

A Guide to Establishing Effective Study Skills

Woodbridge High School
Counseling Department



*Adapted by Allison Singer
from the Counseling Department of Saddleback Valley Unified School District*

Woodbridge High School

Counseling Department

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A Guide to Establishing Effective Study Skills

Study skills are the essential student behaviors and habits which ensure successful learning experiences. The ability to study effectively and productively is not something that students are born with; it is a set of skills that are learned. Forming good study skills helps to improve grades and the ability to learn.

A note to students: A positive attitude is essential to success. Studying doesn't have to be boring, dull, or difficult. Once you learn to study efficiently, you may find your classes becoming easier and even more fun!

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STUDY SKILLS QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire will identify areas that need improvement. For each question marked "No," see the page number in this booklet for new strategies.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

YES **NO**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do you set aside a specific time for studying each course that you are taking? (page 9) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you usually study in the same place every day? (page 8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. When studying, do you take a break every 30 to 45 minutes? (page 9) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you know your best time of day to study? (page 9) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you turn class assignments in on time? (page 22) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you organize materials before going to bed? (page 8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you keep a record of grades? (page 15) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Is your notebook organized by subject and kept neat? (page 8) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. If you are having academic problems, do you ask for help? (page 6) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Do you take notes from textbook reading assignments? (page 18) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. Do you take notes using key words, phrases, and abbreviations rather than copying word for word from texts? (page 16) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Do you review class material on a regular basis? (page 15) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Do you use more than one method while studying? (page 8) |

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Parents can help their student(s) by monitoring their study habits and by helping them to develop a plan to improve their techniques. Once the student has shown that he/she has mastered these techniques, parents can (and should) step back and enjoy their student's achievements, with less frequent monitoring.

YES **NO**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Have you helped your child establish a regular place of study that is free of distractions? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you monitor your child's study schedule and daily planner? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Does your child stay on task and use time efficiently? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you help your child review for tests? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you check to see that all study and homework tasks are neat, complete, and organized for school the next day? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you regularly discuss academic progress with your child? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Have you and your child discussed post-high school goals, plans, and expectations? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Do you attend Back to School Night and Open House to meet your child's teachers and receive information about class and homework? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Do you regularly check on-line grades (Parent Portal) and review class websites (Canvas)? |

Make the Most of Class Time



1. Sit close to the front.

- You'll have a better view of class activities.
- You'll have an easier time hearing what the instructor is saying.
- Since distractions are minimized, you will be more engaged and focused.
- Greater eye contact and connection with the instructor instills a sense of personal responsibility to listen to, and take notes on, what the teacher is saying.

2. Take notes.

- It's impossible to remember everything that you hear, and studies show that taking handwritten notes can help you to study and to retain information. It can also keep you from being distracted.
- Refer to page 15 for note taking tips.

3. Participate in class discussions.

- You are more likely to stay alert and engaged.
- Expressing your opinions helps you to test your ideas.
- The teacher knows that you are paying attention!

4. Ask questions.

- You'll know right away whether you're understanding the material.
- It's likely that other students would like clarification, too, and will be glad that you were willing to ask.

5. Listen to others.

- Participate, but don't dominate the discussion.
- Be courteous when others are speaking.

6. Complete reading assignments before class.

- Lectures will be more meaningful and you will be more likely to engage.
- Class discussions will be more interesting and you'll be better equipped to participate.

7. Go to class.

- Be on time--every day. If you make attendance a priority, you're more likely to take the class seriously.
- You're more likely to fall behind when you miss class. Catching up can be challenging.

8. Seek help when needed.

- Create a tutorial schedule so that you're sure to get help from the classes where you're most challenged.
- **Take advantage of our After School Tutoring Center (ASTC).** It's open from 3:15-5:15, Monday-Thursday in the Media Center. Teachers and peer tutors are there every day. Once you check in, make sure you speak up and ask for help. For the more information, go to **WoodbrigeHigh.org >Academics>After School Tutoring Center**

Organization

Organization of school materials and assignments makes learning easier both at home and at school. When organizational skills are practiced at home, those skills become habits that increase student effectiveness in a wide variety of tasks. A dedicated study space that is free of distractions and interruptions will improve the quality of study time. Parents can assist in helping to create this atmosphere.

