

## THE CLASSROOM

### TAKING NOTES

#### • BASICS:

1. Clear, concise notes are more effective than long, complicated notes.
2. Instead of using a spiral, use a loose-leaf notebook divided into class sections.
3. Make all notes on loose-leaf paper. In an upper corner title and date each sheet as you use it.
4. Rewrite and combine your old study and lecture notes into a new single set of notes or outline. Use them as a replacement for your old notes in the loose-leaf binder.

*This gives you complete control of and fast access to a crucial part of the learning process-your course notes-their organization, additions, replacements and rewrites!*

#### • LECTURE NOTES:

1. Sit near the front of the class to avoid distractions.
2. Be a good listener - focus and concentrate on the main points of the lecture. Get them down on paper. You'll put them into your own words later along with your study notes. Pay attention to the instructor's clues as to what is considered important.
3. If there is something you don't understand, ASK!
4. For fast classroom access to key information on major topics, use a **QuickStudy®** guides, if available.
  5. Immediately after a lecture, without looking at your notes, try to recall on a separate paper as much as you can about what you have heard and learned. Then review your actual lecture notes to confirm and/or supplement your memory.
6. During your next study session, quickly recall again on paper what you learned. Then review and reorganize your lecture notes in your own words.
7. Repeat the recall process several times over several days to commit the new information to memory!

*Your listening skills, note taking and ability to manage your sessions will help determine your success in high school and beyond.*

### BALANCING WORK AND SCHOOL

*For some students, holding down a part-time job in high school produces more organization and better grades. For others, it becomes the first step to dropping out.*

#### If you work and go to school...

Keep in mind that school is your priority. Without education, you will probably be stuck in a low paying job that you hate. Your time is valuable, and you must manage it well. However tired you might be after a long day of school and work, you must limit your relaxation time to provide for study time. If your job is impairing your performance in school, quit the job. You'll get by in high school without music, fancy clothing and a car much better than you will as an adult without an education. So be assertive: never let an employer force you to take a work schedule that interferes with your studies. If possible, find a job that provides enough free time to get all your studying done. And remember that employment makes time-management skills even more valuable.

## STUDY STRATEGIES

### TIME MANAGEMENT

#### • LEARN TO SAY NO!

1. Saying no to parties, movies, etc. does not make you a terrible person.

• **DO NOT STUDY FOR MORE THAN 2 HOURS AT A TIME.** Your brain really does shut down and any studying you do after that point is not as beneficial.

• **USE TRAVEL TIME TO STUDY.** Pop a study or lecture tape into your car's cassette player; put on earphones if you ride the train or car pool. If you use a laundromat, listen to study tapes while your clothes spin and dry.

• **TRY TO STUDY DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS.** Natural light really is more conducive to learning.

• **USE TWO SCHEDULES.**

1. Create an hour-by-hour weekly schedule. Using your class schedules as a guide, block out specific times each day for study and all other activities. Rule of Thumb: one and a half hours of study for each hour of class.

2. Create a semester schedule showing midterms, finals, due dates, and other important events. Weekly review both schedules and allow more study time as needed. *A good schedule keeps you from wandering off course.*

• **PRIORITIZE:** List daily what you need to study, prioritize and set times for each item and stick to it.

• **USE THE 30-3-2 SCHEDULE.**

1. Study for 30 minutes.
2. Take a **3-minute break.** Let the break be a time to think about other things.
3. Upon returning, take an extra **2 minutes** to mentally review what you have just read and do a quick preview of what is coming up next.

### STUDY, STUDY, STUDY

• **ATTEND** as many academic support activities and workshops as possible. They are often free and always helpful.

• **STUDY!** *This may be a case of stating the obvious but you would be surprised how many students don't bother.*

• **STUDYING WITH SOOTHING MUSIC** in the background (contrary to popular opinion) can enhance your concentration.

• Floral scented candles and mixed floral potpourri facilitate learning (strange but true).

• Studying in a soft chair or on a cushy bed may not be the best strategy.

1. Active learning may require walking around the room or sitting on the edge of the chair.
2. Wake up your body -Wake up your mind.

• **STUDY SPACE:** Your regular study space should be as quiet and comfortable as possible and large enough to have easy access to everything you need for studying (text & reference books, paper, pencils, rulers, etc).

1. Libraries, study lounges, or private rooms are ideal.
2. Get rid of clutter. Clear the desk or table of all materials not related to the current project.

• **TUTORING IS NOT A NEGATIVE THING!** Get help early before the academic damage is irreversible. *Many schools offer free tutoring in a variety of subjects.*

• Study groups are great, but don't neglect the important benefits of studying alone.

