STUDY SKILLS HANDBOOK

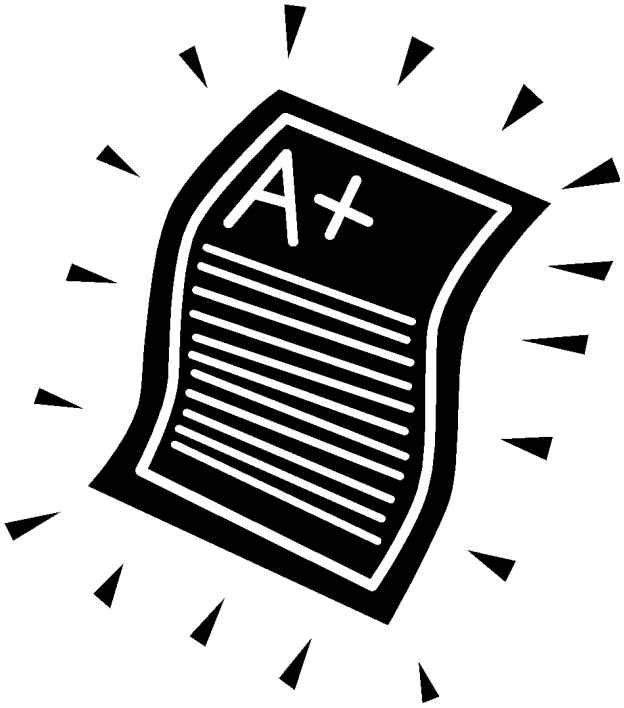
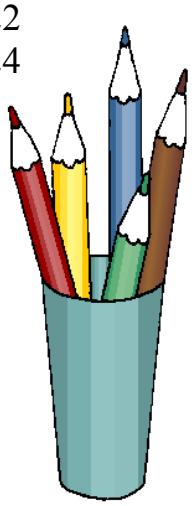


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PREPARING TO LEARN/STUDY



The Teacher/Student Guide

Tips and Reminders to help students study:

A. Agenda Book – Use it to help avoid confusion and uncertainty!
   Use it as a tool of communication between home and school!
B. Schedule a study time each day. Use the idea of same time and same place each day!
C. Eliminate distractions – Noise, Siblings, TV, Computer, Phone, etc.!
D. Have all materials needed for assignment available beforehand!

Know your learning style:

Take learning styles surveys. Teachers can help with this or find a site online to assist your search. Resources to find learning style inventory:
http://homeworktips.about.com/library/weekly/aa101400a.htm
http://www.middleschool.net/LearningStratagies/learning.htm
http://pss.uvm.edu/pss162/learning_styles.html

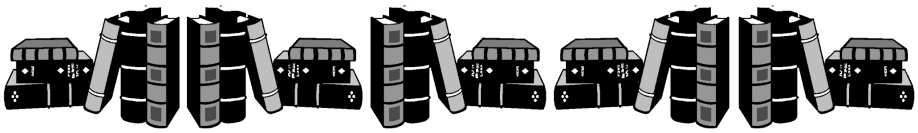
Know your motivation to learn!

A. Grade?
B. Internal?
C. Parental approval?
D. Teacher approval?

Good Health Helps!

A. Get enough sleep – set a good bedtime and try to stick to it!
B. Good nutrition is important!
    a. Eat three square meals a day
    b. Have a few healthy snacks in between to keep your mind in check
C. Exercise!
D. Take breaks!

LEARNING STYLES



Tips for the Tactile Kinesthetic Learner

- Speak out loud when using flashcards or reading through notes!
- Study sitting in a lounge chair or couch, you may want to even try lying down!
- Listen to music while studying
- Read material using colored paper or transparencies
- Take frequent breaks
- Use flashcards, card games, floor games, etc. to help learn and process new information!

