

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

Create a test-prep plan

Set time aside each day for 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 make flash cards and review sheets. Highlight key words and important phrases. Look these over whenever you have a few minutes—like when you're standing in line or waiting for a ride.

Explain it

Stand in front of a mirror and explain a concept aloud in your own words, or ask a friend or roommate if they will listen to you explain it. If there's something you have trouble explaining clearly, you'll know what you need to 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 and retaining information.*

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

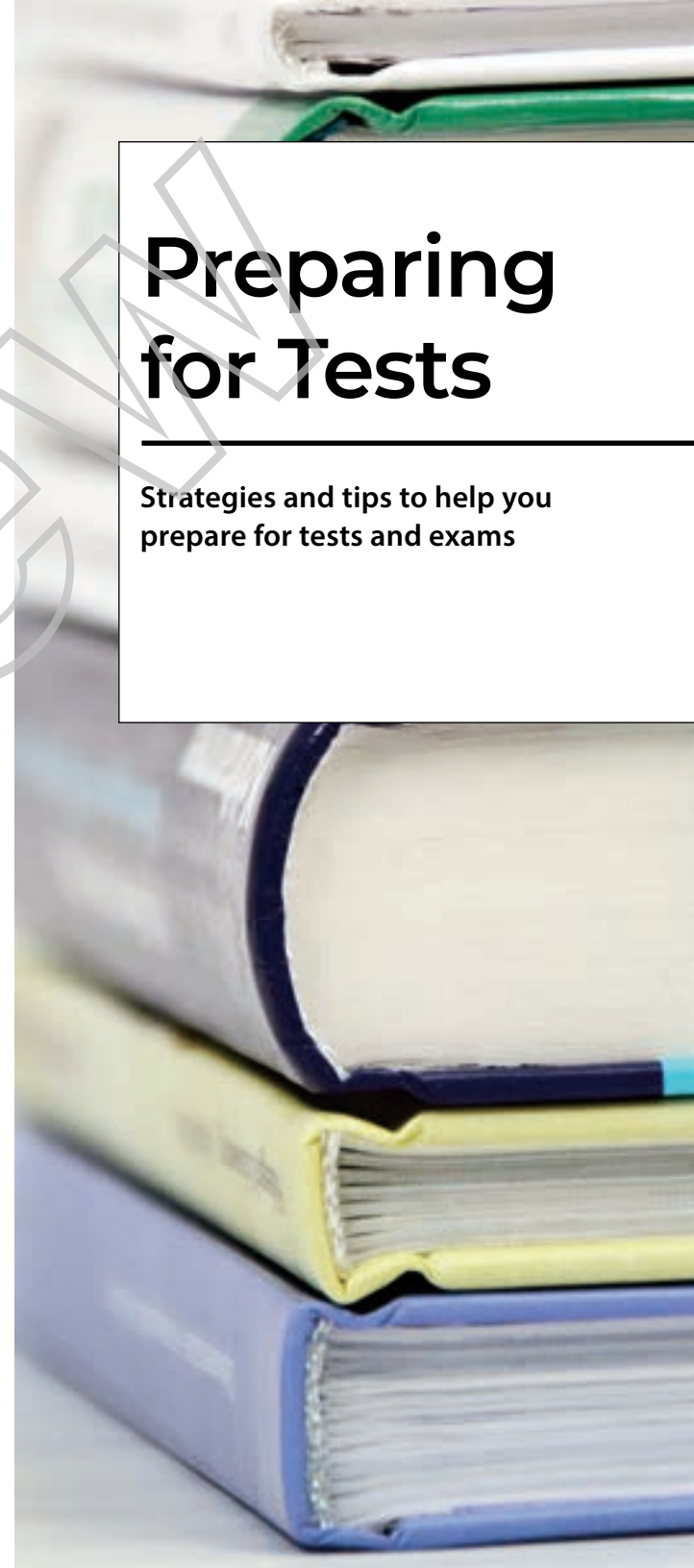
- ▶ Get plenty of sleep the night before a test. If there's something you want to remember, go over it right before you go to sleep.
- ▶ Get up early enough to eat a good breakfast and not be rushed. Spend any free time you have before your test to look over your flashcards and mentally review the material.
- ▶ Practice visualization. Close your eyes and imagine yourself confidently taking the test and answering the questions correctly.
- ▶ Get to class early and 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

Strategies and tips to help you prepare for tests and exams

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Prepare Early

When you start early and give yourself plenty of time to study, you're better prepared and have less stress.

Prepare as you go

- ▶ Make the most of the time you have in class. Listen carefully, take notes, and ask and answer questions. *Learning in class means that you have less to learn on your own.*
- ▶ Complete all reading assignments on time. If you get behind in your reading, it can be very difficult to catch up.
- ▶ Take good, well-organized class notes.
 - Write on only one side of the paper and skip a line between topics.
 - Leave a wide margin on each page. Use this space to write in **key words** (topics, names, events).
- ▶ After each class, make sure your notes are complete, and highlight the most important information.



The class before the test

- ▶ Pay close attention in the class before the test. This is when important test information is likely to be given.
- ▶ Make sure you find out what the test will cover and what the test format will be (essay, true/false, multiple choice, or open book).

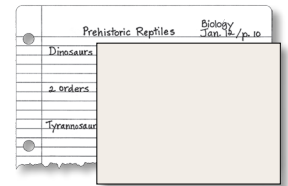
Test-Prep Resources

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

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 margin, 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
- ▶ all **bold** and *italic* words
- ▶ chapter review questions



Other resources

- ▶ **Handouts and review sheets**
Use these to create possible test questions.
- ▶ **Graded homework and quizzes**
Review these carefully.
- ▶ **Classmates**
Discussing material with other students can help you review and clarify information.

Preparing for Tests

- ▶ Do you ever feel unprepared for tests?
- ▶ Do you usually wait until the day before a test or exam to start studying?
- ▶ Do you often study the wrong things?
- ▶ Is finals week your worst nightmare?

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

Many students listen in class and do all the assignments, yet their test and exam grades don't seem to accurately reflect their knowledge or effort.

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

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's unnecessary or repetitive.
- ▶ Vary your sentence structure and correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.
- ▶ Ask someone whose opinion you respect to read your paper and provide feedback.

Step 6. Write the final draft.

- ▶ Reread your paper out loud one more time. Pay attention to the small details.
- ▶ Make sure your paper is formatted according to your professor's specifications.

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

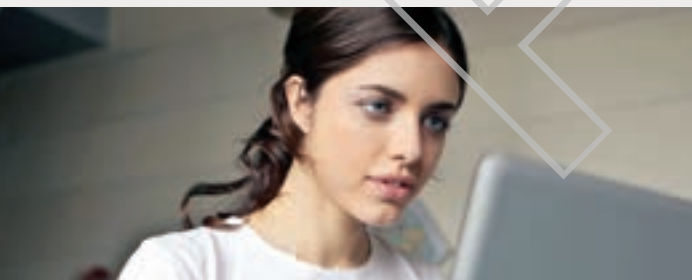
- ▶ Start early. Some papers will be quick and easy. Others are likely to be more challenging and time-consuming. Give yourself plenty of time.
- ▶ Create a strong opening paragraph that includes a bold statement, notable quote, relevant statistic, or interesting example.
- ▶ Make sure your thesis statement is clear and concise.
- ▶ End with a strong closing paragraph that restates or summarizes the main idea.
- ▶ Always identify another person's words or ideas with quotation marks, footnotes, and by including a Works Cited, References, or Bibliography page. If you present another person's words or ideas as your own, it's plagiarism, and you may find yourself in violation of your college's academic code.
- ▶ Follow instructions regarding the paper's length, font, and spacing, and make sure your paper is submitted on time.
- ▶ Visit your college's writing center for help on any stage of the writing process. Even strong writers benefit from the input of others!

Writing Papers

Ideas and tips to help you write an outstanding paper

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Types of Papers

The Writing Process

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 are a strong writer or someone who struggles with writing assignments, following this step-by-step process makes writing a 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.

These are the most common types of papers assigned in college:

Report or essay

- ▶ a paper that informs, explains, or persuades
- ▶ generally 1–4 pages in length
- ▶ focuses on one topic, idea, or argument
- ▶ can include sources and/or your own ideas

Research or term paper

- ▶ examines a topic in-depth and at greater length
- ▶ requires research, organization, and documentation of outside sources
- ▶ often requires specific formatting, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago

Narrative paper

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



Thesis Statement

All reports, essays, re-research 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.

- ▶ Carefully read the assignment requirements and make sure you understand what your professor wants. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.
- ▶ If you're using outside sources, 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 (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.

Plagiarism is passing off someone else's ideas as your own. Colleges have academic codes and take plagiarism very seriously—and they might not care if it was done unintentionally.

You should always cite your source if you use someone else's ideas. This applies to 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 have 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, quotation marks are not required, but you must attribute the source.

To avoid plagiarizing a source: In a Word or handwritten document, 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.



MLA, APA, and Chicago are the citation styles typically used by college students. Your professor will tell you which to use.

MLA – MLA is commonly used in humanities and liberal arts fields, such as English. An MLA in-text citation for a book looks like this: (Author's last name Page #). For example: (Bell 204). The list of sources at the end of an MLA paper is titled Works Cited.

APA – Fields like psychology, business, and education use APA. An APA in-text citation for a book looks like this: (Author, year of publication). For example: (Bell, 2018). If you are citing a direct quote, include the page: (Bell, 2018, p. 204). The list of sources at the end of an APA paper is titled References.

Chicago – History and some business fields use Chicago style citations which use footnotes at the bottom of the page to attribute each source. The footnote should contain all source information: 1. First name Last name, Title of Book (Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication), page number. 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
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Doing Research

Information and tips to help you do research effectively and efficiently





Doing Research

- ▶ Do you feel overwhelmed when you have to do research for a paper or project?
- ▶ Do you have trouble finding good source material for research papers?
- ▶ Are your notes and sources materials typically unorganized?
- ▶ Are you often unsure if and/or how to cite your sources?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, this InfoGuide is sure to help you be a more confident researcher.