### GOAL SETTING

1. Set **realistic** goals, within timelines (in writing).
2. Goals should be **specific** and **clear**.
3. Determine the **purpose** of your goals and their achievement benefits. Write them down next to your goal.
4. Set **specific strategies** for accomplishing each goal (in writing).
5. Set **target dates** for evaluation of progress.
6. Periodically **visualize** your goal - as well as your strategies for accomplishing the goal.
7. List potential **obstacles** to attaining the goal.
8. List strategies for **overcoming** obstacles.
9. **Follow through** on all strategies.

## WHAT IS A QuickStudy® GUIDE?

It's a condensed course outline in laminated form, written by leading educators. Each chart contains summaries of the most important things you must learn in each course.



## WHY USE A QuickStudy® GUIDE?

**QuickStudy®** aids in comprehension and provides you with a wealth of key facts, definitions and formulas to help you study and make better grades.



## BRAIN POWER

## CAN YOU REMEMBER

- **MEMORIZE FROM GENERAL TO SPECIFIC.** Study the big picture, then learn the details. Learning and memorization are like a funnel. The process is not very effective when the small end is at the top.
- **CRAMMING DOES NOT WORK!** Cramming for an exam only commits the information to your short-term memory. *You will forget what you never really learned.*
- **FOUR BASIC REASONS WHY WE FORGET PIECES OF INFORMATION:**
  1. Don't use the information.
  2. Confuse it with other information.
  3. Decide the information does not match what you already believe.
  4. Never really learned the information in the first place.
- **KEYS TO REMEMBERING:**
  1. **Be interested.** Pay attention. Consciously choose to remember. Establish a **need** to remember.
  2. **Visualize.** Picture in your mind what you wish to remember.
  3. **Relate.** Relate and form associations between the new ideas and information you wish to remember and information, ideas, persons, things, etc. **that you already know.**
  4. **Repeat.** Even though something is initially learned, it will more than likely be forgotten if not **over learned.** Be sure to repeat information in your own words.

## MORE MEMORY TIPS

- **FILL IN BLANKS**
  1. Make your own flash cards by writing "fill in the blank" statements on the front of index cards with answers on the back.
  2. Do the same with a hand-held tape recorder. Make recorded questions, pauses for your answers, then record the correct answers.
- **SEVEN IS THE MAGIC NUMBER.** Repeat difficult information seven times a day for seven days. -OR- Create seven index cards with the word or fact written on them. Tape the cards in places where you go frequently (i.e., mirror, fridge, etc.), then forget about them. After two weeks you will subliminally absorb the information.
- **REVEAL**
  1. During review, cover up the text below headings and try to remember what's next.
  2. This method works well with your notes, outlines and **QuickStudy®** charts.
- **KEY IDEAS**
  1. If allowable, **highlight** them in your textbooks and outlines.
  2. Give extra attention to **words or phrases in bold.**
  3. Make up acronyms or mnemonics to recall. (i.e. **GIGO = garbage in; garbage out**) or (Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally = **parentheses first, then exponents, then multiplication, division, addition and subtraction.**)
- **MAPPING**
  1. Make a mental image of your notes, outlines, **color-coded QuickStudy®** charts, etc. and where facts are located on them in relation to other topics. These images (fact maps) and their data can often be recalled during tests.

## CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- **DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU SEE, READ, OR HEAR.** Decide for yourself what you are going to believe.
- **CRITICAL THINKING IS IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO:**
  1. Enhance common sense.
  2. Filter emotion.
  3. Categorize experiences.
  4. Select references.
  5. Understand the "experts."
  6. Sort fact from opinion.
  7. Learn to express yourself in a cogent and interesting manner.
- **CRITICAL THINKERS ARE:**
  1. Attractive socially.
  2. Able to resist manipulation.
  3. Able to overcome confusion.
  4. Able to perceive connections between subjects and events.
  5. Able to base judgments on evidence and facts.
  6. Able to realize that the "truth" is never simple; grey or foggy areas always exist.

## READING SKILLS

## SKIMMING &amp; SCANNING

- Skimming & scanning enable you to select material(s) which should be read and/or discarded.*
- **WHEN TO USE:**
    1. To quickly determine main idea.
    2. To locate facts quickly.
    3. To answer test items.
    4. To answer chapter questions.
  - **HOW TO USE:**
    1. Fix intent for reading (or facts sought) clearly in your mind.
    2. Scan table of contents, chapter headings and subheadings.
    3. Quickly move eyes over reading material, focusing upon page headings and subheadings, discarding information that is obviously not related to reading intent.
    4. Skimming reading rates should be twice as fast as average reading speed.
    5. Selectively omit portions of reading material.
    6. Locate as quickly as possible the key or topic sentence of each paragraph (usually, but not always, the first sentence).
    7. Practice skimming and scanning to locate information - repeated practice will increase speed.
    8. Read carefully the last paragraph for summary information.
    9. Carefully review tables, charts and any side boxes.

