

3) Review

Reading Tips

After you've finished reading an assignment, take a few minutes to review. It will make a huge difference in what you're able to remember later.

- ▶ To review, go through the same process you did when you surveyed the text (read the introduction, summary, headings, and the words in **bold** and *italic print*), but this time, think about what you've learned.

As you read each section heading, think about the important points that were presented in that section—and as you look at the words in bold and italic print, think about what they mean, and why they are important.

- ▶ If there are chapter review questions, make sure you can answer all of them.
- ▶ If you really want to lock the information into your brain, review everything again a day or two later. When you sit down to study for the test, you'll be amazed at how well you already know the material.

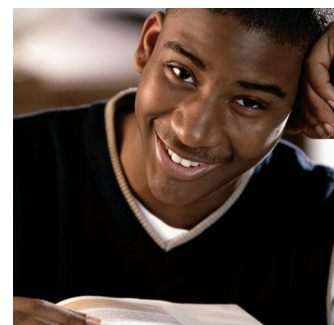
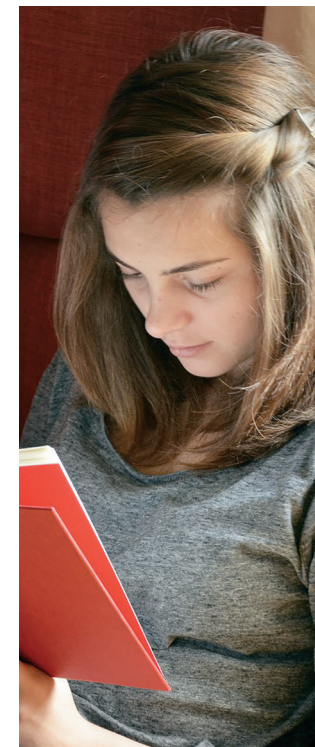
Review is the key to learning and remembering information!

Using these tips will help you get the most out of your reading sessions.

- ▶ Have a quiet place to read, with good lighting and a comfortable chair.
- ▶ Determine when and where is the best time and place for you to concentrate on your reading.
- ▶ Practice reading at different speeds. For example, a science textbook should be read at a much slower speed than a novel.
- ▶ When you're reading a textbook, don't just read the words. Concentrate, and focus on learning the material.
- ▶ We often read too quickly when scrolling text online. Make an effort to read slowly, and pause frequently to check your comprehension.
- ▶ Read introductions and summaries carefully. They contain the most important information.
- ▶ If you're reading material that's particularly difficult or important, read it aloud, or take notes as you read.
- ▶ Most importantly, take the time to 1) **SURVEY**, 2) **READ**, and 3) **REVIEW** each assignment.

Reading to Learn

Information and tips to help you learn and remember what you read



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1) Survey

2) Read

Reading to Learn

- ▶ Does your mind ever wander when you're reading a textbook?
- ▶ Do you sometimes miss information that's important?
- ▶ Do you often forget what you've just read?
- ▶ Do you get behind in your reading and then have a hard time catching up?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your reading skills.

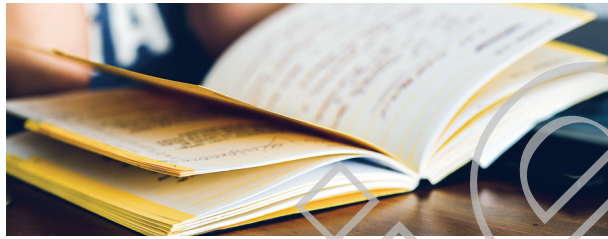
To do well in your classes, you must be able to understand and remember the information you read.

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

1) SURVEY 2) READ 3) REVIEW

Using this three-step process doesn't mean more work—it just means better grades!

Before you begin reading an assignment, take a few minutes to survey the entire assignment.



Get an overview

Surveying gives you a quick overview of what you'll be reading. To survey an assignment, do the following:

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

The 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, South American Indians 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 the Indians hunt.

To survey the above, look at the picture and read all of the highlighted text.

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

Use the learning tools provided

Textbook authors use the following learning tools to make it easier for students to understand and learn the material they're presenting.

Headings and subtitles – introduce main ideas

Bold and italic print – highlight key terms

Pictures and graphs – help you visualize information

Vocabulary lists – introduce new terms

Chapter summaries – give you an overview

Review questions – test your comprehension



Read with a purpose

When your reading has a purpose, you have a reason to stay focused and your comprehension improves.

To give your reading purpose, turn each section heading into a question. Then keep your question in mind as you read. When you're finished reading the section, see if you can answer your question.

To give your reading of *The Poison Dart Frog* purpose, you would turn the heading, "A deadly creature," into a question. When you've finished reading the section, you should be able to answer your question.

What makes this creature deadly?

Test Prep Tips

You test well by preparing well. Here are some tips to help you prepare.

Create a study plan

Create a study plan that spreads out your studying. Start early to eliminate the need for cramming.

Make flash cards and/or review sheets

Take the most important information and use it to create review sheets and flash cards. Highlight key words and important phrases.

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. If there’s something you have trouble explaining, you’ll know what you need to go back and review.

Adjust your studying for the test

- ▶ **True/false and multiple choice tests** – Make sure you know facts and detailed information.
- ▶ **Essay tests** – Review main ideas and key facts.
- ▶ **Open book tests** – Put self-stick notes in your textbook to help you find information quickly.

Review often

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

Prepare Mind & Body

Test success isn’t just about knowing the material. You also want to feel confident and calm when you take a test.

- ▶ Get eight hours of sleep the night before a test. If there’s something you want to remember, go over it right before you go to sleep.
- ▶ Get up early enough to eat a good breakfast and not be rushed. Spend any free time you have before your test to look over your flashcards and mentally review the material.
- ▶ Practice visualization. Close your eyes and imagine yourself confidently taking the test and answering the questions correctly.
- ▶ Walk into the classroom with your head up and your shoulders back. When you act confident, you feel more confident—and you perform better.
- ▶ Before you begin, think positive thoughts. If you feel anxious, take several slow, deep breaths.
- ▶ Focus on the test rather than those around you. Relax and do your best.

Preparing for Tests

Tips and strategies to help you prepare for quizzes, tests, and exams



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Prepare Early

Test Prep Resources

Preparing for Tests

- ▶ Do you ever feel unprepared for tests?
- ▶ Do you usually wait until the day before a test to start studying?
- ▶ Do you often study the wrong things?
- ▶ Are your test grades lower than they should be?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving the way you prepare for tests.

Many students listen in class and do all of their assignments, yet their test grades never seem to accurately reflect their knowledge or effort.

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

"Before anything else, preparation is the key to success." Alexander Graham Bell



With the right preparation, studying for tests will take less time and effort, and your test grades will be higher.

Prepare as you go

- ▶ Make the most of the time you have in every class. Ask and answer questions, participate in discussions, and take good notes. *Learning in class means that you have less to learn on your own.*
- ▶ Complete every homework assignment, and have all of your reading done several days before the test.
- ▶ Take good, well-organized class notes.
Use only one side of the paper and skip a line between ideas/topics.
Leave a wide margin on each page. Use this space to write in key words (topics, names, events).
- ▶ After class, make sure your notes are complete, and highlight the most important information.

The class before the test

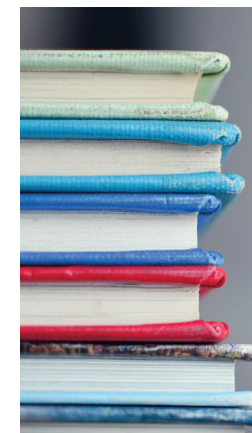
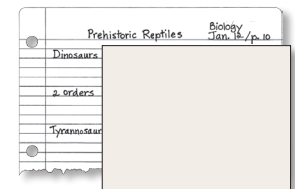
- ▶ Pay particularly close attention in the class before the test. This is when important test information is likely to be given.
- ▶ Before you leave class, make sure you know what information the test will cover and what kind of test it will be (e.g., essay, true/false, multiple choice).

Before you start to study, make sure you have the following test prep resources.

Class notes

Because most test questions come from information that's been presented in class, your class notes are your best test prep resource.

If you have key words written in the left hand column, cover up the right side of your notes and test yourself to see what you can remember about each topic.



Textbooks

Have all textbook reading completed early. Then use your study time to review the following:

- ▶ chapter introductions and summaries
- ▶ the first and last paragraph of each section
- ▶ **bold** and *italic* words
- ▶ chapter review questions

Other resources

- ▶ **Handouts and review sheets** – Use these to come up with possible test questions.
- ▶ **Graded homework and quizzes** – Go back over these carefully.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking someone else's ideas and passing them off as your own. Teachers take plagiarism very seriously, and they may not care if it wasn't done on purpose.