Tips for the Visual Learner

- When possible, use charts, maps, posters, and videos to study and present material!
- Look at the person who is speaking
- Work in a quiet atmosphere
- Study alone
- Use colored highlighters to focus on main ideas
- Preview new reading material by scanning pictures and heading
- Choose a desk away from the window or door
- Write down information you want to remember

Tips for the Auditory Learner

- Recite information out loud
- Read out loud

- Use grid or graph to complete math problems
- Use various colors to highlight notes, books, etc.
- Make your own flashcards, using various colors
- Study with a friend or in a small group

TIPS FOR STUDYING



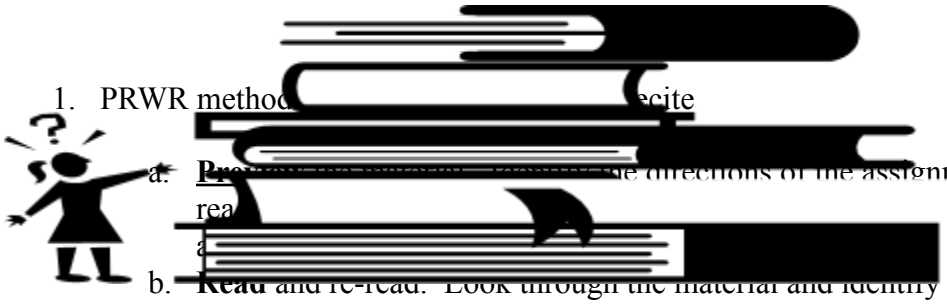
Top Ten Spectacular Study Tips

1. Study in the same place each day. Find a place that is just right for YOU! Make sure to consider time, temperature, lighting, and atmosphere!
2. Study at the same time each day. Determine what time of the day suits you. Think about what activities or schedules might get in the way!
3. Use a Homework Box. Keep all of your homework supplies in one place so they are ready to go! Pencil, pen, highlighter, whiteout, eraser, calculator, extra paper, etc. If you are organized you won't spend time searching for your things!
4. Review regularly. A regular review of your daily notes should be a part of your homework plan. It will help you remember important things from your notes. Sometimes just rewriting your notes is a great way to remember and refresh!
5. Make sure you are crystal clear about the assignment! If you are not sure…ask!
6. Eat balanced meals/snacks and drink plenty of water! Your body needs fuel and needs to be filled up regularly! You can't start a car without gasoline!
7. Try not to study for more than 50 minutes at a time! After 50 minutes, take a break, relax, have a snack, or stretch for a few minutes. If you are having a difficult time studying – STOP! If you are not on task you will not accomplish anything! Take a break and set a time to begin again!
8. Attempt difficult work FIRST!
9. Study with a friend! Quiz each other and compare notes!
10. Keep your agenda book up to date! It will help keep you on track and organized!

Speaking of Organization…

Here are some spectacular tips to keep you well organized:
Color Coding: Use different colored notebooks and folders for each different subject!
Folders: Use them!
Assignment book: Use it!
Post it notes: Use them to mark pages, write yourself notes, etc.!

Study Methods: Which one is Right for You?



1. PRWR method: [illegible]ecite
   a. **Pr**[illegible] the directions of the assignment/project, rea[illegible] the a[illegible]
   b. **Read** and re-read. Look through the material and identify new vocabulary.
   c. **Write** down highlights from material or questions you may have. Write definitions for new vocabulary works.
   d. **Recite** or learn material by repetition.

2. Acronyms and Acrostics
   a. **Acronyms:** An acronym is an invented combination of letters. Each letter is a cue to an idea you need to remember.
   b. **Acrostics:** An Acrostic is an invented sentence where the first letter of each word in the sentence is a cue to an idea that you need to remember! *EXAMPLE:* The order of the planets: My very energetic mother just served us nine pizzas (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto).

3. Verbal Repetition
   Read or repeat things out loud. Make up a chant with a group of students; create a rhyme or rhythm to use to help you remember!

4. Location Method
   Remember items on a list by imagining each are located in a different place in a familiar room. Sometimes it even works to visualize the items written down on paper.

