



Study Tips

Your approach to studying is literally half the battle; this is your guide to success!

PLANNING is the crucial starting point.

It takes effort, but you can't skip it and it happens *BEFORE* you start to study.

There are four basic steps to getting ready to study. They aren't as easy as they sound, and we have outlined the process for each step to guide you. We are here to help you through!

Step 1. Map out ALL your responsibilities and your social time

Step 2. Organize your materials.

Step 3. Set realistic goals.

Step 4. Plan your study sessions.

Successfully preparing for exams means starting early. Likely far earlier than you think (the first week of class is ideal!) and probably not exactly what you expect.

A word about TEST ANXIETY

Being nervous before a test or exam is normal and can even help you focus. Test anxiety is different. It feels miserable and can interfere with your test taking skills. Essentially, the fear, stress, negative thoughts, racing or blank mind don't leave enough room for thinking about the test or recalling the learned material.

What can you do to combat it?

Before the test or exam:

1. **Effective studying!** You'll feel more relaxed if you systematically study and practice the material.
2. **Spread out your studying.** Start early and space it out. Cramming is not a strategy.
3. **Look after your physical health.** Eat well (breakfast!), stay hydrated and get a good sleep.

During the test or exam:

1. **Take deep breaths** and focus on relaxing your muscles
2. **Read over the whole test** so you know what is expected and you can manage your time.
3. **Read each question slowly, more than once**, and make sure you understand what it is asking.
4. **Focus on 1 question at a time.** You can choose the order you do the questions, and come back to harder questions, but only focus on the question you are answering.

Creating your Study Plan

The very first thing is to *get a planner!*

We have blank calendar pages for planning if you need them. Just ask!

We also have Sample Plans for you to look at to help guide you as you make your own. You can't copy it, that wouldn't work at all, yours must be created for you by you!

Step 1. Map out ALL your responsibilities and your social time.

For academics, include current work as well as preparing for exams and culminating projects.

For extracurriculars include your job, practices, lessons, games, performances etc.

Social time is your fun time. Everyone needs that, and if you don't factor it into your plan you will derail your work and study plan.

Knowing what all your obligations are and seeing them laid out, you can **be realistic about how much time you have for your academic responsibilities.**

You may be surprised at how limited your time actually is.

Step 2. Organize your materials.

Your notes are a key resource to help you prepare for exams. Good quality, complete notes allow you to focus on the essential concepts while you study.

Gather your notes, tests and assignments - check for GAPS

- get notes from classmates for things you missed
- get notes from classmates for the ones you lost
- compare your notes with a classmate to check they are thorough.
- ASK YOUR TEACHER to look at your notes and give you guidance.

Step 3. Set realistic goals.

Look at the key concepts and get an idea of where you are in understanding/how much you need to invest to achieve your goals. What do you want or need your final grade to be? Be honest with yourself.

1. Review each course and identify the courses and units you are least confident about and **prioritize which need the most work.**
2. Decide on a realistic study session length for yourself. Then block in study periods for each subject.
3. Set **specific goals for each session! Break larger goals into its smaller components and schedule them in.** For example, by a set date, a certain chunk of material should be covered and learned. Work backwards from there to assign specific goals to each study session (the anatomy of a cell or read 8 chapters etc.).

Step 4. Plan your study sessions.

There are many different ways to study. The most important factor is to actually **do it!** Take a look at the chart of study strategies below, and remember, using the best strategies isn't as important as using what works best for you. But try to use a mix!

In addition to specific strategies, there are some study 'rules' that apply equally to everyone. Take them seriously! You will be amazed at the difference looking after your physical health makes. Feeling good is a goal in itself, but it affects your ability to learn as well as your motivation and attitude. That's huge!

Here is the list - do you have a favourite? Any that seem new to you?

If you don't quite understand what they mean, or how to execute them, talk to your tutor!

Study Strategies		
Technique	Description	Effectiveness
Spaced Practice	Make a study schedule that spreads out studying over time	Best
Practice Testing	Self testing or taking practice tests	Best
Mixed Practice	Mixing different kinds of problems/materials in a single study session	Better
Self-explanation	Explaining why a fact or concept is true	Better
Worked examples	Studying detailed examples of how to solve a problem	Better
Highlighting/Underlining	Marking important portions of material while reading	Good
Rereading	Restudying text again after initially reading it	Good
Summarizing	Writing summaries of materials to be learned	Good
Imagery	Attempting to form mental images of materials while reading or listening	Good
Keyword	Using Keywords and mental imagery to associate verbal materials	Good

Study techniques that apply to everyone:

1. **Study space** - make sure you have one that you can use where you will be most effective. Some need total silence, some do better with background noise or music etc. Try music without lyrics while you're studying - video game soundtracks can be great for this as they are meant to keep you concentrated for hours!
2. **Find out** what type of question types will be included on your exam: fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, definitions, short answer etc., and study accordingly.
3. **Eat** to power your brain. Consider supplementing your meals with healthy fats like fish, and save items with lots of processed sugars until after you're done.
4. **Stay hydrated.** Dehydration leads to exhaustion and hinders brain function.
5. **Plan short breaks** in your study sessions. Try for something that gets you up and moving. Maybe head to the kitchen for a fueling snack and some water?
6. **Sleep.** If you have poor sleep hygiene, now is the time to take steps to improve it. There are a host of health benefits, not the least of which is that memory processing happens when you sleep.

Some ideas to try that may work for you!

1. **Write out** your own cue cards by hand. Then test yourself silently and/or have someone test you out loud (summarizing, self testing and potentially mixed practice)
2. **Colour code** your notes! Highlight names, dates and key words with different colours. (highlighting, keyword, re-reading)
3. **Try explaining key concepts** of your material in your own words to people not versed in the subject. They can be real people, or imaginary. You must know it well to be able to explain it! (self explanation)
4. **Re-do** old tests and quizzes - or better yet, create your own! (practice testing)