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. Like anything else in college, it takes practice and patience to get good at it.

While your professors will determine what your research should look like and include, the tips in this InfoGuide will help you find credible sources, stay organized, and cite your sources correctly.

Gathering 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

For many students, Google is the first (or only) step in their research process. But Google doesn't filter by what's most credible or appropriate for academic research. For more reliable results, use Google Scholar—a simple way to search for scholarly literature.

Even better, start with your college library's website. After logging in with your student username, the library website will grant you access to credible online databases and collections of full-text articles and books. Databases to which your college may have access include **Academic Search Complete** and **ERIC**, as well as topic-specific databases.

Search engine tips

- ▶ Adding quotation marks around your search terms provides results that contain that exact phrase.
- ▶ Typing "or" between two terms gives you results with either of those terms. Typing "and" between two terms gives you only results that contain both.



The library

College libraries offer a wealth of research resources—free and within reach. And college librarians are trained to help students with research. If you can't find something, chances are a librarian can.

Staying Organized

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.
- ▶ If you're doing online searches, keep track of all the search terms you've tried.
- ▶ Write down library call numbers and sort them by topic. List which book or chapter pertains to each topic in your paper.



Keeping track of your sources

- ▶ For online sources, print out each one or store the source info (author, title, web address) in an Excel spreadsheet, Word document, or handwritten record. Make sure to note whether or not you actually use each source in your paper.
- ▶ 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.

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 that 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 retaining information!

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

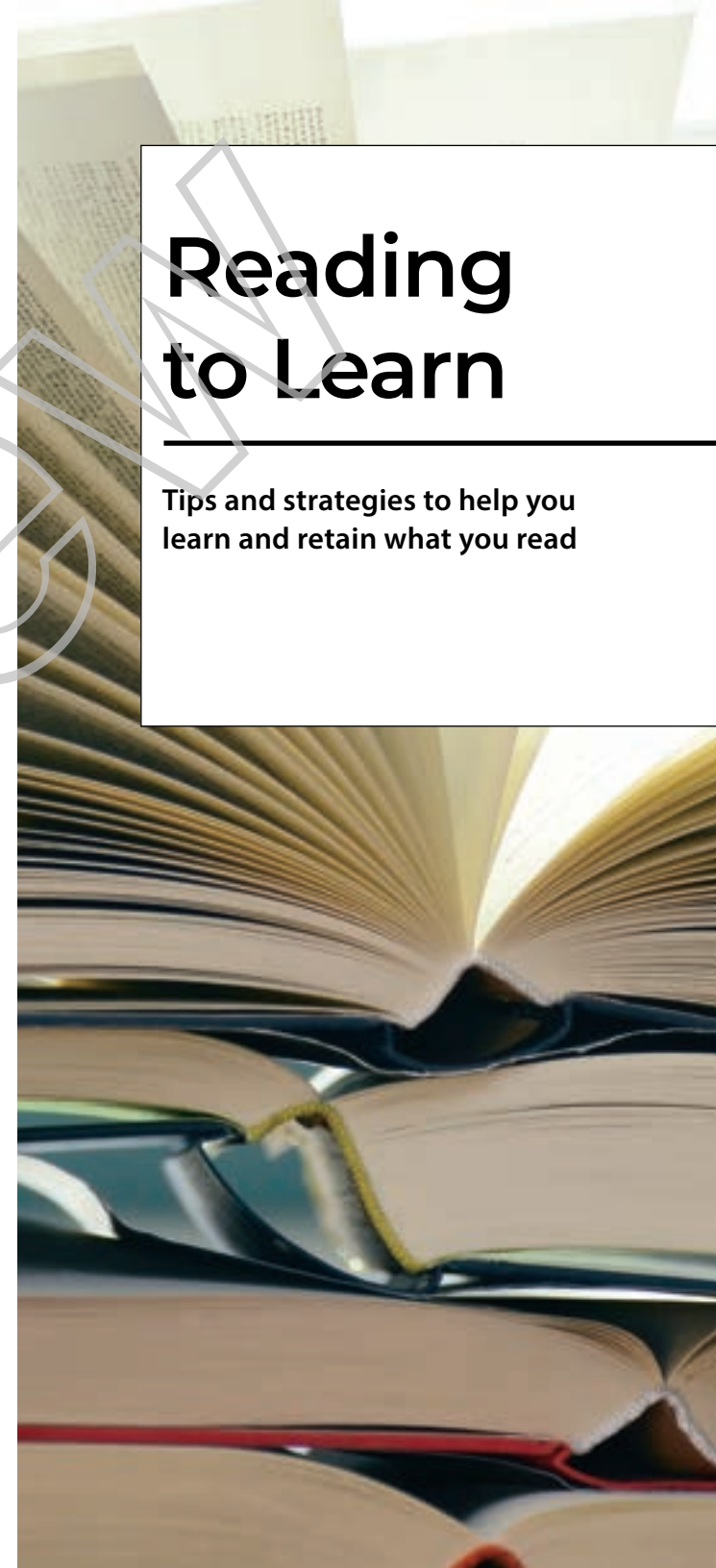
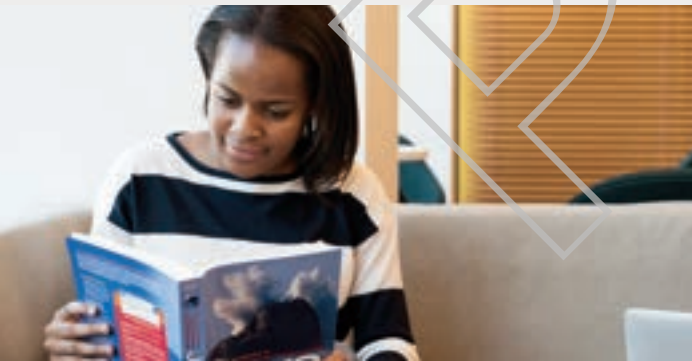
- ▶ Have a quiet place to read, with good lighting and a comfortable chair.
- ▶ Don't read anything you need to remember when you're too tired to concentrate.
- ▶ When reading material on a computer, use an app like Skim or tools in Adobe Reader to make notes and highlight PDF text files.
- ▶ Practice reading at different speeds. For example, a science textbook should be read at a much slower speed than a novel.
- ▶ When you're reading an assignment, 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 and take notes as you read.

Reading to Learn

Tips and strategies to help you learn and retain what you read

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1) Survey

2) Read

Reading to Learn

- ▶ Does your mind ever wander when you're reading?
- ▶ Do you often forget what you just read?
- ▶ Do you sometimes miss important information?
- ▶ 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 3-step process means less work—and better grades!

Before you begin reading, 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

Authors use the following learning tools to make it easier for students to understand the material they are presenting.

Headings and subtitles – introduce main ideas

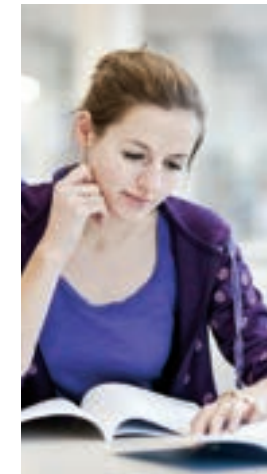
Bold and italic print – highlight key terms

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 heading into a question. Then keep your question in mind as you read that section. When you're finished reading, see if you can answer your question.

The Poison Dart Frog

Turn the heading, "A deadly creature," into a question. When you've finished reading the section, you should know what makes this frog so deadly.



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 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 in the room over the course of the presentation.
- ▶ If you're feeling flustered, or you've lost your place, pause for a few seconds. Take a breath and then resume.
- ▶ The biggest mistake speakers make is talking too fast. Talk slowly and expressively with a strong, clear voice.
- ▶ Avoid "filler" words, such as "like," "um," and "okay."
- ▶ Watch out for nervous, repetitive gestures, such as fidgeting or playing with your hair.
- ▶ Know that the audience is rooting for you. They don't want to listen to a boring speech or see you struggle. They want you to do well.

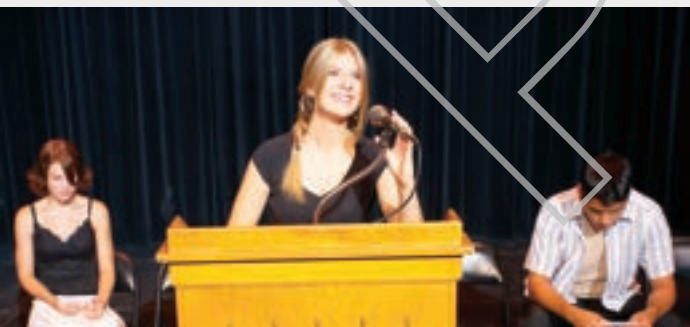
If you're afraid of speaking in public, you aren't alone. Over 75% of people report a fear of speaking in public. There's even a name for this fear – glossophobia.

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

- ▶ Adequate preparation is the best way to reduce anxiety. Practice your presentation out loud over and over.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Congratulate yourself for what you do well, and know that with every presentation, you'll get even better.

Preparing Presentations

Tips and strategies to help you give an outstanding presentation



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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 reluctant to speak up?
- ▶ Do you dread giving presentations?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on developing your public speaking skills.

You'll likely be required to give at least one presentation at some point in your college career. Possibly several. Whether you're a seasoned 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.

Consider the content

- ▶ Is the purpose of your presentation to inform, persuade, or demonstrate? How long does your presentation need to be?
- ▶ If you're given 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?

