

When some students think about studying they get frustrated because it seems that no matter how hard they study they can't obtain good grades. It can even be confusing when the information you receive in class does not appear to agree with your test. Some students study long hours but never earn better grades. There is one solution to this problem. You must learn how to study smart.

First realize that you can learn anything you set out to understand if you have a positive mental attitude. You must determine your short term goals each time you sit down to study. Your short-term goals should include information you need to creatively learn your subjects. For example, let's say that you are studying for a history examination. Identify all of the information resources you will need, such as video tapes, extra text books, library information, internet resources, meetings with your teacher, and computer software. Map out a plan indicating resources you will use to study each course.



Fast Tips

- ▼ *Organize your study notes into separate binders*
- ▼ *View video tapes and web sites related to your course*

QUANTITY VS. QUALITY

The quality of your study is an important factor in beginning an effective study session. Quality study time begins when the first day of school starts. It includes preparing and collecting study materials for each class. Once you have collected your materials, identify a quiet study environment and begin to develop an outline of your material. Use your calendar to mark off important examination dates. Have a written plan indicating action steps you will use to obtain your goal. Having a game plan will help you to maximize the amount of information that you will learn from each study session.

Some students believe that long hours of study results in better grades. This belief is not necessarily true. Some students who study long hours each night do not achieve the results they desire. Even after long hours of study they don't remember their material when they enter the examination room. This happens because they have not discovered that the quality of study is more important than the quantity of study time.

Quality of study also includes having a right attitude about the information you're studying. To study effectively your mind must be clear of all distractions. Try to resolve personal problems as soon as they arise. Talk to a friend or see a counselor who can give you sound advice. When you have the right attitude, your study will be more effective.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Ask yourself what have I learned after each study session*
- ▼ *Make notes of important points while you study*

There are many places where you can acquire greater knowledge about your topic. The smart student uses every learning resource.

Start by seeking assistance from your teacher. Getting to know each of your teachers is important. Knowing your teacher enables you to gain easy access to additional resources that they can provide. Each semester get to know your teachers. Knowing your teacher's likes and dislikes can improve your grades on examinations and quizzes.



Most schools have a tutoring center or teachers who can offer additional support on your subject. Go to each session with the appropriate preparation. Complete all textbook chapters and problems prior to scheduling your tutoring meeting. Your preparation for each session is important because it will help you to identify your tutoring needs.

Always schedule tutoring time when you have energy. Study daily to get the most out of each tutoring meeting. Take notes on key points you pick up from each tutoring session. Include these points or principles in your examination preparation.

You will be a better student if you seek help when you need it. Once you have identified a good tutor continue with the same tutor until the end of the school year.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Seek help from other teachers*
- ▼ *Seek research help from a local senator or congress person's office*
- ▼ *Seek help from a local college tutoring center*
- ▼ *Seek help from a college student organization*



Now that you are preparing for college or trade school you need to take advantage of every resource. One of your greatest resources for collecting information is a study group. The principle of quality study time also applies to effective study groups.

Each session you should identify study group partners who are committed to the group goal. At each session you should identify a purpose and outcomes you want as a result of your participation.

Study group members should demonstrate their own knowledge of the subject during each session. Your preparation should include a study of all textbook materials and notes prior to the beginning of the study group. If each partner makes this same commitment, then the study group will be effective.

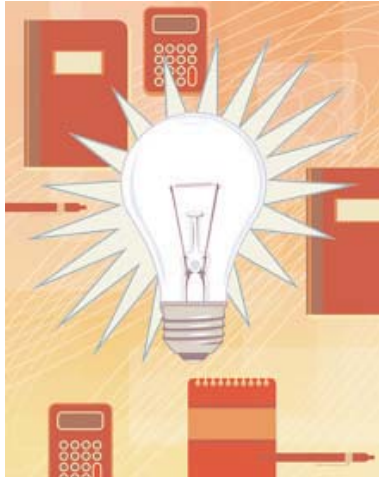
Fast Tips

- ▼ *Identify a purpose for each study session*
- ▼ *Give an assignment to each group member*
- ▼ *Follow up with group members by telephone or e-mail*

Know Yourself

You can learn a lot about yourself by getting to know your own learning style. To determine this, there are many tests that can be administered by a counselor or college learning center. Once you identify your learning style, you have a fantastic opportunity to use this information as you implement your study strategies.

Develop activities throughout your study sessions that explain the information according to your learning style. You may be a tactile learner who needs to



touch something to understand it. If so, create an opportunity to visit a laboratory or corporation where there are items available in the area you are studying. You may want to visit a museum so you can see certain artifacts you are studying in a geology class. You will be able to form a picture of your topic and a better memory of where it fits.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Don't procrastinate on projects*
- ▼ *Know how you learn best*
- ▼ *Do you learn better by reading, listening, or seeing information?*

Put an End to Peer Pressure

Developing positive learning partnerships with friends is a great experience. In high school many life long relationships are established. The exchange of information with friends who attend your classes can be a powerful motivation for you to complete your diploma.