STUDY FOR SUCCESS



- Have your tools handy: pen, paper, highlighter, dictionary, ruler…
- Skim the text to get the general ideas. Then read everything more carefully.
- Sort through the information in a systematic way. Write down headings and supporting facts.
- Pay attention to illustrations, maps, charts, diagrams, and summaries. They help you grasp ideas.
- After studying – test yourself!

Where to Study

- Try to study in the same place as much as possible. Avoid window views!
- Make sure your study space has good lighting and fresh air!
- Don't study with the TV on. Soft music in the background can be helpful for some people.
- Keep the top of your desk uncluttered!

When to Study

- Study when you are most alert.
- Get into a routine: study at the same time everyday!
- Don't try to memorize all the important facts in one day. Do a few each day!
- Put homework first. If you have other commitments (social, athletic), schedule them around your homework period.

And then some days, you just can't seem to turn off the TV…

Try these tricks:

- Just start. Once you get going, it is MUCH easier to continue.
- Reward yourself (a healthy treat, a short walk) for making progress
- Work with a friend. Encourage each other.

- Design your own study schedule. Stick to it!
- Be in control! Don't let a TV show, a phone call, a text, or the computer stop you!

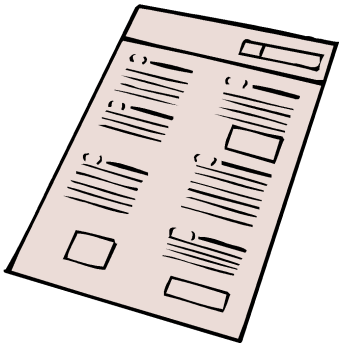
1-2-3 – Testing…

PREPARING FOR TESTS

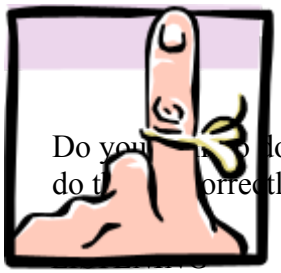
- Avoid cramming. Start studying well before the test date.
- Make a list of everything that is going to be on the test.
- Memorize facts and formulas.
- Make up questions that you think will be on the test.
- Take all the school tools you need to complete the test.
- Don't worry! If you prepare well, chances are you'll do well.

WRITING TESTS AND EXAMS

- You're prepared, right? So relax!
- Study all the directions first, and then read all of the questions.
- Be sure you understand a question before you answer it.
- Do the easier questions first to boost your confidence.
- Answer multiple-choice questions in your head first then pick the answer that matches it most closely.
- Take time to review your work and check your answers before handing in your paper.



COMMUNICATION PLUS



Do you want to do well in school? Listen carefully? Express yourself clearly? And do things correctly? If so, read on…

LISTENING
Listen actively: ears tuned in, open eyes, and open MIND!
Ignore distractions and concentrate!
Ask for more information or an explanation if you need it!
Notice key phrases like "This is important" or the BEST one – "This will be on the test!"
Search for main ideas and write them down!

MEMORY
Review what you have learned often
Summarize important chapters in your texts
Read books or articles related to your studies
Apply what you've learned: if you learn a new math formula, try a few examples.
Read out loud to help yourself remember!
Use memory aids like acronyms for memorizing facts (for example, HOMES for the Great Lakes)!

NOTE TAKING
Keep notes neat; they'll be easier to study from.
Listen 80% of the time; write 20% of the time.
Use your own words so you understand better!
Write in shorthand and use abbreviations!

WRITE ON!

TOPIC
Choose a topic that is well defined. For example, write about "Migration Patterns of Pink Flamingos" rather than "Tropical Birds." If you topic involves discussing an idea, make sure to support it with sound arguments.

PURPOSE
Having a definite purpose for your writing (to entertain, to inform, to instruct) will give it more focus.

AUDIENCE
The type of words you choose will be determined by your audience: your teachers, your six-year-old brother or sister, your newspaper, your parents, etc.