Use visual aids wisely

- ▶ Visual aids can help engage the audience; however, too many props, pictures, graphs, sounds, and slides can be distracting and unwieldy.
- ▶ If you're using PowerPoint, choose an appropriate theme, and don't use too many fonts, animations, transitions, or sounds.



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, question, quick summary, or quote.



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 them very often.

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

Practice, practice, practice

The more you practice, the better your delivery will be. Here's how to get the most out of your practice time.

- ▶ Once you can deliver the content 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 provide feedback on content, pace, and tone.
- ▶ Record or video your presentation. Look for ways to improve it, and then record it again.
- ▶ Practice talking slowly, speaking clearly, and pausing 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 of your closing remarks.

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

- ▶ Use 3 x 5 index cards to memorize facts, formulas, and lists. Take these cards with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes (e.g., while waiting for a ride, between classes, standing in line).
- ▶ Record yourself reciting what you need to remember. Listen to the recording while you walk to class, do laundry, clean your room, or get ready for bed.
- ▶ Make up rhymes to help you remember information (e.g., "In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue," "30 days hath September, April, June, and November...").
- ▶ Before you go to sleep, review the material 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 remember a person's name, use his/her name in the conversation. "Nice to meet you, John."

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

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

- ▶ **Outlining** – Identify the main ideas. Under each main idea, make a list of supporting facts, ideas, and examples.
- ▶ **Mapping** – Map information by putting 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

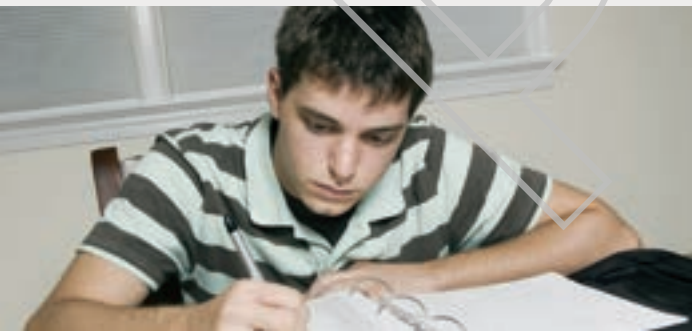
Picnic items – hot dog, fruit, mustard, ants

Office items – pencil, phone, ruler, chair

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

Memorizing Information

Tips and strategies to help you retain and remember information



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Memorizing 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 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 need to remember details for a history exam, the steps to solve a math problem, or the name of someone you just met, memorization is a skill that can be developed and improved.

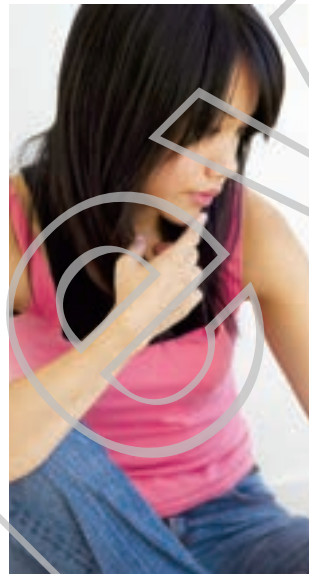
Keep reading to learn a few simple strategies to help you improve your memory!

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 retain 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

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

Use acronyms

The acronym HOMES can help you remember the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior).

The acronym Roy G Biv gives you the colors of the rainbow.

Create unforgettable images

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

- ▶ For example, to remember that Pizarro conquered the Inca empire, imagine a pizza covering an ink spot.



Create silly sentences

Use the first letter of the words you want to remember to make up a silly, ridiculous sentence. For example, to remember the names of the eight planets in order (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), create a silly sentence like, *My very elegant mother just served us noodles.*

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.

Try this 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.

Getting to Class

Even if you plan to attend class, it's sometimes hard to get motivated to go. Here are a few tips to help ensure that you get to all of your classes.

Choose your class times wisely

Make it easy on yourself. If you aren't a morning person, don't register for 8 am classes, and if you like to work out before dinner, avoid late afternoon classes. Schedule your classes so they aren't competing with anything else, and in a way that fits with how you like to structure your day.

Don't give yourself an option

Don't think of going to class as something you should do—think of it as something you just *always* do. If you have a morning class and you're lying in bed thinking, "Should I go to class?" ,you are likely to go back to sleep. *Going to class should be a given—not a choice.*

Plan your day

Each night before you go to bed, plan out the following day. Think about the classes you'll have, and what you'll do between classes. When you have a schedule to follow, you're more likely to get to all of your classes, and make better use of your time between classes.



If You Must Miss Class

Sometimes you have a legitimate reason to miss class. Here are some tips for handling an absence.

- ▶ Refer to the professor's attendance policy. (It's usually outlined in the syllabus.) It may allow for a certain number of absences.
- ▶ If you're sick and visit the health center, ask for a nurse or doctor's note. Some professors don't differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, but it doesn't hurt to have proof of the reason for your absence.
- ▶ If your professor takes attendance each day, send an email explaining your absence, and if possible, offer evidence for the reason (doctor's note, tow truck receipt).
- ▶ If you know you're going to miss a class and your absence may be noticed, notify your professor ahead of time.
- ▶ Ask a classmate to provide you with class notes to copy. Don't email your professor and ask, "What did I miss?" It's your responsibility to make up what you missed, not your professor's.

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Classroom Success

Showing Up

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Showing Up

Tips and ideas to help motivate you to attend all of your classes





Reasons to Attend Every Class

Make Going to Class Worth Your Time

Showing Up

- ▶ Do you sometimes skip class?
- ▶ Have you gotten a lower grade in a class because of your attendance?
- ▶ Do you often have a hard time getting motivated to go to class?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, improving your class attendance will likely improve your interest in your classes and your GPA.

In college, no one forces you to go to class. No one sets your alarm for you, there's no attendance office keeping track of how often you don't show up, and most professors won't reach out and ask you why you weren't in class.

Unfortunately, some college students take advantage of this freedom and assume that if no one is hassling them to get to class, then it must not be important. *This is one of the biggest mistakes college students make.*

The single most important thing you can do in college is to attend every class.

There are a lot of reasons why you should be in class every day.

When you miss class...

When you're not in class, you miss out on lecture material, explanations of assignments, class discussions, changes to the syllabus, and information on upcoming tests and exams. You also can't ask questions or hear the answers to questions posed by other students.

And when you miss class, you essentially have to teach the entire class to yourself. This is time consuming, stressful, and for most, a much less effective 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 is not the same as being in class, and it's often more of a hassle. *Notes copied from another student are never an adequate substitute for your own.*

Better grades

In some classes, your grade may be partially based on attendance, and even if it's not, a professor isn't likely to cut you any slack if you're often a no-show.

Perhaps you're skipping classes because you don't feel like you're getting that much out of them. Here are some tips to help you get the maximum benefit from your classes.

Sit up front and participate

When you sit up front, you can hear what's being said, see what's written, and you're less likely to get distracted by other students. It's also easier to participate when you're closer to the professor. And when you participate, you are more alert, you learn more, and the time goes by faster.

Get to know your classmates

While your success in college depends on you, college isn't a solo endeavor. Your classes are filled with students who have similar goals, expectations, and anxieties. When you get to know them, you become part of a community—a community that will provide support, and notice when you're not there.

Get to know your professors

Developing a positive relationship with your professors is one way that you can directly influence the quality of your education. Visit your professors during office hours to introduce yourself, ask for assistance, or request career guidance. Once you get to know your professors, your classes will feel less impersonal, and you'll likely find them more interesting.



Good academic planning requires more than choosing the right classes. You also need to schedule the right combination of classes at the right times.

Spread out difficult courses

When you're taking a particularly difficult class, you may need to devote twice the normal study time to it. If possible, avoid taking more than one time-consuming, challenging class in the same semester.

Many classes include a lab, which is a completely separate class session. Taking too many classes with required labs in the same semester can leave you with very little free time.

Consider taking a difficult class during the summer, when you have fewer or no competing classes.

Consider class times and spacing

Let's face it, many students stay up way too late. So unless you're a morning person, avoid early morning classes.

Think about how you want to space out your classes. Back-to-back classes provide longer blocks of uninterrupted non-class time, but they also make it harder to arrive early and stay after class.

Schedule an appointment with your advisor early each semester. Here are some questions you may want to ask.

- ▶ How do I access my degree audit? *A degree audit is an online analysis that allows you to keep track of your academic progress and unfulfilled requirements. At many schools, it is called DARS or CAPP.*
- ▶ What is a reasonable course load?
- ▶ Are there admission requirements for the major I've chosen?
- ▶ I'm not strong in the area of _____. Is there a particularly difficult course in that subject area I should take during the summer, when I have more time to devote to it?
- ▶ I'm thinking of taking courses at a college near my home in the summer. Will these courses transfer to this college?
- ▶ I've reviewed the general education (gen. ed.) courses and the courses required for my major. When should I take these courses?
- ▶ When do I register for next semester's courses? What's the best way to ensure I get into the classes I need?