You should always cite your source if you use someone else's ideas. This goes for quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing.

- ▶ **Quoting – using someone's exact words.** Always put quotes in quotation marks ("") and give credit to the author.
- ▶ **Paraphrasing – putting an idea or a passage from a source into your own words.** You don't need to use quotation marks, but you must still attribute the source.
- ▶ **Summarizing – taking only the main ideas within a source and putting them into your own words.** Like a paraphrase, you don't need to use quotation marks, but you must attribute the source.

To avoid plagiarizing...

A good way to avoid plagiarizing a source is to keep a collection of the summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotes you collect as you read a source.

Be sure to put the source at the top of each group so you know where they came from.



Citing your Sources

Citing your sources correctly is a critical part of research. This is how you give credit to those whose work you have included in your research.

Here are three common citation styles.

- ▶ **MLA** – An MLA in-text citation for a book looks like this: (Author's last name Page #). For example: (Jones 208). The list of sources at the end of an MLA paper is titled Works Cited.
- ▶ **APA** – An APA in-text citation for a book looks like this: (Author, Year of publication). For example: (Jones, 2018). If you are citing a direct quote, include the page: (Jones, 2018, p. 204). The list of sources at the end of an APA paper is titled References.
- ▶ **Chicago** – Chicago style citations use footnotes at the bottom of the page to attribute each source. The footnote should contain all source information: Author's first name last name, Title of book, Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication, page number. For example: Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. (New York: Free Press, 1989), 55-56. The list of sources at the end of a Chicago style paper is titled Bibliography.

For additional information on citations and formatting, visit owl.purdue.edu.

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Doing Research

Information and tips to help you do research for a paper or project



Gathering Sources

Staying Organized



Doing Research

- ▶ Do you often feel overwhelmed when you have to do research for a paper or project?
- ▶ Do you have trouble finding relevant and reliable information?
- ▶ Are you often confused about how to cite your sources?
- ▶ Do you have a difficult time keeping your information and sources organized?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, you may want to work on improving your research skills.

Whether you're writing a research paper for English or gathering material for an informative speech in your history class, doing research helps you develop your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

The information and tips in this pamphlet will help you get started on your research, stay organized, and correctly cite your sources.

Finding good sources is a large and important part of doing research. Here's what you need to know about gathering sources.

Online searches

When searching for information online, be careful which sources you choose to include in your research.

- ▶ You can usually count on .edu websites (education-related sites) and .gov sites (government-related sites) to include credible information.
- ▶ Try to find a copyright year or some kind of indication of how up-to-date the information on the site is.
- ▶ Never use Wikipedia as a primary source of information—though the citations at the bottom of the article's page may yield some good sources.
- ▶ For more reliable results, use Google Scholar instead of Google to search for sources.

Search engine tips

- ▶ Adding quotation marks around your search terms will only give results that contain that exact phrase.
- ▶ Putting "or" between two terms will give you results with either of the terms; putting "and" between two terms will give you only results that contain both.



Libraries

Go to your school and public libraries. They have a wealth of resources, and if you can't find something, chances are a librarian can.



Organization is the key to making sure your research covers everything you need to cover, and that you have the information you need to correctly cite all of your sources.

Organizing your research

- ▶ Before you begin, have an outline of your paper or project ready. Use this outline as a guide for finding and organizing your sources.
- ▶ Have a system for organizing information. Use 3 x 5 index cards, a notebook, and/or print-outs from online resources.
- ▶ If you're doing online searches, keep track of the search terms you try so you don't waste time searching through the same sources.

Keeping track of your sources

- ▶ Record accurate information for each source you use (title, author, page numbers, publisher). When obtaining information online, record the URL and date of access. You'll need this information to cite your sources.
- ▶ Use sticky tabs to keep track of relevant pages and passages in library books so that you can easily find them when you need them.

Step 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.
- ▶ Write supporting ideas under each main idea.

Step 4. Write the first draft.

- ▶ Expand your outline ideas into paragraphs.
- ▶ Don't worry about making mistakes. Just focus on getting your ideas down.

Step 5. Rethink, revise, and rewrite.

Read your first draft out loud to see if it makes sense. Then revise and rewrite.

- ▶ Add explanations and details.
- ▶ Rewrite anything that isn't clear.
- ▶ Eliminate text that isn't necessary.
- ▶ Vary your sentence structure.
- ▶ Correct spelling and punctuation errors.
- ▶ Ask someone whose opinion you respect to read your paper and give you feedback.

Step 6. Write the final draft.

- ▶ Reread your paper out loud one more time. Pay attention to the small details.
- ▶ Make final edits and revisions.

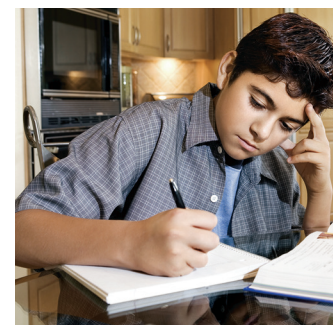
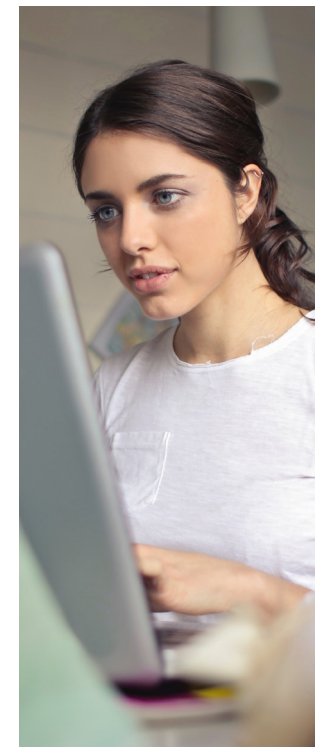
Here are some additional tips to help you write an outstanding paper.

- ▶ Create a strong opening paragraph that includes a bold statement, notable quote, statistic, or interesting example.
- ▶ Make sure you have a thesis statement that's clear and concise.
- ▶ End with a strong closing paragraph that restates or summarizes the main idea.
- ▶ Always identify another person's words or ideas by using quotation marks, footnotes, or by including a Works Cited page. If you present another person's words or ideas as your own, it's plagiarism, and you may find yourself in trouble.
- ▶ Make sure that 1) your paper is the proper length; 2) you've followed the instructions; 3) your paper is turned in on time.

The key to writing a good paper is to give yourself plenty of time to plan, write, and revise it!

Writing Papers

Information and tips to help you write outstanding papers



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Types of Papers

The Writing Process



There are several different types of papers. These are the ones most commonly assigned.

Report or essay

- ▶ informs, explains, or persuades
- ▶ generally 1–4 pages in length
- ▶ focuses on one topic, idea, or argument
- ▶ includes facts and evidence from several sources

Research or term paper

- ▶ similar to an essay, but longer
- ▶ examines a subject in greater depth
- ▶ requires a great deal of research, organization, and documentation of outside sources

Narrative paper

- ▶ can be about something that actually happened or about something you've made up
- ▶ uses description, plot, and dialogue to tell a story



Thesis statement

All reports, essays, and term papers need a thesis statement.

A thesis statement is a sentence or two that tells what your paper is about. It explains what you believe, intend to prove, or plan to explain.

To write a thesis statement, ask yourself, "What is the focus of this paper?"



Following these six steps will help ensure that your papers are organized and well thought out:

Step 1. Choose a topic.

- ▶ If you have a choice, choose a topic you're familiar with, or one you want to learn more about.
- ▶ Choose a topic that's not too broad. (Instead of writing about the Civil War, write about one battle.)
- ▶ Make sure there's plenty of information available on whatever topic you choose.

Step 2. Gather information.

- ▶ Information on almost any subject is available online; however, finding good, reliable information online isn't always easy. A library is still a great place to go for information, and librarians can be very helpful in locating hard-to-find information.
- ▶ Create a system for gathering and organizing information. Use 3 x 5 index cards, a notebook, and/or printouts from online resources.
- ▶ Record accurate information for each source you use (such as title, author, page numbers, and publisher). When obtaining information online, record the URL and date of access. You will need this information to cite your sources.

Writing Papers

- ▶ Do you ever feel overwhelmed when you have a paper to write?
- ▶ Do you skip making an outline and just start writing?
- ▶ Do you wait until the last minute to begin?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your writing skills.

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

Whether you're a strong writer or someone who struggles with writing assignments, following this step-by-step process makes writing a great paper easier and less stressful.