Skills to Improve

- **Identify your learning style and use the techniques that work best for you.** Visit <http://www.thestudygurus.com/> for a free Learning Styles Quiz that will help you to determine your learning style.
- Keep a neat notebook with school papers separated for notes, tests, handouts, homework, etc.
- Bring necessary supplies to school every day: paper, pens, pencils, etc. A zippered pocket in your notebook can help to keep these supplies organized.
- Record homework assignments and their due dates in your **WHS student planner**.
- Ask the teacher questions before leaving class.
- Bring all needed texts and materials home for study and homework tasks.
- Study at a comfortable desk or table with good lighting, pens, pencils, paper, and other materials you may need close by. Your bed is not an ideal place to study.
- When appropriate, study with a partner, especially when practicing foreign languages or reviewing for tests or quizzes. Consider forming a study group.
- After studying, put all materials together to take to school the next morning.
- Check **Parent Portal** and your teachers' **Canvas** pages regularly. **Be sure that you have received credit for all assignments and that your scores have been accurately recorded.**



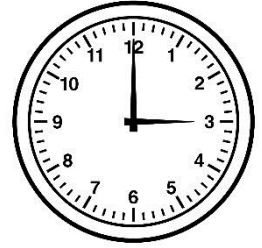
Behaviors to Eliminate

- Tossing papers haphazardly into notebooks and backpacks.
- Leaving homework materials at school.
- Trying to study in a cluttered or noisy area.
- Interrupting your study time with phone calls, texting, or other technology.
- Jotting down homework assignments on scratch paper or relying on memory.
- Listening to loud music or TV while trying to study. Some students find that well-chosen music can help them to study, while others find it distracting. Decide what works best for you.
- Going to bed without organizing the materials that you'll need for the following day.



Time Management

Time management means making the best use of your time.
A well-planned schedule can save time and energy in studying.



Determine Your Most Productive Study Time



The time of day you study can make a world of difference to your efficiency. Pick the time of day you are most alert and plan your study schedule accordingly. If your time is not always your own to plan out, try doing the more mechanical chores during "down" times.

Time Management Tips

- Start using a calendar, planner, or task list at the start of the semester.
- Write down important dates for exams, assignments and other projects on a calendar.
- Make a weekly or monthly schedule to get an overall picture of when you'll be busiest and when you have free time.
- Make a task list to keep track of things you need to do on a daily basis.
- Although some people like to use lots of tools to manage their time, it's not always necessary. Decide on one or two that will help you the most.
- Use short breaks in your daily schedule (such as an hour between classes) wisely. Schedule appointments on campus, check email or Canvas, or review your class notes.
- Break large tasks into smaller pieces that can be completed within a few hours (or even a few minutes).
- Procrastination happens, but don't let it take over your life. Pay attention to what makes you procrastinate and try to avoid these triggers, especially during high stress times.
- No one can - or wants to - study all the time! Plan your time to include doing things that you enjoy.
- Be patient and flexible. If certain time management strategies don't work for you, try a different strategy.

Steps in Creating a Daily Schedule

- Block in all fixed obligations: meals, school, appointments, practice, etc.
- Plan the study time. (This includes homework, review, and organization time.)
- Plan for deadlines. Avoid leaving long assignments until the last minute.

- Break large assignments into several smaller blocks of time.
- Take a break every 30-45 minutes.

Following a Schedule

- Keep the schedule in a safe place--posted on the wall in front of the desk or in your notebook.
- Adjust your schedule as needed.
- Keep using a written schedule until it becomes a habit.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

Make out a chart for a full week. Block in all your fixed obligations: classes, meetings, meals, etc. Take time to review before or just after classes. Estimate how much time you will need each night for each subject and schedule those times. **WEEKENDS** are good for working on longer projects. The reading of novels, plays, and some biographies and histories should be done in large batches. Research projects can be worked on with fewer interruptions and more concentration. Plan to read a minimum of 30 minutes a night.