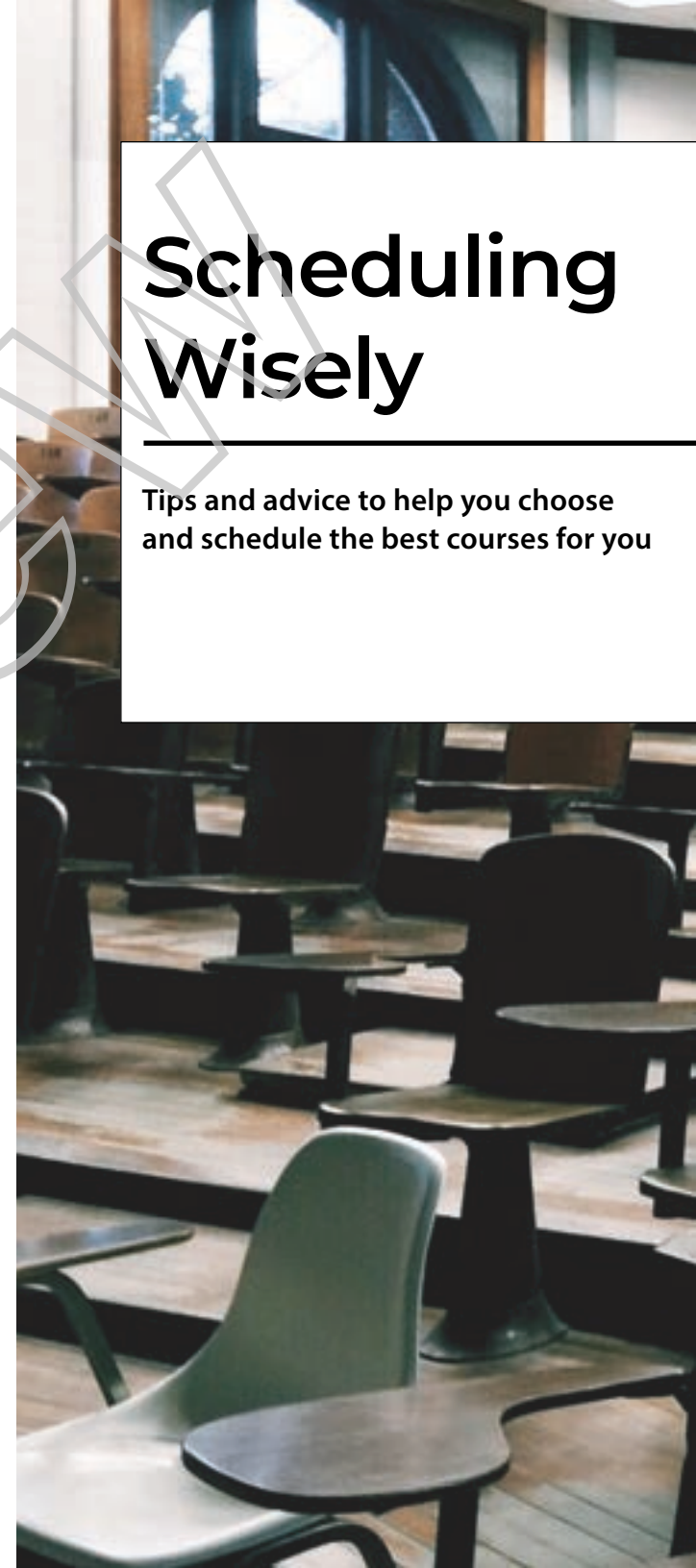
Scheduling Wisely

Tips and advice to help you choose and schedule the best courses for you

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Classroom Success Pamphlets

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Choose Your Classes Wisely

Register as Early as Possible

Scheduling Wisely

- ▶ Are you unsure which classes you should take and when?
- ▶ Do you register for classes without checking them out or discussing them with your advisor?
- ▶ Are you sometimes unable to get into the classes you want or need to take?

If you answered yes to any of the above, this pamphlet will help you select your courses wisely and make smart scheduling decisions.

Scheduling wisely simply means making smart, well-researched decisions about the classes you take. And while your academic advisor can help you with academic planning, the ultimate decision about which classes to take and when to take them is up to you.

Good academic planning will help you navigate your academic world wisely and efficiently.

Choosing the right courses is one of the most important things you do in college. These tips will help ensure that you choose courses in line with your personal and career goals.

Course selection tips

- ▶ Months before you need to register, schedule an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss the courses you're considering.
- ▶ Create a list of first-choice classes, along with a list of alternate course selections.
- ▶ Get all core requirements completed as early as possible.
- ▶ Schedule a good mix of classes with regards to difficulty and subject matter.
- ▶ Be aware of the courses required for your major, particularly with regards to courses that have prerequisites or need to be taken in sequence.
- ▶ If your school offers a College 101 or Academic Strategies course or seminar, take it. You'll learn lots of helpful college success tips.

Not sure about a course? Check it out.



- ▶ Leaf through the textbook at the bookstore.
- ▶ Sit in on a class. After class, ask a few students what they think of the course and the professor.
- ▶ Visit the professor during office hours to discuss the class.

To ensure you get the courses you want each semester, make your course selections early and register on the earliest date possible.

Understand registration

Colleges generally provide a registration date (or range of dates) according to the number of hours students have completed. Find out what your date and time to register is.

Registration typically opens at a specific time in the morning. *Be ready as soon as your time slot opens.* Some classes fill up quickly, so always register at the earliest possible time.

If you're closed out of a course you need, plead your case with the professor during office hours. They may be able to add a spot or put you on a waiting list.



Understand Withdrawal Policies

Before you decide to withdraw from a class, get the answers to the following questions:

- ▶ What are the withdrawal policies of your department and/or college?
- ▶ What is the withdrawal deadline?
- ▶ Will withdrawing from this class affect your financial aid?

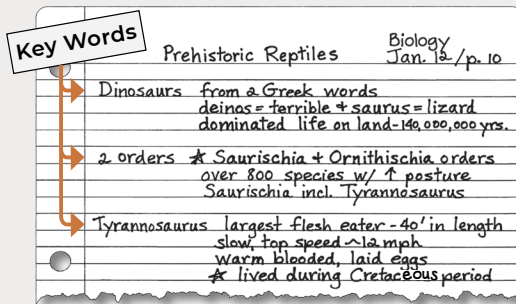
Use Key Words

Notetaking Tips

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

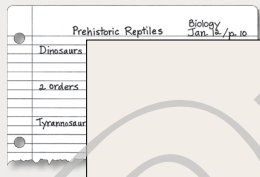
Leave a margin for key words.

Leave a wide space or margin on the left side of each page. As you're taking notes, write the 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 person, topic, place, or event. Uncover your notes to see what information you missed or got wrong.



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, don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar and use abbreviations and symbols.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|------------------|
| = | 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 your 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

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Have a Notetaking System

Develop Your Listening Skills

Taking Notes

- ▶ Do you generally take too many notes or not enough?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time knowing what to write, and what not to write?
- ▶ 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.

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

Use three-ring notebooks/binders.

- ▶ Keep important course information (professor's email address, office hours, course syllabus) in the front of your notebook or binder. Write your name and email address in the inside cover.
- ▶ Using three-ring notebooks 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 class notes, the important thing is that you have a system 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, events).



Taking good notes requires 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 are also thinking about and trying to understand the information that's being presented.

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 instructors 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"
- ▶ clarifications like, "Is this clear?"

Group members often have different levels of commitment and ideas on how a particular group should function. These differences can sometimes 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 be unrelated 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, as this can deepen the rift within the group.
- ▶ Discuss a plan to work past the conflict, even if it's just getting to the end of the project, and not solving the actual conflict.
- ▶ If necessary, seek support from your professor.

Recruiters and graduate schools seek candidates who can communicate clearly, solve problems, and work in collaboration with others. They also value candidates with 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!

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Doing Group Work
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Doing Group Work

Tips and strategies to help you improve your group experiences





Group Roles

Group Tips

Doing Group Work

- ▶ Do you dread or avoid group projects?
- ▶ Do you sometimes feel that other group members don't pull their weight—or don't let you contribute enough?
- ▶ 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, you may want to look for ways to improve your future group experiences.

At some point in college, you will likely be involved in one or more group projects. You're not alone if you're the type of person who prefers completing assignments independently. Many students dislike group projects; however, being part of a well-functioning group can be a very worthwhile and rewarding experience.

Whether you're working on a group project, involved in an extracurricular activity, or working at a part-time job, being able to collaborate and work as part of a team are valuable skills—skills that will be assets in college and beyond. **Look at group work as an opportunity to develop and improve these important skills.**

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

Positive roles

In successful groups, members assume roles that help the group move forward and 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 their share of the work

Think about the roles you have assumed—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?



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

Set goals

- ▶ Make sure the task or project is manageable, and that the goal of the group is understood by all.
- ▶ Set short-term and long-term goals, and assign equitable tasks to each group member.
- ▶ Create deadlines to ensure that all tasks are completed in a timely fashion.

Focus group meetings

Begin each group meeting by going around the table and allowing everyone (even the quiet ones) to give updates on their individual progress, share ideas, and ask questions.

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.

Collaborate and keep in touch

Establish how the group will communicate, collaborate, and store their work. Consider apps such as Facebook Messenger, GroupMe texts, Google Drive and Dropbox.

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

Come to class awake and alert

- ▶ Get plenty of sleep each night. Don't rely on caffeine to keep you alert.
- ▶ Get up early enough to have a good breakfast and be fully awake for your first class.

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. When you take notes, you don't have time to think about or do anything else. Taking notes, therefore, helps you stay engaged, and having good notes to study from later is an added bonus.
- ▶ If your professor is presenting from a PowerPoint, don't just watch and listen passively. Jot down important points and questions you have about the material.

