

Homework and Study Tips

Schedule the Hours—Once a week, write down when you will do your homework, for example, Monday from 5:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M., Tuesday from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. etc.

Power Homework Secret—Do you have trouble just getting your homework started? This tip can help you. When you do your homework or study for a test try working hard for 15 or 20 minutes, then take a 5-minute break. Use a timer if you have one. Start another 15 or 20 minutes of working hard followed by another 5-minute break. Repeat until finished.

When, Then Strategy—Start out by telling yourself, “when I finish my homework then I will reward myself.” Start by picking a really motivating reward, like using the telephone, using the computer or video game, listening to music, watching TV, or even having a snack. Just make up your mind that if you do not finish your homework you will not allow yourself to have the reward.

Set a Stop Time—If you give yourself unlimited time to do your homework you increase the chances of not finishing because you have time to dill-dally and be distracted doing other things. Instead, set a stop time. For example, I may do homework until 9:30 P.M. After that I have to stop. Having a stop time forces you to stay on task.

Mind-Set—The responsibility for developing an interest and understanding for what is being taught is as much yours as it is the teacher’s. Develop a mind-set geared to listening. During class talk to yourself about listening. Tell yourself not to be distracted by daydreaming or what others are doing.

Say it to yourself—Say it to yourself is a way of paying attention and concentrating to what you are hearing in class. As your teacher speaks, repeat what you hear to yourself, saying it almost at the same time she is. Speak to yourself as though you are speaking right along with your teacher. Once you are paying attention you can stop saying it to yourself. If you drift off again, use say it to yourself to bring yourself back.

Come Prepared—Bring to class the things you need. Before you go to bed at night pack up all of your books and homework in your backpack and put it by the door.

Leave Prepared—Write down your assignments in your assignment book. If no assignment was given write “NONE.” Be sure to take your assignment book home every day.

Taming Paper—(1) Don’t leave loose papers anywhere—ever! (2) Never leave homework assignments folded inside a book. (3) Have a separate place in your notebook for each subject. (4) Keep papers in sections using dividers.

Repeat Exposure—An “all-nighter” is the least effective way to study for a test. Cramming for a test is like not eating for

two weeks, and then trying to eat all those missed meals in one sitting. You can’t digest that much food at once. You can’t digest that much information at once either. Schedule several study sessions before a test. Repetition is the key to remembering.

Turn it into a Song—This sounds corny, but it works. Take the information from your textbook or notes and turn it into a goofy song, poem, or even a rap! It will familiarize you with key ideas in an almost “fun” way. It makes it easy to “sing” the song back to yourself while taking the actual test and the keywords stick to you, and the song/s you write about them become like your own invisible cheat sheets!

Test Yourself—It is not enough just to read over your notes or textbook. Test yourself after you have studied. It is the only way you can be sure that you have learned what you are supposed to. Write down questions as you study. Put the page numbers where the answers can be found next to the questions.

Summarize—While you are reviewing your notes, cover them up periodically and summarize them out loud. Pretend that you are explaining the material to someone else.

Flash Cards—Make flash cards with facts, definitions, dates, etc. Write the key words or facts on the front and answers on the backside. The act of writing the information on the cards will help you remember. Test yourself using your flash cards.

Detour Distractions—When studying, get away from all visual distractions like TV and other people. Low music in the background is okay. Have a family member answer your phone calls and tell your friends that you will call them back later. Ask your parents to help keep noisy brothers and sister away or quiet.

Study with a friend—Compare notes, ask each other questions, do flash cards together, discuss themes that would make good essay questions.

Make a Test—Play the role of your teacher, make up the most difficult test you can and take it until you know the answers.

Say it out loud—Say what you are trying to memorize out loud. It not only makes it seem more interesting but you learn it (at least) 5 times faster!

Take notes as you read—You will remember more if you stop every page or two and take the time to write out some notes. Use these guide questions:
(1) What did I just read? (2) What were the important points?
(3) What vocabulary was I just introduced to? (4) If I were the teacher what would I ask on a test?