



How to Improve your Study Skills

Students who do well academically typically have “mastered” five study-skill areas:

- They listen actively
- They get involved in class discussions
- They take good notes
- They get the most out of reading
- They prepare effectively for exams

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER IN CLASS

- Sit close to the front of the room, if possible
- Focus your attention on what the teacher is saying
- Evaluate what you hear and relate it to other things you already know
- Make notes of the important information and review them later
- Ask questions about anything you don't understand

GET INVOLVED IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS

- Be prepared for each class session
- Think about the points that might be discussed in class
- Participate, but don't dominate
- Ask questions
- Verbally summarize what you think you've heard
- Respect the opinions of others

TAKE GOOD NOTES

- Use a notebook and write neatly, so you can read what you wrote later
- Record the speaker's main points in your own words – don't try to write everything that the speaker says
- Listen for key words or information that the speaker repeats several times
- Copy key information written on the board
- Use as few words as possible; use symbols and abbreviations that make sense to you
- Some people prefer to take notes a format similar to an outline
- Read over your notes sometime later in the day and again before a test to keep the information fresh in your mind

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF READING

- Before you read, quickly skim-over the material so you know what to expect
- As you read, pay attention to main ideas and how they are supported by details
- After you've read, think (and talk) about what you have learned, and note any points about which you have questions
- Try to avoid moving your lips or pointing at the words with your fingers, as this tends to slow down your reading
- Skim material when you are looking for a particular answer
- Slow down when reading complicated or step-by-step information
- If necessary, ask for help to expand your vocabulary/reading skills

PREPARE EFFECTIVELY FOR EXAMS

- Depending on the exam, it may be helpful to prepare by underlining or highlighting important ideas in your notes and books (if allowed)
- Writing a brief summary of major ideas can also be useful
- Review your notes regularly in the days leading up to the exam
- Ask the teacher what to expect on the test
- Try to predict major test questions and prepare for them
- For an exam that will require the memorization of specific facts, it may be helpful to use flashcards, develop acronyms or memorize in segments