Watch your body language

- ▶ Use body language that shows you're engaged and paying attention. 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

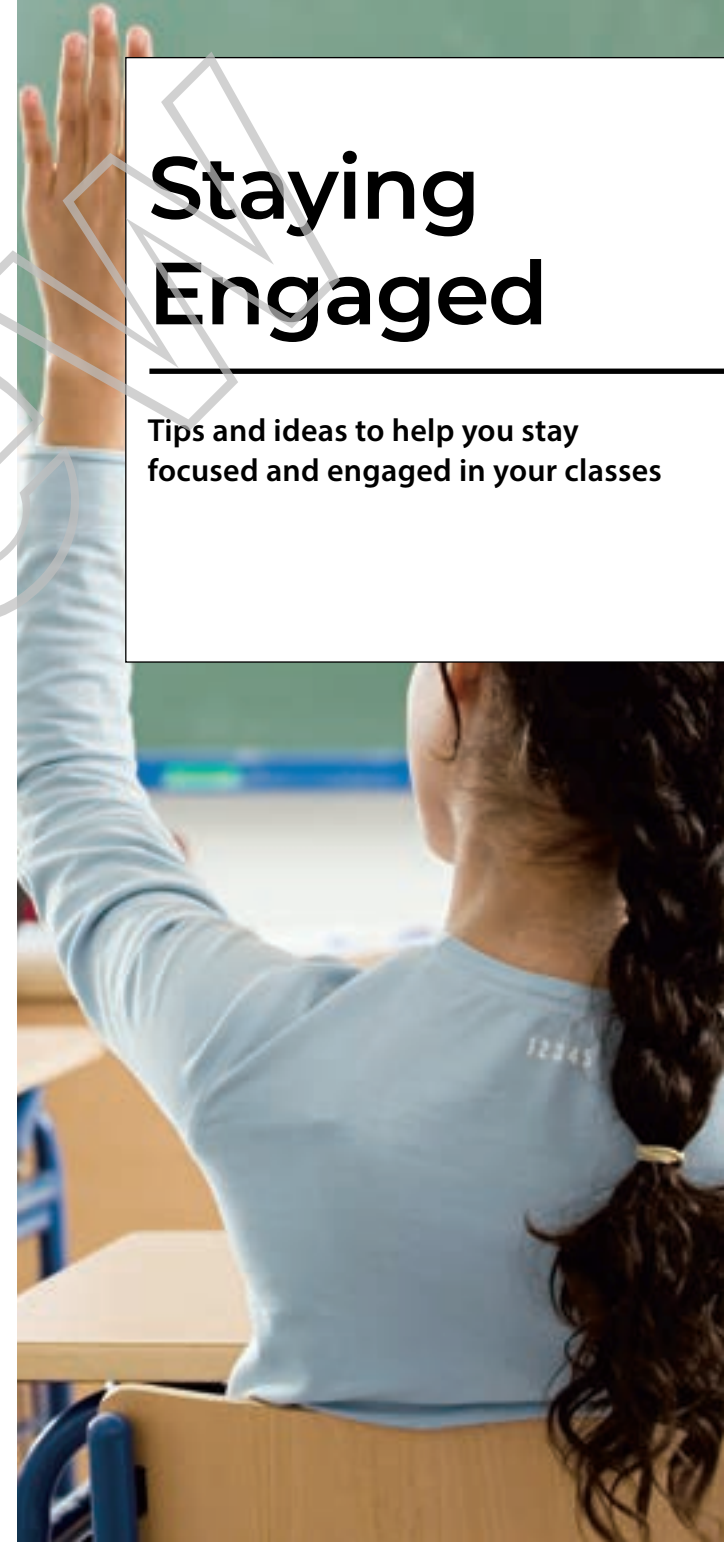
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Staying Engaged
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Staying Engaged

Tips and ideas to help you stay focused and engaged in your classes





Keep Your Mind Engaged

Participate in Your Classes

Staying Engaged

- ▶ Do you often daydream during class?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time remembering what you learned in class?
- ▶ Are you often bored when listening to a lecture or presentation?
- ▶ Do you sometimes skip class because it doesn't interest you?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, now is the time to work on staying more engaged in your classes.

Obviously, showing up to class is the first step to success. But your physical presence isn't enough. You need to stay engaged while you're in class—otherwise you're 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. The time in class also goes much 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 your homework completed and be caught up on the assigned reading. The lecture will make more sense and you'll be able to participate in discussions.
- ▶ Be 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

- ▶ Sit close to the front. Students in the front seldom talk to one another, text, use social media, doze off, walk in late, or engage in other activities that are distracting and annoying.
- ▶ Disable your phone and put it away. Also, stay off your laptop unless it's being used in conjunction with the lecture. Consider using an app like Freedom or SelfControl that blocks the internet and other apps for a period of time.



Give yourself a reason

- ▶ Try giving yourself a reason to focus and pay attention. Challenge yourself to take notes good enough to share with others, or imagine you need 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 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 to the current discussion.

If your professor asks questions, try to answer often. If your professor puts you in small discussion groups, actively engage in the discussions.

Look for ways to be engaged

If the class isn't structured to include student participation, you can still participate by making eye contact with your professor, nodding, and writing down questions to ask your professor during office hours.

Even if you don't ask and answer questions in class, when you're sitting in the front and paying attention, you send a positive message to your professor—"I'm here to learn."

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

Essay tests

- ▶ Read each question and start with the easiest one.
- ▶ Before you begin writing, brainstorm. 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 facts and details to support the points you're making. In the final paragraph, restate important points, draw conclusions, or write a brief summary.

Math tests

- ▶ Before you begin to solve a problem, estimate the answer.
- ▶ Show all of your work and write numbers 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.

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 answering the questions calmly and correctly.
- ▶ Avoid caffeine and energy drinks—they can exacerbate anxiety symptoms.
- ▶ Walk into the classroom with your head up and your shoulders back. If you act 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, visit your college's counseling office or learning center.

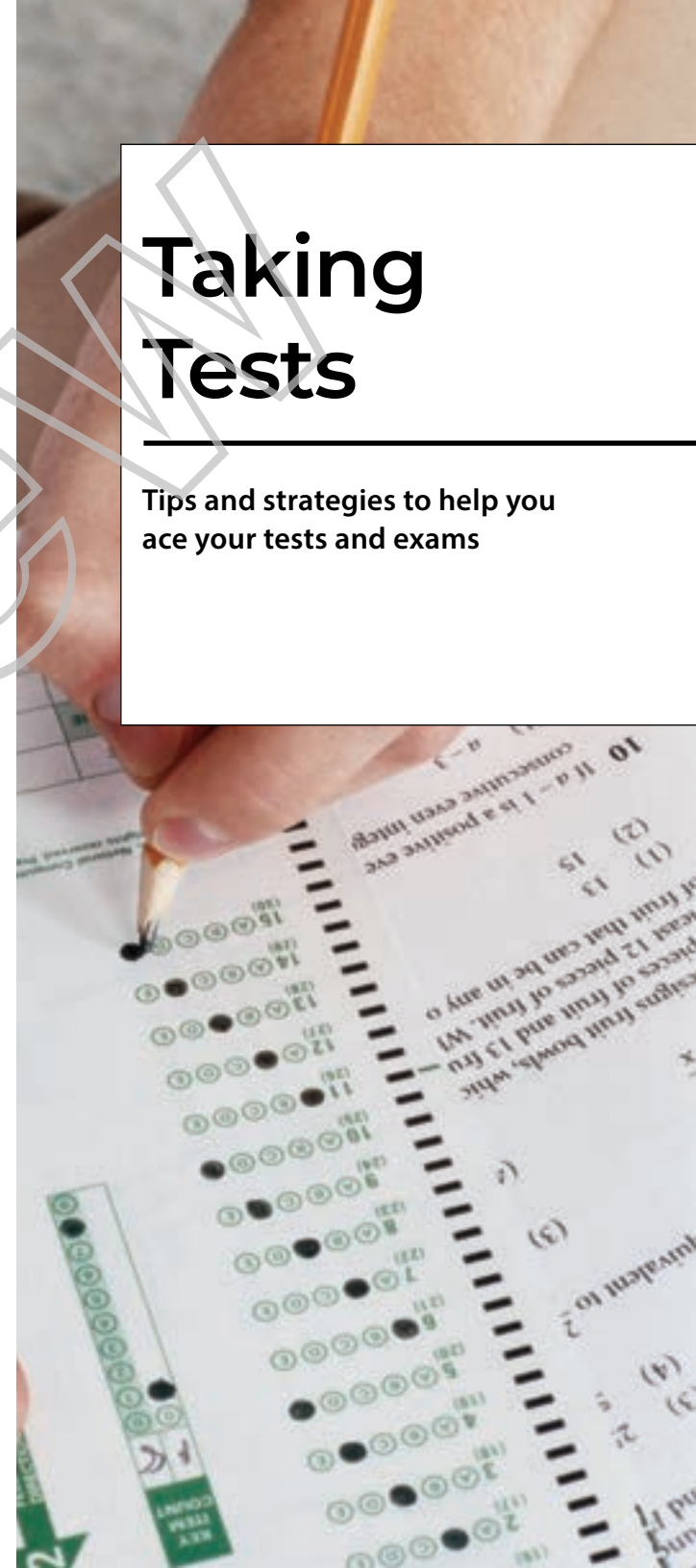
Taking Tests

Tips and strategies to help you ace your tests and exams

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Test-Taking Tips

Types of Tests

Taking Tests

- ▶ Do you get overly nervous when you take tests?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time answering essay questions?
- ▶ Do you sometimes run out of time when taking a test?
- ▶ 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 improve your test taking skills.

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

Smart test takers use strategies that improve their confidence, help them choose the right answers, and nail their essay responses.

In this pamphlet, you'll find 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

- ▶ Get anything you need for the test ready the night before, and get a good night's sleep.
- ▶ Get to the test early so you'll have a few minutes to relax and get focused.
- ▶ As soon as you're handed your test, write anything you want to remember at the top of the page (names, formulas, dates). Then read the directions.

Develop a plan

Before you begin answering questions, look over the entire test and decide how much time you'll spend on each section or question. Pace yourself so that you have enough time to review your answers.

Don't get stuck on difficult questions

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



Check your answers

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.

For essay questions, make sure your response addresses every part of the question, and proofread your writing.

Different types of test questions and formats require different strategies.

Multiple-choice

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

True/False

- ▶ Statements with absolute words such as *all*, *always*, *never*, *every*, and *none* are usually false.
- ▶ Statements with qualifiers like *usually*, *sometimes*, and *generally* are typically 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

- ▶ 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.

Academic success involves more than attending class and completing assignments. To be successful in college, you need to be organized.

