

Learning to Learn

Learning is a very personal matter. There isn't one study/learning skill or strategy that works for every person in every situation. Therefore, learning to learn strategies are about learning what you know, learning what you don't know, and knowing what to do about it. By building a large repertoire of strategies you will be able to select the best ones to complete your tasks

Your repertoire of study/learning strategies will:

- enable you to take more responsibility for your own learning
- allow you to spend your time effectively and stay on task
- help you select the best approach(s) for each assignment/task
- provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to begin, follow-through, and complete assignments
- present you with access to a variety of content and reference materials
- give you the confidence to know when and who to ask for help

1. Know Yourself

Begin by honestly assessing your strengths and weaknesses in basic college skills—reading, writing, listening, and mathematics—and study/work habits such as organization, time management, concentration, and note-taking.

Next, identify your learning style preferences. Many factors affect learning, but consider: Do you learn most effectively by reading, by watching, by listening, or by doing? You must also become familiar with your instructors' teaching styles to help you adapt your learning style to the best advantage.

In addition, consider when and where you are at your best for learning. For example, are you a morning person or a night owl? Do you concentrate best in a bright room with noise or in a cozy, quiet corner? *If you're not sure about your strengths and style, check with your college's learning center or counseling office for help.*

2. Manage Your Time and Life

The first step in learning to manage your time—controlling your own life—is to identify what your goals are and then to establish priorities to help you reach them. Analyze how you are using your time. If you aren't spending time on your priorities, you must make the necessary adjustments or you won't reach your goals. If school, learning, and good grades are a priority, then you must make and follow a schedule that gives a significant amount of time to class and study. *For more specific ideas, see the [Managing Your Time Effectively Tip Sheet](#).*

3. Improve Your Concentration

As a good student you will not necessarily study more than a poor student, but you will definitely use your study time more effectively.

Learn to keep your attention focused on the task at hand—concentrate. When you are in class or ready to study, give it your full attention.

And remember, how well you learn something, not how fast you learn it, is the critical factor in remembering. You must “get” something before you can “forget” it. *For more specific ideas, see the [Concentrate » Comprehend » Remember Tip Sheet](#).*

4. Know What Study Means & How To Do It

Learning takes more than just going to class and doing homework. It is a cycle built on the Plan » Do » Review reading and study strategy:



When you establish a learning cycle routine, you will be able to learn more in less time with less stress.

More Learning to Learn strategies below.

5. Develop a Thinker's Vocabulary

English is the richest language on earth. Each word is a symbol that represents an idea or object. Your ability to understand the meaning of the words others use and to select the right one(s) to communicate your ideas, information, and feelings is very important to effective learning.

To develop a thinker's vocabulary you must become sensitive to words, create strategies for unlocking the meanings of new words, and develop a process for remembering the new words and their meanings. *For more specific ideas, see the Improving Vocabulary Tip Sheet.*

6. Be An Active Reader

Did you ever fall asleep while playing tennis or watching your favorite television show? Probably not. How about when you're reading? Probably so. What makes the difference? If you are actively involved, physically and mentally, you stay interested and committed. When you become passive, you rapidly lose interest and drift away.

To learn from study-reading material, you must be an active, thinking participant in the process, not a passive bystander. Always preview the reading and make sure you have a specific purpose for each assignment. Read actively to fulfill your purpose and answer questions about the material. Keep involved by giving yourself frequent tests over what you've read. And, always review. *For more ideas, see the An Effective Textbook Study Strategy Tip Sheet.*

7. Be An Active Writer

Writing that accurately expresses your ideas demands not only writing skill but also focused attention, critical thinking, and active involvement. Only if you become actively involved in the writing process will you be able to communicate your ideas clearly.

Your writing must have a purpose, a thesis, organized development of your idea with major and minor supporting details, and a logical conclusion. *For more specific ideas, see the Process of Writing Tip Sheet.*

8. Build Listening & Note-Taking Skills

Accurately listening to a lecture and deciding what is important are two skills that must be mastered before you worry about how to write the information in your notes. Again, being an active, rather than a passive, participant is the key to your success. Taking good notes demands that you »prepare for class, be an active listener, distinguish major from minor points, use a note-taking system, participate in class, and »review often. *For more specific ideas, see the Taking Good Notes In Lectures Tip Sheet.*

9. Know How To Study For & Take Exams

Exams are your way to show a professor how much you've learned. Preparing for exams will give you a better understanding of the material, lower your anxiety, and improve your scores.

Study and review the material over a period of time using the night before as final review, not a cram session. Pace yourself during the exam and always go over your graded exam with your professor. *For more specific ideas, see the Preparing For and Taking Exams Tip Sheet.*

10. Set Your Own Goals

Your professors can only set the stage for you to learn. You must create your own goals and achieve them through your own action. By assessing what you know and deciding what you want to achieve, you will expand your capabilities and write your ticket to achieving success.