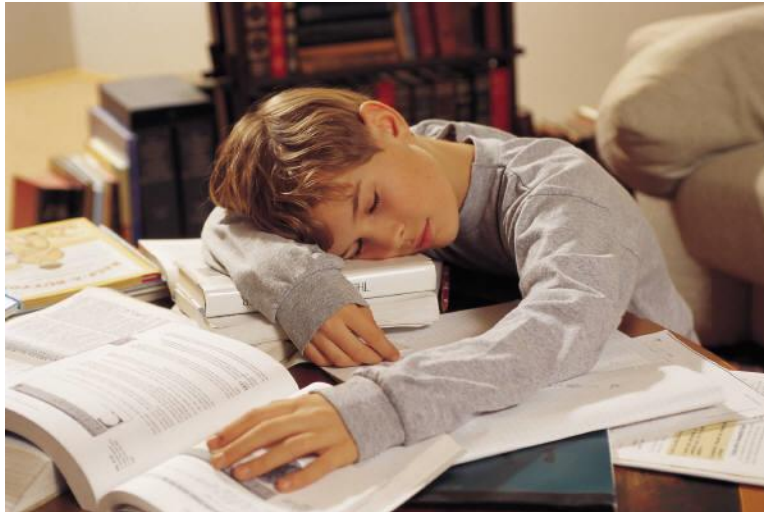


STUDY “SMARTER” NOT HARDER



**Guide to useful websites and
user-friendly study tips**

Helpful Websites for High School Students

General Test-Taking and Study Skill Websites:

1. www.how-to-study.com

This website offers very important tips and suggestions for students on different ways to study.

2. www.highschoolace.com

This is an academic webpage for high school students.

3. www.testtakingtips.com

This site is very useful for students to learn strong tips to take any test!
(Handouts included)

4. www.howtostudy.com

Different site from above – another site to give students practical tools to study.

Study Skills Help & Study Tips

- ✓ Everyone is different, different methods work for different people. The following are only suggestions on improving upon your current studying techniques.
- ✓ It is best to review the material right after class when it's still fresh in your memory.
- ✓ Don't try to do all your studying the night before the test, instead space out your studying, review class materials at least several times a week, focusing on one topic at a time.
- ✓ Have all of your study material in front of you: lecture notes, course textbooks, study guides and any other relevant material.
- ✓ Find a comfortable and quiet place to study with good lighting and little distractions (try avoiding your own bed; it is very tempting to just lie down and take a nap).
- ✓ Start out by studying the most important information.
- ✓ Learn the general concepts first; don't worry about learning the details until you have learned the main ideas.
- ✓ Take notes and write down a summary of the important ideas as you read through your study material.
- ✓ Take short breaks frequently, your memory retains the information that you study at the beginning and the end better than what you study in the middle.
- ✓ Space out your studying, you'll learn more by studying a little every day instead of waiting to cram at the last minute. By studying every day, the material will stay in your long-term memory but if you try to study at the last moment, the material will only reside in your short-term memory that you'll easily forget.
- ✓ Make sure that you understand the material well, don't just read through the material and try to memorize everything.
- ✓ If you choose to study in a group, only study with others who are serious about the test.
- ✓ Test yourself or have someone test you on the material to find out what your weak and strong areas are. You can use the review questions at the end of each chapter or practice tests the teacher may give out as well as other materials.

- ✓ **Listening to relaxing music such as classical or jazz on a low volume can relieve some of the boredom of studying.**

- ✓ **Don't study later than the time you usually go to sleep, you may fall asleep or be tempted to go to sleep, instead try studying in the afternoon or early evening. If you are a morning person try studying in the morning.**

Test Taking Tips

- ✓ Bring at least two pens/pencils with good erasers, calculator with enough batteries and any other resources that your instructor allows.
- ✓ Bring a watch to the test with you so that you can better pace yourself.
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test and try to stay relaxed, if you start to feel nervous take a few deep breaths to relax.
- ✓ Keep your eyes on your own paper, you don't want to appear to be cheating and cause unnecessary trouble for yourself.
- ✓ When you first receive your test, do a quick survey of the entire test so that you know how to efficiently budget your time.
- ✓ Do the easiest problems first; don't stay on a problem that you are stuck on especially when time is a factor.
- ✓ Do the problems that have the greatest point values first.
- ✓ Don't rush but pace yourself, read the entire question and look for keywords.
- ✓ Ask the instructor for clarification if you don't understand what they are asking for on the test.
- ✓ Write legibly, if the grader can't read what you wrote they'll most likely mark it wrong.
- ✓ Always read the whole question carefully, don't make assumptions about what the question might be.
- ✓ If you don't know an answer, skip it, go on with the rest of the test and come back to it later, maybe on another part of the test there will be something that will help you out with that question.
- ✓ Don't worry if others finish before you; focus on the test in front of you.
- ✓ When you are finished, if you have time, left look over your test, make sure that you have answered all the questions. Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted the question because the first answer that you put is usually the correct one. Watch out for careless mistakes and proofread your essay and/or short answer questions.
- ✓ Double check to make sure that you put your first and last name on the test.

