

# **STUDY SKILLS:**

## **A GUIDE**

### **FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

**Learning can be fun and easy if the proper study skills are developed.**



**INSIDE THIS PUBLICATION ARE SOME GREAT TIPS FOR DEVELOPING PROPER STUDY SKILLS**

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**STUDY SKILLS:  
A GUIDE  
FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS**

Study skills are the essential student behaviors and habits which ensure successful learning experiences. The ability to study is NOT something students are born with--it is a set of skills that you can learn. Reading this booklet will help! Forming good study skills at an early age will help improve your grades and your ability to learn.

**PARENTS:** you can successfully assist your child in the development of study habits without expertise in the student's courses.

**STUDENTS:** the most important thing about studying is a positive attitude. 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

Parents can help their children by monitoring their study habits and helping them develop a plan to improve their techniques.

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 5)                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do you usually study in the same place every day? (page 4)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. When studying, do you take a break every 30 to 45 minutes? (page 5)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Do you know your best time of day to study? (page 5)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do you turn class assignments in on time? (page 14)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Do you organize materials before going to bed? (page 4)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Do you keep a record of grades? (page 9)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Is your notebook organized by subject and kept neat? (page 4)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. If you are having academic problems, do you ask for help? (page 3)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. Do you take notes from textbook reading assignments? (page 10)  |
| <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 10) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. Do you review class material on a regular basis? (page 10)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Do you use more than one method while studying? (page 4)  |

## QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

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. Do you regularly discuss academic progress with your child?   |
| <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 and review teachers' websites?  |

## MAKE THE MOST OF CLASS TIME

### 1. Sit close to the front.

- A. It helps you see and hear better.
- B. It cuts down on distractions

### 2. Take notes.

- A. No one can remember everything they hear.
- B. See page 11 for help.

### 3. Participate in class discussions.

- A. It helps you stay alert.
- B. Expressing your opinions helps you test your ideas.
- C. The teacher knows you are paying attention!

### 4. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

- A. You probably aren't the only one in class who is confused.
- B. Other students will be glad you asked!

### 5. Listen to others.

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

### 6. Complete reading assignments before class.

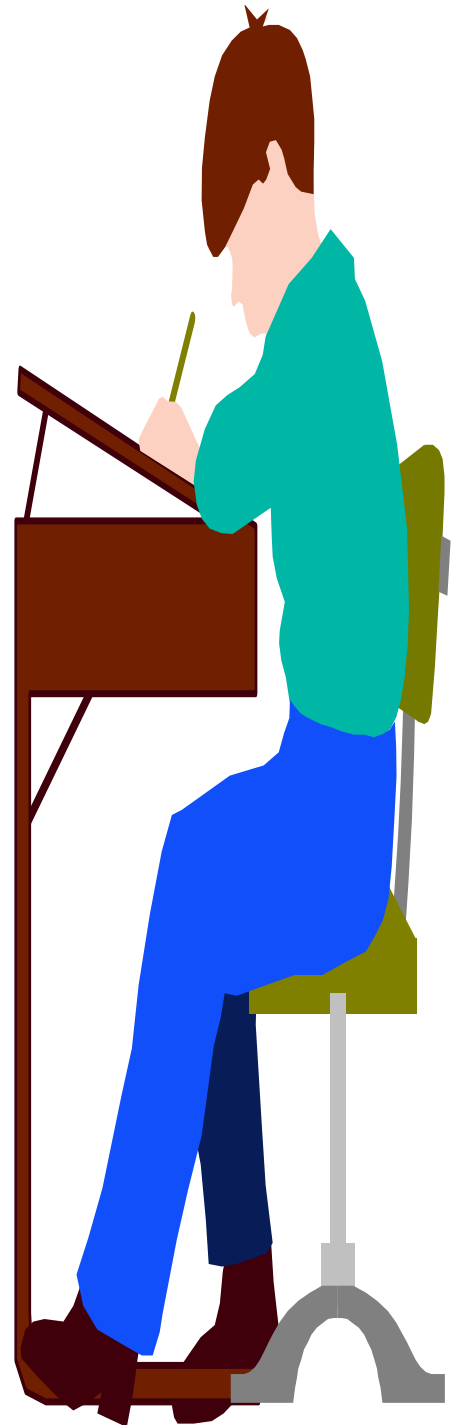
- A. Lectures will be more meaningful.
- B. Class discussions will be more interesting.

### 7. Go to class!

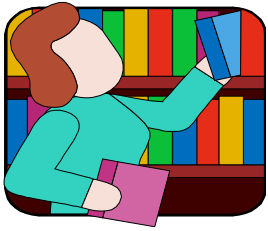
- A. Be on time--every day!
- B. It's hard to learn when you aren't there.

### 8. Ask for help!

- A. Contact your Guidance Specialist about homework assistance at your school.
- B. See the District website for a list of tutors—[www.svusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.svusd.k12.ca.us), under "District Resources."



