

GOOD STUDY HABITS = SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Study can insure success for almost all high school students. College students often are disappointed by their performance in college largely because they never learned how to study in high school. There are some simple methods to follow, and a few routines to establish, to improve your study skills.

CREATE A GOOD ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDY...

You need an environment where you can concentrate, avoid interruptions, and stay alert. At home you can create this environment in your room, dining room, or family room. Designate a particular place to study. It should have good lighting, a straight back chair, and a desk or table for writing. TV is not recommended, but soft background music may be work for you. Often the dining room or family room is better than the privacy of your bedroom since you will be better supervised by your parents so you will not get side tracked by activities other than studying. Ideally this is a quiet time for the entire family. It is important that your study environment be comfortable but not too comfortable. The purpose is to learn and comprehend, not to be entertained or fall asleep.

CREATE A STUDY SCHEDULE...

Next, create a study schedule. Everything about high school is related in one way or another to a schedule. You have class schedules, test schedules, work schedules, and even football schedules. You should have a study schedule, too. A calendar or daily planner can help you organize and remember your study schedule.

To develop a schedule: a) list your present activities (household chores, work, extra-curricular school & community activities); b) determine what times you are most alert; c) plan on studying each academic course at least 30 - 60 minutes each school day; d) lay out on paper a daily and weekly schedule designating the times for studying (preferably a 2-3 hour time block) and arrange your other activities around your study time. Save time to relax before going to bed, or between school and your study time. Do not overload yourself with too many other activities such as jobs, sports, and extracurricular activities. After a week or two, some adjustments may be necessary. However, by following a regular study schedule, you will develop good study habits which will make preparing for tests easier.

KNOW YOUR ASSIGNMENTS...

Record your daily and weekly assignments in your class notebook, binder, or daily planner. Copy the words exactly from the blackboard or word for word if the teacher gives the assignment orally. Check to be sure you have the correct deadlines. Many teachers now have web sites with lessons and assignments posted several weeks in advance. Use these web sites to verify that you are working on the correct assignment, and perhaps complete several assignments ahead of schedule.

USE GOOD STUDYING METHODS...

REVIEW previous chapters, handouts, and notes by scanning the major headings and looking for main points and important details. Use a highlighter (but not on school-owned books!). Reviewing will help you to remember the previous material and prepare you for the new material.

SURVEY the new material by quickly scanning the entire assignment you are about to read. Get a feeling for the contents by reading the topic headings, the bold faced print, and the captions under the pictures, illustrations, graphs, etc. Read the chapter summary or review and the questions at the end of the chapter if using a textbook. These are all good indications of what the author (and teacher) thinks is important and what you may be tested on.

READ for the main ideas and important details. Also, look for the answers to the questions at the end of the chapter. To help

you concentrate and to increase the speed of your reading, try using your finger or a ruler or index card as a guide. If you use an index card or other straight edge, place it above the line you are reading. These techniques may help to keep you from getting bogged down on any given word, keep your eyes from wandering, and allow you to focus your attention on what is coming. Experiment to determine which techniques works best for you.

CREATE YOUR OWN QUESTIONS as you read. Imagine, as you read your textbook, that the author is speaking directly to you. Talk back, have a debate, be prepared to disagree or agree. Ask the standard what, why and how?

TAKE NOTES as you read. Your notes should be brief. Use your own words and paraphrase what you read. Use key words, phrases, abbreviations, and diagrams to record main ideas, concepts, and important details. Organize your notes by using an outline format. Note taking forces you to put the author's thoughts into your own words, which will help you remember the material without resorting to rote memorization. At the end of the chapter or reading assignment, summarize what you just read. Typing up your notes will also reinforce what you have just learned.

REVIEW the assignment immediately after you finish reading by skimming the material. Look for points that you don't understand and read these again. Review your notes, making additions and changes if necessary to make them easier for you to understand and remember. Typing your notes can also help reinforce the information.

RECITE to someone (friend, parent, or yourself) what you learned from the material you just read. This is an excellent way of testing your understanding and reinforcing your memory. Another technique is to write from memory the key ideas and supporting details of what you have just read and reviewed. Re-read any fuzzy material one more time. The more you involve yourself in using the material (questioning, looking for answers, note taking, reviewing and reciting) the better you will remember the information.

PACE yourself. There is no limit to what you can learn. But there is a limit to how much you can mentally digest in a given period of time. The brain fatigues the same as any muscle and needs rest or a change of pace. Take short 3-5 minute breaks every 30 minutes and a 10 - 15 minute break between subjects to allow your brain to relax, refresh itself, and shift gears. Never study just before going to sleep unless you want to dream about your homework all night. Allow yourself some time to unwind.

COORDINATE your class notes and textbook notes. Combine your textbook notes and class notes by writing your class notes on the right-hand page of your notebook and transferring your text notes to the appropriate left-hand facing page. This makes review easier and shows you what the teacher felt was important in the textbook, verses what the author of the textbook felt was important.

THE INTERNET can be used to expand your knowledge of a subject. Familiarize yourself with the data bases on the Contra Costa County Library web site (you will need a library card to access these data bases), and a good search engine like *Google*. Ask your teachers for guidelines for using the internet for research, and for recommended web sites. Your high school's web site will also list recommended web sites for both general research and specific curricular research. Consult your high school Librarian if you need assistance locating the information you need on the internet.

PARENT SUPER VISION IS HELPFUL...

If you are having too much difficulty with a subject, you or your parent should contact the teacher for assistance, and inquire about tutoring services available at your high school. Most high schools have free, peer tutoring programs, and also maintain a bulletin board with flyers from college students and adult tutors who are available in the community.