

Adopt a Good Study Attitude

LEARN

A basketball enthusiast related the story of an argument he once had with his father. It seems that dad had asked his son to shovel the snow off the sidewalk. The boy balked, pouted all morning, and despite the threat of punishment, refused to shovel. Later that afternoon, the same boy bounced out of the house and eagerly shoveled the snow away from the drive next to the garage so he and a friend could shoot some baskets. The question here of course is one of motivation. The work will be done and done enthusiastically if the motivation is right—it's a matter of a "proper" mental orientation.

Effective study begins with the right frame of mind. The most productive study happens when you are convinced that you are working to improve yourself. Before you begin your study remind yourself that studying feeds your own natural curiosity, that your studies work to expand your view of life, and that with careful study you can find a deeper sense of yourself and the world in which you live.

If your attitude is built on this vision, your studies will have much more meaning and the time spent with your books will be much more productive. Believe it or not, your grades will also fall into place.

Student's Self-Analysis of Study Skills Checklist

This checklist helps students to evaluate how they study most efficiently. Teachers should administer this checklist to their students so that they can help their students to determine how they can improve their current method of studying.

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Very Seldom
1. Do I understand directions provided in class?			
2. Do I take notes that are helpful?			
3. Do I ask questions when I don't understand?			
4. Do I understand lectures and discussions?			
5. Do I keep up with assigned work?			
6. Do I feel disorganized most of the time?			
7. Do I participate in class discussions?			
8. Do I find it difficult to complete assignments?			
9. Do I feel adequately prepared most of the time?			
10. Do I find vocabulary in reading too difficult?			
11. Do I have a regular place where I study?			
12. Do I have a regular place to study?			
13. Do I outline or summarize what I read?			
14. Do I keep a calendar of tests and assignments?			
15. Do I review class and reading notes often?			

What Does Research Tell Us about Effective Study Skills Instruction?

Researchers have developed a number of strategies to help students improve their study skills. These strategies can be applied at three stages of learning: preparing to learn, acquiring knowledge, and applying knowledge.

In addition, teachers can use the principles and tips outlined in this document to help students assess their skills, plan and monitor goals, and develop a system for improving study habits.

It is important for teachers to provide explicit instruction regarding learning strategies and study skills to students with learning and behavioral disorders. Such instruction may be woven into content-based lessons. The most effective strategies for these students are general, can apply to a relatively broad spectrum of learning contexts, and are straightforward.

What Are the Goals for Teaching Study Skills and Other Strategy Instruction?

Strategic study skills training will help students process information. There are four desired goals teachers should keep in mind when teaching and using these interventions.

To improve background knowledge

This will help students because a key component in the learning process is connecting new ideas to what one already knows. The more familiarity a student has with a subject or concept, the larger is the foundation for building new knowledge. Also, the better students become at reflecting on their prior knowledge, the more active they become in the learning process.

Ten Steps to Preparing for Academic Success

1. ***Get organized:*** Set up binders for each subject and pay close attention to the course syllabus and grading policy for each class.
2. ***Develop your before- and after-school routine:*** Set up a routine, based on your class schedule and extracurricular activities, that will maximize your study, homework, and test preparation time.
3. ***Develop consistent classroom routines:*** Set up a routine that keeps you organized, ensures that you make note of homework assignments and test dates, and helps you keep your subject-area binders in order.
4. ***Learn how to take good notes:*** Effective note-taking is critical to high school academic success.
5. ***Daily review/summary:*** Establish a time within your daily routine for a review of your notes from each class.
6. ***Review your agenda:*** Establish a time within your daily routine to review your agenda to ensure that you are aware of announced test, quizzes, and project due dates.
7. ***Test preparation:*** If you are consistently following your routines, then you should be preparing yourself for announced tests and quizzes.
8. ***Put your homework where it goes:*** The grades of many high school students suffer, due to misplaced, forgotten, or lost homework assignments.
9. ***Develop your vocabulary, writing, and grammar skills:*** Writing and language skills are critical to high school success and success on the SAT/ACT exams. Take advantage of every opportunity to continue expanding your vocabulary and developing your writing skills.
10. ***Become a critical thinker:*** Continue developing and expanding your critical-thinking skills. Consciously go through the process of investigation, interpretation, and judgment when formulating ideas and making decisions.

