



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.

Reasons 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.

Make Going to Class Worth Your Time

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.



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 (e.g., 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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