

## Studying “Study”

You are starting a new school year, and many of you are beginning your first year in college. The time to establish good study habits is now. Much research has been done on the best ways to study and how people learn. Here are some tips that may help.

**Determine how you learn best.** Different people learn best in different manners. If you are a visual learner, you may find it easier to learn by reading, taking notes, recopying notes, and/or looking at pictures and graphs. If you are an audio learner, you probably benefit greatly from the professor’s lectures; you may even want to tape them. You may also find it helpful to recite facts and salient points out loud, or have someone quiz you verbally.

Those that learn by doing will need to figure out ways to put their lessons into practice. Working math problems and participating in science labs are obvious examples of this. For other subjects, you may try creating historical timelines; diagramming the relevant points or ideas in a book; making flashcards; or creating scrapbooks or models.

Some people find color-coding useful. If this works for you, you may wish to highlight information using different colored makers, or write different types of information, ideas or notes on different colored note cards.

Other students discover that devising mnemonic sentence or phrase helps to master difficult information. They take the key words or ideas in each point and arrange the first letters in a sense or nonsense word or phrase. For example, for the question, “What are the five largest cities in Texas, the mnemonic phrase might be “Happy Small Dogs Are Friendly” (Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, and Fort Worth).

**Don’t wait until the last minute and then try to cram.** A full-time student should plan to study about twenty-six hours a week. Study as you go and don’t fall behind. For example, many students find that if they review the notes they took in class that same day, they will remember the information longer. Keep up with the reading. If you always have some of the required reading with you, you can do some of it while you are waiting for class to start, standing in line, or other “lost” times. You may be amazed how much you can get done in small time segments.

**Get some sleep.** Students who stay up all night, whether for studying, partying or surfing the net, frequently find themselves too tired to pay attention, or even stay awake, in class the next day. If the pattern continues, they fall further and further behind until they can’t catch up.

Also, recent studies of the way the brain operates indicate that if you study a subject and then go to sleep, most people will retain more information than before they went to sleep or if they did something else after studying.

**Study in blocks.** Studies indicate that it is more effective to study for 20 minutes to an hour and then take a short break than to study for longer periods of time. The break can be to grab a snack, walk down the hall or listen to a little music. Then go back to studying for another chunk of time.

**Manage your time and pace yourself.** Don’t allow yourself to become overwhelmed. You can do it! Finally, if you find you need help, ask for it.