Six Steps to Writing a Great Paper

Step 1 – Choose a topic.

Step 2 – Gather information.

Step 3 – Organize your ideas.

Step 4 – Write the first draft.

Step 5 – Rethink, revise, rewrite.

Step 6 – Write the final draft.

Giving a Presentation

Here are some tips to help you give a great presentation.

- ▶ Take extra care with your appearance on the day of your presentation. If you look good, you will feel more confident.
- ▶ Use a conversational tone and be enthusiastic. Pretend that you're telling your best friend something really interesting.
- ▶ Making eye contact will draw in your audience. If the group isn't too large, try to make eye contact with everyone.
- ▶ If you've lost your place or are feeling flustered, pause for a couple of seconds. Take a breath and then go on.
- ▶ The biggest mistake speakers make is talking too fast. Talk slowly with a strong, clear voice.
- ▶ Try to avoid "filler" words, such as "um," "okay," and "like."
- ▶ Watch out for nervous, repetitive gestures, such as playing with your hair or fidgeting.
- ▶ Know that the audience is rooting for you. They don't want to see you struggle—they want you to do well.



Overcoming Anxiety

If you are afraid of speaking in public, you're not alone. Over 75% of people say they have a fear of speaking in public. There's even a name for this fear – glossophobia.

Some nervousness is normal, but if you get overly anxious, these tips may help.

- ▶ Adequate preparation is the best way to reduce anxiety. Practice your presentation over and over. Rehearse it in front of others, and record or videotape yourself. Practice, practice, practice.
- ▶ Visualize success. In the days before you give your presentation, visualize yourself being relaxed and confident, successfully delivering your presentation to an appreciative audience.
- ▶ Before you get up to speak, take some deep breaths and let your body relax.
- ▶ If you make a mistake or stumble, it's okay. Don't comment on it. Just go on. What may seem like a big error to you will hardly be noticed by your audience. And remember, no one expects you to be perfect.
- ▶ Congratulate yourself for what you do well, and know that with every presentation, you'll get even better.



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Preparing Presentations

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Preparing Presentations

Information and tips to help you prepare and give a great presentation



How to Prepare an Outstanding Presentation



Preparing Presentations

- ▶ Are you afraid to speak in front of a group?
- ▶ Do you avoid situations where you might have to speak in public?
- ▶ Do you sometimes have something you want to say, but are too shy to speak up?

If you answered “Yes” to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your speaking skills.

You'll likely be required to give at least one presentation at some point before you graduate. Possibly several. Whether you're a great speaker or someone who dreads speaking in front of an audience, think of every presentation as an opportunity to develop your confidence and improve your public speaking skills.

Being able to express yourself in front of a group is a skill that will be an asset throughout your life! Keep reading to learn how you can become a more effective presenter.

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

Things to consider

- ▶ Is the purpose of your presentation to inform, persuade, or demonstrate? How long does your presentation need to be?
- ▶ If you have a choice, choose a topic you're familiar with, or one you want to learn more about.
- ▶ Think about your audience. How much do they know about the subject? What information will they find the most interesting and useful?

Have a strong beginning and ending

- ▶ 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.

Use visual aids wisely

- ▶ Visual aids (e.g., charts, pictures) and props can help engage an audience. However, too many props and visual aids can be distracting and difficult to manage.
- ▶ If you're using PowerPoint, choose an appropriate theme and don't use too many fonts or animations.



Practice, practice, practice

- ▶ Once you can make your presentation without any major errors, improve your delivery by adding inflection, enthusiasm, and hand gestures.
- ▶ Practice your presentation in front of a mirror, and imagine that the audience is in front of you.
- ▶ Give your presentation to family or friends. Ask them to give you feedback on content and pace.
- ▶ Record or videotape your presentation. Look for ways to improve it, and then record it again.
- ▶ Practice talking slowly, speaking clearly, and putting pauses between ideas and sections. Time your presentation to make sure it's the correct length.
- ▶ To help you get off to a good start, memorize the first few lines of your presentation word for word. So that you can end on a strong note, also memorize the last few lines.

Memorization Tips

Here are some tips to help you retain and remember facts and information.

- ▶ Use 3 x 5 cards to memorize facts, formulas, and lists. Take these cards with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes (on the ride home from school, while standing in line, waiting for the bus).
- ▶ Record yourself reciting what you need to remember. Listen to the recording while you do other activities.
- ▶ Make up rhymes to help you remember information (*"In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue," "30 days hath September, April, June, and November..."*).
- ▶ Before you go to sleep, think about what you want to remember. Your brain will commit it to memory while you sleep.
- ▶ Immerse yourself. If you're studying the Revolutionary War, imagine yourself as a soldier, and try to visualize the experiences you would have.

To help you remember a person's name, use their name in the conversation. "Nice to meet you, John."

Group and Organize

The human brain likes order. Our brains therefore remember information better when it's grouped and organized.

The two most common ways to group and organize information are outlining and mapping.

- ▶ **Outlining** – When outlining information, first identify the main ideas. Then list supporting facts and ideas under each main idea.
- ▶ **Mapping** – To map information, put the main idea in a circle. Then draw lines out to additional circles that contain more detailed information.

Memory Test (from inside panel!)

Most people remember five or six items on the list. But when they group these same items into categories (as they are below), the items are easier to remember, and the scores are usually much higher.

Ways to travel – boat, train, car, trolley

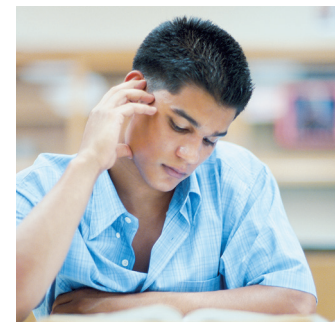
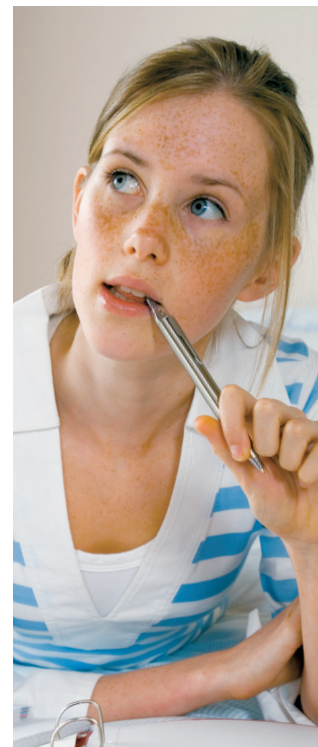
Picnic items – hot dog, fruit, mustard, ants

Office items – pencil, phone, ruler, chair

Chunking individual pieces of information into groups makes them easier to remember.

Memorizing Information

Tips and strategies to help you retain and remember information



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Strategies that Work



Memorizing Information

- ▶ Do you have a hard time memorizing and remembering information for tests?
- ▶ Do the things you've memorized seem to get mixed up in your head?
- ▶ When you're taking a test, do you sometimes feel sure that you know the answer, but you just can't remember it?
- ▶ Do you wish you had better strategies to help you memorize and remember information?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, the memorization strategies presented here are sure to help you.

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

Keep reading to learn a few simple strategies that will help you improve your memory.



Give these strategies a try whenever you have information you need to remember.

Use all of your senses

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

By looking at it, saying it, and writing it down, you are using your visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses.

Look for logical connections

Here are a couple of examples:

- ▶ To remember that Homer wrote *The Odyssey*, just think, "Homer is an odd name."
- ▶ To remember that all three angles of an acute triangle must be less than 90 degrees, think, "When you're over 90, you're not cute anymore."

Create unforgettable images

Take the information you're trying to remember and create a crazy, memorable image in your mind.

- ▶ 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, ridiculous 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 silly 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.

Review is the key to remembering anything. When you review, you move information from your short-term memory into your long-term memory.

Memory Test

Get a piece of paper and a pencil. Give yourself 15 seconds to memorize the 12 items below. Then write down as many as you can remember.

*boat hot dog pencil fruit train car
phone ruler mustard trolley ants chair*

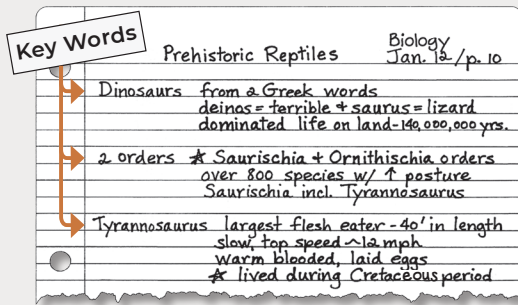
How did you do? Go to the square on the back for a tip on how you might have improved your score.