## THE SQ3R+READING METHOD

- **SURVEY**
  1. Preview the assignment/material to be studied by scanning the text quickly to discover the author's central concept.
  2. From your preview, formulate an **overall picture and the purpose** of what you're going to study.
- **QUESTION**
  1. What you need to learn in terms of: **what, why, how, when, who and/or where to support the central concept.**
  2. Write these questions in the margins of your textbook or at the top of your lecture or study notes.
- **READ**
  1. Read specifically to answer the questions.
  2. Most paragraphs contain one or more main ideas in support of that concept. Locate and highlight them with a marker. Make notes in the margins summarizing key points. Pay special attention to **bold or italicized type** and to **tables, graphs & illustrations** which may explain an idea more powerfully than text.
- **RECALL**
  1. **Pause** periodically (every 15 minutes or so) to **recall** in your own words a summary of what you **have read:** the important ideas or concepts and how the text, examples, graphs, charts or illustrations support them. Write on notepaper as much as you can recall about what you have read and learned! Each mini-review is a knowledge builder and memory reinforcer.
- **REVIEW**
  1. Did you answer your questions, understand the new material and accomplish your goal?
  2. **Reread** difficult parts, work a few more problems. *Recalling and reviewing the same material several times over a period of several days is the best way to fully absorb and remember it!*

## STAYING HEALTHY

Don't try to keep yourself going on **soda, coffee, or candy.** While they might provide an energy rush, they can impair your thinking. Eat regular, well-balanced, **healthy meals**, and plenty of foods rich in complex carbohydrates: pasta, rice, bread, potatoes, etc. Fruit juices are a good source of quick energy. **Regular exercise** is a good way to deal with the stresses of school. It can also help you maintain a regular schedule for all your other important activities. Many students claim to think more clearly when they are in good physical shape. When overwhelmed by term papers or finals, keep your periods of study and work **short and effective.** Set small goals that can be accomplished in half an hour, and take breaks in between. Snack, stretch, exercise, meditate-- whatever helps you feel refreshed. But don't do these things at the same time that you study.

## WHEN TO USE A

QuickStudy

GUIDE!



- Use at the start of a semester as an overview to visualize how all the elements of the subject fit together.
- Use throughout the semester to refresh + reinforce your memory of the topic.
- Use during homework time to understand and find answers quickly.
- Use during class to find facts fast.
- Use to prepare for mid-term and final exams.
- Use to prepare your own individual outline.
- Use while traveling; you can take it anywhere.

Check out our Website to order or find a store in your area where **QuickStudy**

guides are available.

visit us at **quickstudy.com**

Customer Hotline: 1-800-230-9522

## THEMES & REPORTS

### REDUCING WRITING ANXIETY

- **GET A CALENDAR OR ACADEMIC PLANNER.**
  1. Follow the tips in the scheduling time box of this chart.
  2. First write down the due date for the paper.
  3. Next, count backwards. How many days will you need to edit, rewrite, revise, write, take notes, research, read, select, and narrow the topic?
  4. Now you know what day you will need to begin the paper.
  5. Review and revise this process after each paper.
- **BE SURE TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOUR INSTRUCTOR EXPECTS.**
- **INVEST IN A COMPUTER and learn to type your own papers.** Do not depend on other people to bail you out; you will quickly learn that everyone has their own paper to deal with. Even paid typists can be unreliable.
- **DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPRESS A UNIQUE OPINION.** The key is to document and support your ideas in an organized and cogent manner.
- **WHEN PROOFREADING TEXT,** start at the end of your paper. Read one sentence at a time and work your way to the beginning. Why? Your brain already knows what you have written. By reading from end to beginning, the pattern is broken and you will find more errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- **DO NOT RELY ON SPELLCHECK.** Remember "principle" and "principal" are both correct spellings. Which word did you intend to use? Other biggies-"to" and "too," "it's" and "its."
- **PLAGIARISM MEANS TAKING ANOTHER PERSON'S WORDS OR IDEAS AS YOUR OWN.** Be careful to always cite your source, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. Remember, if it's not common knowledge or your original idea, you must cite the source.

