Study Skills Handbook

Christian Academy of Louisville Counseling Department



Study Skills and Homework
Organization and Time Management
Test Preparation
Test Taking Strategies

Section 1: Study Skills and Homework

The Study Environment

Many students use the same method to study that they used back in middle school. Did you ever realize that you may be able to improve on this to save time and energy? It's a fact that most students, regardless of how bright they are, can improve study habits.

- Choose a quiet, well-lit area, preferably a desk or table no easy chairs. Keep it clear of clutter. Use the same location every time be consistent.
- Make sure you have resources nearby and handy. Take your books home every night. Stock your study and homework area with paper, pens, pencils, erasers, a calculator, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a computer (if possible).
- Get rid of all distractions: radio, phone, TV, Instant Messaging (computer).
- Don't study when you're overtired. Take a nap, and come back refreshed.

SmartNoter App: App that supports the regular classroom experience with comprehensive, searchable reference material that you can explore at your own pace.



Don't study harder Study SMARTER!

How to Read a Textbook

- 1. Review VOCABULARY/TECHNICAL WORDS at the end of the chapter.
- 2. Read the MAIN IDEA QUESTIONS in the back of the chapter.
- 3. Read the CHAPTER SUMMARY at the end of the chapter.
- 4. Review all CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, PICTURES/CAPTIONS, and GRAPHS throughout the chapter.
- 5. Begin reading at the beginning of the chapter. Remember, the type in which headings are printed is a good clue to topic importance. Remember, the textbook is the thinking of the author. Let him or her draw you a road-map by reviewing the END of the chapter before you begin reading.

Todoist App: A task manager users can utilize anywhere – even offline.



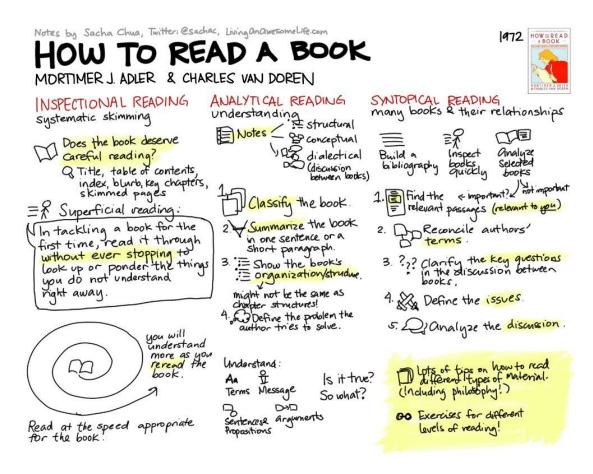
Follow These Tips to Maximize Learning

When reading/studying/doing homework...

- Make notes on important points (main idea) you have learned from each assignment. Use an abbreviated outline format for note-taking.
- O Review what is not clear to you.
- Try to think of questions your teacher might ask.
- When tackling homework, be sure you understand the teacher's expectations.
- What is the point of the assignment? (If you pay attention in class, the teacher will explain and instruct you.)
- Summarize, in your own words, what you have learned.

In class...

- ① Listen for important information in lectures. Try to pick out key facts and phrases, such as, "The three main reasons are..."
- O Attend all classes. Skipping class only adds to school anxiety.
- Remember, teachers are human; they have their likes and dislikes, too. Study your teacher. Part of being a good student is finding out EXACTLY what your teacher wants and expects and then delivering it!
- ① Apply everything you learn as early and as often as possible.