Use Key Words

Using key words (topics, people, events) in your notes will help you organize your thoughts and make your notes easier to understand.

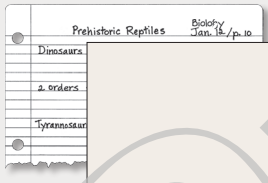
Leave a margin for key words

Leave a wide space or margin on the left side of each page. As you're taking notes, write key words in the left-hand margin.



Use key words to study for tests

When you're studying for a test, cover up the right side of your notes, look at each key word, and test yourself to see what you can remember about that topic, place, person, or event. Uncover your notes to see what information you missed or got wrong.



Notetaking Tips

Your class notes are your best test-prep resource. It's therefore important that you have good notes to study from.

To take notes faster, use abbreviations and symbols, and don't worry about punctuation, spelling, or grammar.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|------------------|
| = | same or equal | ★ | most importantly |
| ≠ | not equal | ∴ | therefore |
| > | greater than | w | with |
| < | less than | w/o | without |
| ~ | approximately | b/c | because |
| ↑ | up or increasing | esp | especially |
| ↓ | down or decreasing | v | very |

While the information is still fresh in your mind, take a few minutes to go over your notes.

- ▶ Make sure key words are written in the left-hand margins.
- ▶ Rewrite anything that's confusing.
- ▶ Fill in missing information.
- ▶ Highlight the most important information.

Studies have shown that about 50% of what a person hears is forgotten in 20 minutes.

Listening in class isn't enough.

You need to write down the information you want to remember!

Taking Notes

Tips and strategies to help you take better class notes



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Taking Notes

- ▶ Do you usually take too many notes? Not enough?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time knowing what to write down?
- ▶ Are your notes disorganized, confusing, or difficult to read?
- ▶ Do you wish you had a better notetaking system?

If you answered “Yes” to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your notetaking skills.

Taking notes increases your focus

You can think much faster than anyone can talk. This is one of the reasons your mind sometimes wanders when you are listening to a lecture. When you're taking notes, your mind doesn't have time to think about anything else. *Taking notes, therefore, helps you stay focused on the material being presented.*

Good notes can improve your test scores

Because tests usually cover material that's been presented in class, having good notes to study from can significantly improve your test grades.

Have a Notetaking System

Develop a notetaking system that works for you. Here are some suggestions.

Use three-ring notebook/binders

Have a three-ring notebook or binder for each subject, or a larger notebook with tabs for multiple subjects.

Using three-ring notebooks or binders for class notes makes it easy to hole punch and insert handouts and copies of notes where they belong. And when studying for a test, you can take your notes out of your notebook and spread the pages out.

Whether you use spiral notebooks, binders, or three-ring 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.
- ▶ Leave a wide margin on the left side of each page for key words—people, places, topics, and events.

Develop Your Listening Skills



In order to take good notes, you need to have good listening skills.

Be an active listener

Imagine this scene: You're listening to music and a new song by your favorite artist comes on. You stop what you're doing and listen carefully. You want to hear every word so that you can understand the meaning of the lyrics.

In this scene, you went from passive listening to active listening. When you're actively listening in class, you aren't just hearing the words; you're also thinking about and trying to understand the information that's being presented. *You must be an active listener in order to take good notes.*

Recognize important information

To take good notes, you must be able to identify the information that's most important. If you listen carefully, you'll find that teachers often give verbal clues telling you what information they believe to be the most important.

To help you recognize important information, listen for the following:

- ▶ louder or slower speech
- ▶ information that's repeated
- ▶ phrases such as “the main point”

To get the most out of your classes, engage your body as well as your mind.

Come to class alert and ready to learn

It's hard to be engaged and pay attention in class when you're tired or hungry. Get at least eight hours of sleep a night and wake up early enough to eat a good breakfast.

Take notes

You can think much faster than anyone can talk. This is one of the reasons your mind sometimes wanders when you're listening to a lecture. But, when you take notes, you don't have time to think about or do anything else. Taking notes, therefore, helps you stay focused. And having good notes to study from is an added bonus.

To make your notes more interesting, try alternating between different colors of pens or highlighters.

Watch your body language

Use body language that shows you're engaged and paying attention. Sit up straight and look at your teachers when they are speaking. If you act interested and engaged, you just may find that you feel more interested and engaged.

All students get distracted and daydream sometimes, even when they're trying to pay attention.

When you catch your attention drifting, notice it, and refocus on the class.

- ▶ If your mind drifts to something you need or want to do later, quickly write it down and then redirect your attention back to class.
Likewise, if you have an idea or thought that doesn't relate to the class, write it down, and get back to paying attention.
- ▶ Use self-talk. If you find yourself thinking about a personal issue or concern, catch yourself, and tell yourself that you will think about that later—not now.
- ▶ When your mind starts to wander, remind yourself that the more you learn in class, the less you have to learn on your own.

"Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand." Alexander Graham Bell

Staying Engaged

Tips and ideas on how you can get the most out of your classes



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Keep Your Mind Engaged

Participate in Your Classes

Staying Engaged

- ▶ Do you sometimes daydream during class?
- ▶ Are you often bored when listening to a lecture or presentation?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time remembering what you learned in class?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, try to work on being more engaged in your classes.

Having good attendance is the first step to succeeding in school. But just showing up isn't enough. You also need to be engaged in your classes—otherwise you are just wasting your time.

When you're engaged, you're more likely to learn, remember, and be interested in what's being taught in your classes. And the time goes a lot faster.

Read on for tips to help you stay engaged and get the most out of your classes.

Here are some tips to help you stay focused and keep your mind engaged.

When you come to class...

- ▶ Have all of your homework done. It's hard to stay engaged when you don't know what everyone is talking about.
- ▶ Be well-rested, alert, and ready to learn—and bring everything you need with you to class.
- ▶ Leave all of your concerns and problems at the door. (You can pick them back up after class.)

Eliminate distractions

- ▶ If you're allowed to have cell phones in class, turn yours off and put it away.
- ▶ Put away anything that isn't directly related to what you are doing in class.



Get excited

- ▶ Try giving yourself a reason to focus and pay attention. Challenge yourself to take notes good enough to share with others, or imagine that you will have to report on what was taught in the class.



The best way to stay engaged in your classes is to participate. Ask and answer questions and interact with your classmates.

Ask and answer questions

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. If your teacher puts you in small discussion groups, actively engage in the discussions.

Look for ways to be engaged

If the teacher's teaching style doesn't provide much opportunity for participation, you can still participate by making eye contact with your teacher, nodding, and writing down questions you might want to ask your teacher later.

And even if you don't ask and answer questions in class, when you're paying attention, you send a positive message to your teacher—"I'm here to learn."

There is nothing a teacher likes more than a student who is genuinely motivated and engaged in the classroom experience. Be that student!

Types of Tests

Essay questions

- ▶ Read each question and start with the easiest one.
- ▶ Brainstorm before you begin writing. Jot down the key words, ideas, and points you want to cover.
- ▶ Use complete sentences and write neatly.
- ▶ In the opening paragraph, tell the reader what they can expect to learn from your essay.
In the middle paragraph(s), present examples, facts, and details to support the points you're making.
In the final paragraph, restate the most important points, draw conclusions, or write a summary.

Math tests

- ▶ Before you begin to solve a problem, estimate the answer.
- ▶ Show all of your work and write neatly.
- ▶ If you're having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture or diagram.
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on any one problem. Finish the test, and then go back to the problems you had trouble with.
- ▶ If you have time, do the problems again to see if you come up with the same answers.

Reduce Test Anxiety

A little anxiety before a test improves your concentration and alertness. Excessive worry or test anxiety, however, can lower your test scores.

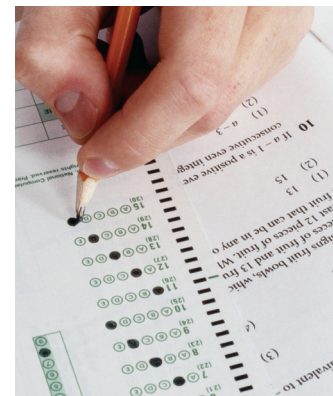
If test anxiety is interfering with your test performance, try the following:

- ▶ Replace irrational thoughts (*I have to ace this test*) and negative thoughts (*I'll never pass this exam*) with thoughts that are realistic and positive (*I've studied hard—I'll do fine*).
- ▶ Mentally practice going through the test. Visualize yourself walking into the classroom, taking the test, and answering the questions correctly.
- ▶ Walk into the classroom with your head up and your shoulders back. If you act more confident, you just may feel more confident.
- ▶ Before you start, take a deep breath and slowly release it. Relax, and do your best.