[Taken from, A Middle School Plan for Students with College-Bound Dreams, Wynn]

Establish Clear Study Goals

Begin each study session by establishing an achievable goal(s), a workable time frame, and some kind of reward for a job well done.

1. Set Realistic Goals. Take a moment at the beginning of each study session to establish just exactly what you want to accomplish. This study goal should be stated or, if you prefer, written in a simple declarative sentence: "I will read two critical essays and 'brainstorm' for my English paper, ultimately narrowing the topic to one or two possibilities."

Warning: "Don't bite off more than you can chew" is certainly applicable to your study habits. When you sit down to study, don't set unrealistic goals for yourself. Don't try to do the impossible or push yourself beyond your capabilities. The resultant pressure will only lead to discouragement and an unhealthy dose of frustration and hypertension! Know your limits and work within them.

2. Establish a Time Schedule.

When deciding how long you will spend studying, consider factors like your energy level, pressures from family or friends, class schedules (you want to be fresh for upcoming classes), assignment due dates, and, of course, your own study stamina (two shorter sessions may be more productive than one longer one.)

Hint: Learning researchers know that long, marathon immersions into a single subject is not the most productive way of studying. After a moderate length of study time it is usually a good idea to switch to another topic. Pounding away on one topic hour after hour becomes increasingly counter-productive.

You will find it helpful to map out your study sessions by creating daily study schedules. (Examine the sample schedule that follows.)

Sample Time Schedule

7:00-7:40

Read the first of two critical essays, *Understanding Falstaff*."

7:40-7:50

Short break, perhaps a sweet roll would be OK.

7:50-8:30

Read the second critical essay, *"Falstaff and Cowardice."*

8:30-9:15

Brainstorm for essay topics. Don't forget to check topics listed in the handbook. Pay careful attention to the assignment instructions.

9:15-10:15

Select and write two possible thesis statements. Then sleep on them and see how they sound in the morning

3. Promise Yourself a Reward.

Upon completion of your study session, you may want to give yourself some positive reinforcement. After all, you set a goal, you achieved it, and because of that, you owe yourself a little “morale booster.” Watch a favorite TV program, take a refreshing walk, visit with friends—whatever you choose to do, think of it as payment for the work you have accomplished.

Study Improvement Activities



Read over the simple study improvement activities listed below. Identify those that you feel might be productive for you and try them out.

Lecture Notes. Meet with a classmate or two after class to compare your lecture notes. Identify similarities and differences in how you heard the lecture material. Also, share your lecture note taking short hand. Does your partner use something that will help you take notes more efficiently?

Textbook Notes. With a group of classmates, share your systems of textbook marking and note taking. See if someone has a notation system that will work for you.

Stress Management. Ask several upper school mates how they managed the stress of going to college. Then make a list of “stress relievers” and put those that make sense to you into practice.

Study Conversation. Meet regularly with a friend with the purpose of telling each other three interesting things that you have learned in class or read in your assigned reading. This kind of sharing encourages learning and remembering.

Discussions about College. With a friend or two discuss the following: How do you define productive study? What is the purpose of studying? What is the difference between study quality and study quantity? How do you find a balance? How important is your study attitude? Do you have a study style? Discussions like these will help keep things in perspective as well as motivate you to become a better student.

Thought Exercise. Consider your best class where you received the best grades. Recall why you had so much success in this class? Did you do anything different for this class? Did you approach it differently? Did you experience it with a different attitude? Then consider what you can learn from this success story and how you can apply it to upcoming classes.

Study Satisfaction. Take a moment and list the satisfactions that you get out of knowing a subject really well. Then reflect on what it means to be an educated college student.

Just for Fun. With a college friend identify different kinds of college students. What “kind” of student are you? What kind of college student would you like to be?

