

Study Tips

1. Start Studying in School

Studying for tests and quizzes actually starts way before you even know you'll have a test. **Good study techniques begin in the classroom as you** take notes. Note-taking is a way of remembering what you were taught or what you've read about.

Some keys to note-taking are to write down facts that a teacher mentions or writes on the board during class. If you miss something, ask your teacher to go over the facts with you after class.

Keep your notes organized by subject and making sure they're easy to read and review. This may mean that you need to recopy some notes at home or during a free period while the class is still fresh in your mind.

2. Plan Your Study Time

When you sit down to study, think about how much time you want to devote to each topic. This will keep you from getting overwhelmed.

If it's Monday, and you've got three tests on Friday, figure out how much time you need for studying between now and then. Then figure out how long each subject will take. For example, a weekly Spanish verb test probably won't be as intense as a big history test. So you won't need to set aside as much study time for the Spanish test — and if you break it up into a short amount every night, that's even better.

Another study technique is called "chunking" — breaking large topics down into chunks. Let's say you have a history test on World War II. Instead of thinking about studying all of World War II (which could overwhelm even an expert), try breaking your study sessions into 2-year chunks or studying the material by specific battles.

Most people can concentrate well for about 45 minutes. After that you'll probably want to take a short break. If you find yourself getting distracted and thinking about other things as you



study, pull your attention back. Remind yourself that when your 45 minutes of studying are up, you can take a 15-minute break.

3. Study Based on the Type of Test You're Taking

Many teachers tell students ahead of time what the format of an exam will be. This can help you tailor how you study. For example, if you know you're going to have multiple-choice questions on World War II, you'll know to focus on studying facts and details. But if the exam will contain essay questions, you'll want to think about which topics are most likely to be covered. Then come up with several possible essay topics and use your notes, books, and other reference sources to figure out how you might answer questions on those topics.

As you study, review your notes and any special information from your textbook. Read things over several times if you need to, and write down any phrases or thoughts that will help you remember main ideas or concepts.

When trying to memorize dates, names, or other factual information, keep in mind that it usually takes a number of tries to remember something correctly. That's one reason why it's a good idea to start studying well in advance of a test. Use special memory triggers that the teacher may have suggested or ones that you invent yourself.

In the case of math or science problems or equations, do some practice problems. Pay special attention to anything the teacher seemed to stress in class. (This is where good note-taking comes in handy!)

Some people find it helps to teach what they're studying aloud to an imaginary student. Or work with a study partner and take turns teaching aloud. Another study technique is making flashcards that summarize some of the important facts or concepts. You can then use these to review for a test.

4. Resist the Urge to Procrastinate

It's tempting to put off studying until the last minute (also known as procrastination). Unfortunately, by the time students get to high school there's so much going on that there's usually no room for procrastination.



If you're a procrastinator (and who isn't sometimes?), one of the best ways to overcome it is by staying organized. After you've written test dates and project due dates on a calendar, it's hard to ignore them. And sitting down to organize and plan your work really highlights how much time things take. Organization makes it harder to procrastinate.

Sometimes people put off studying because they feel overwhelmed by the fact that they're behind on things or they just feel really disorganized. Don't let this happen to you. Keep your notes organized, stay on top of required readings, and follow the other study tips mentioned earlier to stay focused and in control. Your teachers will give you plenty of notice on important tests so you have enough time to study for the type of exam you'll be taking.

But what if you're feeling overwhelmed by all the stuff you have to do? Are classes or extracurricular activities limiting your time to study properly? Ask your teachers for help prioritizing. You may need to involve the people in charge of your activities — such as your coach or music or drama teacher — in working out a solution.

Don't wait until the last minute to talk to your teachers, though, or you'll just look like a procrastinator! And don't be afraid to ask for help. Teachers respect students who are thoughtful and interested in learning and doing well.

5. Start a Study Group

Sometimes it can be useful to go over things with people who are studying for the same test: You can make sure that your notes are correct and that you understand the subject. Study groups are also helpful because you can work together to come up with ways to remember concepts and then test one another.

For some people who are easily distracted, though, study groups spell disaster because they get off the topic. When you're with a bunch of friends or classmates, you may spend more time hanging out than actually studying. **One way to ensure quiet and focus when studying with a group is to study in the library.** You'll be forced to keep things more low-key than if you're at someone's kitchen table.



wainwrightonwellness

In the end, it comes down to what works best for you. If you like to study alone and feel most confident doing it that way, that's great. If you think you'd like to work in a group, try it out — just be aware of the drawbacks.