If you continue to have problems with test anxiety, talk to your counselor.

Taking Tests

Strategies and tips to help you do your best on quizzes and tests



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Test-Taking Tips

Types of Tests



Taking Tests

- ▶ Do you get overly nervous when you take tests?
- ▶ Do you sometimes run out of time?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time answering essay questions?
- ▶ Are your test grades lower than you'd like them to be?

If you answered yes to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your test-taking skills.

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

Smart test takers know strategies that improve their confidence and help them choose the right answers.

In this pamphlet you'll find a number of test-taking strategies that will help you perform better on tests—and get better grades.

Whenever you're taking a quiz, test, or final exam, keep these tips in mind.

Get off to a good start

- ▶ Have everything you need for the test when you go to class.
- ▶ As soon as you get your test, write anything you want to remember at the top (names, formulas, dates, etc.). Then read the directions.



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

Put a dot or a light mark by any answer you aren't sure of. After you've gone through all of the questions, go back to the ones you've marked and try them again.

Check your answers

If you have time, check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may have made a careless mistake. Use all of the time you're given.

Different types of test questions and formats require different strategies.

Multiple-choice questions

- ▶ Try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices.
- ▶ Read all of the answer choices. If you're not sure which answer is correct, cross out the choices you know are wrong and make an educated guess.

True/False questions

- ▶ Look for key words. For example, statements with absolute words such as *all*, *always*, *never*, *every*, and *none* are usually false.
- ▶ Statements with words such as *usually*, *often*, and *generally* are often true.
- ▶ If any part of a statement is false, then the entire statement is false. But if part of a statement is true, the entire statement may or may not be true.



Open book tests

- ▶ Put self-stick notes or bookmarks in your textbook to help you locate information quickly.
- ▶ Make sure the most important information in your notes is highlighted.
- ▶ Have all of the information you know you're going to need on one sheet of paper.

Group Work Challenges

Group members often have different levels of commitment and ideas on how a group should function. These differences can sometimes present challenges and lead to conflict.

Common challenges

- ▶ group member(s) not pulling their weight
- ▶ disagreements on project details, such as timelines, goals, and division of work
- ▶ personality clashes
- ▶ tensions among team members that may or may not be related to the project itself

How to handle group conflicts

- ▶ Don't ignore the conflict, even if it feels awkward to acknowledge it.
- ▶ Keep your group's goals in mind, and remember that conflict will make it more difficult for your group to successfully complete the assignment.
- ▶ Try not to take sides. This will likely just make things worse.
- ▶ Discuss a plan to work past the conflict, even if it's just getting to the end of the project, and not resolving the actual conflict.
- ▶ Ask your teacher for help.

Traits of a Team Player

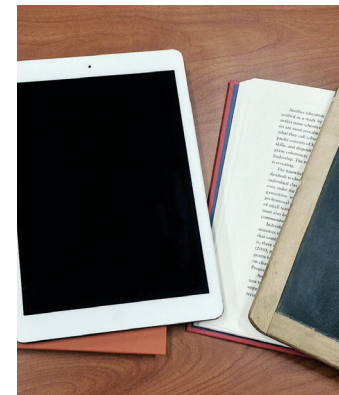
Employers and colleges are looking for young people who can communicate clearly, solve problems, and work in collaboration with others. They are also looking for people who have the following traits:

- ▶ **Reliability** – doing what you say you're going to do and not making excuses
- ▶ **Honesty** – being straightforward about your abilities, and not afraid to provide honest, constructive feedback
- ▶ **Positive attitude** – maintaining an upbeat and optimistic attitude, even when a project is difficult, frustrating, or boring
- ▶ **Flexibility** – having your own ideas, but being open to change and the suggestions of others
- ▶ **Confidence** – having the self-assurance to express your ideas and ask for help
- ▶ **Diligence** – doing your share of the work to the best of your abilities

Developing the above traits will serve you well in all facets of your life!

Doing Group Work

Tips and strategies to help you improve your group experiences



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Doing Group Work

- ▶ Do you dread having to do group work?
- ▶ Do you sometimes feel that other group members don't do their share of the work?
- ▶ Do you ever get frustrated with how disorganized groups are, or how long things take to get done?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, this InfoGuide will help you improve your group experiences.

If you'd rather do assignments on your own, you're not alone. Many students don't enjoy group work. But at some point, you'll likely have to work on a group project in at least one of your classes.

Being able to work as part of a group is an important skill. It's a skill that colleges and employers value—and one that will help you succeed in school, and beyond. **Look at group work as an opportunity to develop and improve this important skill!**

Group Roles

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

Positive roles

In successful groups, members assume positive roles that 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 tasks



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 his/her share of the work

Think about the roles you've assumed in the past—and how well you have contributed to the groups you've been a part of. Are there things you can do to be a more positive and productive group member in the future?

Group Tips



Here are some tips to ensure that your groups work well together and are able to successfully complete assignments/projects.

Set goals

- ▶ Make sure the task or project is manageable and that everyone understands what you need to do.
- ▶ Set short-term and long-term goals, and assign equal tasks to each group member.
- ▶ Create deadlines to ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely fashion.

Structure your meetings

Begin each group meeting by going around the table and allowing everyone (even the quiet ones) to give an update on their individual progress.

To help keep your group on track, have a set agenda for your meetings: 1. Progress reports; 2. Problems or concerns; 3. Questions; 4. What's next.

Don't take negative feedback personally

If your group suggests changing one of your ideas or tasks, be open to their suggestions. Remember, the goal is to create the best product possible.

Meet with Your Counselor

Make a Four-Year Plan

Your counselor is an expert on the courses and programs available at your school.

Here are some questions you may want to ask your counselor.

- ▶ What courses should I take next year?
- ▶ What required courses do I still need to take?
- ▶ What courses do I need for college?
- ▶ Am I on track to graduate on time?
- ▶ What courses should I take to prepare for a career in _____ (e.g., business, math)?
- ▶ Should I go to summer school?
- ▶ What courses do I need to take to be eligible to play a sport in college?
- ▶ Should I be taking any honors or advanced classes?
- ▶ What are the advantages and disadvantages of dual-credit courses?
- ▶ I like hands on courses. Are there any courses or programs I should consider?
- ▶ I'm having a hard time in several of my classes. Is there any help available for me?

Your counselor can help you choose courses that will put you on the road to success!

Having a four-year plan will ensure that you take the required courses, the courses you need to achieve your goals, and the electives you want to take.

In the lines below, list the courses you've taken, and the courses you are planning to take.

9th Grade

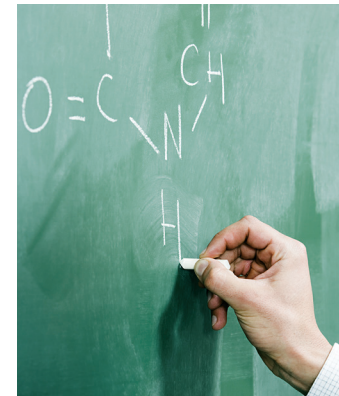
10th Grade

11th Grade

12th Grade

Taking the Right Classes

Information to help you schedule courses that will be right for you



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Taking the Right Classes

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Choose Your Courses Wisely



Taking the Right Classes

- ▶ Are you unsure which courses you need to graduate?
- ▶ Do you have questions about which courses you should take for college? To prepare for a specific career?
- ▶ Are you uncertain about the courses you should take next year?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, learn more about the courses your school offers, and about which ones you should take.

To succeed in school, you need to be in the right classes. If you're in courses that are too hard, you'll be frustrated and discouraged. If you're in courses that are too easy, you'll be bored. And if you're taking courses that don't interest you, you'll have a hard time staying motivated.

You want to choose courses that are right for your abilities, courses that will help you achieve your education and career goals, and courses you will enjoy.

Choosing the right classes is the first step to academic success.

Explore your options

In order to meet the needs of their students, most schools have a variety of academic programs. These often include:

- ▶ career and technology programs for the students who like a more “hands-on” approach to learning.
- ▶ programs allowing students to take college courses in high school (dual-enrollment).
- ▶ advanced, honors, and AP classes for students who excel in specific subjects.
- ▶ assistance for students who need extra help.

If you have questions about the programs available at your school, see your counselor.



Consider taking summer classes

Taking a class during the summer can be a good way to earn credits toward graduation, and lighten your course load for the following school year.

In order to stay on track for graduation, students who are short on credits, or have failed a required course, should go to summer school whenever possible.