Math Test Taking Tips

- ✓ Repetition is important in math. You learn how to solve problems by doing them, so keep on practice problems, but don't do it blindly, make sure you learn how to recognize when/why you should use a specific method to solve a problem.
- ✓ Work on practice problems for each topic ranging in levels of difficulty.
- ✓ When practicing, try to solve the problem on your own first then look at the answer or seek help if you are having trouble.
- ✓ Mix up the order of the questions from various topics when you are reviewing so you'll learn when to use a specific method/formula.
- ✓ Make up a sheet with all the formulas you need to know and memorize all the formulas on the sheet.
- ✓ When you get your exam, write down all the key formulas on the margin of your paper so if you forget them when you're in the middle of the test you can look back at the formula.
- ✓ Read the directions carefully and don't forget to answer all parts of the question.
- ✓ Make estimates for your answers....i.e. if you are asked to answer $48 \times 12 = ?$, you could expect a number around 500, but if you end up with an answer around 5000, you'll know you did something wrong.
- ✓ Show all your work (especially when partial credit is awarded) and write as legibly as possible.
- ✓ Even if you know the final answer is wrong, don't erase your entire work because you may get partial credit for using the correct procedure.
- ✓ Check over your test after you are done with it. If you have time, redo the problem on a separate piece of paper and see if you come up with the same answer the second time around. Look for careless mistakes such as making sure the decimal is in the right place, that you read the directions correctly, that you copied the numbers correctly, that you put a negative sign if it is needed, that your arithmetic is correct and so on.

True-False Test Tips-Help

- ✓ Usually there are more true answers than false on most tests.
- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, guess, you have a 50% chance of getting the right answer.
- ✓ Read through each statement carefully, and pay attention to the qualifiers and keywords.
- ✓ Qualifiers like “never, always, and every” mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these type of qualifiers lead to a false answer.
- ✓ Qualifiers like “usually, sometimes, and generally” mean that if the statement can be considered true or false depending on the circumstances, usually these type of qualifiers lead to an answer of true.
- ✓ If any part of the question is false, then the entire statement is false, but just because part of the statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.

Short Answer Test Tips

- ✓ Use flashcards, writing the key terms, dates and concepts on the front and the definition, event, and explanations on the back.
- ✓ Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them. Usually what your instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test.
- ✓ Try not to leave an answer blank, show your work/write down your thoughts, even if you don't get the exact answer, partial credit is usually awarded.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer, come back to it after you finish the rest of the test and make an educated guess. Other parts of the test may give you clues to what the answer may be.
- ✓ If you can think of more than one answer for a question, ask the instructor what to do.
- ✓ Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything that it asks for; some short answer questions have multiple parts.

Multiple Choice Test Taking Tips

- ✓ Read the question before you look at the answer.
- ✓ Come up with the answer in your head before looking at the possible answers, this way the choices given on the test won't throw you off or trick you.
- ✓ Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- ✓ Read all the choices before choosing your answer.
- ✓ If there is no guessing penalty, always take an educated guess and select an answer.
- ✓ Don't keep on changing your answer, usually your first choice is the right one, unless you miss-read the question.
- ✓ In "all of the above" and "none of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "none of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "all of the above".
- ✓ In a question with an "all of the above" choice, if you see that at least two correct statements, then "all of the above" is probably the answer.
- ✓ A positive choice is more likely to be true than a negative one.
- ✓ If there is an "all of the above" option and you know that at least two of the choices are correct select the "all of the above" choice.
- ✓ Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.