Reading Comprehension Suggestions

To improve reading comprehension skills, the following suggestions are offered:

- 1. <u>Notingandrecallingdetails</u> are key components of reading comprehension. To accomplish this, one should engage in at least some informal discussion after reading something, with emphasis being placed on the main thought of the material. Attention should also be focused on the <u>supportingdetails</u> of the material. This can be accomplished by trying to identify evidence which supports various detailed statements and specific application of how detailed information might be used.
- 2. A large part of being an effective reader is remembering what has been read. It is often necessary to organize in our minds the material being read. This can be done by trying to grasp the author's plan and trying to understand the <u>relationshipsbetweenmajor</u> <u>ideasandthefactsordetails</u> which give them meaning. It can also be helpful to outline or summarize (take notes) on what is being read.
- 3. It is essential to actively intend to remember what is being read. Of course, this will need to be <u>selective</u>, as it is impossible to remember everything read. Those points that should be remembered must be singled out and given special attention.
- 4. A single reading of materials is frequently insufficient—especially when memorizing. Re-reading is crucial.
- 5. Additionally, it proves beneficial to recall those points which are worth remembering or to recite them to ourselves. At least half the time spent trying to fix material in memory should be spent in activerecitation.
- 6. Comprehension is enhanced if there is effective use of headings, subheadings, tables, graphs, illustrations, and marginalnotes.
- 7. It is helpful to identify topic sentences in each paragraph read.
- 8. When reading chapters or sections, pay close attention to introductoryandconcluding paragraphs.
- 9. In story reading, it might prove helpful to establish the significance of an incident by asking what <u>feelingoremotion</u> was felt by the character during or after the incident.

Habitica App: A

task manager that

allows users to create

a custom avatar and unlock gaming-like

features as you complete goals and

tasks.

10. It is also helpful in understanding what has been read and to summarize an incident using only <u>onesimplesentence</u>.

Sections 2: Organization and Time Management

Ten Strategies for Better Time Management

- 1. Know How You Spend Your Time. Keeping a time log is a helpful way to determine how you are using your time.
- 2. Set Priorities. Categorize your activities into four quadrants in the Time Management Matrix.
- 3. Use a Planning Tool. Write down your tasks, schedules, and memory joggers the key is to find one planning tool that works for your and use the tool consistently.
- 4. Get Organized. Implement a system that allows you to handle information only once.
- 5. Schedule Your Time Appropriately. Scheduling is not just recording what you have to do, it is also making a time commitment to the things you want to do.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	- Crisis - Pressing Issues - Deadlines - Meetings	Preparation - Planning - Prevention - Relationship building - Personal Development
Not Important	III - Interruptions - Some mail - Many popular activities	- Trivia - Some phone calls - Excessive TV/Games - Time wasters

- 6. Delegate: Get Help from Others. Delegation begins by identifying tasks that others can do and then selecting the appropriate person(s) to do them.
- 7. Stop Procrastinating. You may be putting off tasks for a variety of reasons. Try breaking down the task into smaller segments that require less time commitment and result in specific, realistic deadlines.
- 8. Manage External Time Wasters. Your time may be impacted by external factors (telephone, unexpected visitors, meetings, mail/email, family obligations) you can decrease or eliminate time spend in these activities by implementing a set time to return calls, establish time for visitors, use a timed agenda, handle each item only once, establish a master calendar for family members).
- 9. Avoid Multi-tasking. Psychological studies have shown that multi-tasking does not actually save time. IN fact, the opposite is often true. You lose time when switching from one task to another, resulting in a loss of productivity (Rubinsteim, Meyer, & Evans, 2001) Routine multi-tasking may lead to difficulty in concentrating and maintaining focus when needed.
- 10. Stay Healthy. Learn to manage time according to your biological clock by scheduling priority tasks during your peak time of day, the time your energy level and concentration are at their best.

While in school...

- Of Get organized!!! Keep all the notes and materials on one subject TOGETHER!
- Take notes efficiently in a notebook. Write clearly so you can read later.
- Note key terms. Write down important ideas, not every word said.
- O Spend a couple of minutes reading your notes right after class, if you have time. Fill in any important details while they're fresh in your mind.
- Develop a schedule. Mark deadlines and exam dates for the semester on a calendar. Keep the calendar with you for convenience.
- Of Getting organized makes a big difference. The keys are: knowing when work is due, planning how to do quality work and get it done on time, and setting short-term goals that you can reach.

While at home...