► **Develop routines**

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

► **Create a study plan**

Know what time of day you study best, and create a study plan that works for you. Identify anything that could interrupt your study plan and figure out how you can eliminate it.

Before you start to study, decide what you want to get done and the order you'll do it.

► **Eliminate clutter**

Put away or get rid of anything you don't need.

► **Use a monthly wall calendar**

A monthly wall calendar helps you keep track of major events, project deadlines, breaks, etc.

► **Keep phone numbers**

Have a phone number for at least two students in each class. If you have a question or miss a class, you'll have someone to contact.



Using 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 to ensure 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 order of importance (1,2,3...).

Do the same with the Bs and Cs.

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

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

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

"Don't agonize. Organize."

Florynce Kennedy

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Habits for Success

Getting Organized

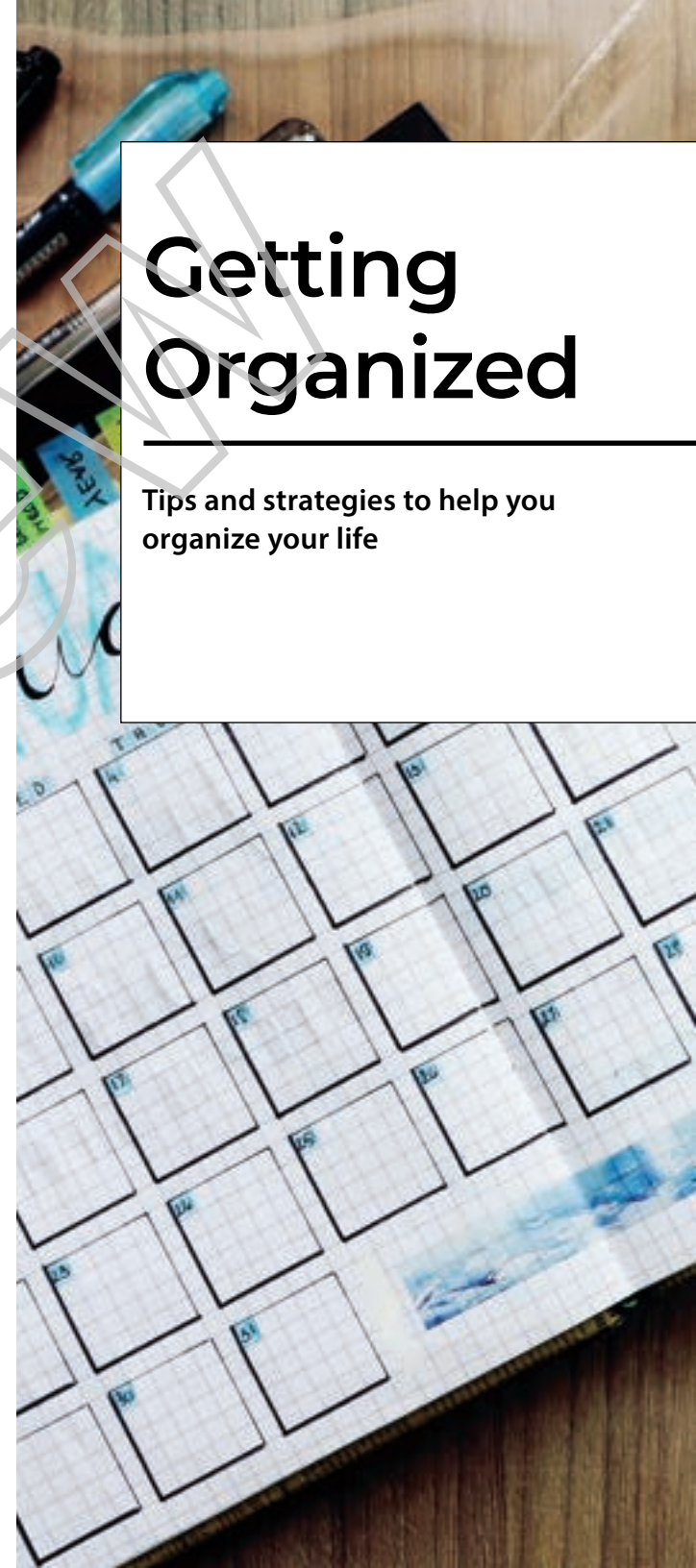
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Getting Organized

Tips and strategies to help you organize your life





Getting Organized

- ▶ Do you waste time looking for things?
- ▶ Do you sometimes forget to bring what you need to class?
- ▶ Are there loose papers in your backpack?
- ▶ Are you often missing the things you need?

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 more smoothly and 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 pamphlet 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.

Use a Planner

Whether it's a hard copy planner or a phone app, using a planner every day is a great way to stay organized. Use it to keep track of the following.

Important dates

Record exam dates, special events, holidays, and the beginning and ending dates of each term.

Daily assignments, quizzes, and tests

- ▶ Write each assignment under the date it's assigned, and note the date it's to be completed.
- ▶ Check off assignments when they're done.
- ▶ Write in all quiz, test, and exam dates.

Whenever you're given a syllabus, copy the assignments into your planner.



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

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



With changing schedules and classes all over campus, it's important to keep your stuff organized.

Notebooks/binders/files

- ▶ Keep important course information (instructor's email address, office hours, syllabus) in the front of your notebook or binder. Write your name and email address on the inside cover in case it's lost.
- ▶ Your notes and class handouts are your most valuable resource when studying for tests. It's therefore very important that you have a system for keeping these organized.

It doesn't matter whether you use spiral notebooks, binders, folders, or 3-ring notebooks. The important thing is that you have a system for organizing papers and class notes that works for you.

- ▶ Have a file to store material that might be useful after the class ends. This is especially important for major-related classes.

Computer files

Regularly back up and organize your computer files. Create a file for each term, and a file for each class within that term, on a cloud system like Google Drive or DropBox.

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

- ▶ Have a phone number for at least two students in each class. If you miss a class or have a question, you'll have someone to contact.
- ▶ Complete written assignments early. This will give you time to review and revise your work.
- ▶ If you like to listen to music while you're studying, 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.
- ▶ If you're struggling in a class, don't wait. Get help before you fall too far behind. Email your professor and/or drop in during office hours.
- ▶ Know your college's Learning Management System. If you're confused about how to use your school's LMS to turn in assignments, view a syllabus, or keep track of your grades, talk to a professor or an upperclass student.
- ▶ Sometimes it's helpful to study with other students. Only study with students who are serious about their schoolwork, and keep your study sessions focused and on track.

Using study strategies that engage multiple senses 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 aids for later.
- ▶ 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 walking to class, cleaning your room, doing laundry, etc.
- ▶ Study in a new place. Explore a building you've never been to, try a different floor in the library, or find a quiet outdoor space.

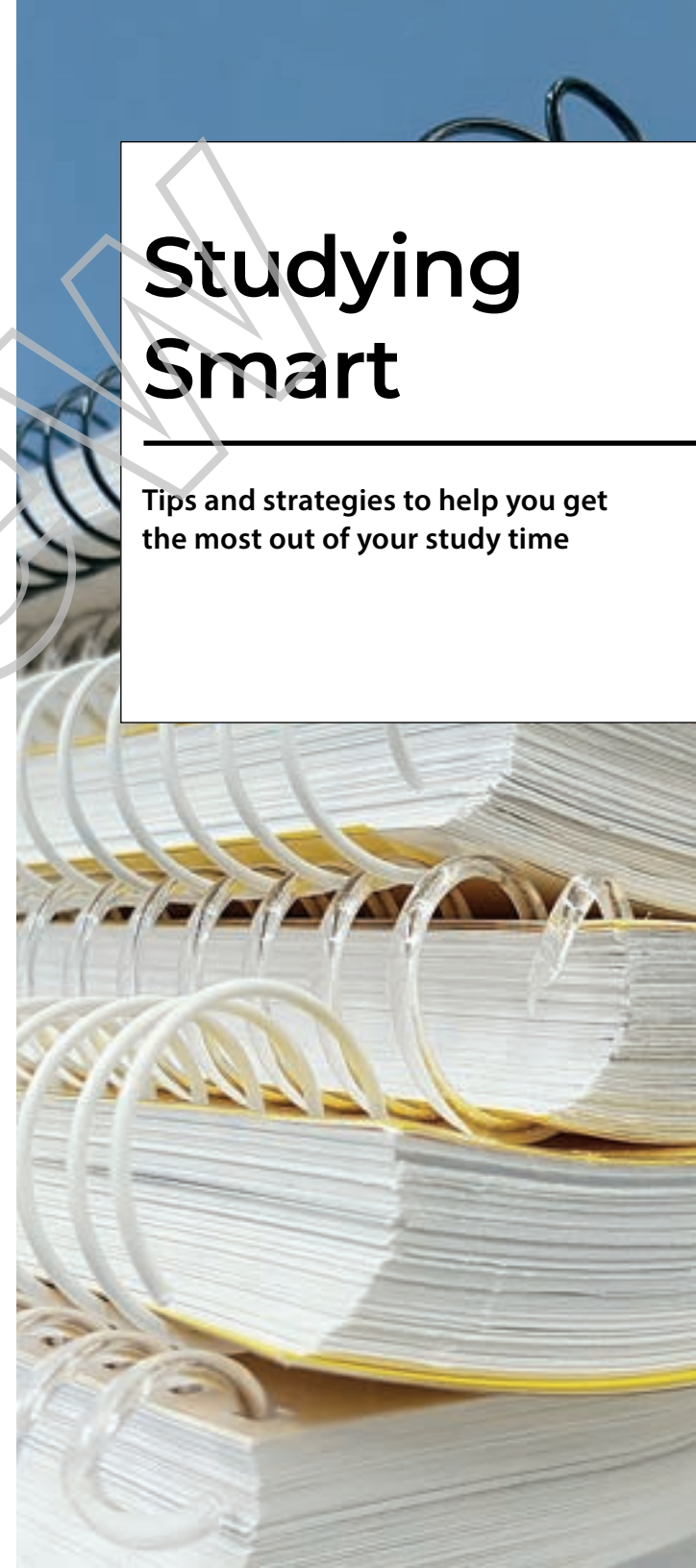
"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." Robert Collier

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Studying Smart

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





Studying Smart

- ▶ Do your assignments seem to take longer than they should?
- ▶ Do you have a hard time staying focused when you study?
- ▶ Do large assignments sometimes seem overwhelming?
- ▶ Are your 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 study habits.