PERCEPTIVE
Adopt a point of view. Looking at a topic from another perspective may increase your understanding and provides variety to your writing.

FORMAT
There are different requirements for writing a letter, a journal, an essay, a review, or a research paper. Find out what they are!



STUDYING FOR TESTS/TEST TAKING SKILLS

Before the Test

1. Be sure to find out ahead of time:
    a. What material the test will cover
    b. What type of test it will be (multiple choice, true/false, short answer, essay)
    c. How much the test counts toward your overall grade
    d. How the test will be graded

2. Study in a place that is free of distractions and have the things you need like: books, calculator, and pens/pencils.

3. Study at a time when you are alert; not when you are hungry or sleepy!

4. Don't wait until the last night before the test to study.

5. Set a goal for your study time in and out of school. If you are being tested on more than one chapter at a time, decide on what study time you review each chapter material.

6. Repetition is important. Read and re-read your class notes, and re-look at relevant chapter sections.

7. While you are reviewing your notes, cover them up every so often and summarize them out loud.

8. Create aids to help you study, based on your own learning style:
    a. Make an outline from your notes of main ideas.
    b. Make a timeline of important dates or the order of events.
    c. Make flashcards to study vocabulary in English or a foreign language.
    d. Make up your own test based on your notes, and have a parent, guardian, or friend ask you the question.

9. Get help from a teacher – BEFORE you begin studying for the test - if you don't understand the topic!

TEN TERRIFIC TEST TAKING TIPS



1. Read the instructions carefully. Never assume you know what they will say. Ask the teacher if you are unsure about anything.
2. Read/skim the entire test through before you start. Notice the point value of each section. This will help pace you.
3. Answer the easiest questions first, then ones you know; then the one with the highest point values. Don't spend 15 minutes on a two-point question!
4. Keep busy. If you get stuck on a question, come back to it later. The answer might come to you as you work on another part (or you might find it in another question if you're lucky).
5. If you aren't sure how to answer a question fully, try to answer at least part of it. You may get partial credit.
6. Need to guess on a multiple-choice test? First, eliminate the answers that you know are wrong. Then take a guess. Because your first guess is most likely correct, don't go back and change answers or second-guess yourself.
7. On an essay test, take a moment to plan your writing. First, jot down your most important points. Then number them in the order you want to write about them – usually a rough outline will suffice.
8. Keep your paper neat. If the teacher can't read or can't find your answer, you might lose points.
9. Don't waste time doing things you won't get credit for – like re-writing the questions!
10. Leave time at the end to check your work. Did you answer all the questions? Did you check for errors?

STRATIGIES FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF TESTS

Short Answer Tests

- Budget your time by estimating how much time you have to answer each question. If some are worth more than others, plan to spend more time answering them.
- Do easiest questions first. Don't spend a lot of time on one question. You may come up with an answer as you work on other questions.
- Look for clues in the question. Words like define, describe, or explain can point you in the right direction.
- Answer all questions. Write what you know even if you don't have a complete answer.
- Use the full time allowed on the test.

Essay Exams

- Read all the questions first. Underline key words like summarize, evaluate, and compare/contrast. Write your initial thoughts.
- Organize your ideas. Do a rough outline on the back or on scratch paper. Rely on facts, figures, and logic, unless you are asked to comment on or evaluate something.
- Start with the easiest question. This can help you build confidence as you move to questions that are worth more points.
- Proofread at the end. Add more details, illustration, or examples. Check for misspellings, wrong ideas, and correct errors that you catch.

