

Study Strategies

PLAN ENOUGH TIME FOR STUDY.

The University expects a student to average about two hours in studying (including library work, term papers, themes, etc.) for each hour spent in the classroom. This is an appropriate and realistic guideline. A genuinely high ability student may get by adequately with less. However, many students would do well to plan for somewhat more than the two-for-one ratio.

STUDY AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY.

In so far as possible, a student should schedule certain hours which are used for studying almost every day in a habitual, systematic way. Having regular hours at least five days a week will make it easier to habitually follow the schedule and to maintain an active approach to study. Avoid studying later than the time you usually go to sleep.

STUDY IN A LEARNING CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

Find a well-lit place that works best for you whether it be your home, the library, outside, or elsewhere, as long as it is somewhere that you can associate with studying and concentrate on the material. If your roommate constantly interrupts you when you study at home, schedule time to go to the library to study or, if you like studying at home, schedule study time when your roommate is at work, in class, etc. Some people find studying in the classroom where they will be tested to be helpful, if possible.

MAKE USE OF THE FREE HOURS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY.

The hours between classes are perhaps a student's most valuable study time yet, ironically, the most frequently misused. A student may effectively utilize these hours reviewing the material and editing the notes of the preceding class and/or studying the material to be discussed in the following class.

PLAN STUDY PERIODS TO FOLLOW CLASS PERIODS.

This should be done whenever possible. The next best procedure is to schedule the period for study immediately preceding the class. A student should specify the particular course he will study rather than just marking "study" on his schedule.

SPACE STUDY PERIODS.

Fifty to ninety minutes of study at a time for each course works best. Relaxation periods of ten or fifteen minutes should be scheduled between study periods. It is more efficient to study hard for a definite period of time, and then stop for a few minutes, than attempt to study on indefinitely.

PLAN FOR WEEKLY REVIEWS.

At least one hour each week for each class (distinct from study time) should be scheduled. The weekend is a good time for review.

ANALYZE YOUR PAST TEST RESULTS.

Make sure you attend review sessions to figure out the areas that you need to spend more time studying and where the instructor tends to focus exam questions (do they come from figures/graphs/captions, lecture notes, textbook, etc.?).

BE ORGANIZED.

When you prepare to study make sure you have your lecture notes, textbooks, study guides, a pen or pencil and some blank paper. You may also want to have some snacks close by to avoid being tempted to break your study schedule to go out for food.

TEST YOURSELF.

Study actively by quizzing yourself or classmates to determine information that needs more attention and to test your level of comprehension. Study to understand the material, not just memorize it.

CREATE YOUR OWN STUDY GUIDE.

If the instructor does not provide study guides, or even if he/she does, create your own. The act of constructing questions, answering them, and actively writing down information aids you to remember the material better.

KNOW YOUR LEARNING STYLE.

If you are a visual learner, flash cards may work well for you to learn facts and mind maps may be best for larger concepts. If you are an auditory learner, you may prefer to tape lectures and listen to them again or read your study guide/notes aloud. If you are a kinesthetic learner, creating examples or real-life scenarios that relate to the information or working through challenging material with a classmate may work for you. For a reading/writing learner, rewriting your notes and study guide may help you learn the material better. Refer to <http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp> for more tips based on your strongest learning style.