If you want to go to college

Four-year colleges recommend that students take the following college prep courses in high school:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of science
- 3–4 years of math
- 3 years of social studies
- 2–3 years of one foreign language
- 1 year of fine or performing arts

Competitive schools and programs consider the above to be the minimum requirements. They recommend that students challenge themselves by taking advanced courses whenever possible.

If you're interested in a specific career

Choose electives that relate to the career field(s) you're considering. For example, if you're thinking about a career in business, take as many accounting, math, and computer courses as you can. This is a good way to find out if a career field might be one you would enjoy.



If you want to play a sport in college

Athletes going to NCAA Division I and II colleges must have a minimum GPA in a specified number of *core courses*.

If you want to play a sport in college, talk to your counselor about the courses you need to take to meet NCAA requirements.

If you have a hard time motivating yourself to get to school, or have attendance problems that are beyond your control, here are some tips to help you get to school every day.

Develop routines

Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start. Get up early enough to eat a good breakfast and not be rushed.

Have a nighttime routine that includes getting everything ready for the next day, and getting a good night's sleep.

Don't give yourself a choice

Don't think of going to school as something you should do. Think of it as something you just always do.

Get involved

Students involved in school activities generally do better academically and enjoy school more. Find a couple of school related activities that look interesting and give them a try.

Get help if you need it

If you have attendance problems because you don't have transportation to school, there are problems at home, or you're being bullied, talk to your school counselor. Your counselor can help you deal with any issue that's preventing you from getting to school every day.

It's important for students to be in school every day; however, schools understand that there are times when students must miss school. Here are some tips for handling an absence.

- ▶ While your teachers will likely be happy to help you catch up when you return, it's your responsibility to find out what you missed, and to make up the work as soon as possible.
- ▶ If you miss multiple days of school, keep up on the work. Many teachers post assignments online, which makes it easy to know what you need to do. If your teachers don't post assignments, call a classmate or check with the office to see if it's possible to get assignments. Also, see a classmate to get copies of any notes or handouts you missed.
- ▶ If you're sick and go to the doctor, get a doctor's note in case your school or teachers need proof to mark an absence as excused.
- ▶ If you know ahead of time that you will miss school, let your teachers know.

Remember, you're not attending school for your parents or teachers. You're going to school and getting an education for yourself and your future!

Being in School

Information on why it's important for you to be in school every day



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Reasons to Be in School



Being in School

- ▶ Are your grades lower than they should be because of your attendance?
- ▶ Have you pretended to be sick or come up with reasons to miss school?
- ▶ Do you typically miss more than five days of school a year?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, now is the time to improve your attendance.

Attendance is the #1 school success factor! To succeed in school, you need to be in school every day.

If your attendance is hurting your success in school, decide right now to make a change. Not for your teachers or your parents, but for you and your future.

Keep reading to learn more about why you should be in school every day.

There are a lot of reasons why being in school every day is so important.

When you miss class...

When you're not in class, you miss presentations, discussions, explanations of upcoming assignments, class notes, and information on what may be covered on tests. You also can't ask questions or hear the answers to questions asked by other students.



Less study time

When you're in school every day, you learn the material as you go, little by little. Studying for tests then becomes mostly review.

When you're not in class, you essentially have to teach the entire class to yourself. This is stressful, time consuming, and not the best way to learn.

You can't get it from someone else

Don't kid yourself into thinking that missing a class is okay as long as you get copies of the notes. Getting copies of someone's notes or having a friend tell you what you've missed is not the same as being in class.

Higher grades

It's a no-brainer. When you're in school every day, you get better grades. And if your teachers see you trying hard in class every day, they're more likely to give you extra help. They may even bump your grade up if your grade is on the border.

Being in school every day gives you the opportunity to do the following.

Be with friends

School is the best place to make friends and to meet others who have similar interests and goals.

Become a more interesting person

The more you're in school, the more you learn. And the more you learn, the more intelligent, capable, and interesting you become.

Be around people who support you

If you look around your school, you'll find teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, tutors, coaches, and secretaries. All of these people are there to support you and to help you succeed.

Be part of a community

When you're in school every day, you feel more like you're a part of the school community. You feel like you belong.

Feel proud of yourself

When you succeed in your classes, your parents and teachers are proud of you. Most importantly, you feel proud of yourself—and *that's a great feeling.*



Prepare for your future

The knowledge you gain and the skills you develop in school will help you be more successful throughout your life—whatever you do.

Organization Tips

Create To-Do Lists

Academic success involves more than being in class and doing your homework. To be successful, you need to be organized.

Develop routines

Have a morning routine that gets your day off to a good start. Get up early enough to eat a good breakfast and not be rushed.

Before you go to bed, get everything ready for the next day. Put your backpack and anything else you will need in the same place each night. If there's something you need to remember to do in the morning, leave yourself a note.

Create a study plan

Know when you study best and create a study plan that works for you. Identify anything that could interrupt your studying and figure out how you can eliminate or avoid it.

Eliminate clutter

Throw out any papers you don't need, and put those you want to keep in a home file.

Use a monthly wall calendar

A monthly wall calendar will help you keep track of major events, project deadlines, vacations, etc.

Keep phone numbers

Have a phone number for at least one person in each class. If you miss a class or have a question, you'll then have someone to call.

Having a To-Do list allows you to focus on what you need to do, instead of wasting time worrying about how you're going to get everything done—and wondering what you've forgotten.

Each night, make a To-Do list for the next day. If you have a lot to do, prioritize the items on your list to ensure that the most important things get done.

To prioritize your tasks, rate each item on your list as an A (*must do today*), B (*should do today*), or C (*would like to do today, but it can wait*).

Rank all of the As in the order of importance (1,2,3). Do the same with the Bs and Cs.

	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 Jenny
C	1 Do laundry
	2 Work on lab report
	3 Get haircut

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

Focus on one task at a time, and at the end of the day, put any unfinished tasks on the next day's To-Do list.

"Don't agonize. Organize."

Florynce Kennedy



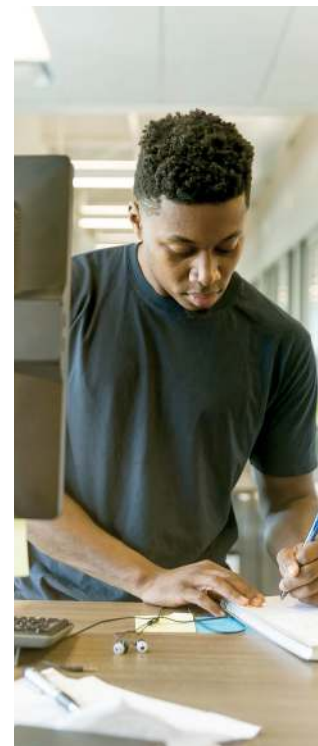
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Getting Organized

Tips and strategies to organize your stuff and your life





Use a Planner

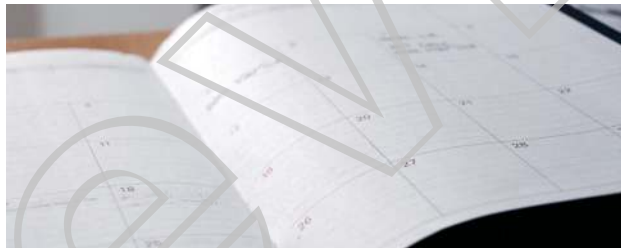
Using a planner every day is a great way to stay organized. Use your planner to record the following information.

Important Dates

Record the beginning and ending dates of each term, exam dates, special events, and the days your school will be closed for holidays and vacations.

Daily Assignments, Quizzes, and Tests

- ▶ Write each assignment under the date it's assigned. Also write in the date it's due.
- ▶ Check assignments off once they've been completed.
- ▶ Write in all quiz and test dates.



Projects and Papers

Break large assignments down into smaller, more manageable parts. For example, if you have a paper due on Friday, you might give yourself these four assignments:

Mon – Make outline	Wed – Revise and rewrite
Tues – Write first draft	Thurs – Write final draft

Be sure to write these smaller assignments in your planner also.

Activities and Appointments

Write in practices, appointments, social activities, and anything else you need to remember.

Organize Your Stuff



Keeping your stuff organized will save you time and lots of aggravation.

Organize your study area

When you're organized you have the tools you need when you need them. Equip and organize your study area with paper, pencils, pens, calculator, paper clips, ruler, stapler, highlighters, etc.

Keep your notes and handouts organized

Three-ring notebooks work well because you can easily insert handouts, and if you're absent, you can copy a classmate's notes and insert them where they belong. (If you keep a 3-hole punch in your notebook, you can put handouts in with your notes as soon as you get them.)

