

Study Skills and Strategies

for High School Students

Does studying seem like it takes you forever and you still don't get it? Don't worry, a lot of people feel that way. People aren't born with effective study skills. Most likely you just aren't studying effectively, but that can be easily fixed. There are adults and children alike whose grades suffer because they simply don't know the right way to study. But gaining the skills to do it effectively and absorb information quickly can change all this. It's important to develop strong study habits in high school so that you can be prepared for any continuing education or training after you graduate. Here are a few tips to make sure you are on the right track.

Figure out your learning style:

Everyone learns in a different way. The best way to improve your study skills is to first figure out how you learn. Here are the different types of learning styles:

- **Auditory Learner**
 - If you can remember things better by listening to someone else explain them, or feel like you can get more accomplished with some soft music or background noise when you study, you are most likely an Auditory learner.
- **Visual Learner**
 - If you need to see things written out or prefer reading your textbook to understand the material, you are probably more of a Visual learner. Take notes during class so you can read them later. Try to fit your material into graphic organizers or draw pictures to help you remember.
- **Tactile/Kinesthetic Learner**
 - Are hands-on projects how you learn the best? You might be a Tactile/Kinesthetic learner. Role-playing, recreating projects or scenes, and lots of movement (like pacing) could help you study more effectively.

Learn time management skills:

Keep a weekly or monthly planner or use a journal. If planners aren't your thing, try making "to do" lists, or using your phone calendar to keep track of assignments and important dates and events. Relying on "just remembering" can be difficult when your obligations and assignments start to pile on.

Organization is the key to improving study skills and strategies. Set out a plan before you begin and stick to it. Set aside time into blocks when you know you can commit. Making it easy to do will motivate you to do it! It will not only help you accomplish your goals, it will keep you on track timewise.

Study Tips and Habits:

- **Study at the same time:**
 - Not only is it important that you plan when you're going to study, but that you also create a consistent, daily study routine. When you study at the same time each day and each week, your studying will become a regular part of your life. You'll be mentally and emotionally more prepared for each study session and each study session will become more productive. Don't study later than the time you usually go to sleep, you may fall asleep or be tempted to go to sleep. Instead, try studying in the afternoon or early evening. If you are a morning person, try

studying in the morning.

- Study in short bursts:
 - There is nothing worse than burnout when you are trying to study. Don't try to do a marathon session, as you will not be able to remember everything all at once. Take breaks every now and then between chapters or subjects to give your brain a rest!
- Cramming is not the answer:
 - Space out your studying. You'll learn more by studying a little every day instead of waiting to cram at the last minute. By studying every day, the material will stay in your long-term memory, but if you try to study at the last moment, the material will only reside in your short-term memory that you'll easily forget. One of the most important high school study skills is to not procrastinate. Don't put off studying for a test until the last minute. Most teachers give you plenty of advance warning before an upcoming test.
- Catch some Zzz's:
 - Don't stay up until 4 a.m. studying for a test! It won't work now and it won't work in college. Sleep has been scientifically documented to be a significant factor on your GPA as well as how well you perform on other tasks.
- Ask Questions:
 - Don't be afraid to ask your teachers for help! They aren't there to scare you; they're a valuable resource. Students in your class are another great source of information and support. Be sure to exchange phone numbers and email addresses with them during your first few weeks of class. They will not only help with schoolwork, but some of them may even turn into long-time friends.
- Do the hard stuff first:
 - The most complicated material should be at the top of the list. Create index cards to remember terms, formulas, and other repetitive information. Learn the general concepts first; don't worry about learning the details until you have learned the main ideas.
- Take Good Notes:
 - Take notes and write down a summary of the important ideas as you read through your study material. Make sure that you understand the material well, don't just read through the material and try to memorize everything.
- Study Groups:
 - If you choose to study in a group, only study with others who are serious about the test.
- Testing Yourself:
 - Test yourself or have someone test you on the material to find out what your weak and strong areas are. You can use the review questions at the end of each chapter, practice tests that the teacher may give out or other pertinent materials.
- Block out distractions:
 - A few good studying tips include turning off your phone, shutting off your IM program and the TV, and closing your door. Nothing will derail your studying as quickly as interruptions. If you really want to be successful, you need to focus, so set up your environment for success. Make sure to settle somewhere comfortable. The best place is your room. Designate a small part of it with some pillows, a comfortable chair, and a radio for the best results. Sometimes listening to relaxing music such as classical or jazz on a low volume can relieve some of the boredom of studying.

- Homework is important.
 - The teacher does not give out homework just to annoy you! These tasks are designed to help you learn the material in the lesson. Successful completion of these assignments will help you pass the tests.

Take your time, make a plan, and stick with it. The key to improving study strategies and skills is to study smart, not hard. Don't procrastinate and don't get distracted. If you want to become a successful student, don't get discouraged, don't give up, just work to develop each of the study habits above and you'll see your grades go up, your knowledge increase, and your ability to learn and assimilate information improve.