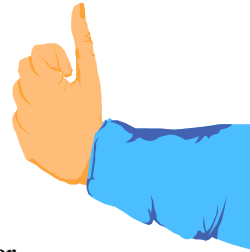
# ORGANIZATION



Organization of school materials and assignments makes learning easier both at home and school. When students use organizational skills at home, the skills become habits that will increase student effectiveness in all tasks. A study environment that is free of distractions and interruptions will improve the quality of study time. Parents can assist in helping to create this atmosphere.

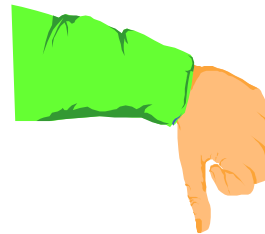
## SKILLS FOR STUDENTS TO IMPROVE:

- ◆ Keep a neat notebook with school papers separated for notes, tests, handouts, homework, etc.
- ◆ Take paper, pens, pencils to school each day. (A zippered pocket in your notebook is very helpful.)
- ◆ Record homework assignments and their due dates in your daily planner.
- ◆ Ask the teacher questions before leaving class.
- ◆ Bring texts and materials home for study and homework tasks.
- ◆ Sit at a comfortable desk or table with good lighting, pens, pencils, paper, and other materials you may need. (A bed is not a good 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.
- ◆ Record grades for tests and quizzes.



## 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.
- ◆ Jotting down homework assignments on scratch paper or relying on memory.
- ◆ Listening to loud music or TV while trying to study. (Sometimes soft "elevator music" can cut down on other distracting noises.)
- ◆ Going to bed without organizing materials to take to class.





# ***TIME MANAGEMENT***

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

## **KNOW 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.



### **STEPS IN CREATING A SCHEDULE:**

- ❖ Block in all fixed obligations: meals, school, appointments, etc.
- ❖ Plan the study time. (This includes homework, review, and organization time.)
- ❖ Plan for deadlines. Don't leave 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.

# DAILY SCHEDULE (SAMPLE)

Make out a chart for a full week. Block in all your fixed obligations: classes, meetings, meals, etc. Next, try to fit in time for reviewing before or just after classes. Now try to 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						↓	
10:30						Break	
11:00						↓	
11:30						Chores	
12:00						LUNCH	LUNCH
12:30						Ball Game	
1:00						↓	Art Project
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							
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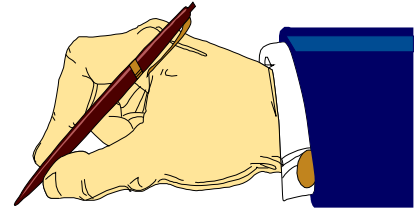
Keeping a monthly calendar will help you keep track of the dates for long term projects and exams so that the deadlines don't creep up on you by surprise.

# MAY

**Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday**

	1	2	3	4	5 <u>ENGLISH EXAM</u>	6 Work 8:00-4:00
7	8	9 Math Chapter Test	10	11 History Unit Test	12	13
14	15	16	17 English Term Paper due	18	19 5-minute speech due	20
21	22 Book report due	23	24 <u>ENGLISH EXAM</u>	25 <u>FRENCH EXAM</u>	26 <u>HISTORY EXAM</u>	27
28	29 History Notebook due	30 <u>SCIENCE EXAM</u>	31 <u>MATH EXAM</u>			

# NOTE-TAKING



## I. CORNELL NOTES

- A. A helpful style of note-taking, referred to as Cornell Notes, helps you organize main ideas, form questions and remember the information.
- B. Notes from lectures, films, class discussions, readings, etc., are taken on the right side of the paper.
- C. A wide margin on the left is used to write main ideas and study questions.
- D. Write a brief summary at the bottom.

### FORMAT FOR CORNELL NOTES

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

## II. TAKING NOTES FROM LECTURES

- A. Don't try to write down everything; listen for key words or phrases.
- B. Listen for clues from the teacher.
  - 1. Main ideas that are repeated.
  - 2. Information written on the chalkboard.
  - 3. Changes in the teacher's tone of voice.
  - 4. Key phrases.
    - a) "An important point to remember is . . ."
    - b) "You may want to note that . . ."
    - c) "The test will cover . . ."
- C. When reviewing notes, underline important information you still don't know with a felt tip pen
- D. Develop your own shorthand system of abbreviations and symbols.
- E. Organize notes in an outline form as demonstrated on this page.

III. **TAKING NOTES FROM TEXTBOOKS--A study formula that can be used for more efficient study in any textbook assignment. 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 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 twenty minutes to one-half hour.**

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.

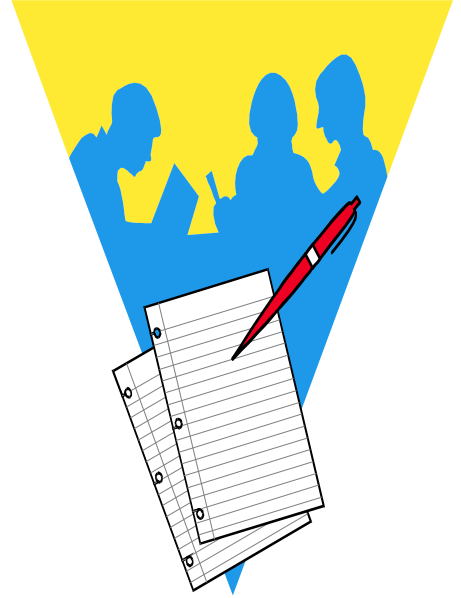
### **Recite. After each mini break:**

1. You might orally recite the main ideas to yourself or a partner to see how much of the assignment you recall.
2. You might also make notes now in order to fix details in your mind.
3. Your recitation will reveal the weak parts of the chapter that will require more attention.