While these relationships are important, they should not be a dominant source of defining who you are as a person. You define who you are as a person by having a wealth of different types of experiences and the ability to choose for yourself and say no when necessary. Develop the ability to have a high level of self-esteem to know the following: who you are, where you are going in life, and how you will stay on track.

You can accomplish great things by focusing on your personal mission statement. Develop your statement and keep it at the forefront of your study plans. You determine when you should relax and when you should say yes or no to friends. Your mission statement should guide your actions. Write down your academic mission statement and post it everywhere. You can tape it to your refrigerator, computer, desk, and notebook.

Throughout your middle school and high school experiences there will be many daily decisions. Making good decisions means a positive outcome for you and for the person or persons who are exerting peer pressure. Your decisions may even lead your peers to evaluate their own commitment to their goals.

Fast Tips

- ▼ Surround yourself with peers who will help you to learn
- ▼ Look for a teacher or college student mentor

Locate a Quiet Study Environment

Creating a quiet study environment increases your opportunity to learn a topic. Creating a quiet environment helps you to gain greater clarity and to think creatively about your topic.

Loud music causes the left and right side of the brain to operate in different directions. If you must study with music make it soft and serene to allow your brain to relax as you study. Try relaxing music like jazz or classical music. Research has shown that music by Mozart can help your memory. Television is another common distraction. You want to avoid as many distractions as possible. Sometimes you will have to leave your room to get the right environment. Places such as the library, a study room in your home, residence hall or a friend's room may meet your needs.

Locate a consistent place to study and remove distractions such as pictures, papers, and books that clutter your study surface. These may prevent you from studying because you lose focus on what you want to accomplish. Avoid studying in places that are too comfortable, such as your bed. If you are too comfortable you may sleep during your study time.



Creatively use your location to highlight your accomplishments. Display term papers and examinations that remind you of good grades you've received. This display will reinforce your persistence. If you organize a study group, find a good location. Locate a place where other students will not distract your group study session. An effective group is organized with a central focus and a location that maximizes the potential contribution of everyone in the study group.

A good study group helps you to improve your performance as you share your knowledge and resources.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Create a quiet study environment*
- ▼ *Plan your study time to avoid distractions*

How to Prepare For Essay Examinations

Use your class notes and textbooks to develop several questions your teacher may ask on your examination. Test yourself by writing answers to your questions in an essay format. Testing yourself can help you to determine how much additional information you need to learn prior to your examination. You may want to access back examinations from a friend, your library or tutoring center. Practice answering these questions to focus on your examination preparation.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Create your own essay questions*
- ▼ *Ask your classmates to create examination questions*
- ▼ *Form a test preparation group*

Objective Questions

To prepare for an objective examination with true or false questions or multiple-choice questions, here are some pointers. Remember, absolute responses such as, always, never, everyone, etc., are frequently false answers. Look for the common themes that you find on your examination. Notice that long answers on multiple-choice tests are frequently correct. Conduct your own mental review of the materials you are studying. If you must guess an answer to a multiple choice question, circle B.



Fast Tips

- ▼ Practice multiple choice questions in your book
- ▼ Review all quiz questions and answers again

Develop Your Own Test

You can always construct your own examination from your notes, tests and study outlines. Set aside a specific time on your calendar to take your own examination.

Improve Your Memory

You can improve your examination performance by using memorization techniques such as 3 x 5 cards or a matrix diagram of your topic. The 3 x 5 card should have a question on one side and a response on the second side. Study your questions and the correct responses in half-hour intervals. Feel free to take a five or ten minute break during each study period.

Use matrix squares to fill in with topic information. For example, if you are studying history, fill in all your dates on the left side and special topic areas across the top of your page. Next, use each corresponding cell to list important information. For example, you could list 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 across the top and on the left side of the matrix, list each president, economy, policies, etc. Using this structure is another way to develop a memory map for your examination. This method enables you to make the topic part of your long term memory.

Fast Tips

- ▼ *Draw pictures into your notes*
- ▼ *Make up a story you will remember*
- ▼ *Use 3 X 5 cards to memorize definitions and facts*
- ▼ *Study for a focused 20 minutes to begin your study session. Short breaks are O.K.*

Develop your Examination Outline

Develop an outline of your text. It should highlight all topics of the chapters of your text book. Use small letters to list important topics from each chapter. Next develop questions you will answer. The main question that you must be able to answer is what is important and why your understanding of the topic is correct.

An outline of your text brings clarity to your preparation for each examination. Review these highlighted topic areas for each of your examinations. Keep them in one place using a three ring binder. These books can always be used to reference additional course materials.