

Help Me with assignments, studying and with tests

Study Skills

- Plan for longer study time
- Find a quiet space that is used for studying only
- Develop a regular routine
- Take frequent breaks
- Keep up with work and do not wait until the last minute to study
- Allow extra time for writing assignments to include editing & rewriting
- Use tutors when necessary
- Highlight or color code important information in text and notes
- Rewrite notes
- Test self on information studied, including making up practice essay questions
- Use active reading techniques—read headings before reading chapter, skim chapter to see what comes next, take notes while reading, make up questions using chapter headings, practice answering these questions while reading, review major points
- Space studying throughout the day into one hour sessions rather than having to spend 3-4 hours in the evening
- Find your prime study time when you are most attentive and at your best
- Figure out what type of environment is best, white noise versus absolute quiet
- Figure out if you study better alone so you won't get off track talking to others or if you need others around to make studying more interesting and help you stay on track
- Review notes as soon after class as possible, filling in any gaps, and helping to remember the information, then review notes prior to the next class
- Use movement (reading, underlining, writing in margins, highlighting, stimulation, and conversation (reciting information out loud), to stay alert while studying

Course/Assignment Strategies

- See Instructor(s) immediately if anything was missed in class
- Take a break between classes to get a snack, walk around, sit and relax for a moment
- Plan big papers in advance to allow time to meet with professor to discuss topic, do library research, editing, rewriting, and organization, and use of several drafts

Test Preparation Strategies

- Review information frequently—this is the only way information is stored in long-term memory
- Understand information rather than just rote memorization
- Strategies for Memory Difficulties (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004)

- Organize yourself and materials to promote good recall. Again, this can be writing side notes when reading your textbook or novel
- It can be helpful to have a daily review of the main concepts in class that day to reinforce long term memory
- Involve yourself in discussions to ensure you understand each concept. If you understand a concept, it is easier to remember
- Encourage yourself to get in the habit of recite/rehearse information. For example, when reading a paragraph in your textbook, rehearse the information once you have read it. Recite is reading the information and rehearse is explaining the information you just read to yourself in your own words
- Use acronyms to remember information. For example, if you had to remember the five lakes you would use the acronyms **HOMES**= **H** for Lake **H**uron, **O** for Lake **O**ntario, **M** for Lake **M**ichigan, **E** for Lake **E**rie and **S** for Lake **S**uperior
- Develop acrostics to remember information. Acrostics are sentences that help you cue words or letters to remember. For example, "**E**very **G**ood **B**oy **D**eserves **F**udge, **E, G, B, D, F** are for musical notes
- Focus less on memorization but more on applied problem solving and meaning. Again, understanding the meaning and concept will make it easier to remember
- Teach and study the material with another student in class for an effective technique for remembering information

Help Me stay organized, both with time and my studies

Organizational Skills

- Keep desk clear of mess
- Use folders/binders to organize class notes and study notes
- Leave margins when taking notes to add information from the text
- Keep track of books and other supplies
- Get books and articles from library before you sit down to write
- Clear/straighten desk at the end of every day
- Use daily planner to keep track of assignment/homework due dates

Time Management Skills

- Start each day with a list of what needs to be done and prioritize your goals, for example buying socks does not have the same importance as completing your assignment that is due in class that day
- Do not procrastinate
- Finish "to do" list each day
- Do not overbook or over schedule
- Allow extra time for assignments, readings, and studying
- Organize time with space for breaks, rest, exercise, social time, and meals

- Use a daily planner to write down all important tasks/activities for the day
- Stick to the plan and avoid temptations of distracting activities
- Be realistic about how long things will take and block off study time, lab work, library research, and writing time in daily planner
- Build in extra room in case things take longer than planned
- Break down large tasks into small components and put these in planner. A large task may feel overwhelming however, when it is broken down into small parts each component is quite manageable
- For paperwork use the O.H.I.O principle - Only Handle It Once. When you receive a document try to respond on the spot, throw it away, or file it permanently
- Get into the habit of carrying a day planner and writing things down frequently. The more you use the reminder, the more you will come to rely on it. Check entries in your reminder each morning before you start your day and throughout the day