Objective tests like multiple-choice and matching

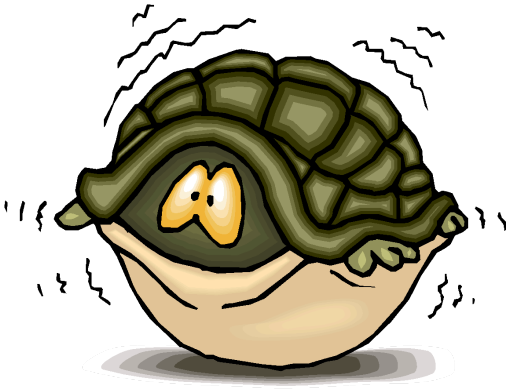
- Solve in the order given. Answers to previous questions might help you to answer some that come later. Don't get hung up on hard questions. If you can, move on, and come back to the hard ones.
- Read each question carefully. Beware of words like always, never, sometimes, and often.
- Think as you read. Multiple-choice questions can be tricky. Be sure you understand what is being asked.
- Finish the exam. Use all the time allowed. Narrow down the choices, and then make an educated guess.
- True/False – I know that words such as usually, often, and many are often true.

- I know that words like always, never, and none are usually false.

Standardized Tests

- If a study guide is available, use it! Answer the sample questions.
- Be realistic. There are questions that you will not be able to answer. Return to them if there is time. This might be a problem on a computerized test.
- Make an educated guess. On some tests, a fraction of a point is deducted for each wrong answer – it still pays to guess sometimes when you can eliminate one or more of the choices. Eliminate the ones you know are wrong. Look for clues in the other choices – agreement in logic, number, gender, and person.
- Problem-solving tests. These involve formulas and calculations. Before the test, study the major concepts and review formulas. Solve some practice problems. During the test, identify the givens and unknowns. Write down a formula used in all your calculations.

TEST-TAKING ANXIETY



What is it?

It's worry or fear caused by having to take tests. Test anxiety may cause:

- Mental distraction – you may be unable to concentrate and may be easily distracted by noises, temperature, and people walking by.
- Physical symptoms – you may fidget and have butterflies in your stomach, you may have a quickened heart beat, nausea, sweaty palms, and even diarrhea.
- Mental blocks – you may not be able to think about what you are supposed to do.

Who is affected by test anxiety?

Very few students have true test anxiety where the feeling is so intense that it affects their performance in serious ways.

- Some students view tests as threats, especially if they have failed often and are afraid they will fail again.
- Someone who has true test anxiety may do poorly on an exam even if he or she knows the material better than a classmate who is not affected by anxiety.

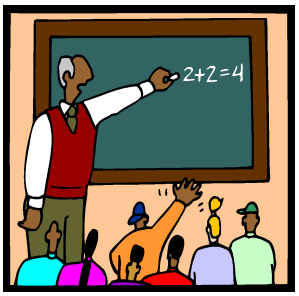
What causes test anxiety?

- Pressure to perform well.
- Past test experiences that were not positive.
- Fear of failure.

WHAT CAN A STUDENT DO TO CONTROL HIS/HER ANXIETY?

- Don't think about the fear; think about what you have to do to complete your work.
- Learn to relax; close your eyes, take a long, deep breath, and let it out slowly. Also, one might do some conscious relaxing of the muscle groups in the body.
- Think positively. If you have a frightening thought try to come up with a more positive thought. Statements like: if I stick to my study schedule, I will concentrate, and I can do it, it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be, I handled this well, I am proud of how well I handled it. Imagine yourself in control – if you think it, you can do it.
- Have a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Avoid caffeine, especially in the afternoons and evening because it could interfere with your sleep!
- Get an appropriate amount of sleep for you! If you need 8 hours of sleep to cope well, get eight hours! Don't cut back three or four to cram!

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION



Preparing for Class

1. Arrive on time
2. Have a pencil/pen, textbook, a large loose-leaf notebook, and assignment book ready
3. Position yourself in the best location for listening, seeing visual materials, asking questions and discussions…usually this is in the front of the class.
4. Avoid distractions such as dozing, talking to friends, passing notes, etc.
5. Have any homework ready to hand in
6. Review yesterdays notes
7. Focus on the topic to be covered today
8. Follow established classroom procedures.