- Set a certain time aside each day to study and stick to it.
- © Concentrate—get right down to work, immediately. No radio, telephone, TV, Computer, or conversation. No distractions!
- Study the more difficult subjects first and leave the easy ones for last.
- Skim the assignment to get an idea of length and determine the amount of time it will take. You'll get a general idea from skimming, too.
- Assign a certain amount of time per subject and stick to it! This will help structure your evening.
- Relax for a FEW minutes between subjects to change gears.
- Be realistic about how much material you can cover in one session.
- Devote one hour per week, per subject, for weekly review.

Planning Big Projects

Writing Assignments

- Nnow your subject do your research and reading.
- Make an outline.
- ⁰ Write a first draft.
- ⁰ Review and revise the draft.
- Proofread your final draft carefully

Long-Term Projects

- O Give yourself plenty of time
- Divide your work into parts. Set a deadline for each part. Use a planner or calendar to help you stay on track.
- ① Try to finish your work early to lower anxiety levels.

Google Keep App: Allows users to organize lists, notes, reminders,



etc. in one place.

Any.do App: A to do-list and task list organizer for the everyday.





Outlook App: Connect your email accounts, calendars, and files in one spot.

Section 3: Test Preparation

General Test Prep Tips

- Be kind to yourself. Eat and sleep well before the exam, so you can be in top form. Don't try to "cram" or stay up all night by taking caffeine or other drugs. You're likely to be tired, irritable, and distracted by test time. During exam week, maintain regular habits and get your usual amount of sleep.
- ① Schedule several short review sessions rather than one or two long ones.
- O Create learning aids. Match the study material to the aid.

When memorizing...

- ① If certain subject matter must be memorized, do not try to do it all at one time.
- ① It is generally better to learn from, or memorize, the whole before you tackle the details.

Dos and Don'ts for Proper Test Preparation

- DO have a written study schedule. Know how much time you have to spend on each activity. This schedule should be flexible, not rigid, but should be used as a CONSTANT GUIDE to help you manage your time.
- DO keep an exam schedule. This will include (1) a list of topics covered for each exam, (2) the test book pages or other material to be covered, (3) the purpose of the test in the overall scheme of the course, and (4) the type of questions you should expect on the test (true/false, multiple choice, short answer, matching, completion, or essay).
- DO review regularly, not just when exams are scheduled. This means daily review, plus a review after each main topic is covered. Research shows that learning is much more efficient when the student

reviews material on a regular basis.

- ⁽¹⁾ DO NOT rely on your memory for important information about tests, such as exam dates, purpose, extent of material covered, and types of questions.
- DO NOT wait for inspiration to strike before studying and reviewing. Keeping up with your assignments is the key to exam success.

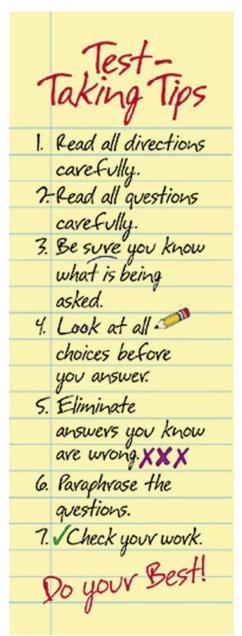
Wunderlist App: A sharable task list organizer for the entire family.