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
7:30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Sleep	Sleep
8:00						Sleep	Sleep
8:30						Breakfast	
9:00						English Paper	
9:30						↓	
10:00						Break	
10:30						↓	
11:00						Chores	
11:30						LUNCH	LUNCH
12:00						Ball Game	
12:30						↓	Art Project
1:00							↓
1:30							
2:00							
2:30							
3:00	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	SNACK	
3:30	SNACK	SNACK	SNACK	SNACK	SNACK	Read	
4:00	English	English	English	English	English		
4:30	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies		
5:00	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math		
5:30	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science		
6:00	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER
6:30	CHORES	CHORES	CHORES	CHORES	Science		
7:00	Foreign Language/ Elective	Foreign Language/ Elective	Foreign Language/ Elective	Foreign Language/ Elective	FOOT-BALL	OUT WITH FRIENDS	Read ↓
7:30	Study for test	Review	Read	Study for tests	GAME	FRIENDS	
8:00	Book Report	PHONE	↓	T.V.			T.V.
8:30	T.V.	T.V.	PHONE CALLS	Read			
9:00	Read	Organize	T.V.	PHONE CALLS			Organize
9:30	Organize	Read	Organize	Organize			Read
10:00	SLEEP	SLEEP	SLEEP	SLEEP			SLEEP
10:30					↓	↓	
11:00					SLEEP	SLEEP	

DAILY SCHEDULE

Fill in your own schedule. Copy this page to use each week.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:30							
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
10:00							
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11:00							
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10:00							
10:30							
11:00							

Keep a Monthly Calendar

Keeping a monthly calendar will help you keep track of the dates for long term projects and exams so that the deadlines don't take you by surprise.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<u><i>5</i></u> <i><u>ENGLISH</u></i> <i><u>EXAM</u></i>	<i>6</i> <i>Work</i> <i>8:00-4:00</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> <i>Math Chapter Test</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i> <i>History Unit Test</i>	<u><i>12</i></u>	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> <i>English</i> <i>Term Paper Due</i>	<i>18</i>	<u><i>19</i></u> <i>5-Minute Speech</i> <i>Due</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i>	<i>22</i> <i>Book Report Due</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> <i><u>ENGLISH</u></i> <i><u>EXAM</u></i>	<i>25</i> <i><u>FRENCH EXAM</u></i>	<u><i>26</i></u> <i><u>HISTORY EXAM</u></i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i>	<i>29</i> <i>History Notebook</i> <i>Due</i>	<i>30</i> <i><u>SCIENCE EXAM</u></i>	<i>31</i> <i><u>MATH EXAM</u></i>			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Tips for Taking Notes



- Go to class — there's no substitute for the real thing.
- Find out how you'll be evaluated on the material from lectures. For example, are the lectures based on material from the textbook, or is the content entirely different?
- Come prepared to class by bringing printed copies of slides or lecture notes. If you don't have access to a computer or printer at home, you can use the computers in the media center or in the counseling office.
- Do assigned readings before the lecture so that you can participate in class discussion, better follow the lecture, and ask meaningful questions.
- Disconnect your internet connection in class or leave your laptop at home.
- Listen actively by comparing what you hear in the lecture to what you learned in the last lecture, what you read in the textbook, or what you see on the slides.
- Concentrate to get the most out of the lectures. Sit where you can hear and see everything you need to.
- Organize your notes after the lecture by identifying main topics and key terms, underlining or using different colors for important points, and making diagrams or concept maps to illustrate relationships.
- Compare your notes with a study partner's notes on a regular basis in order to fill in missing information and identify what you know and what's unclear.
- Review your notes on a weekly basis to prepare in advance for exams.

Consider Using the Cornell Note-taking System

- Helps to organize the main ideas, form questions, and remember the information.
- Notes from lectures, films, class discussions, readings, etc., are taken on the right side of the paper.
- A wide margin on the left is used to write main ideas and study questions.
- A brief summary is written at the bottom.
- Refer to the template on page 17.

Format for Cornell Notes

QUESTIONS/ MAIN IDEAS	NOTES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Format for Cornell Notes▪ How do they help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use this side for writing notes▪ Abbreviate, use symbols▪ Highlight important information▪ Skip lines between main ideas
Summary: The format of Cornell Notes helps in studying for tests.	

