_\_\_ hours – do chores/work
8. \_\_\_\_ hours – play video games

\_\_\_\_ Total hours for #3 and #7

\_\_\_\_ Total hours for all other numbers

How does the time you spend on #3 and #7 (things you need to do) compare with the total time you spend on the things you want to do? What activities do you often spend too much time on?

Think about the things you like to do in your free time and list four of your favorite activities.

	1	2	3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

After you've listed four of your favorite activities, do the following for each:

**In column 1** – write an **A** if it's an activity that you primarily do alone. Write an **F** if it's an activity mostly done with friends or others.

**In column 2** – write an **M** if it's an activity that involves movement or action. Write an **S** if it's a sedentary activity requiring little movement.

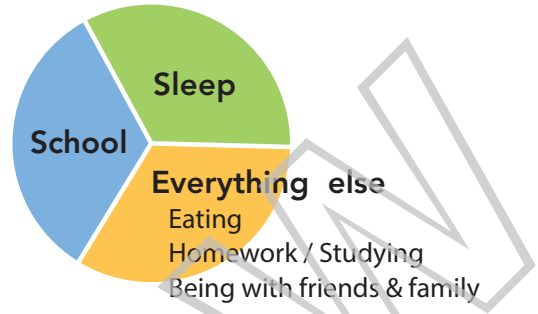
**In column 3** – write an **I** if it's an activity that's generally done inside. Write an **O** if it's an activity mostly done outside.

Do you have a good balance between the types of activities you spend your time doing? What changes should you make to the way you spend your free time?

## Create to-do lists

During the week, you are most likely in school 7–8 hours a day, and you sleep about 8 hours each night. This means that you probably have about 8 hours a day for everything else.

Having to fit everything else into 8 hours means that you need to consciously think about how you spend your time.



Fill in the blanks with the other things you do that belong under **Everything else** (hobbies, sports, chores, work, lessons, leisure activities).

---

---

---

---

### Create to-do lists.

To-do lists are a great way to keep track of and prioritize the things you need to do. If you have a lot to do, going through the following steps will help you create a great to-do list.

**Step 1.** Each day make a list of all the things you need to do.

**Step 2.** Rate each item as an A (must do today), B (should do today), or C (want to do today, but it can wait).

**Step 3.** Take all of the As and rank them in order of importance (1, 2, 3...). Do the same with the Bs and Cs.

**Step 4.** Rewrite your list with the As at the top (in the order of importance), followed by the Bs and Cs.

**Step 5.** 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.

Wed	
A	1 Study for French test 2 Do math assignment 3 Get TJ's birthday gift
B	1 Do outline for paper 2 Call Grandma
C	1 Do laundry 2 Work on lab report 3 Get haircut

### Make your own to-do list.

List the things you need or want to do in the next day or two and rate each as an A, B, or C.

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Think about your class success

When you get the most out of the time you spend in class you have a lot less to learn on your own.



Put a check in the boxes that best describe you.

Almost  
always

Some-  
times

Hardly  
ever

- |  |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I ask and answer questions in class.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I get along with all of my teachers.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I participate in class discussions.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I have my homework done when I come to class.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I take good notes.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I ask for help when I need it.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I try to keep a positive attitude in class.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. When doing group work, I try to be a good group member. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Survey results:** Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you're probably doing pretty well in your classes. Keep it up!  
If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly ever** and work on improving those areas.

What can you do to get more out of your classes and get better grades?

---

---

---

---

---

## Stay engaged in your classes

### Ask and answer questions to help you stay engaged.

Participating in class makes the class more interesting and helps keep your mind focused. Many teachers give participation points, so participating can also help you get better grades.

### On a scale of 1–10, rate your class participation.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10

I never raise my hand and I don't talk unless I have to.

I always raise my hand and I'm eager to share my ideas.

*If you circled a number between 1 and 6, try to become more involved in your classes. You'll learn more and the time will go by a lot faster!*

### Use these class success tips.

- ▶ Come to class alert and well-rested.
- ▶ Look at your teachers when they are talking.
- ▶ Put away anything that's not related to what you're doing in class.
- ▶ Have a positive attitude.
- ▶ Take thorough notes.

What can you do to increase your participation and be more engaged in your classes?

---

### Be a good group member.

Whether you're helping with a class project or working at a job, you must be able to work and get along with the other members of a group. Being able to work well as part of a group or team is a skill that will help you succeed in school, your career, and in life!