The Payoff

When you've finished studying, you should feel like you can approach the test or quiz with confidence — not necessarily that you will get 100% of the answers correct, but that you have a good understanding of the information.

Most of all, don't panic if you can't remember some facts the night before the test. Even if you've spent all evening studying, the brain needs time to digest all that information. You'll be surprised by what comes back to you after sleeping.

Reviewed by: Eric J. Gabor, JD

Date reviewed: March 2012

Note Taking Tips

Write down key facts. If you have a teacher who writes notes on the board, that's a bonus: You can copy them down. If not, write down the most important points from class. Does your history teacher mention the date of a key Civil War battle? Does your English teacher give examples of Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony? Does your math teacher go over a particular formula? Write it down!

It can take some experimenting to figure out what information really is helpful, so keep trying and don't give up. Different teachers do things differently. For example, some teachers may mention lots of dates and facts in class but only write the key ones on the board. Other teachers may not write anything down, but they may repeat a certain date or piece of information. That's a clue that it's probably important. After a while, you'll get to know a teacher's style.

Don't overdo it. Don't go crazy taking notes, though: You'll be frantic if you try to write down every word that's said in class. And if you focus too much on getting your notes right, you might



wainwrightonwellness

miss important points. Some people actually learn better by listening, writing down a few key points, and then going over the material after class when they have more time.

Ask. Don't be afraid to ask the teacher to repeat something you miss. If the teacher's going too fast, chances are your classmates will also be relieved to hear the information again. If you don't want to ask in class, see your teacher afterwards. It's much easier than wondering if you got the notes right as you study.

Compare. Keep your notes handy when you're doing your reading assignments. Compare what you wrote with what the readings say — you may even want to add to your notes as you read.

Going over your notes with a friend and comparing what the two of you put down can help reinforce what you're learning. It also can help you remember information when it's time for the test. And going over your notes will alert you and your friend to any errors.

Copy. Depending on how neat your handwriting is, you may want to recopy your notes when you get home. If you've taken notes in a hurry, you're more likely to figure out an unreadable word or sentence on the day of the lesson than you are weeks later when you look back over your notes in preparation for a test.

Organize. Keep notes for each subject in one place so you can find everything easily when it comes time for a test. That may mean keeping a notebook or section of a notebook for each subject as you take notes in class.

Some people combine the copying technique with organization by using just one notebook for class notes and then copying these notes into a notebook for each subject when they get back home. The trick to making this technique work is to be sure you actually do it regularly. If you don't, your notes will be all over the place and things will get totally crazed when it's time to study for the test.

Good note-taking requires extra time and organization. It may help if you think of the time you spend reviewing notes as an investment. For example, if you decide to recopy your notes each evening, you'll probably have less time to watch TV or IM friends. But you'll save time later when it comes to studying for the actual test.



Note-taking gives your mind a chance to absorb the material it needs to learn. Not only can this help you to do better on a test, it's also a great confidence booster when you're studying and find yourself saying, "Hey, I remember that!"

Reviewed by: Chris Cortellessa, M.Ed, NCC

Date reviewed: January 2012

Tips for Parents

Helping your child study

- **Establish a Routine.** Setting a regular time and sticking to it helps children complete their homework assignments.
- **Set the Mood.** Ensure the room your child studies in is quiet, has plenty of light, and has school supplies close at hand. Remove distractions by turning off the television and discouraging social phone calls during homework time.
- **Show an Interest.** Ask your child about school activities and talk about what was discussed in school that day. Take your child to the library to check out materials for homework, and make time to read with your child as often as you can.

Monitoring homework assignments

- **Be Informed.** Find out about the school's policy on homework at the beginning of the school year. Ask your child's teachers about the kind of assignments that will be given and what kind of time frame the children have to complete them.
- **Be Involved.** Ask the teacher how you can help with homework. Be available to answer your child's questions, look over completed assignments, and encourage your child to share returned assignments so you can read the teacher's comments.

Providing guidance to homework assignments



wainwrightonwellness

- **Learn How Your Child Learns.** Understand your child's learning style and develop routines that best support how he or she learns best.
- **Encourage Good Study Habits.** Help your child get organized. Ensure your child has scheduled enough time to complete assignments.
- **Talk. Discuss homework with your child.** Talking about an assignment can help your child think it through and break it down into small, workable parts.
- **Provide Encouragement.** Find ways to support your child's efforts in completing assignments.

References

<http://teenshealth.org/teen/>

<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Publications/The%20Learning%20Team/Volume%2010/Number%201/Pages/Homework%20Tips%20for%20Parents.aspx>



wainwrightonwellness



wainwrightonwellness