Structure

- Frequent use of lists and notes to self
- Color code (e.g., files, texts, schedules)
- Consistent use of routines and rituals
- Use Reminders
- Computer software program that assists in managing time
- Use of calendar, computers, phones

Help Me stay on topic

Procrastination

- Stick to your daily plan
- Do things that were put off from the day before
- Tackle tough assignments early
- Pick interesting paper assignment to avoid boredom
- Learn what motivates you
- Time breaks to avoid letting a 10-15-minute break turn into 30-45 minutes when doing tasks
- Avoid the TV when studying; use this as a reward for finishing or plan studying around a TV break

Strategies for Attention Difficulties (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004)

- Make sure attention is focused free from distractions at the start and during each subject
- If unsure of instructions, ask for clarification right away

- Allow yourself plenty of time to complete assignments and tasks to allow yourself to ask for assistance if needed
- Working with another student whom you can double check for instructions and assignments can be very helpful
- Provide yourself a daily/weekly progress note to track completion of assignments. This will allow you to see your progress patterns
- Break assignments into smaller chunks. For example, after reading a paragraph, make notes of what the main points are to ensure you understand what you have just read. You can use the side notes to study and review so that you don't have to re-read the whole paragraph again
- Once you have an idea in your head, write it down right away to decrease your mind from being overwhelmed of information
- If it is difficult to transfer your thoughts to paper, it can be helpful to relate these thoughts to real life examples

Help Me stay on track

GOAL SETTING – Compiled and adapted by Christine Johnson-Quan from Smart but Scattered, 2018

Goal setting is a valuable means to creating accountability and encouraging success by:

Deciding what is important for you to achieve in your life

Separating what is important from what is irrelevant, or a distraction

Motivating yourself

Building your self-confidence, based on successful achievement of goals

If you don't already set goals, do so, starting now. As you make goal setting a priority, you'll find yourself feeling more positive about achievements.

GOAL SETTING TIPS

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective goals:

State each goal as a positive statement: Express your goals positively – 'I need to follow through and expect to do my best' is a much better goal than 'Don't give up and make stupid mistakes'

Be precise: Set a precise goal, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you will know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it. I need to be able to....I want to be able to.....

Set priorities: When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.

Write goals down: This makes it real too, and crystallizes the goal in order to make the goal more forceful.

Keep your everyday goals small: Keep the low-level goals you are working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward. Derive today's goals from larger ones.

Set performance goals, not outcome goals: You should take care to set goals keeping in mind the things you have as much control as possible. There is nothing more dispiriting than failing to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control. In business, these could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, for example, these reasons could include poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck. If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals and draw satisfaction from them.

Set realistic goals: It is important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (employers, parents, media, society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions. Alternatively, you may set goals that are too high, because you may not appreciate either the obstacles in the way or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

AREAS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN SETTING GOALS

Athletic Goals:

Is there any part of your athletic interests where you believe you need to make some goals in order to increase performance, listening or other areas.

Attitude:

Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? If so, set a goal to improve your behavior or find a solution to the problem.

Education:

Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to achieve other goals?

Family:

Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?

Physical:

Are there any athletic goals you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?

Health and wellness:

How do you want to enjoy yourself? - you should ensure that some of your life is for you!

GOAL SETTING – PsychCentral, 2015

Below are some tips about setting and reaching goals from PsychCentral (2015)

- Set small, appropriate goals.
- If you are unsure, seek advice or guidance from someone you trust, or get into counseling so that you can process.
- Accept that failure can happen and that disappointments are a part of life.
- Don't set yourself up for failure. This does not mean that you must accept failure, but accept that sometimes when we try at something we may not succeed the first time. Don't give up!
- Be realistic.
- Don't set yourself up for failure. For example, if you have not been exercising, don't expect to run a half marathon with only a couple weeks of running.
- Understand and accept that your life's path is not the same as that of the person next to you.
- You may share the same goals, but your means for getting there may be different. Work with what suits you. Remember that what makes you feel whole may work for someone else.
- Ask for help.
- Sometimes we need to get rid of the Superman/Superwoman cape! Some things cannot be accomplished without help. Reach out to someone you trust and who supports you.