



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.

Study Tips

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 upper class student.
- ▶ Sometimes it's helpful to study with other students. But only study with students who are serious about their schoolwork, and keep your study sessions focused and on track.



Vary Your Studying

Using study strategies that engage multiple senses (visual, auditory, and tactile) 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.



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