

Prepare 2  
Lead &  
Succeed

# Study Habits for Success



Developing effective study habits is a step-by-step process that takes practice and perseverance. But, just like learning to play a musical instrument or play a sport, the more you practice good study habits, the more successful you will learn and perform in class. And your high school success will help you prepare for college success too!!

## **It Starts in the Classroom**

The more actively involved you are during class, the better you'll be at reviewing, practicing, and studying on your own. Practice these **S.L.A.N.T.** strategies to help you be an active learner and get a great head start.

**S**it Up      **L**ean forward      **A**sk questions      **N**ote important information      **T**rack the speaker

## **Organize**

The first step to effective study—be organized and manage your time well. This means:

- have a system to keep track of due dates for assignments, papers, tests, and projects.
- schedule time every day for study and review,
- break up work into smaller chunks and start early to avoid procrastination and last-minute stress, and
- gather everything you need before hand: notebooks, textbooks, pencils & pens, etc.



## **Find a Quiet Place**

Find a study space that is as quiet and comfortable as possible. To make the best use of your study time, you want to have an environment that helps you focus and concentrate.

- Make sure you have good lighting.
- Turn off distractions like television, instant messaging, cell phones, loud music. These are “pitfalls of procrastination”.
- Use self-motivating statements like: “the sooner I get done, the sooner I can relax”.

## **Study Your Hardest Subjects First**

It's natural to want to study the hardest subjects last—but that is often when you are the most tired and least motivated. Instead, try tackling your most difficult assignments first—when you are fresh and have energy. Then, you can “reward” yourself with the easier, more enjoyable assignments.

## **Take Short Breaks**



Do you ever find yourself reading the same paragraph over and over without taking in the information? It's time for a break! Experts have found that taking a short break every hour (5-10 minutes) actually improves memory and thinking skills!

So rest your eyes, wash your face, stretch your muscles, eat a light snack, turn off your brain for a few minutes. Then get back to it.

# Use SQ3R to Remember What You Read

The SQ3R method is a proven way to improve your understanding and memory when you read.

**Survey** - This is like looking at a road map before going on a trip—and will help you to get an overall picture of what you'll be reading. Start by surveying (scanning/reading) the following parts of the chapter:

- Titles, headings, subheadings
- Graphics like maps, charts, diagrams, etc.
- Introductory and summary paragraphs
- Boldface print and italics
- Bullet points
- Review questions at the end of chapters

**Question** - ask yourself questions as you read—what, why, how, when, who, where? What is this section about? What questions is this section trying to answer? As you answer them, you will make sense of the material and remember it more easily. Want to go one step further? Write your questions down.

**Read** - carefully and actively. Look for answers to your questions from the previous step. Re-read captions, tables, graphs, and pictures. Pay attention to bold and italicized print. Slow down through difficult passages. Stop and reread unclear parts.

**Recite** - Quiz yourself—what are the main points of what you just read? Highlight important information through written notes or by talking out loud.

**Review** - The review process is ongoing and can include: rereading sections, writing additional notes on main ideas, creating flash cards, and using mnemonic devices.

SQ3R =  
Survey  
Question  
Read  
Recite

## Memory (practice, practice, practice)

To truly learn something—and commit it to long term memory (not just cramming for a test), experts say that you must go over material 5 times or more! Mnemonics are one fun way to review, learn, and memorize material. Here are some examples:

- **Acronyms** are single words that represent the first letters in other words in a series. For example, the acronym HOMES helps with the names of the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

$7+(3+2)\times 5$   
32

- **Acrostics** are invented sentences with first letter cues. For instance, to remember the sequence for solving math problems: **P**lease **E**xcuse **M**y **D**ear **A**unt **S**ally = Parenthesis, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction.

- **Flash cards** are a powerful way to help you remember information like vocabulary words, math & science formulas, history facts. Write the question on one side, and the answer on another—and quiz yourself!

## Work with Others

Seek out people who can help you study: teachers before and after school, after-school programs, and free tutoring programs. Not sure what is available at your school? Talk to your teachers. Getting extra help shows that school is important to you and that you want to learn as much as possible!

Have you ever heard the saying, “two heads are better than one”? Starting a **study group** can be a great way to review material—to think out loud, share ideas, and learn from one another. Study group members who share your interest in doing well in school can be a strong source of support and friendship.



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