Your notes and class handouts are your most valuable test prep resources. It is, therefore, very important that you create a system for keeping these organized.

Organize and save computer work

Make sure you save your work often. Regularly back up, clean up, and organize your computer files.

Getting Organized

- ▶ Do you waste time looking for things?
- ▶ Do you often forget to bring what you need to class?
- ▶ Are there loose papers in your notebook?
- ▶ Do you finish assignments at the last minute?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your organization skills.

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

Being organized isn't hard; however, it's a skill that needs to be developed and practiced. The tips in this InfoGuide will help you get started.

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

Study Tips

Vary Your Studying

Use these tips to help you stay on track and make the most of your study time.

- ▶ Have a phone number for at least one person in each class. If you miss a class or have a question, you'll have someone to call.
- ▶ Complete written assignments early. This gives you time to improve your work.
- ▶ If you listen to music while you're doing homework, try listening to classical music.
- ▶ MS Word is the standard in word processing. Familiarity with Word's shortcuts and features will save you countless hours.
- ▶ Sometimes it's helpful to study with other students. But only study with students who are serious about their schoolwork, and keep study sessions focused and on track.
- ▶ If there's something you don't understand, ask for clarification. If you're struggling in a class, don't wait. Get help.
- ▶ The key to learning anything is REVIEW. When you review, you move information from your short-term memory into your long-term memory. *Review often!*

Using study strategies that engage multiple senses (visual, auditory, and tactile) can make your study time more effective and less tedious.

- ▶ Put important information on flashcards or create a PowerPoint with colors and pictures. Creating these will not only help you learn and remember the material—you'll have great study tools for later.
- ▶ Alternate types of work. For example: 1) read biology, 2) do math, 3) read history.
- ▶ When thinking about a paper you need to write, or trying to figure out how various ideas connect to each other, try mapping the concepts. Make a flow chart or diagram and use arrows and lines to connect the different ideas.
- ▶ Record yourself reading material out loud and listen to these recordings while taking a walk or doing chores.
- ▶ Study in a new place. Go to a public library or coffee shop, or find a quiet outdoor space.

"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." Robert Collier



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Studying Smart

Tips and strategies to help you get the most out of your study time





Know When, Where, and How to Study

Organize Your Study Time

Studying Smart

- ▶ Does your homework seem to take longer than it should?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time staying focused when you study?
- ▶ Do large assignments sometimes seem overwhelming?
- ▶ Are your grades lower than they should be?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your study habits.

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

Students who "study smart" often spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades. They know how to make the most of their study time, and they get help when they need it.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle

The time, the place, and your focus play a big part in how productive your study time is.

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 (e.g., paper, pencils, pens, calculator, stapler, 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 activities, jobs, or other responsibilities they must work around. At the end of each school day, think about the time you have available, the amount of work you have to do, and make a plan.

Get started

Don't procrastinate or 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.



Organizing your work will help you make the most efficient use of your time.

Create a study plan

- ▶ Before you begin studying, decide exactly what you want to get done and the order in which you are going to do it. Be specific. For example: 1) do lab report, 2) read history pages 51-70, 3) revise English paper.
- ▶ If you have a lot to do, prioritize your work. Start with the things that are the most important.
- ▶ If you have something to memorize, work on it first, and then go over it again at the end of your study session.

Break large assignments down

Use a planner to break large assignments down into smaller, more manageable parts. For example:

Mon – Create outline Wed – Revise and rewrite
Tues – Write first draft Thurs – Write final report

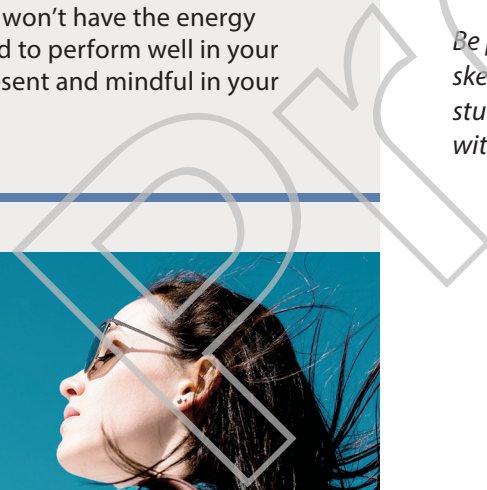
Take breaks

After studying for 30 minutes, take a short break. Get a snack or get up and stretch. Resist the temptation to text a friend, go online, or check your messages. Save those things for later.

Manage Stress

It's difficult to be mindful or present when you're stressed out—and being a teenager today can be stressful at times.

- ▶ When you're feeling stressed out, take good care of yourself. Get plenty of sleep, eat right, and get some exercise. (Physical activity can actually reduce stress.) Also, do whatever helps you feel calm and relaxed—take a walk, go someplace quiet, take a hot bath, read a book, or play with a pet.
- ▶ If you are feeling overwhelmed and think you may have taken on too much, make a list of everything that's going on in your life and determine what can be changed, dropped, or put off until later.
- ▶ When you're feeling stressed, confide in others—friends, family, your school counselor, spiritual leaders. It's much healthier to share your problems than it is to go it alone.
- ▶ Make sure you have time in your day to relax and rejuvenate. If you don't have time for rest and relaxation, you won't have the energy and stamina needed to perform well in your classes, or to be present and mindful in your daily activities.



Relax and Meditate

Try these mindfulness strategies whenever you have a few extra minutes.

Deep breathing

Find a comfortable place to sit, close your eyes, and relax your body. Breathe in deeply, and slowly count to four. On four, slowly release your breath. Then repeat. *Deep breathing is incredibly effective in helping you feel calm and relaxed.*

Visualization

Close your eyes. Imagine a relaxing scene, adding as many details as you can. Even better, pair your visualization with deep breathing.

Guided meditation

Meditation enhances relaxation and improves focus, which are key components of mindfulness. With guided meditation, a voice walks you through the meditation process by helping you relax your body and focus your thoughts. Guided meditation is easy to find in online streaming services like **Spotify**, **Google Play**, or **iTunes**. You can also use an app like **Meditation Studio** or **Calm**.

Be positive and open-minded, even if you're skeptical about this meditation and mindfulness stuff. Anything that will help you relax and deal with stress is worth a try.

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Being Mindful

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Being Mindful

Information and tips to help you stay focused and manage stress





Be Present

Know Yourself

Being Mindful

- ▶ Do you often have a hard time concentrating?
- ▶ Does your mind frequently wander in class? While you're studying? Even when you're talking to someone else?
- ▶ Do you wish you could be more focused and present in class and with others?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, you might benefit from learning some mindfulness techniques.

Mindfulness is simply making the effort to notice things that you wouldn't normally pay attention to. When you aren't mindful, you're basically on auto-pilot—and when you're on auto-pilot, you're more distracted and less focused.

Being distracted and unfocused can make succeeding in school difficult, frustrating, and stressful.

Read on to learn how to be more mindful, improve your focus and attention, and as a result, become a better student.



Being present means turning off auto-pilot and focusing on what you are doing and experiencing now.

To be more present in class...

- ▶ come to class well-rested, alert, and ready to learn.
- ▶ leave all of your concerns and problems at the door. (You can "pick them back up" after class.)
- ▶ be aware of your thoughts. If your mind starts to wander, notice it, and refocus on the class.
- ▶ remind yourself that when you learn as much as you can in class, you have less to learn on your own.

Train your brain

Practice targeting your attention. For example, when you're walking to class, pay attention to things you wouldn't normally notice, like the sounds you hear, what the hallway looks like, and what other students are doing.

Being mindful is something you get better at with practice. Remind yourself to be "in the now" and to be fully present—throughout the day, in and out of class, with others, and alone.

Being mindful isn't just paying attention to what's going on around you. Paying attention to yourself and how you feel is also important.

Know (and stretch) your limits

Everyone's attention span is limited. This limit often varies from situation to situation, and from subject to subject. For example, you may be able to do math problems for a long period of time, but struggle to stay focused for more than a few minutes when reading a history assignment.

Pay attention to how long you can do something (like work on a paper or read a textbook) before you get the itch to take a break or pull out your phone. Then try to extend the time you can work on that subject/project, before you give in to that itch.

Know what works (and what doesn't)

Just because you've always done something a certain way doesn't mean it's the best way. For example, you may have always waited until after dinner to do your homework, but that doesn't mean it's the most ideal time for you to study.

To determine what works best for you, pay attention to how you feel, and to the results of your efforts.