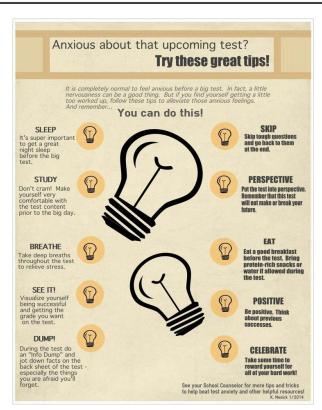


Section 4: Test Taking Strategies

Test-Day Strategies

- DO read the directions for all parts of the test carefully before you do anything else. Directions may change for different sections. If you have any questions, ask them before you begin working.
- DO find out the scoring system. This will tell you whether you will be penalized for wrong answers or whether you can afford to guess, even if you are not completely sure of the meaning of the question or the best answer.
- DO read the test all the way through before starting. Look to see if the test gives away some answers. Most long objective tests will. For instance, the answer to question 5 (or a good clue) may be implied by the way question 20 is asked.
- [®] DO budget your time according to the length of the test, the value placed on different portions of it, and the knowledge you possess about the various questions.
- [®] DO answer first those questions to which you definitely know the answers. Leave the more difficult questions and those about which you have doubts until after you have gained all the points you can from the areas of your strongest knowledge.
- DO re-read the directions after you have finished the test to make sure you have done what was asked. Make sure you have given
 - your name, class, section number, and other required information.
- DO look over your answers to make sure you haven't made silly mistakes which could pull your score down.
- [®] DO NOT change any answers unless you are absolutely certain the change is correct; your first hunch is apt to be right if you understood the question the first time.
- ⁰ DO NOT automatically blame the teacher if you fail. Something may be wrong with your study habits, review procedures, or test-taking methods.





Avoiding Test Anxiety

What is Test Anxiety?

It's worry or fear caused by having to take tests. It may include mental distraction, physical symptoms, and mental blocks. Building your test-taking skills can help reduce test anxiety so you can feel better and do better.

Who is affected?

Every student who takes a test feels some anxiety. But for some students, the feeling is so intense that it affects their performance — with serious results. Some students can rise to the challenge, others view tests as threats. Students who have failed in the past often fear they'll fail again. A test-anxious student may do poorly on an exam even if he or she knows the material better than a classmate who is able to control the anxiety.

You can learn to control your anxiety!

Think positively.

- O For any emotional, frightening thought, come up with a calming response. For instance, replace, "I could never study enough for this test," with, "I have a lot to study, but if I stick to my schedule and concentrate, I can do it."
- When you let your imagination go overboard, anxiety is sure to follow. Learn to imagine yourself remaining calm and in control. Cast yourself in the role of a winner, not a loser! Use your imagination in a positive way!

Have a healthy diet, and exercise regularly.

- ① These can help you sleep better and handle pressure better. Be sure to consult your physician before starting an exercise program.
- O Avoid caffeine and don't use alcohol or other drugs.

Use relaxation techniques.

Ocod techniques can help you when you feel yourself becoming anxious, to help you sleep the night before an exam, and/or as a refresher between study sessions.

If your mind is blocked during an exam...

- Oclose your eyes, take a long, deep breath, and let it out slowly.
- © Concentrate on your breathing feel and hear yourself breathing. Don't allow yourself to worry about the time, test, or tension

Relaxation APPS:

Stop, Breathe, and Think App



Smiling Mind App



Take a Break App



The DETER Strategy for Taking Tests

To do well on a test, you must have a good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do. Make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.

D = Directions

- Read the test directions very carefully.
- Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.
- Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.
- ① If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

E = Examine

- ① Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.
- Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

T = Time

- Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.
- ① If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.
- Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

E = Easiest

- ① The second E in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.
- If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

R = Review

If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.

Specific Tips by Test-Type

True-False

① Look out for qualifying adjectives, such as all, some, many, none, always, never, and most. An answer frequently hinges on these universal qualifiers. The sentence is usually, but not "always" false. "Men are created equal," may be true enough, but "Men are created equal in all ways," is obviously false.

Multiple Choice

- Answer all the questions you're sure of, first—these are your strong response answers. Then work on the ones you're uncertain of.
- Beware of words like "often," "sometimes," and "always." Select the answer that seems most correct. Even wrong answers may be partially true.
- ⁰ Think as you read; multiple choice questions can be tricky.
- Don't take too much time on multiple choice questions—the longer you ponder, the more possibilities you'll think of and the more confused you'll get. Usually, only two of the four or five choices are good possibilities as correct. Eliminate the obviously incorrect, and from the two best, choose the one which seems most correct.
- On a weak response, when you're in doubt, your first choice will usually be the best. Trust it.
- Never change an answer on multiple choice unless you're POSITIVE your first answer was wrong.

