

Learning Skills, Room 120

Study Tips

General Study Tips

- Be aware of how you waste time; take an inventory for one week.
 - Review notes before and after classes; review all notes regularly.
 - Use index cards to record important information or definitions. Flip through them on the bus, between classes, while watching TV, etc.
 - Study your hardest subjects at your best time of day.
 - Plan short breaks - 50 minutes of studying with a 10-minute break.
 - Plan leisure time; reward your hard work.
 - Work at regular times and let your friends know when this time is.
 - Be assertive; learn to say “no” to interruptions or distractions that interfere with study time.
 - Break large projects down into realistic short-term goals, for example:
 - Week 1 - Choose your project topic and research/narrow topic
 - Week 2 - Read/research
 - Week 3 - Read and create an outline
 - Week 4 - Write a draft, preferably on the computer
 - Week 5 - Type and proofread final copy and hand in
 - Reward yourself for staying on schedule or for finishing a difficult assignment.
- Make a daily “to do” list and prioritize that list.
 - Use a daily/weekly planner at all times to record assignments and appointments.
 - Create a weekly schedule of study, social, and work time.
 - Have a study place free of distractions.
 - Control your thoughts; when an unwanted thought enters your head, say “STOP” and refocus.
 - Separate ideas presented in class by indenting, underlining, or spacing your notes.
 - Review. Review. Review.

Textbook Tips

- Preview the chapter or section to be read; pay attention to the ‘big picture’.
- Read slowly and take breaks.
- Place a mark in your text where you lost concentration. Reread those passages.
- Underline after you have read the section.
- Underline or highlight only key words in your texts or make notes in the margins.
- Review as you read. For example, read and mark (underline or make notes) on pp. 1-3 for ten minutes. Review and recite these pages for two minutes. Ask yourself “What did I learn?” and “How does this relate to the course?”
- Take subheadings in textbooks and change them into questions.

Effective Habits for Effective Study

Habits are behaviours we practice on a regular basis. Habits are “good” when they help us achieve our goals; habits are “bad” when they get in the way of us achieving our goals.

We are in charge of our own habits, but first we need to recognize the ones that we have already formed and appreciate the possible need to develop new ones.

Taking Stock

Think about your present study habits ~ do they help you or hinder you?

- Where do you study?
- When do you study?
- How do you decide what to work on?
- How long are your study/homework sessions?

Developing New Habits

You can prepare yourself to succeed in your studies. Try to develop and appreciate the following habits:

Take responsibility for yourself

Responsibility is recognition that in order to succeed you must make decisions about your priorities, your time, and your resources.

Centre yourself around your values and principles

Take some time to think about and name your values. Also, think about how these values relate to your goals and to your education. Finally, think about how a “values-driven” education will impact your future career decisions.

Put first things first

Follow up on the priorities you have set for yourself, and don’t let others, or other interests, distract you from your goals.

Discover your key productivity periods and places

Do you work best in the morning, afternoon, or a night? Is your study place distraction free? Are you utilizing your time on campus in the best possible way?

Consider yourself in a win-win situation

You win by doing your best and contributing your best to a class. If you are content with your performance, your grade is only an external check on your performance. Sometimes personal benefits far outweigh grades.

First understand others, then attempt to be understood

When you have an issue with an instructor, for example, such as a questionable grade or an assignment deadline extension, put yourself in the instructor’s place. Now ask yourself how you can best make your argument given his/her situation.

Look for better solutions to problems

If you don’t understand the course material, don’t just re-read the material. Try something else! Consult with the professor, a tutor, a classmate, a study group, or the learning skills counselor.

Look to continually challenge yourself

Challenges can be invitations to stretch yourself and engage in deeper learning. Think of a difficult assignment as a challenge to do your very best thinking.

Get Some Help

Volunteer Tutors: Fill out a purple request form and take it to Student Affairs to discuss with the Tutor Coordinator.

Learning Skills: Sign up for an appointment with an Education Counsellor. Watch for posters about workshops.