Group members often take on a positive or negative role. Put a ✓ in the box(es) that best describe the role(s) you most often take on when you're involved in group work.

#### Positive Group Roles

- leader – takes charge of the group
- encourager – helps group stay positive
- contributor – offers new ideas

#### Negative Group Roles

- blocker – opposes new ideas/doesn't offer suggestions
- disrupter – uses group time to play around
- non-participant – doesn't do their share of the work

What can you do to be a better group member? \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Get along with your teachers

### Watch your body language.

Body language (gestures, posture, and facial expressions) often communicate how we feel and what we're thinking better than words. Students who slouch in their seat, look out the window, or work on something for another class send a message that they aren't interested in what's going on. Messages like this don't win any points with teachers!

### What messages are you sending?

Pretend that you are looking at yourself through your teachers' eyes. Circle the words you think your teachers might use to describe you.

daydreamer    bored    disorganized    friendly    happy    rude    tired  
hard worker    engaged    attentive    unhappy    angry    confident    organized

What can you do to have better body language and send more positive messages in the future?

---

### Be able to adapt to different teachers.

Teachers are in charge of what goes on in their classroom and they make the rules. As a student, you need to figure out what's important to each of your teachers. *You will then know what you need to do to succeed in each of your classes.*

List the names of the teachers you have below. Then write a few words describing what each one likes, and/or what's important to them in the classroom setting.

Mr. Bradley                      Likes discussions, never be late to class

**Teacher**                              **Teaching style/things to remember**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Take good notes

### Improve your notes by adding key words.

Leave a wide margin on the left side of each page. As you're taking notes, listen for **key words** (topics, people, places, events). When you hear a key word, write it in the left-hand margin.

Inventors	History Oct. 10 / p. 12
Thomas Edison	invented electric light bulb, phonograph, motion picture camera - had over 1,000 patents / started General Electric
Alexander Graham Bell	
Henry Ford	

Key words help you organize your thoughts, and they make your notes easier to understand.

Key words can also help you review for a test. Just cover up your notes, look at each key word, and test yourself to see what you can remember about it.

### Use abbreviations.

Using symbols and abbreviations help you take notes faster.

Match each of these common abbreviations with their meaning.

=	with
≠	up or increasing
>	not equal
<	same or equal
~	greater than
↑	very
w	approximately
w/o	because
b/c	less than
v	without

### Take organized notes.

Since test questions usually come from material that's been presented in class, having organized notes to study from will help you do well on tests.

#### Sample of neat and organized notes

Key Words	Prehistoric Reptiles	Science Jan. 12 / p. 10
Dinosaurs	from 2 Greek words deinos = terrible + saurus = lizard dominated life on land - 140,000,000 yrs.	
2 orders	* Saurischia + Ornithischia orders over 800 species w/ ↑ posture Saurischia incl. Tyrannosaurus	
Tyrannosaurus	largest flesh eater - 40' in length slow, top speed ~ 12 mph warm blooded, laid eggs * lived during Cretaceous period	

Check off the things you regularly do when you take class notes.

- I write down any information the teacher writes on the board.
- I underline, star, or highlight the most important information.
- I put key words in the margin.
- I use symbols and abbreviations.
- I write on one side of the paper.

What can you do to have better, more organized class notes to study? \_\_\_\_\_

## Think about your study skills

Put a check in the boxes that best describe you.

	Almost always	Sometimes	Hardly ever
1. I have a place to study that's quiet, well-lit, and comfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I make a study plan before I begin my homework.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I am good at finding information online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I allow enough time each day for homework and studying.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. When I study/do homework, I focus completely on what I'm doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I ask for help when I need it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. When I'm studying, I eliminate distractions and silence my phone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I break large assignments down to make them more manageable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Survey results:** Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you probably have pretty good study skills. Keep it up! If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly Ever** and work on improving those study strategies.

### Use different learning styles to make your study time more productive.

Three popular learning styles are visual (learning by seeing), auditory (learning by hearing), and kinesthetic (learning by being physically involved). To make your study time more effective and less tedious, use study strategies with varying learning styles.

On the lines below, put a **V** for examples of visual learning, an **A** for auditory, and a **K** for kinesthetic.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. read out loud                    | _____ 7. act out an idea                    |
| _____ 2. use color in your notes          | _____ 8. visualize information in your mind |
| _____ 3. listen to a podcast              | _____ 9. study standing up                  |
| _____ 4. walk around while you study      | _____ 10. record information and replay it  |
| _____ 5. reread material                  | _____ 11. do a lab experiment               |
| _____ 6. discuss an idea with a classmate | _____ 12. study charts and graphs           |

As a general rule, the more senses you involve and the more methods you use to study, the more you'll learn and remember. (Answers are below.)