Completion and Short Answer

- Unless you will be penalized for wrong answers, fill in ALL blanks logically, even if you're not sure what the teacher expects. Frequently, a number of answers may be correct and instinctively you may choose one of them. Try to be as specific as possible. When in doubt, ask for clarification.
- [®] Budget your time. Estimate how much time you have to answer each question. If some questions are worth more points than others, plan to spend more time answering them.
- ① Do the easiest questions first and don't dwell on any particular question. You may come up with the answer to one question as you work on another, different question.
- ① Look for clues in the question. Words such as "define" or "describe" can point you in the right direction. Always use the full time never leave early.

Matching

[®] First match the items you know for certain. This will make it easier for you to decide which of the remaining choices go together.

Problem-Solving Tests

- These tests involve using formulas and making calculations. Before the test, study major concepts and review formulas. Solve a lot of practice problems so you know what to expect.
- ① During the test, identify the givens and the unknowns. Write down the formula used in all your calculations.

Essay

- Read all the questions first.
- Underline key words, such as "summarize," "evaluate," and "compare." Then, jot down initial thoughts. Be sure to FOLLOW Directions and answer the question being asked.
- ① It's helpful to begin with the easiest question to build confidence.
- O Some prefer to begin essay answers with a written outline. This is a good practice, IF YOU'RE SURE your answer is the correct one. Remember, the outline is "bare bones" if your answer is wrong, your teacher will know it. An outline will help you to be organized, clear and precise.
- ① If you don't have confidence in your answer, consider a mental outline, or one written on scratch paper. Remember, it's always better to write MORE, rather than less on an essay response the teacher will look for detail.
- Don't EVER leave an essay question blank! It's the surest way to get a zero! Put something down, make it sound as plausible as you can, and you will get SOME points for trying. Never just quit.
- Proofread at the end. Correct any errors. Make changes as neatly as possible.

Remember, these are all ways to make the structure of the test work for you. They are little tricks that may help you out, but they are NO SUBSTITUTE for good, solid preparation!

Flashcardlet App: Flashcardlet app is a free, easy-to-use studying application with material for any class or standardized test.



The Ten Study Habits of Successful Students

Successful students have good study habits. They apply these habits to all of their classes. Read about each study habit. Work to develop any study habit you do not have.

Successful students:

1. Try not to do too much studying at one time.

If you try to do too much studying at one time, you will tire and your studying will not be very effective. Space the work you have to do over shorter periods of time. Taking short breaks will restore your mental energy.

2. Plan specific times for studying.

Study time is any time you are doing something related to schoolwork. It can be completing assigned reading, working on a paper or project, or studying for a test. Schedule specific times throughout the week for your study time.

3. Try to study at the same times each day.

Studying at the same times each day establishes a routine that becomes a regular part of your life, just like sleeping and eating. When a scheduled study time comes up during the day, you will be mentally prepared to begin studying.

4. Set specific goals for your study times.

Goals will help you stay focused and monitor your progress. Simply sitting down to study has little value. You must be very clear about what you want to accomplish during your study times.

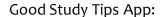
5. Start studying when planned.

You may delay starting your studying because you don't like an assignment or think it is too hard. A delay in studying is called "procrastination." If you procrastinate for any reason, you will find it difficult to get everything done when you need to. You may rush to make up the time you wasted getting started, resulting in careless work and errors.

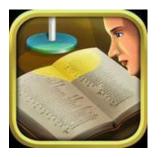
6. Work on the assignment you find most difficult first.

Your most difficult assignment will require the most effort. Start with your most difficult assignment since this is when you have the most mental energy.

7. Review your notes before beginning an assignment.



Learn good study tips on how to study and retain information.



Reviewing your notes can help you make sure you are doing an assignment correctly. Also, your notes may include information that will help you complete an assignment.

8. Tell your friends not to call you during their study times.

Two study problems can occur if your friends call you during your study times. First, your work is interrupted. It is not that easy to get back to what you were doing. Second, your friends may talk about things that will distract you from what you need to do. Here's a simple idea – turn off your cell phone during your study times.

9. Call another student when you have difficulty with an assignment.

This is a case where "two heads may be better than one."