Taking Notes in Class

1. Use a large, loose-leaf binder (unless your teacher requires something else)
2. Use only one side of the paper
3. Draw a left margin line and only write notes on the right side of this line
4. Do not try to save paper – you should try to take helpful notes
5. Get down the main ideas and facts – do NOT try to write everything down!
6. Use speed techniques if necessary
    a. Eliminate words
    b. Use word beginnings
    c. Use standard abbreviations
    d. Create your own abbreviations
7. Use appropriate grade level note taking methods
    a. Paragraph Form
    b. Outline
    c. Modified Outline
    d. Picture Notes
    e. Cornell 2 column notes (i.e., question and answer)
    f. Concept Maps
    g. Graphs
8. Star, asterisk, underline, or otherwise mark points the teacher emphasizes!
9. Skip a line to show the end of a topic
10. Copy down everything the teacher writes on the board.
11. Listen for cues
    a. Enumeration of a series of points
    b. Repetition of points
    c. Transition from one point to the next

Using the 5 R System in Note Taking

1. Record using your BEST note taking system!
2. Reduce by making cram sheets or cards after class!
3. Recite aloud to help memory!
4. Reflect on how new information relates to the old!
5. Review as soon as possible after class.

Paying Attention in Class

1. Use good posture
2. Keep an attentive expression
3. Shift your seat position every so often to keep the blood circulating
4. Train yourself not to give in to distractions
5. Use active listening and come prepared with a few questions
6. Ask for clarity on points you do not understand
7. Join in class discussions
8. Try to anticipate the main ideas that will be presented
9. Focus on your note taking

Classroom Participation

In most classes there is an expectation that you participate. It may even be worth a percentage of your class grade!

Pre-Class Preparation

Put time into reading the assignment, review and make notes. Write down ideas you don't understand. Write down ideas with which you disagree.

Know when to get involved in the discussion!

Elementary School

If you have a good question
If you know the answer to somebody else's question
If you can reword the question for a better understanding
If you can clear up point or correct a wrong idea
If you can give an easy example of the lesson

Secondary School

When you can ask a serious, thoughtful question.
When you can answer someone else's question.
When you can give an alternative perspective to the discussion.
When you can supply additional information to clarify or correct an error in the topic.
To give a concrete example of something that has been discussed.

Participation takes PRACTICE!

Set a goal of one question per week in each class so you will overcome feelings of self-consciousness. You do not have to agree with what is said, but learn to disagree without getting angry or defensive. Keep your voice on a conversational tone and level!

LEARNING WITH OTHERS



Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning involves students working in a group toward a common goal. Each is responsible for a portion of the project. Before a project is begun the student should be made aware of the research skills necessary for finding information, what is expected for group cooperation, what the finished project should resemble, when the project is due and how each will be assessed on his/her part of the project. Depending on the length of time required for the project and on the age and independence of the students, teachers should monitor and encourage students to keep on task and meet progressive deadlines.
For more information of cooperative learning go to www.kagencooplearn.com!

Tutoring Guidelines

As students work in groups, either in studying with others or a cooperative learning group, more advanced students will be in a situation to help those who are less advanced. Teachers need to set guidelines prior to group activities to apprise students of their limits on sharing answers and on different ways to ask questions to help lead students to the answers. Teachers should also instruct students on how to remain positive when a fellow student does not understand something!

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts often arise during group learning situations. Teachers should explain age-appropriate procedures for preventing and solving these conflicts.

Elementary School – should follow the teacher's instructions!

Middle School – students should try to resolve group conflicts themselves, some examples are:

Make a request for change
Talk with others
Give and accept constructive criticism

High School – students should show proper respect for each member of the group!

PROJECT SKILLS

Organizing Projects

a. When assigning projects always five the objectives for the assignment
b. Tell and show students exactly how they are going to be graded
c. Tell students when the project is due.
d. Chunk parts of large project into smaller parts and give due dates.
e. Parental notification of larger projects is a good idea – complete with a due date and materials needed!

Researching on the Internet

a. Identify key words for the search
b. Discuss reliability of various web sites.
c. How to use a search engine and which ones are available.
d. How to choose the line that is the most useful to your research and using the back on the toolbar to start your search again!