TV Challenge. Make a pledge to yourself (or with your roommate) to reduce the amount of TV that you watch each week. Here are three possible pledges:

- Eliminate TV entirely (or at least for a month)

- Limit yourself to no more than two programs a week.
- Only watch TV using the formula that allows you to watch one program for every three hours of study.

Replace some of the time spent watching TV with more study time.

Reaffirm Purpose. Meet with a friend or group of friends once a semester to talk about the importance of school. It is motivational to remind yourself of what you are trying to achieve by going to college.

Test Study Strategies. With a group of peers share some of your techniques for studying for tests. Listen for a strategy that will help you.

Time Management. Talk to several classmates about their approach to time management and organization. Ask the question, "How do you organize all the demands on your time in college?"

Study Spaces. Ask three to seven students where they like to study best. Ask them why a certain study space works for them. See if something makes sense for you.

Study Busters. With a group of peers make a list of things that can interfere with, interrupt, or distract you from your studies. With each "study buster" on your list, agree upon a remedy or alternative.

Study Log. Keep a simple study log and compare it to your weekly schedule. Then ask yourself the following questions: Did you meet your study goals? Did you study as much as you had planned? Was your study time enough to complete your work? Did you feel satisfied with the amount and quality of your study?

Study Goals. Each time you sit down to study, write down in a pocket notebook your study goal or goals for that session. When you finish each study session, give yourself a goal grade based on the extent to which you accomplished your goals. Keep a list of all your study goals. At the end of each week look to see how you scored cumulatively. Your weekly grade may provide you with a hint about the efficiency and/or quality of your study time.

Review Lectures. With a classmate take turns presenting an after class "mini lecture" based on what you just heard in class. These short review talks will be a good way to cement the material in your mind.

College Skills. Survey a few experienced students and ask them if they had done anything that they feel made them a better college student. Learn from the experience of others.

Content Discussions. After you read a textbook chapter or section, tell a friend or family member about something that you have just learned. Try to present it in a way that will encourage discussion.

Brain Care. Take care of your brain by eating right, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep. Get a realistic picture of how you eat, exercise, and sleep by keeping track of all three during a designated week. Then at the end of the week see where you are shortchanging them and subsequently make necessary changes.

Lecture Listening: Getting the Most Out of Lectures*

I. Strategies for Better Listening

1. Maintain a positive attitude. Try to find areas of interest in each lecture.
2. Don't let a professor's poor delivery sour your view of the content.
3. Hold back judgment until you comprehend where the professor is going with the lecture.
4. Remember that effective listening is hard work; employ your mental energy.
5. Keep an open mind.
6. Go to class intending to listen and learn.
7. Take responsibility for getting something out of each lecture. Remember that you are responsible for the quality of your own learning.
8. Avoid distracting students.
9. Sit where you can maintain your focus on the instructor and see and hear as well as possible.
10. Look at your notes from the previous class to refresh your memory; reviewing notes will help you to make connections.
11. Arrange your schedule so you go to class fresh and ready to exercise peak mental energy.
12. Fight against mind wandering. Remind yourself to stay focused on the lecture.

SOFT SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE



Possible uses:

- ♦ Team Discussion Ideas
- ♦ Written Assignments
- ♦ Interview Topics
- ♦ Home Discussion with Adults
- ♦ Student Sharing of How These Topics Relate to Their After School Employment
- ♦ Add Onto Tests to Encourage Thinking/Writing Skills

1. **Interpersonal Skills** – Simply considering others before yourself and speaking softly
2. **Using Time Wisely** – While at work, share personal talk during breaks; find things to do while on the clock
3. **Work as a Team** – Help others sweetly and pull for the entire group
4. **Communicate Effectively** – Choose your words and actions carefully; say what you mean without being rude
5. **Accept Supervision with Correction** – Realize that you are not perfect and appreciate suggestions
6. **Show Respect to All People** – Address individuals by their proper name or title, smile while speaking with them
7. **Be Tactful when Offering Suggestions** – Use the phrase “I’m wondering if”
8. **Develop the Ability to Offer Solutions without Pointing Fingers** – When you point to someone, you have at least three fingers pointing back at you. Focus on the solution, not the person