10. Review your schoolwork over the weekend.

Yes, weekends should be fun time. But there is also time to do some review. This will help you be ready to go on Monday morning when another school week begins.

These ten study habits can help you throughout your education. Make sure they are your study habits.



20 Study Hacks to Improve Your Memory

Posted on January 24, 2014 by Andrea Leydenhttps://www.gocongr.com/en/examtime/blog/study-hacks/

We've scoured our brains and the internet for the best study hacks to help your brain remember **information** quicker and easier and ultimately help you do better in your exams.

1. Walk Before An Exam

It's been proven that exercise can boost your memory and brain power. Research conducted by Dr. Chuck Hillman of the University of Illinois provides evidence that about 20 minutes exercise before an exam can improve performance.

2. Speak Out Loud Instead of Simply Reading

Although this may make you look a little crazy, give it a go! You will be surprised how much more you can remember when you've said it out loud. Warning: Don't try this in a crowded library!

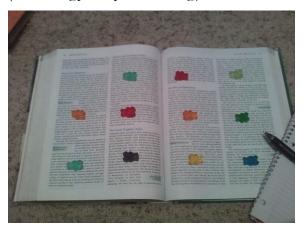
Composite of 20 student brains taking the same test



You're 50% more likely to remember something if you speak it out loud instead of simply reading it over and over.

3. Reward Yourself With A Treat

There are many ways to integrate a reward system into your habits so you learn how to study for exams more efficiently. You can get creative and motivate yourself to study with Gummy Bears or gaining validation through apps. There are actually several apps designed to help you study (technology truly is amazing). "Forest" functions by allowing you to plant a tree, which will



http://debut.careers/insight/12-ways-reward-youre-studying/

grow with every half hour you spend avoiding your phone. Should you stray from the app, it will kill your tree, which may seem inconsequential but you get surprisingly invested. It is actually incredibly sweet to expand your forest with different varieties of plants, knowing that each represents thirty minutes of hard work.



4. Teach What You Have Learned

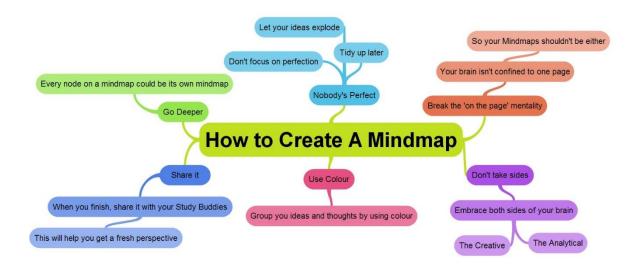
The best way to test if you really understand something is to try to teach it to someone else. If you can't get anyone to listen to you explain the Pythagorean Theorem, why not teach a class of stuffed animals!

5. Create Mental Associations

The ability to make connections is not only an easier way to remember information, but it's the fuel of creativity and intelligence. Steve Jobs famously said "Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did

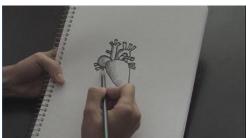


something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something". Mind Maps are an easy way to connect ideas by creating a visual overview of different connections.



6. Draw Diagrams

Drawing diagrams will help you to visualize information which would be hard to describe. This creates a visual memory in your mind which can be recalled in an exam. You may even be asked to draw or label diagrams such as the human heart in your exam so get practicing!



7. Times New Roman is the Fastest Font to Read

Simply put – there's a reason why Times New Roman is the default font on most applications:

This is easy to read.

This is easy to read.

This is not easy to read.

This is not easy to read.

8. Use Apps to Block Distracting Sites

The SelfControl app for Mac users and the Self Control for Study app for Droid helps you to avoid distractions by blocking websites for a certain amount of time.





9. Watch a Documentary on the Topic

Documentaries are an entertaining way of compacting an entire story into a short timeframe. This will help you remember key details from a story plus you may even get extra credit for mentioning that you took the initiative and watched a film about the topic!

10. Search Google Like a Pro

Save time when researching sources online by mastering the biggest search engine in the world; Google. Follow the tips in this image to find what you need at your fingertips:

