

Study Skills for College Students

Taken from The College Student: Reading and Study Skills 4th Edition (Spargo, 1994)

I. How to Study – For most students, study time is lost time because they are not organized for the task. Through organization, lost time becomes productive time. The first step is to plan and follow a carefully structured study schedule.

II. Training your Memory - No one is born with a naturally poor memory. What we call forgetting is in reality faulty recall. The memory is a faculty that can be strengthened and developed.

III. Learning to Concentrate – Everyone suffers from a lack of concentration at times, but a chronic inability to sustain attention spells disaster for students. To improve concentration, you can avoid distracting influences and employ aids to acquire and develop the ability to concentrate.

IV. Listening Effectively – Listening is a lost art today for most people. Understanding listening faults is a prerequisite to overcoming them. Suggestions for improving listening help you correct poor habits and cultivate good ones.

V. Taking Notes – Many inexperienced students panic when they are expected to take notes. With confidence, the skill is readily mastered. Suggestions help the note taker develop the resources needed to record classroom lectures successfully.

VI. Writing Effectively – Writing need not be the chore many students make it. Organization is the key to effective writing. A step-by-step approach will help you structure and compose your work. Editing will improve the quality and effectiveness of your writing as well as disclose any errors in it.

VII. Reviewing for Exams – When exam time comes, you must show how much knowledge you have about a specific subject. With good notes and a continuous review, successful exam preparation is assured. Exam jitters or panic will not plague you if you are well prepared.

VIII. Taking Objective Exams – You can't pass a test if you don't know the subject. But it is possible to improve your test performance through knowledge of test-taking techniques, thus ensuring that your knowledge of the subject is used to the best advantage.

IX. Taking Essay Exams – Essay examinations permit you to influence the kind of grade you receive to a considerable extent. Because much can be organized and prepared in advance, you have an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the subject most effectively.

X. Using Curiosity and Interest – Asking why, what, and how isn't for children only. Intelligent people of all ages are curious to learn more. An active desire to learn can help you "get into" subjects you might have thought dull and uninteresting, and active participation in your courses will help keep your interest level and your grades high.

XI. Managing your time – The demands on a student's time are heavy. You must find time to attend classes, enjoy some sort of leisure activity, perhaps hold a paying job, and actually sit down and study. Learning how to manage your time takes a little common sense and a lot of discipline. It can be the most valuable lesson you'll ever learn.

XII. Choosing courses – Choosing courses can be a bewildering experience. You are expected to seek out required courses, choose from a tantalizing array of electives, and fit everything into a convenient schedule – all without even being sure where your interests lie and what you want to do when you graduate. But making decisions is an important part of your education, and this selection offers ways to minimize your mistakes.