## Create a daily study plan



A study plan will help make your study time as productive as possible.

**Before you start your homework, make a list of what you need to do—in the order you want to do it.**

**Prioritize your work to make sure you have time for the things that are the most important.**

**Minimize distractions, focus on one task at a time, and cross things off as they're completed.**

### Jake's Monday Study Plan

Monday

1. Study for history quiz
2. Do math worksheet
3. English - read pp. 55–75
4. Go over Spanish vocab

What distractions do you have when you're doing homework?

---

What can you do to reduce or eliminate these distractions?

---

### Break large assignments down.

Breaking large assignments and projects down into smaller parts makes them more manageable. It also helps ensure that you get them done on time.

Suppose you have to write a paper for your history class. If today is Monday and the paper is due on Friday, how might you break this assignment down and spread the work out over the week?

Day	
Mon.	
Tues.	
Wed.	
Thu.	
Fri.	History paper due

## Do your homework

Having good homework grades can greatly impact your final grade. Giving your homework your best effort will also help you learn the material.

How much time, on average, do you spend on homework each day? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you usually do your homework? \_\_\_\_\_

When do you usually do your homework? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you rate your homework grades?

excellent    good    OK    should be better

### How can you improve your homework grades?

Put a check mark by the things you can do to improve your homework grades.

- spend more time on my homework
- get help from a parent, classmate, or teacher
- find a better place to do my homework
- turn off the TV or music
- be more focused when I'm doing my homework
- start working on my homework earlier
- know the assignment and have the materials I need
- limit interruptions and distractions
- other \_\_\_\_\_



### Homework tips

- ▶ If you have something to memorize, work on that first. Then go over it at the end of your study session.
- ▶ Getting started on your homework is often the hardest part. If you have a difficult time getting started, begin with a subject you like or with something you can finish quickly.
- ▶ Alternate tips of homework (read English, do math, read history).

## Use memorization strategies

There are times in school when you need to memorize information. Memory techniques such as these will help you remember important information.

### Use all of your senses.

**You try it!** Suppose that you need to memorize the word *escuela* (which means “school”) for your Spanish class.

1. Look at the word. Close your eyes, and try to see it in your mind. Repeat this 2 or 3 times.
2. Now say the word aloud (*es-quāy-la*).
3. Now write the word. \_\_\_\_\_

By looking at the word, saying it aloud, and writing it down, you are using your visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses. **Using all of your senses makes memorization easier.**

### Create a memorable image.

Take the information you’re studying and create a crazy, memorable image in your mind. For example, a ridiculous image could help you remember that Hawthorne wrote **The Scarlet Letter**. Just visualize a large red letter “A” with a big thorn sticking in it saying, “Ha!”



**You try it!** See if you can come up with an image to help you remember that Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean. Draw it in the box.

Check out our drawing on page 20.



### Look for a connection.

Look for an easy or logical connection. For example, to remember that Homer wrote *The Odyssey*, think, “Homer is an **odd** name.” Can you make a logical connection to something you’re learning right now?

### Review before you sleep.

Before you go to sleep, go over any information you want to remember. Your brain will put it in your memory while you sleep.

## Read to learn

If you follow this 3-step process whenever you have a textbook assignment, you'll understand and remember a lot more of what you read.

### The 3 steps to reading a textbook assignment

#### 1. **SURVEY** for a quick overview.

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

#### 2. **READ** with a purpose.

Turn each section heading into a question. Keep this question in mind as you read. After you've finished reading, see if you can answer your question.

#### 3. **REVIEW** to remember.

As soon as you finish reading an assignment, survey the assignment again. This time, think about what you've learned. **Reviewing is the key to remembering!**

*It may take a little practice to get the Survey, Read, and Review process down, but you'll soon realize that this process doesn't mean more work—it just means better grades.*

### **SURVEY, READ, and REVIEW** this section on the poison dart frog.

#### **Poison Dart Frog**



#### **A deadly creature**

Found in the **rainforests of Central and South America**, poison dart frogs are small, but they can be very deadly. Measuring only about an inch long, *their skin can secrete some of the most toxic chemicals known to man*. For example, the tiny golden poison dart frog has enough poison in its skin to kill 10 men.