As you have undoubtedly heard, you should study two (or more) hours for each hour in class. But the key to success in college is not studying a lot—it's *studying smart*.

Students who "study smart" often spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades.

Keep reading, and you'll learn how studying smart can help you get your assignments completed more efficiently—and get better grades.

Know When, Where, and How to Study

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

Choose a good place to study

Your study area should be comfortable, quiet, well-lit, and have a surface for writing. This can be your dorm room or bedroom; however, these areas are often too distracting. Scope out quiet study areas on campus (e.g., dorm study lounges, empty classrooms, various locations in the library).

Eliminate distractions

Silence your phone and restrict time on your tablet and laptop to study-related uses. Consider downloading an app (e.g., SelfControl or Freedom) that limits the use of your phone during times specified by you.

Be smart about when you study

Some students like to study at night; others are more focused in the morning. Know when you study best and try to organize your day so that you're able to study when you're the most alert and productive.



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.

Organize Your Study Time

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. Be specific. For example: 1) math pg. 61; 2) revise paper; 3) write lab report.
- ▶ Prioritize your work. Start with the things that have impending deadlines, or are the most important.
- ▶ Alternate types of work. For example: 1) read biology; 2) do math; 3) read history. If you have something to memorize, work on it first, and then go over it again at the end of your study session.



Break down large assignments

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

Mon – Do research	Wed – Revise and rewrite
Tues – Write first draft	Thurs – Write final report

Take breaks

Research shows that students learn the most during the first and last 10 minutes of any study session. After studying for 30 minutes, take a short break. Resist the temptation to text a friend, go online, or check your messages. Save those things for later.

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

▶ **Create routines**

Create a morning routine that includes getting up early enough to eat a good breakfast—and get to your first class on time.

▶ **Identify chunks of time that are wasted**

If you have time between classes, meet with a professor, run an errand, study, or just relax. The important thing is that you think about how you can best use the time you have.

▶ **Don't procrastinate**

Procrastinating wastes valuable time and energy. If you have trouble getting started on your studying, begin with something you can finish quickly or a subject you like.

▶ **Learn to say “no”**

In college, there's so much going on that it's easy to get sidetracked. It's also easy to convince yourself that you'll have time to study later. *Don't let anything get in the way of your coursework.*

▶ **Use snippets of time**

Fifteen minutes here and there add up. Using these snippets of time wisely will free up time in the evening for socializing and chilling out.

▶ **Combine tasks**

Study while you're doing laundry, go over a speech while cleaning your room, or review your notes while you're waiting for a ride.

▶ **Schedule 90-minute study sessions**

Have a specific time to start studying, and silence your phone. During your study sessions, don't do anything else. Focus completely on your work.

▶ **Don't overextend yourself**

If you never seem to have enough time, identify activities you can eliminate, shorten, or postpone. Don't sacrifice sleep or exercise to get everything done.

▶ **Control time wasters**

Social media, TV, and video games can take up a huge amount of time. Schedule small chunks of time for these activities, and stick to your schedule.

"If you want to make good use of your time, you've got to know what's most important and then give it all you've got."

Lee Iacocca

Managing Your Time

Tips and strategies to help you make the best use of your time

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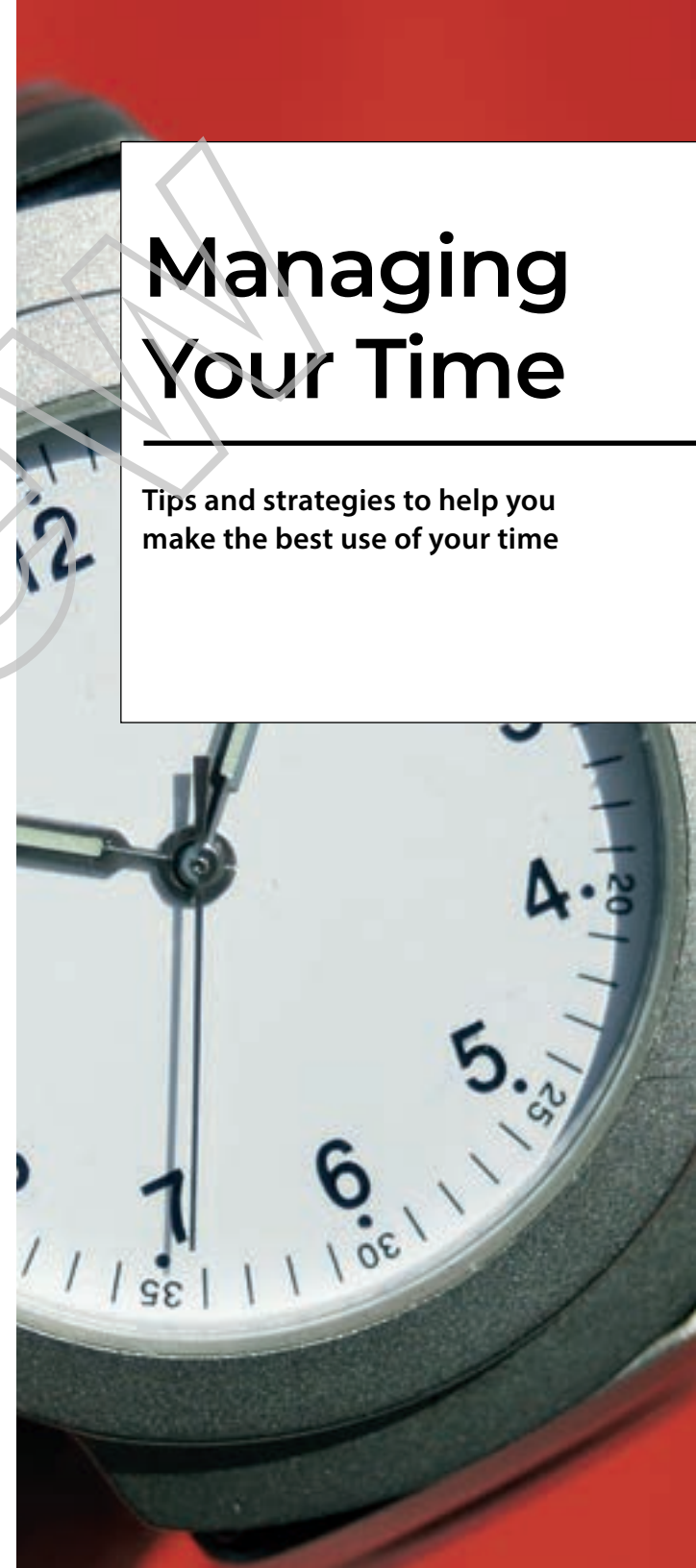
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Managing Your Time

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Time-Management Strategies

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

Create 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.

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

Focus on one task at a time. When it's completed, cross it off your list. 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.

Having a to-do list allows you to concentrate 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.



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 project deadlines and events.

Managing Your Time

- ▶ Are you often late to class, meetings, and appointments?
- ▶ Do you typically rush to finish assignments at the last minute?
- ▶ Do you often feel like you have too much to do?
- ▶ Do you wish you had more time to do 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.

In college, you are in control of how you spend your time. And while this freedom can be exciting, not managing your time wisely can be stressful, and make it more difficult to succeed in your classes.

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

Read on for tips on how to manage your time effectively in college.



Create a weekly schedule

A weekly schedule like the one below will help you organize and plan out your days.

First write in all classes, appointments, and meal times. You can then 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
8:00 am				
9:00 am				
10:00 am				
11:00 am				
12:00 pm				
1:00 pm				
2:00 pm				
3:00 pm				
4:00 pm				
5:00 pm				
6:00 pm				
7:00 pm				

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

Manage Stress

It's difficult to be mindful or present when you're stressed out. And being a college student can definitely be stressful at times.

- ▶ There are a number of ways to manage stress (e.g., relaxation exercises, Tai Chi, deep breathing, Yoga, meditation). Check out your college's Health and Wellness program and Recreation Center for relaxation related programs.
- ▶ When you're feeling stressed, confide in others—friends, family, spiritual leaders, professionals at the Counseling Center. It's much healthier to share your problems and concerns than it is to go it alone.
- ▶ If you're feeling overwhelmed and think you may have taken on too much, make a list of everything going on in your life and determine what can be modified, delayed, or dropped.
- ▶ 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 and 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 mindfulness and meditation stuff. Anything you can do to help your mind adapt to the new demands of college life is worth a try.



