



College Preparation Toolkit

Studying 101: Guide to Studying in College

Whether you like to study or not, studying is a necessary part of college life. In fact, studying will probably dominate a significant part of your time. Before you hit the books, check out this guide to studying in college.

Quick Tips

- Avoid distractions at all costs. It will interrupt your ability to retain information.
- Approach each effort with a willingness to study and do the work.
- Use highlighters to emphasize certain points for easier reference later on.
- Take notes as you read new material. This will help you retain what you read.
- Don't write down everything your professor says. Only make note of the most important points.
- Always review your notes after a lecture. You will be more likely to remember everything you've learned.
- Prioritize what you need to study, and get the most important work out of the way first.
- Take breaks every now and then while you study. A five to ten minute refresher every hour will help you work better.

Come to Terms with Studying

When you are in college, there is always something better to do than study. This is why you need to come to terms with the fact that you *are* in college and *need* to study. If you choose fun over study time every chance you get, you will be lucky to pass your required classes. If it makes things easier, think about college as a full time job. You need to put in at least 40 hours into classes, labs, meetings, study groups, and homework. If you attend a school based on a foundation of rigorous coursework and competition, you might need to bump that number up a little higher.

Create a Study Schedule

Once you get a syllabus from each professor, you should probably start planning your quarter or semester. Planning early may help you stay on track. There is nothing worse than being forced to chug caffeine so you can stay up past 3 o'clock preparing for the next morning's class. Scheduling can also allow you to spread out the work, thus helping you to feel less overwhelmed. When writing down your schedule, try to make it realistic as well as challenging. Make note of important days like when papers and projects are due and when you have midterms and finals.

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Stick to Your Study Schedule

It's great to make a study schedule, but the next step is sticking to it. Staying committed to your plan will probably help you to be more successful as well as reduce your stress level. When planning your schedule, you should allow a little wiggle room for unexpected life events. You never know when a party or a date might come up. If you need to put something off, it shouldn't dramatically interfere with your plan. Flaking out too often will leave you behind and overwhelmed.

Find a Good Place to Study

Finding a good study haven is as essential as making a study schedule. Some students prefer reading out on the lawns where they can sunbathe as well as study. Others prefer the library because they have access to a variety of materials, not to mention silence. Many libraries offer group study rooms, tons of desks, and common rooms. Still, other students simply prefer studying in the comfort of their own rooms. Regardless of what place you choose, make sure you feel comfortable and can concentrate.

Use the SQ3R Method

If you want to study smarter, not harder, consider using a proven study method, such as SQ3R. The SQ3R method is based on simple principles:

- **Survey:** Look over what you are supposed to study before you begin. This includes notes, chapter headers, chapter summaries, etc.
- **Question:** Ask questions as you read or study to get the basics of who, what, when, how, why. Don't be afraid to take notes in the margins.
- **Read:** You should read as carefully as possible. Do not scan words or let your mind wander.
- **Recite:** Stop studying periodically to recite what you remember. This will allow you to confirm you are retaining information before you proceed.