These **amphibians** are called "dart frogs" because, for centuries, indigenous peoples of South America have used their toxic secretions to poison the tips of their **blow darts and arrows**. A strike from a poisoned dart tip will quickly kill the birds and monkeys they hunt.

#### 1. **SURVEY**

Find the words and phrases in **bold** and *italic* print (6) and underline them.

#### 2. **READ**

Turn the section heading *A deadly creature* into a question. \_\_\_\_\_

Now read the entire text. When you're finished, see if you can answer your question.

#### 3. **REVIEW**

Go back over the **bold** and *italic* words again and think about what they mean.

## Write great papers

In order to write a great paper, there are a number of steps you need to follow.

Figure out the order in which the following writing steps should be completed and write in the correct number (1–6). #1 has been done for you.



**Step** \_\_\_\_\_ **Organize your ideas.**  
Use the information you've gathered to make an outline of your main ideas. Add supporting information for each idea.

**Step** \_\_\_\_\_ **Write the first draft.**  
Write the first draft in one sitting. Don't worry about making mistakes. Just start writing.

**Step** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gather information.**  
Have a system for gathering and organizing information. Use index cards, a notebook, and/or printouts from online resources. Record titles, authors, and page numbers of sources.

**Step** 1 **Choose a topic.**  
If you have a choice, choose a topic that you're familiar with, and one that you want to learn more about.

**Step** \_\_\_\_\_ **Write the final draft.**  
Make final changes and turn in a neat, clean copy.

**Step** \_\_\_\_\_ **Rethink, revise, and rewrite.**  
Read your first draft out loud to see if it makes sense. Then rethink, revise, and rewrite. Correct all errors, and give it to someone else to read. Ask for suggestions.

Answers are at the bottom of the page.

### Writing tips

- ▶ The key to writing a good paper is to spread it out over as much time as possible.
- ▶ Be sure to put your paper away at least once or twice. When you take it out and read it again, you'll see and hear things you didn't notice before.
- ▶ Always identify another person's words or ideas by using quotation marks or footnotes.

## Prepare for tests

### Think about the last time you prepared for a test.

1. When did you study for the test? (Check all that apply.)

- over several nights       right before the test       I didn't study.  
 the night before       all of the above

2. What study techniques did you use? (Check all that apply.)

- reviewed class notes       studied with classmate(s)       Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 went over the textbook       made flashcards       I didn't study.  
 went over handouts       got quizzed by someone else

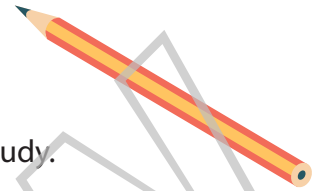
3. How did you do on the test? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What could you have done to get a better grade on the test? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Test-preparation tips

- ▶ Pay **close attention** in class the day before a test. This is when teachers often go over information you need to know.
- ▶ If your textbook has **review questions**, know all of the answers. Also, go through your textbook and make sure that you know the meanings of all the words in **bold** and *italic* print.
- ▶ Try teaching material to yourself in front of a **mirror**.
- ▶ If a teacher hands out a **review sheet**, study it until you know everything on it. Then use it to come up with questions that might be on the test.
- ▶ Write down any names, dates, or facts you need to remember on **index cards**. Take these cards with you the day of the test and go over them as often as you can.

What can you do to be better prepared for tests this year? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Think about your test-taking skills

Put a check in the boxes that **best** describe you.

Almost  
always

Some-  
times

Hardly  
ever

- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I use all the time I'm given when taking a test.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I study enough to feel prepared.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. As soon as I get my test, I write anything I want to remember at the top.                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I get a good night's sleep the night before a test.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Before I begin, I quickly look over the test and plan out how much time I'll spend on each question/section. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I organize my ideas before answering an essay question.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If I have time, I check all my answers.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I am happy with my test grades.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Survey results:** Give yourself 2 points for each **Almost always**, 1 point for each **Sometimes**, and 0 for each **Hardly ever**. **Your score:** \_\_\_\_\_

If your score is 14–16, you're probably a pretty good test taker. If you have less than 14 points, consider the items you marked **Sometimes** or **Hardly ever** and work on improving those test-taking strategies.

### Test-taking tips

- ▶ Before you start, stay calm and think positive thoughts. If you're nervous or anxious, take several deep breaths.
- ▶ Before you begin to answer an essay question, jot down the key words, ideas, and points you want to cover. Then number your ideas in the order you want to present them.
- ▶ For open book tests, highlight your notes, write down the information you'll need on one sheet of paper, and put self-stick notes in your textbook to help you locate information.
- ▶ If you're having difficulty with a math problem, try drawing a picture or diagram.
- ▶ Read all multiple choice answer choices. At least a couple will sound like they could be correct. If two of the choices are similar or opposite, one is probably the correct answer.