Are you tired when you study after dinner? Are you distracted when you study in your bedroom? Is the way you study boring or ineffective? If so, make a change! Try something different.



Successful students use tips such as these to manage their time.

- ▶ **Use free time in school wisely.** You'll have a lot less work to do at night.
- ▶ **Look for chunks of time during the day that are wasted.** Think about how you can use these times more effectively. For example, review your notes while waiting for a ride.
- ▶ **Create routines.** A good morning and nighttime routine will save you time, and help your day run more smoothly.
- ▶ **Learn to say "no."** Don't let anything get in the way of your schoolwork.
- ▶ **Don't give up sleep to get everything done.** If you're doing more than you can handle, look for activities that can be eliminated or postponed.
- ▶ **Control time wasters.** Social media, TV, and video games can all be huge time wasters. Schedule small chunks of time for these activities, and stick to your schedule.
- ▶ **Set aside time to relax.** It's important to take time to relax and recharge your batteries.

List four of your favorite activities.

Favorite Activities	1	2	3
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

After you've written in 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.

What do the results show about how you spend your time?

Do you have a good balance between doing things alone and with friends, between doing things inside and outside, and between activities that are sedentary and active? Should you make any changes to how you spend your free time?

Managing Your Time

Tips and strategies to help you use the time you have wisely



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Time-Management Tips



With good time management, you have less stress and more free time. You also feel more in control of your life.

Managing Your Time

- ▶ Do you often feel like you have too much to do?
- ▶ Do you typically finish assignments at the last minute?
- ▶ Are you often late to school, practices, and appointments?
- ▶ Do you wish you had more time for the things you want to do?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on improving your time management skills.

We all have the same amount of time: 24 hours a day/168 hours a week. How we use our time is time management.

When you use your time wisely, you have time for the things you need to do, and you still have time for the things you want to do.

"Time is the most precious element of human existence." Denis Waitley

Make to-do lists

1. Each day make a list of all the things you need to do.
2. Rate each item as an A (must do today), B (should do today), or C (want to do today, but it can wait).
3. Take all of the As and rank them in order of importance (1, 2, 3...). Do the same with the Bs and Cs.
4. Rewrite your list with the As at the top (in order of importance), followed by the Bs and Cs.
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 Jenny
C	1 Do laundry 2 Work on lab report 3 Get haircut



Stay organized

Being organized is a huge time saver.

- ▶ Get everything ready for the next day before you go to bed.
- ▶ Use a planner to keep track of assignments, tests, and appointments.
- ▶ Use a wall or phone calendar for events and project deadlines.



Make a weekly schedule

Using a schedule like the one below 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.

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

Each Sunday night, take time to plan out the coming week. Make sure that you have enough time to do everything that's scheduled.

Motivational Tips

Don't Give Up

These motivational tips will help you stay engaged and ready for a challenge.

Use motivating self-notes

Write motivating words, ideas, and/or quotes on sticky notes. Put these notes anywhere you're likely to see them.

Visualize success

For example, before the day of a test, close your eyes and 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.

Turn failures into successes

When something doesn't go well, learn from the experience, and use that knowledge to do better next time.

Hit refresh

When you're feeling overwhelmed, take a break. Listen to music, take a walk, or talk to a friend—then return ready to tackle your work.

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.

Most successful people have faced failure at some point in their lives, but like the people below, they found the motivation to keep going. They refused to give up!

Michael Jordan was cut from the high school varsity basketball team his sophomore year.

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor because he had "no good ideas."

JK Rowling received rejections from 12 publishers before her first "Harry Potter" book was accepted for publication.

Raised in extreme poverty, Oprah Winfrey didn't own a pair of shoes until she was six. She is now a billionaire.

Thomas Edison once had a teacher who told him that he was too stupid to learn anything.

Steven Spielberg, an Academy Award winning director, was rejected by USC's film school three times.

Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade.

"If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astonish ourselves."

Thomas Edison

Staying Motivated

Information and tips to help you stay confident and engaged



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Have a Positive Attitude

Plan for Success

Staying Motivated

- ▶ Do you give up on schoolwork too easily?
- ▶ Do you think negative thoughts about school, yourself, and your abilities?
- ▶ Are you frustrated in your classes or unhappy with your grades?
- ▶ Would you like to feel more confident in yourself or more optimistic about your future?

If you answered yes to any of the above, it's important that you find ways to feel more confident in your abilities and more motivated in your classes.

We all get stuck sometimes. To keep yourself going when you're feeling stressed out, discouraged, or overwhelmed, it's important to keep a positive attitude and to find ways to stay motivated.

This pamphlet will provide you with lots of tips on how you can keep moving forward and stay positive—so that you can be successful in whatever you do.

A positive attitude will get you far in life. Here are some tips for staying positive, even when the going gets tough.

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

Have you ever heard a coach talk to a team before a game? In pregame speeches, coaches try to energize their players and make them believe they can win. This is because coaches know that people have a greater chance of succeeding if they believe in themselves.

Whether you're an athlete preparing for competition or a student tackling a difficult subject, it's important that you recognize the talents and abilities you have, and believe that you can succeed!

Move with positive energy

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

Having goals you want to achieve and focusing on the positive will help you stay motivated—and be successful, both in and out of the classroom.

Set goals

Goals give you direction. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do. Have a list of both short-term goals (get a B on Monday's biology test) and long-term goals (graduate with a 3.0 GPA).

"People with goals succeed because they know where they are going." Earl Nightingale



Focus on your strengths

You are a unique individual with many interests, talents, strengths, and weaknesses. While it's good to work on your shortcomings and weaknesses, your strengths are where your future lies. Look for ways to pursue your interests, and to develop your talents and strengths.

Use positive self-talk

We all have a voice inside our head, 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 how you act.

So many others...

If you look around your school, you'll find teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, tutors, coaches, social workers, and secretaries. All of these people are there to help you have the best school year possible.

Look for people in your school who support you, and who you feel comfortable talking to. Whether it's a teacher, counselor, coach, or secretary, find at least one adult in your school you can develop a bond with—and can talk to when you have a problem.

We all need to know that we have people "in our corner." And the more, the better!

The person who can help you the most...

The person who can help you the most with any problem, issue, or concern is a parent. If you're having a problem with a class, teacher, another student, or something else, tell a parent right away.

Start the conversation by letting your parent know what you need. Do you want advice, support, or just someone to listen?

If you don't feel you can talk to a parent, talk to another adult you trust.



Other Resources

Help is available everywhere. It can be a call, text, or click away.

- ▶ **al-anon.org** can connect you with resources if a parent or family member is an alcoholic.
- ▶ **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988.
- ▶ **Crisis Text Line:** Text "HOME" to 741741.
- ▶ **National Domestic Violence Hotline:** Call 1-800-799-7233 or visit thehotline.org.
- ▶ **National Eating Disorders Association Helpline:** Call or text 1-800-931-2237.
- ▶ **National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens:** Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- ▶ **activeminds.org** can help you connect with a mental health professional in your area.

If you're struggling with something, no matter what it is, you don't have to go through it alone. There is always someone to help.

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Reaching Out for Help

Tips, advice, and encouragement to get the help you need



Academic Help

Your Counselor



Reaching Out for Help

- ▶ Are you worried about your grades?
- ▶ Do you sometimes need help, but are too shy or afraid to ask for it?
- ▶ Do you need help figuring out what to do after you graduate, or need help with a personal problem?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to get the help you need.

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.

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

If you're struggling in a class, your teacher should be your first point of contact.

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.

If you're struggling in a class, talk to your teacher before or after class to schedule a time to meet—and tell your teacher what you want to talk about (e.g., go over the results of a test, ask for help with an assignment, 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.

If you need help with a specific task, such as how to solve a math problem or make a PowerPoint presentation, there's often a YouTube video that can provide you with the information you need.

Your school counselor is there to help you succeed both in and out of the classroom.

School counselors are very busy and often don't have time to just check in with their students to see how they're doing. This is why it's so important for you to let your counselor know when you need help, want information, or just need someone to listen.

Here are just some of the reasons you may want to make an appointment to see your counselor:

- ▶ you need help deciding which classes to take.
- ▶ you're being bullied or harassed in school or online.
- ▶ you're having a problem with friends, a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ▶ you are struggling in one or more of your classes.
- ▶ you need help figuring out what to do after you graduate.
- ▶ you have questions about college.
- ▶ you are dealing with something that's making it difficult to succeed in your classes (e.g., drugs or alcohol, a pregnancy, anxiety, a health concern, stress, problems at home).



Have a question? Need information? Have a concern or problem? Reach out to your counselor!