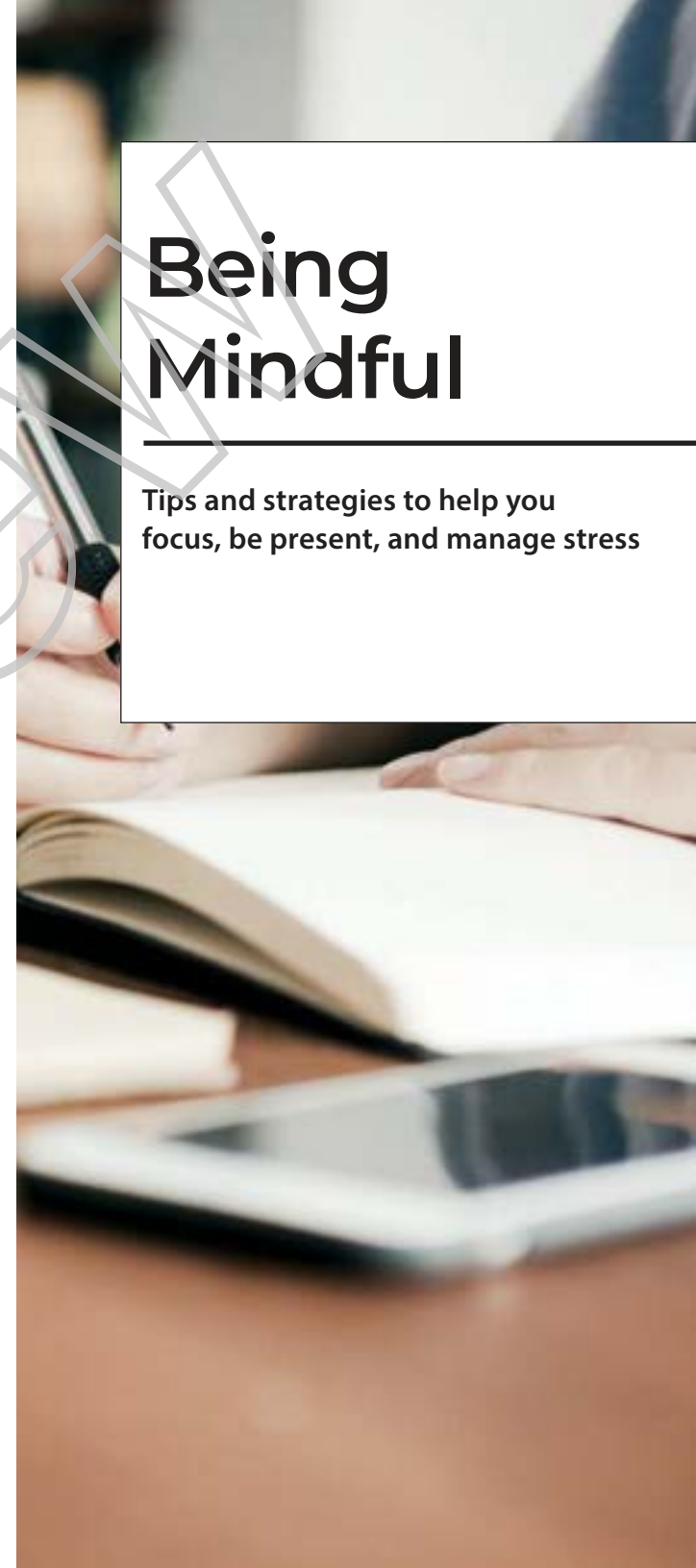
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Habits for Success InfoGuide

Being Mindful
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Being Mindful

Tips and strategies to help you focus, be present, and manage stress





Being Mindful

- ▶ Do you often have trouble concentrating?
- ▶ Does your mind frequently wander when you're in class? When you're studying? Even during conversations with friends?
- ▶ Is stress making it difficult for you to stay focused or pay attention?
- ▶ Do you wish you could be more aware and present in class and with others?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, then 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 rely only on routine and past experience to dictate how to act in a situation. Basically, you go on auto-pilot, which means you're more distracted and less focused.

Being distracted and unfocused can make succeeding in college difficult and stressful.

This InfoGuide will help you learn some ways to be more mindful, so that you can be a better, more confident student.

Be Present



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

To be more present in class...

- ▶ Come to class well-rested and alert.
- ▶ Get to class early, sit in the front, and turn off your phone.
- ▶ 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 walking your familiar route to class, pay attention to things you don't normally notice—the sounds you hear, the scenery, the buildings and people you pass.

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.

Know Yourself

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.

Improve your attention

Everyone's attention span is limited. This limit varies from person to person and situation to situation. For example, you might be able to do math problems for hours, but struggle to pay attention to your history textbook for longer than a few minutes.

Pay attention to how long you can do something (e.g., work on a paper, read a textbook) before you get the itch to take a break or pull out your phone. Then commit to extending the time you'll work on a subject or project, before you succumb 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, even if you've always saved homework and studying for the evening, 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 studying in your dorm room? Is the way you study ineffective or boring? If the answer is yes, make a change! Try something different.

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 the next time.

Hit refresh

When you're feeling overwhelmed, walk away. Listen to music or have lunch with 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, get a paper done early so you can hang out with friends, or reward yourself with video game time once your homework is done.



Most successful people have faced failure and doubt 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 twelve 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.

Thomas Edison once had a teacher tell him he was too stupid to learn anything.

Winston Churchill failed the sixth grade.

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

Thomas Edison

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Habits for Success

Staying Motivated
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Staying Motivated

Tips and strategies to help you stay positive and motivated





Be Positive and Goal-Oriented

Learn to Cope with Difficulty

Staying Motivated

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

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. After all, college can be tough—and maintaining the focus, energy, and effort necessary to succeed in college can be difficult. So how do you keep going when you're feeling stressed out, discouraged, or overwhelmed? *You need to keep a positive attitude and find ways to stay motivated.*

This pamphlet will provide you with a number of tips on how you can keep moving forward and stay positive—so that you can be successful in college, and beyond.

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

We come across all kinds of people in life. Some are positive influences in our lives and some are not. Avoid 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.



Set goals

Goals provide direction. They help you decide where you want to go and what you need to do to get there. Create both short-term goals (get a B on next week's math test) and long-term goals (graduate with a 3.0+ GPA).

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. Pursue your interests, and look for ways to develop your talents and strengths.

Being able to maintain a positive outlook while dealing with difficult situations will help you succeed in college, and in life.

Practice positive self-talk

We all have an "inner voice," and when things aren't going well, that voice can be negative and critical. You can help yourself stay positive and motivated just by changing your "self-talk."

Replace "I'm terrible at math" with "I'm smart – I can do this." Changing how you think will change how you feel and act.

Learn to accept negative feedback

Whether it's a bad grade on a paper, a low test score, or classmates rejecting your ideas for a group project, it can be tough to accept that others consider your work less than stellar.



In these cases, it's important to remember that comments on your work aren't judgments about you.

Try to keep a growth mindset. Remember that all feedback (even when it's less than encouraging) is an opportunity to grow. Don't argue, get defensive, or take anyone's comments as a measurement of your worth.

Have confidence in yourself

College coursework should be challenging, and you should expect it to be difficult at times. Just know that you can rise to the challenge.

Even the most intelligent, hardworking students can experience mental health issues that can negatively impact their academic performance.

When to get help

- ▶ if you experience feelings of sadness, eat too much or too little, or have trouble sleeping or sleep too much
- ▶ if you often feel nervous, irritable, or experience anxiety so severe that you feel physically ill
- ▶ if you feel so overwhelmed that you think you can't continue with college
- ▶ if you ever have thoughts of harming yourself or others

Where to get help

Visit your college's counseling center. Helping professionals are available to address any personal concerns you may have.

Mental Health Support Resources

- ▶ **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988, or chat online at 988lifeline.org.
- ▶ Visit **ulifeline.org** (an online resource for college mental health) or text "HOME" to 741741 to reach the Crisis Text Line.

Your college offers an array of services; however, participation is voluntary. It's up to you to seek the assistance you need.

Dorm issues?

Talk to your RA or visit the residence life office.

Medical or sexual health issues?

Visit the health center.

Undecided about your major or career?

Schedule an appointment with career services.

Money problems?

Check with the financial aid office.

Personal, emotional, or substance abuse problems?

Visit the counseling center.

Need to get in shape or lose weight?

Take advantage of the facilities and activities offered by campus recreation and wellness.

Computer/Phone issues?

Visit the help desk.

Not sure where to go?

Visit the student affairs or student life office. They will direct you to the services you need.

With so many people and resources to assist you, there's absolutely no reason to go it alone.

Reaching Out for Help

Tips for getting the help you need to succeed in college and in life



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Habits for Success

Reaching Out for Help

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Academic Support

Reaching Out for Help

- ▶ Are you concerned about not succeeding in your classes?
- ▶ Are you having a hard time adjusting to college?
- ▶ Is there something in your life holding you back?
- ▶ Do you need help but are afraid to ask for it—or aren't sure who to talk to?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please read on.

Your college wants you to succeed and thrive. To that end, a myriad of resources are available to facilitate your academic, career, and personal success. But ultimately, your well-being 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 demonstration of your desire to grow and succeed.

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

Talk to your professor

Seek help at the first sign that you might need assistance. Don't wait until your grade in a course is beyond improvement. *Reaching out for help is your responsibility.*

Talk to your professor before or after class to schedule a time to meet, or send an email letting your professor know you'll be visiting during office hours. Be sure to schedule a concrete time. Even with open office hours, professors can still step out to grab lunch, or be busy with other students. If you send an email, note which class you're in and what you'd like to discuss.



If you need a tutor

If you think you need a tutor, check your college's website for information on the academic support services available at your school. Many colleges have learning centers that offer tutoring in writing and math, and workshops on study skills. Your academic advisor can also provide you with information on how you can obtain the help you need.

Your tuition dollars pay for these services, so why not take advantage of them?



If you have a disability...

If you have a disability and/or had an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) before college, you're likely to be eligible to receive accommodations in college. Common accommodations include extended exam times and note-taking help.

It is up to you to register with disability services. They will then determine what accommodations are appropriate for you. Your professors will be notified of your specific accommodations at the start of each class. (They will not be informed as to the nature of your disability.)

Other Helpful Resources

- ▶ Online tutoring resources like Khan Academy and Smarthinking can supplement in-person tutoring.
- ▶ YouTube tutorial videos can be helpful for questions on a variety of topics (such as grammar rules or how to solve a math problem).
- ▶ There are a number of helpful apps for college students. Go online and search for "best apps for college students."