Taking Notes from Lectures

- Don't try to write down everything; listen for key words or phrases.
- Listen for clues from the teacher; write down ideas which are stressed or repeated, and copy information written on the board.
- Listen for changes in the teacher's tone of voice.
- Write down key phrases and important terms. Listen for these prompts:
 - "An important point to remember is . . ."
 - "You may want to note that . . ."
 - "The test will cover . . ."
- When reviewing notes, underline or highlight important information that you need to research further.
- Develop your own shorthand system of abbreviations and symbols.
- Organize notes in an outline form such as the Cornell Notes system above.

NOTES

Subject: _____

Date: _____

Taking Notes from Textbooks

Use this formula to read your textbooks more efficiently and carefully.

Pre-reading Warm-up

Quick Survey

1. Survey the entire chapter; turn every page.
2. Note the headings of the main sections.
3. Glance at pictures, maps, charts, tables, and graphs.
4. Read the summary at the end of the chapter and any study questions provided.
5. Be aware of any new vocabulary presented.
6. Try to determine how long it will take to read the chapter, then try to meet your goal.

Question

1. Turn chapter headings into questions.
2. As you SURVEY, you automatically begin to ask QUESTIONS.
3. What does the title mean?
4. What does a visual aid have to do with the chapter?
5. What does a certain new word mean?

Read

As you read, take a mini-break at least every 20-30 minutes.

1. Write down the answers to the questions from the chapter headings.
2. Read aggressively! Go for the meaning.
3. Look for the ideas behind the author's words; what is he trying to tell you?
4. Be time conscious.

Recite

After each mini break:

1. Recite the main ideas to yourself or a partner to see how much of the assignment you recall.
2. Consider making notes now in order to cement details in your mind.
3. Your recitation will tell you which parts of the chapter need more review.

Review

Wait 24-48 hours before reviewing:

1. Skim back through the section to check any information you were unable to recite.
2. Fix it in your memory, either with repetition or memory association.
3. Recite and review alternately until you have achieved satisfactory recall.
4. Use a highlighter on your chapter heading notes to review before a test.

Test Taking Tips



Before the Test

- Choose a good study place with few distractions or interruptions.
- Create and stick to a study schedule; study a little everyday rather than cramming the night before the test.
- Create your own test questions from your Cornell notes or textbooks, and make an outline or summary of the materials you have reviewed.
- Keep all previous quizzes, assignments, papers, labs, etc. and review them to pinpoint where you've had difficulty in the course. Make sure you understand that material since you may see it again in the next exam.
- Write practice exams under exam-like conditions (timed and with your books closed).
- Make study cards with one idea per card. **Quizlet** <https://quizlet.com/> is a great online resource for creating flashcards, tests, and study games. You can even access tools that other students have already created.
- Review your lecture or reading notes and underline key ideas.
- Have a parent or study buddy review and test you.
- Keep a regular schedule. Be sure to eat right, get enough sleep, and take time to exercise.

Essay Exams

- **Essay** tests require the ability to recall facts and main ideas with supporting data and relationships among various topics and chapters.
- Read all questions thoroughly first.
- Underline important words in the directions, like "describe," "explain," "compare," or "contrast."
- Organize your answers before writing.
- Budget your time.
- Begin a new paragraph for each point.
- Proofread your answers to avoid careless mistakes.

Objective Exams

- **Objective** exams require reviewing main points, supporting details, key words, phrases and key sentences.
- Read directions carefully.
- Underline important words in the directions.
- Underline important words in test questions, like "always," "never," "usually," "only," "all."
- Answer the easy items first.
- On multiple choice questions, eliminate obvious wrong answers quickly. This makes it easier to choose from the remaining answers.
- Check your answers for careless mistakes.

Coping with Test Anxiety



For some people, taking a test can bring about anxiety, no matter how much they have prepared. Anxiety is often accompanied by uncomfortable physical symptoms: tense, upset stomach, pounding heart, sweaty palms, dizziness, headaches, and shortness of breath. This is the body's natural stress response, and stress in small doses can help to motivate us to do our best. But sometimes this stress response can be overwhelming and distracting.