### **Review. Wait 24 hours (no more than 48 hours) before reviewing.**

1. Skim back through the selection to check any information you were unable to recite.
2. Fix it in your memory, either by 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 PREPARATION



## TEST PREPARATION

### *C. Overcome stress.*

5. Develop good study habits and a study schedule.
6. View the exam as a competitive game.
7. Pace yourself during the exam. Concentrate on the answers rather than yourself.
8. If you are nervous during an exam, accept it and focus on your answers.

### *D. Prepare on a systematic basis for exams.*

1. Use a half hour a day per subject for homework completion and material review for upcoming tests.
2. Establish the day and hour(s) preceding large exams.
3. Review your Cornell notes (see page 9), including items that teachers have stressed in their lectures.
4. Make a condensed summary or outline of materials you have reviewed.
5. Anticipate questions that you would ask if you were the teacher.
6. Ask the teacher about the kind of test and materials to be covered.
7. **Essay** tests require the ability to recall facts and main ideas with supporting data; relationships among various topics, chapters.
8. **Objective** exams require reviewing main points, supporting details, key words, phrases and key sentences.
9. Keep all previous tests and quizzes. Correct any mistakes before studying from them.

# TIPS FOR TEST TAKING



## TIPS FOR TEST TAKING

### *E. Before the test:*

9. Create your own test questions from your Cornell notes or textbooks.
10. Make study cards with one idea per card.
11. Review your lecture or reading notes and underline key ideas.
12. Have a parent or study buddy review and test you.

### *F. Essay Exams*

10. Read all questions thoroughly first.
11. Underline important words in the directions. Example: "describe," "explain," "compare," or "contrast."
12. Organize your answers before writing.
13. Budget your time.
14. Begin a new paragraph for each point.
15. Proofread your answers to avoid careless mistakes.

### *G. Objective Exams*

1. Read directions carefully.
2. Underline important words in the directions.
3. Underline important words in test questions. Example: "always," "never," "usually," "only," "all."
4. Answer the easy items first.
5. On multiple choice questions, eliminate obvious wrong answers quickly. This makes it easier to choose from the remaining answers.
6. Check your answers for careless mistakes.



# REDUCING TEST ANXIETY

For some people, the very experience of taking a test, no matter how well prepared they are, is filled with fear and anxiety. Anxiety is often accompanied by uncomfortable physical symptoms: tense, upset stomach, pounding heart, sweating palms, dizziness, headaches, shortness of breath. Historically, the chemicals released in the human body were needed for extra energy either for "fight or flight" as man encountered life-threatening situations. Although the same chemical reactions take place in modern man, the anxiety-producing situation (test-taking) requires more mental energy than physical prowess.

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

## PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- Have all materials ready (pens, pencils, ID if needed, notes, books, watch, sweater if room may be cold).
- Allow plenty of time to arrive at test location.
- Get a good night's sleep prior to test day.
- Eat a light breakfast at least an hour before the test.
- When seated, take several deep breaths and relax. Remind yourself to breathe deeply occasionally throughout 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 mentally put all of your worries in a ball and 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: Test anxiety is a habit that has been learned over a period of time. Learning to be more relaxed will take practice, but, like any skill, will improve with practice.**

# WHAT SENIORS SAY THEY WISH THEY KNEW WHEN THEY STARTED HIGH SCHOOL

## ABOUT COLLEGE

1. Freshmen classes and grades are included in your high school transcript which is sent to colleges.
2. "D" grades count for high school credit, but NOT FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS.
3. "A's" and "B's" are necessary for continuation in the college prep sequence through high school (i.e., Algebra 1 to Geometry; Spanish 1 to Spanish 2.
4. Your first year is very important for success in classes the next three years.

## ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL GRADES

1. ALL "F" grades in required subjects must be made up in order to graduate.
2. Always complete and turn in ALL HOMEWORK--zeros on homework will pull down "A" AND "B" grades on tests and final grades.
3. You cannot retake tests to get a higher grade.
4. You MUST study an average of a half hour for each class, every night, whether you have homework or not.
5. Your priority in high school should be your studies.
6. Don't miss class or fall behind on assignments.
7. Sit near the front of the class whenever possible.
8. Students who get involved in some type of extra-curricular activity do better in school.
9. Keep an accurate record of assignments and deadlines in your planner or notebook.
10. It's your responsibility to check with the teacher about missed assignments after an illness.
11. You must maintain a 2.0 GPA to be eligible for extra-curricular activities.
12. ONCE YOU GET BEHIND, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO CATCH UP.



# NOTES