Essay Test Tips

- ✓ Read the directions carefully; pay close attention to whether you are supposed to answer all the essays or only a specified amount (i.e. “answer 2 out of the 3 questions).
- ✓ Make sure that you understand what the question is asking you, if not ask your instructor.
- ✓ Make sure that you write down everything that is asked of you and more. The more details and facts that you write down, the higher your grade is going to be.
- ✓ Budget your time, don’t spend the entire test time on one essay.
- ✓ If the question is asking for facts, don’t give your personal opinion on the topic.
- ✓ When writing your essay, try to be as neat as possible, neater papers usually receive higher marks.
- ✓ Make an outline before writing your essay. This way your essay will be more organized and fluid. If you happen to run out of time, most instructors will give you partial credit for the ideas that you have outlined.
- ✓ Don’t write long introductions and conclusions, the bulk of your time should be spent on answering the question(s) asked.
- ✓ Focus on one main idea per paragraph.
- ✓ If you have time left at the end, proofread your work and correct any errors.
- ✓ Budget your time, if you have an hour to write 3 essays, spend no more than 20 minutes on each essay, then if you have time left over at the end go back and finish any incomplete essays.
- ✓ If you aren’t sure about an exact date or number, then use approximations i.e. “Approximately 5000” or “In the late 17th century”.
- ✓ If you make a mistake, simply draw a line through it, it is much neater and quicker than erasing it.

Strategy for Reading Textbooks

SQRW is a four-step strategy for reading and taking notes from chapters in a textbook. Each letter stands for one step in the strategy. Using SQRW will help you to understand what you read and to prepare a written record of what you learned. The written record will be valuable when you have to participate in a class discussion and again when you study for a test. Read to learn what to do for each step in SQRW.

Survey

Surveying brings to mind what you already know about the topic of a chapter and prepares you for learning more. To survey a chapter, read the title, introduction, headings, and the summary or conclusion. Also, examine all visuals such as pictures, tables, maps, and/or graphs and read the caption that goes with each. By surveying a chapter, you will quickly learn what the chapter is about.

Question

You need to have questions in your mind as you read. Questions give you a purpose for reading and help you stay focused on the reading assignment. Form questions by changing each chapter heading into a question. Use the words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *how* to form questions. For example, for the heading “Uses of Electricity” in a chapter about how science improves lives, you might form the question “What are some uses of electricity?” If a heading is stated as a question, use that question. When a heading contains more than one idea, form a question for each idea. Do not form questions for the Introduction, Summary, or Conclusion.

Read

Read the information that follows each heading to find the answer to each question you formed. As you do this, you may decide you need to change a question or turn it into several questions to be answered. Stay focused and flexible so you can gather as much information as you need to answer each question.

Write

Write each question and its answer in your notebook. Re-read each of your written answers to be sure each answer is legible and contains all the important information needed to answer the question.

As you practice using SQRW, you will find you learn more and have good study notes to use to prepare for class participation and tests.

Hint

Once you complete the Survey step for the entire chapter, complete the Question, Read, and Write steps for the first heading. Then complete the Question, Read, and Write steps for the second heading, and so on for the remaining headings in the chapter.

Taking Notes in Class

In classes, your teachers will talk about topics that you are studying. The information they provide will be important for you to know when you take tests. You must be able to take good written notes from what your teachers say.

Taking good notes is a three-stage process in which there are certain things you should do before class, during class, and after class. Here are the three stages of note taking and what you should do during each stage.

Get Ready to Take Notes (Before Class)

- Review your notes from the previous class session before you come to class. This will help you remember what was covered and get you ready to understand new information your teacher provides.
- Complete all assigned readings before you come to class. Your teacher will expect that you have done this and will use and build upon this information.
- Bring all note taking materials with you to class. Have several pens and pencils as well as your notebook.

Take Notes (During Class)

- Keep your attention focused on what your teacher is saying. Listen for “signal statements” that tell you that what your teacher is about to say is important to write in your notes. Examples of signal statements are “The most important point.....” and “Remember that....” Be sure to include in your notes information that your teacher repeats or writes on the chalkboard.
- Write quickly so that you can include all the important information in your notes. Do this by writing abbreviated words such as med for medicine, using symbols such as % for percent, and writing short sentences.
- Place a ? next to information you write in your notes, but about whose meaning you are not sure.

Rewrite Your Notes (After Class)

- Have two notebooks for each class, one to take notes in class and one you leave at home.
- Rewrite your notes to make them more complete by changing abbreviated words into whole words, symbols into words, and shortened sentences into longer sentences.
- Make your notes more accurate by answering any questions you had when writing your notes in class. Use your textbook and reference sources to obtain the information you need to answer your questions. If necessary, ask your teacher or other students for help.
- Check with other students to be sure you did not leave out important information.

Having good class notes will help you to be better prepared for tests.