## Use test-taking strategies

To do well on any test, you must study hard and be prepared. You can further improve your test performance by using some simple test-taking strategies.

Read the questions and circle the correct answers.

- How should you approach multiple choice questions?
  - Try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices.
  - Always choose c if you don't know the answer.
  - If you're not sure, cross out the choices you know are wrong and make an educated guess.
  - both a and c
- If you get stuck on a question or problem,
  - keep working until you figure it out.
  - skip it.
  - mark it and come back to it.
  - make a guess.
- When answering a math problem, you should
  - not worry about showing your work.
  - spend as much time as you need on it.
  - estimate the answer before beginning the problem.
  - all of the above
- On essay questions, it's best to start with
  - the easiest question.
  - the hardest question.
  - the first question.
  - any of them—it doesn't matter.
- T F True/false questions with absolute words like *all*, *always*, *never*, *every*, and *none* are usually true.
- T F If any part of a true/false question is false, the whole statement is false.
- T F True/false questions with words like *usually*, *often*, and *sometimes* are typically true.
- T F If you don't watch out for statements with double negatives, you won't get the right answers.

Answers are below. Give yourself one point for each right answer.

Your score: \_\_\_\_\_

How can you improve your test-taking skills and test grades? \_\_\_\_\_



## Reduce test anxiety

A little anxiety before a test improves your concentration. Too much worry, or test anxiety, can lower your test scores.

Having test anxiety is like not having the password to your computer. The information is there; you just can't get to it.

On a scale of 1–10, rate your test anxiety.

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

I feel calm and confident before tests.

I get so nervous before a test I feel sick.

If you circled 4–10, the following tips may help you reduce test anxiety.

- ▶ Start studying early. Cramming only increases test anxiety.
- ▶ Replace negative thinking with thoughts that are positive.
- ▶ Mentally practice going through the test and receiving the grade you want.
- ▶ Walk into the test with your head up and your shoulders back. Tell yourself that you're ready, and that you're going to do fine.
- ▶ Try these relaxation techniques:
  1. Take a deep breath. Then slowly release your breath, along with any tension. Do this until you feel your body relax.
  2. Starting at the top of your head, flex and then relax each part of your body.
  3. Think of a place where you feel relaxed and calm. Close your eyes and visualize being there.



What can you do to reduce test anxiety and feel more confident when taking tests?

---

---



For more tips on dealing with test anxiety, check out this short video.



## Motivation tips



We all get stuck sometimes. To keep yourself going when you're feeling stressed, discouraged, or overwhelmed, have a positive attitude and find ways to stay motivated. Here are a few suggestions.

### 1. Use 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."

*Think of something critical that you've said to yourself, and change it into something positive.*

---

### 2. Visualize success.

Here's an example. Before the day of a test, imagine yourself confidently walking into the classroom and answering the questions correctly. *Imagining a scene like this is called visualization.* This is a technique used by students, athletes, and leaders around the world.

*Think of something that you want to succeed at. Now, close your eyes and imagine a scene where everything goes just the way you want it to. Put in as many details as you can.*

---

### 3. Figure out what motivates you.

Turn what competes with your schoolwork into a motivator. For example, reward yourself with phone or video game time once your homework is done. *What can you use as a motivator?*

---

### 4. Turn failures into successes.

When something doesn't go well, learn from the experience, and use that knowledge to do better the next time. *Tell about a negative academic experience that taught you something.*

---

### 5. Write motivating notes to yourself.

Write motivating words, ideas, and/or quotes on sticky notes. Put these notes anywhere you're likely to see them. *Write yourself a positive, motivating message here.*

---

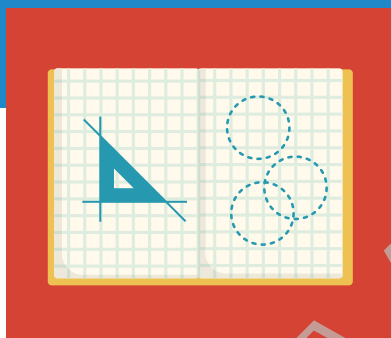


*For tips on the power of positive thinking, watch this short video.*



VIDEO

# Skills and Habits for Academic Success



**WOODBURN PRESS**

woodburnpress.com

Item 5086