

# Study Tips

It is never too late to develop great study habits. If you're starting a new school year, or you just want to improve your grades and school performance, take a look at this list of good habits and start making some changes in your routine.

## 1. Write Down Every Assignment

The most logical place to write down your assignments is in a planner, but you might prefer to keep a to-do list in a simple notebook or in your cell phone note pad. It doesn't really matter what tool you use, but it is absolutely essential to your success to write down every single assignment, due date, test date, and task.

## 2. Remember to Bring Your Homework to School

It sounds simple enough, but many F's come from students forgetting to bring a perfectly good paper to school with them. Does your homework have a home? Is there a special place where you always put your paperwork each night? To avoid forgetting your homework, you must establish a strong homework routine with a special homework station where you work each night. Then you must get in the habit of putting your homework where it belongs right after you finish it, whether this is in a special folder on your desk or in your backpack.

## 3. Communicate With Your Teacher

Every successful relationship is built upon clear communication. A student-teacher relationship is no different. Miscommunication is another one of those factors that can cause bad grades, despite good efforts on your part. At the end of the day, make sure you understand every assignment that's expected of you. Imagine getting a bad grade on a 5-page paper because you didn't understand the difference between an expository essay and a personal essay.

Be sure to ask questions and find out what format you should use when you write a paper or what type of questions might appear on your history exam. The more questions you ask, the more prepared you'll be.

## 4. Organize With Color

Devise your own color-coding system to keep your assignments and your thoughts organized. You may select a single color for each class (like science or history) and use that color for your folder, your highlighters, your sticky notes, and your pens. You'll be surprised to discover how much strong organization skills can change your life!

Color-coding is also a tool to use when conducting research. For example, you should always keep several colors of sticky flags on hand when you're reading a book for school. Assign a specific color the every topic of interest. Place a flag on a page containing information you will need to study or to cite. It works like magic!

## 5. Establish a Study Zone at Home

Take the time to assess your individual style and your real needs and plan for the perfect study place. After all, if you can't concentrate, you certainly can't expect to learn very well. Students are different.

Some need a completely quiet room free from interruptions when they study, but others actually study better listening to quiet music in the background or taking several breaks.

Find a place to study that fits your specific personality and learning style. Then stock your study space with school supplies that will help you avoid last-minute emergencies.

## **6. Prepare Yourself for Test Days**

You know that it's important to study for test days, right? But there are other things you should consider in addition to the actual material that the test will cover. What if you show up for test day and the room is freezing cold? For many students, this would cause enough of a distraction to interrupt concentration. That leads to bad choices and bad answers. Plan ahead for heat or cold by layering your clothing.

And what happens when you spend so much time on one essay question that you don't have enough time to finish the exam? Another way to prepare for test day is to take a watch and be mindful of time management.

## **7. Know Your Dominant Learning Style**

Many students will struggle in a subject without understanding why. Sometimes this is because students don't understand how to study in a way that matches their brain style.

Auditory learners are those who learn best through hearing things. Visual learners retain more information when they use visual aids, and tactile learners benefit by doing hands-on projects.

Every student should examine and evaluate their habits and their natural tendencies and decide how they might be able to improve their study habits by tapping into their personal strengths.

## **8. Take Fabulous Notes**

There are a few tricks to taking fabulous notes that really help when it comes to studying. If you're visual person, you should make as many doodles on your paper as you can. Useful doodles, that is. As soon as you realize that once topic relates to another, comes before another, is the opposite of another, or has any kind of connection to another—draw a picture that makes sense to you. Sometimes the information will not sink in until and unless you see it in an image.

There are also certain code words to look out for in a lecture that can indicate that your teacher is giving you the relevance or the context of an event. Learn to recognize key words and phrases that your teacher deems important.

## **9. Conquer Procrastination**

When you put things off a lot, you end up putting things off until it's too late from time to time. It's that simple. When you procrastinate, you take the chance that nothing will go wrong at the last minute-- but in the real world, things *do go wrong*.

So how can you battle the urge to put things off? Start with trying to recognize that a feisty little voice that lives inside every one of us. It tells us it would be more fun to play a game, eat, or watch TV when we know better. Don't fall for it!

## 10. Take Care of Yourself

Some of your personal habits might be affecting your grades. Are you feeling tired, achy, or bored when it comes to homework time? You can change your grades by practicing a few healthy homework habits. Change the way you feel by taking better care of your mind *and* your body.

For example, between text messaging, Sony PlayStations, Xbox, Internet surfing, and computer writing, students are using their hand muscles in all new ways, and they're growing increasingly susceptible to the hazards of repetitive stress injury. Find out how to avoid pain in your hands and neck by changing the way you sit at your computer.

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