Research

Instruction on library skills on a weekly basis is suggested for grades K-5. Skills to be covered should include:

1. Use of encyclopedia (index, guide words, cross-references, bibliographies, use of volume numbers, Dewey Decimal system, and plagiarism).
2. Use of computer card catalogs
3. Basic set up of your library.
4. What reference materials are available?

Try to integrate library kills into every classroom instruction when researching!

PUBLIC SPEAKING



<u>The six steps to effective speaking!</u>

1. ***Know your material***
Practice your speech or presentation and revise it if necessary! If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase!

2. ***Visualize yourself giving the speech***
Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and assured! When you visualize yourself successful, you will be successful!

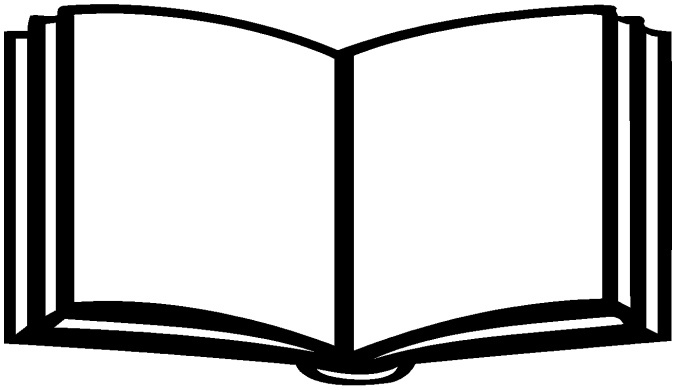
3. ***Realize that people want you to succeed!***
They don't want you to fail! Your listeners want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining!

4. ***Turn nervousness into positive energy!***
Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm!

5. ***Gain experience***
Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking!

6. ***Express, Express, Express!***
Stress the importance of inflection of voices when speaking to an audience! Remember to make eye contact, your reading rate, and the fluency of your content!

READING SKILLS



(www.iss.stthomas.edu)

Taking notes from textbooks
Skim section being read
Locate main ideas, sub-points, and direction words
Paraphrase information on your notes, use only enough detail to understand
Designate binder or notebook per subject

Learning from multiple sources
Sources include: textbook, lectures, original material, duplicate/handouts, interviews/biographies, fictional stories/novels, electronic media, and Internet!

Reading/Understanding Essays

Essay Test
Read EVERY question carefully
Circle direction words before answering
Do what the question asks to be done
If you are uncertain, ASK FOR HELP!

Essay Articles
Observe title/date written, and author
Prior knowledge
Mark important/factual information
Reflect over what was learned and how it relates to previous knowledge!

Difficult Material
Scan section
Read through summary at end of chapter
Mark what isn't understood to review later
Look up words not understood

Read to the end

Speed and Comprehension

Reading rates differ depending on tests, fiction can usually be read quicker, whereas a science book takes longer because you have to RETAIN the information!

To better comprehend:
Scan the chapter first
Read the 1st sentence of each paragraph
Take notes on the headings and 1st sentence!

Marking and Underlining Notes

Read one Section at a time
Review the section
Underline or highlight ONLY main subjects, characters, examples of main ideas, unfamiliar vocabulary words, and/or definitions.

Resources

For Study TIPS and Test Taking:

www.how-to-study.com
http://homeworktips.about.com/cs/toppocls/tp/topstudytips.htm
http://homeworktips.about.com/library/weekly/aa101400a.htm
http://www.middleschool.net/learningstratagies/learning.htm
http://pss.uvm.edu/pss162/learning_styles.html
http://www/iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/selfassessment.htm

For Note Taking:

http://mason.gmu.edu/~llmiller/syllabi/OCS42/notetaking.html
http://www.ucc.edu/academiclearning/cornell.html
http://www.bucks.edu/~specpop/Cornl.htm
http://ksi.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/articles/conceptmaps/cm.html#section2
http://mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm