



Study Skills



Study Strategies

Often, along with knowing little about their learning style, tutees know little about study strategies. Some students are aware that they lack skills in this area, but they are not sure how to "fix" what is wrong. Following is a compilation of various study skills that your tutees should employ. This page is by no means a complete study skills resource. You may find that you need more information on study strategies once tutoring is underway. If this is the case, please ask a Learning Support Services staff member for alternate study strategy resources.



Note-Taking

Your tutees may give several reasons why they don't take notes. Perhaps their instructor talks too fast or lectures directly from the book. Don't accept these excuses. The advantages of taking notes always outweigh the disadvantages.

Advantages:

- **Requires organization on the part of the student**
- **Requires critical thinking**
- **Develops active listening skills**

- **Requires concentration**
- **Solidifies understanding**
- **Provides a record of what was discussed**
- **Aids student in determining what the instructor thinks is important**
- **Strengthens some learning styles**

Encourage tutees to bring their notes to every tutoring session. These notes provide a written record that both the tutor and tutee can review. The student can also use these notes to make up example test questions or flash cards for test review. The tutor can also determine if the tutee is taking effective notes. Are the notes legible, organized, and coherent? If not, suggest some of the following:

- **ALWAYS read the assigned chapter before the class session.**
- **Identify unfamiliar terms or ideas.**
- **Review previous lecture notes. This will help you identify items to focus on during the lecture.**
- **Always label your notes with the subject, date, and chapter (if possible) at the top of your paper. If you use more than one sheet of paper per day, number and label each page.**
- **Sit close to the front of the room and away from any visual or auditory distractions.**
- **Eat before coming to class.**
- ***PAY ATTENTION!* Having a general understanding of the content ahead of time (see #1) should help. but staying**

focused is difficult. You may have to continually assess what you need to do in order to keep on task.

- **Look for verbal and visual clues that indicate important points.**

- **Write legibly and use abbreviations or shorthand. This gives you more time to think about the topics being presented. If you have questions, ASK.**

- **After the lecture, make sure to review and/or rewrite your notes within a few hours of the lecture. This will reinforce what you have heard and help you identify items that need more explanation.**

If your tutee is having difficulty with note-taking skills, refer him/her to the link below, or ask a Learning Support Services staff member for additional note-taking resources.

[Editing Lecture Notes](#)



Listening Skills

The one skill you'll use most in college is listening. Yet how many of us have ever taken a "course" in listening? There are strategies to consider that can improve your ability to hear a lecture and interact with communicated instructional material.

Students spend twenty percent of all school related hours just listening. If television watching and one-half of conversations are included, students spend approximately fifty percent of their waking hours just listening. For those hours spent in the classroom, the amount of listening time can be almost one-hundred percent. Look at your own activities, especially those related to college. Are most of your activities focused around listening, especially in the classroom?

Listen and Learn - Modern research has revealed that although we spend a large percentage of our time listening, only a small amount of what we have heard actually registers in our brain. The development of active listening skills has become an increasingly recognized part

of study and communication skills.

Attentive and Critical Listening

Listening Skills



Textbook Marking

Textbook marking is another study technique. You may find that some of your tutees are hesitant to mark up their new textbooks. However, textbook marking greatly increases recall. Here are some suggestions:

Highlight to help locate important information.
Underline main points to make them more recognizable.
Number sub-headings to help your mind organize the thoughts presented.
Circle vocabulary words to draw attention to them.
Paraphrase in the margins to help organize and condense the information.
If the tutee does not wish to write in the textbook, use small Post-It Notes on the pages. These are available in The Office of Learning Support Services.

A word of caution here: your tutee should not use this technique on everything s/he reads. Highlighting everything in pink only makes everything pink; it does not make the text more understandable or make it stand out. If textbook marking is to be used successfully, it should be used with discretion, and then only after an entire section is read. S/he should only note main topic areas, vocabulary words, and items of emphasis.



Memory and Concentration

Along with note-taking, successful students learn ways to increase their ability to remember. If your tutees complain of not being able to remember what they have studied, here are a few suggestions:

[Mnemonics \(Memory-Aiding Devices\)](#)

[Remembering](#)



Study Environment

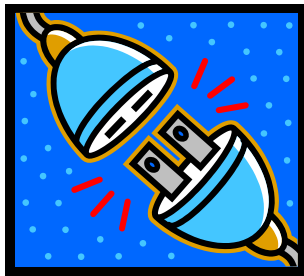
What type of study environment does your tutee use? Is he/she studying in the living room with the television on and two children fighting over the remote control? If this scenario sounds familiar, or you find that the student is trying to study (maybe even thinking s/he is studying) while also interacting with friends (in the campus center, during a child's soccer game, etc.), make the case for establishing a unique study place free from visual and auditory distractions. Preferably, this place should have all the necessary supplies at hand (dictionary, highlighter, etc).



Duration

How often and how long is your tutee studying? Some students try to cram everything into a three-hour study marathon. This does not work. The mind tends to remember the first and the last items covered, while forgetting the middle. Had the student studied thirty minutes over a period of six days, s/he would have remembered more with less repetition.

If you study for longer periods, take ten-minute breaks every twenty to thirty minutes. You will soon learn your frustration level. When you are studying and feel frustrated, take a brief break. When you start back studying, your mind will have cleared away those emotions. (See also Time Management below).



Association

Associate new material with things the tutee already knows. You can also associate facts to images. This helps to make the information meaningful and aids in the organization and structure of the material. The more organized the information, the more successful your brain will be in locating the information.



Mnemonic Devices

One of the most successful ways to memorize information is to use mnemonics. Mnemonics are devices (usually rhymes or formulas) used to aid memory. For example, to remember the names of the Great Lakes, students use the first letter of each lake to spell HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior). If you visualize summer homes on a lake, you make this association even stronger. Modeling the use of mnemonic devices greatly increases the likelihood of your tutee using this technique.



Live a Healthy Life

It is also very important to exercise, eat a well-balanced diet, and drink plenty of water. Along with this, students should avoid alcohol, smoking, and caffeine. Finally, GET PLENTY OF SLEEP!



Time Management

Surely, you've heard the saying, "Work smarter, not harder." Time management allows you to do this. Students with poor time management will have problems turning in assignments on time, always seem to be running late, and are generally disorganized. Students who tend to be perfectionists also suffer from poor time management skills. They tend to be a bit more organized, but find it hard to focus on the big picture. For some perfectionists, if they can't do it "perfectly," then it's no use doing it at all. The following are some suggestions for helping your tutee overcome time management obstacles:

- Make a list of items that need to be completed, and prioritize this list. Then, decide how long it will take to accomplish each of these tasks.
- Use an organizer and assign yourself blocks of time to study. How long these "blocks" of study time should be will depend on the first step. If a task is more complicated, it will require more time. Remember, studying in shorter increments over a long period is better than cramming everything in over a short period.
- Set goals for yourself and a timeline in which to reach those goals. Remember to be realistic when setting these goals and to reward yourself for accomplishments.
- Don't procrastinate. Address the hardest material first. Instead of dwelling on a section, just do it and move on; the perfectionist will have more problems with this concept. If you have kept to your established schedule, it will be easier to recognize when you are spending too much time on one part of the project.

Consult this link if your student is having time management problems:

- [Overcoming procrastination](#)

College Lifestyle Assessment



Taking Tests

Test-taking isn't fun for anyone, but for those with test anxiety or problems with the above-mentioned study skills, taking tests may be an even greater obstacle to overcome. Here are some general test-taking guidelines:

- Prepare and study in advance. Cramming is not studying. The more you study and prepare ahead of time, the less anxiety you will experience.
- Ask questions about the test before studying for it. Is it multiple choice, true/false, essay, or a combination of these? Is there a study guide? Use this information as a guide for studying more efficiently.
- Arrive for the test 5-10 minutes early.
- Come prepared with needed test equipment (pencils, paper, calculator, etc.).
- Stay relaxed. If you are having trouble doing this, take several slow, deep breaths to relax. Avoid talking to other students before the test.
- Always read directions carefully.