In order to reduce these uncomfortable feelings and allow yourself to concentrate more effectively, focus on these two types of preparation:

Physical Preparation

- Get a good night's sleep prior to test day.
- Eat a light breakfast at least an hour before the test.
- Have all of your materials ready (pens, pencils, notes, books, calculator, a bottle of water, and a sweater if room may be cold).
- Leave in plenty of time to arrive at your test location early.
- When seated, take several deep breaths and relax. Remind yourself to breathe deeply from time to time during the test.

Mental Preparation

- When you enter the room, do not listen to other people's chatter. It can cause more anxiety.
- Sit quietly and picture yourself scrunching all of your worries and concerns into a ball, then (mentally) throw it out the window.
- Repeat positive affirmations to yourself. (I am ready for this test, I know I can do it, Everything is OK, etc.).
- Don't allow negative thoughts to clutter your mind. (I'll never pass, I can't take tests, etc.).
- Visualize a positive outcome (getting an 'A', receiving college acceptance, etc.)

Remember that test anxiety is a habit that has been cemented over time. With practice and commitment, you can learn to be more relaxed. Just give yourself some time.

What Seniors Wish They Had Known When They Were Freshmen



About High School Grades

- **Failing a Class** If a failing grade – F – is earned in courses that are required for graduation, those courses must be repeated.
- **Homework matters.** Always complete and turn in your homework. Late, incomplete, and missing homework assignments will affect your grade in the class, often significantly.
- **Study** It's recommended that you study an average of a half hour for each class, every night, whether you have homework or not.
- **Prioritize** Make your studies your priority.
- **Avoid missing class or falling behind on your assignments.** Once you fall behind, it can be difficult to catch up.
- **Be Proactive** Sit near the front of the class whenever possible.
- **Get Involved** Students who are involved in extra-curricular activities, like sports, clubs, or the arts enjoy high school more and tend to do better in school.
- **Keep Up** Keep an accurate record of assignments and deadlines in your planner or notebook.
- **Take Make Up Work Seriously** It's your responsibility to check with the teacher about missed assignments after an illness.
- **You must maintain a 2.0 GPA to be eligible for sports and other extra-curricular activities.**

About College

- Your freshman year is important in preparing you for success for the remainder of your high school career.
- Freshmen classes and grades matter. Your freshman grades can determine your eligibility for future high school classes.
- Many colleges and universities require that freshman coursework be included in the application.
- Courses in which you have earned a "D" grade count for high school credit towards graduation, but they do not count for college admission. You must earn a grade of "C" or higher in all classes required for college admission.
- "A's" and "B's" may be required for continuation in the college prep or honors/Advanced Placement sequence through high school.

Online Resources



Woodbridge High School

The Woodbridge High School Home Page. Staff contacts, calendar of events, and important links.

<http://woodbridgehigh.org/>

Woodbridge Naviance Home Page

Woodbridge's college and career planning tool.

<https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=woodbridgeca>

IUSD Parent Portal

Easy online access to your student's grades. Sign up to receive weekly email alerts.

<https://my.iusd.org/LoginParent.aspx>

The Study Gurus – Learning Styles Assessment

Free online learning styles assessment with study tips geared toward your specific learning style.

<http://www.thestudygurus.com/quiz/quiz.php?quiz=learning-styles>

Quizlet – Flashcards, Tests, and Study Games

Free studying tools for a variety of subjects.

<https://quizlet.com/>

Khan Academy

The Khan Academy is a non-profit educational organization that provides free video tutorials and interactive exercises in a wide variety of subjects, including SAT preparation.

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>

Crash Course

An educational YouTube channel started by the Green brothers, Hank Green and noted author John Green.

Courses include Anatomy and Physiology, Astronomy, US Government and Politics, Economics, World History, Biology, Literature, Ecology, Chemistry, Psychology, and US History. Videos can also be accessed through Khan Academy.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/crashcourse>

Math Resources

Math Is Fun - <http://www.mathisfun.com>

Cool Math - <http://www.coolmath.com>

Math Mistakes - <http://www.mathmistakes.info>