### LIBRARY TIPS

*Be sure that the topic is acceptable to the teacher and has sufficient available resource material.*

- **Do not wait until your first research paper/project to "scope" out the school library.**
  1. Many libraries offer tours.
  2. Find out early what resources, as well as deficiencies or limitations, the library has.
  3. Learn how to use its computers and card catalogs to find books by subject or author.
  4. Practice using every machine in the library (i.e., microfiche, CD Roms, etc.).
  5. Use the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* for magazine articles; **encyclopedias** for general information on most known topics; **almanacs** for facts, lists, charts and tables, **atlases** for maps, etc. Ask the librarian for instructions on using them and help in locating other specific reference sources for your paper.
- Know copier rules and procedures in advance.
  1. Where are copiers located?
  2. Does the copier require cash or some sort of copy card?
- Talk to other students, especially those browsing shelves or studying in the same area as you are. You never know what kind of contact you could make or what kind of information you could gain.
  - Check out the local community and university libraries. They may house the one obscure article or book you need to earn that "A."

### WRITING THE PAPER

- Make/use index cards (put the topic at the top of each card), notes, bibliographies, summaries, reports and reviews as part of your preparation process to organize your materials.

## EXAM STRATEGIES

### PREPARATION

1. Learn the exam format: e.g. facts vs. concepts.
2. Review course outline, notes and **QuickStudy**® charts.
3. Review previous tests; check at departmental office.
4. Summarize highlights on single sheet.

### MEMORY DUMP

*At the beginning of the test, write down on scrap paper everything you remember - formulas, facts, names, etc.; scan the test questions; then do a second memory dump and begin the test.*

### OBJECTIVE EXAMS

1. Scan the exam to determine types of questions.
2. **Always read & follow directions!**
3. Determine the exam's scoring rules and use them. If wrong answers are penalized, don't guess unless you can reduce the choices to two.
4. **Answer easy questions first.**
5. **Mark difficult questions and return to them later.**
6. **True - False Questions:**
  - a. Pick out key words or groups of words on which the truth or falsity of a statement hinges.
  - b. If any clause in a statement is false, the statement is false.
7. **Multiple-Choice Questions** are essentially true-false questions arranged in groups.
  - a. Usually only one alternative is totally correct.
  - b. Eliminate obvious false choices.
  - c. Of the remainder, pick the alternative that answers most fully all aspects of the question.

### ESSAY EXAMS

1. **Planning your time when answering essay questions is more important than with objective type tests!**
2. **Read through the entire examination first.**
  - a. Get a feel for the questions you are expected to answer.
  - b. If the exam allows you to choose from a number of questions, be sure to number your answers exactly to match the questions.
3. **Follow directions carefully.**
  - a. Pay attention to the key words in the question.
    - i. Words such as "list," "describe," "compare and contrast," and "outline" require different types of answers.
  - b. **Don't "write around" the question but answer it directly and concisely.**
4. **Outlining**
  - a. After scanning the list of questions to be answered, choose the ones you know most about. On scrap paper, quickly prepare an outline of important ideas and facts to be included in your response.
  - b. Your opening statement summarizes what you are going to say.
  - c. What follows should support your opening statement.
  - d. Your conclusion should show how your body text supports your opening statement.
5. **It is absolutely essential that your ideas can be read and understood:** print if your cursive writing is difficult to read; know and use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

### • PREPARE A WRITTEN OUTLINE.

1. Don't make the mistake of trying to keep everything in your head.
2. Make your outline in the form of main headings or ideas with sub-headings fleshing out the flow of the paper. This will establish the paper's content and conclusion.

### • WRITE THE PAPER.

1. Use the outline as a guide and stick to it.
2. Write in your own natural style.
3. **Reread, rewrite, revise and edit until the paper says exactly what you want to say in the way you want to say it.**
4. Use correct punctuation and grammar. Utilize the spellcheck but, again, don't rely on it.

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN TOLD ABOUT

### QuickStudy® GUIDES

*"I bought the Spanish chart and I loved it!  
It's complete, yet concise and easy to use!"*

Glen Rice, student



*"Your charts have changed the way I study.  
No more digging through textbooks  
looking for formulas and such!"*

Jason Blumenfeld, student

*"Very concise and convenient. Good for  
exam reviews."*

Sandeep Narang, student



*"As a math teacher of 25 years, I've never  
seen anything so complete and totally  
useful to our students."*

Paula Shock, teacher

## THE SAT

- You should take the SAT for the first time no later than the beginning of your **junior** year. It is best to take the SAT early so that you can take it again if you aren't satisfied with your score.
- Many students are intimidated by standardized tests like the SAT, but they don't need to be. The SAT is only one among many factors used by admissions officers to determine your suitability as a student. As with all the elements of your application, you do have control over your SAT scores. There are many materials and classes to help you prepare for the SAT. **QUICKSTUDY**® offers effective, concise study guides for both the verbal and mathematics sections of the test.

## PLANNING AND PREPARING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

- The sooner you begin to plan for college, the better--but at the same time, it's never too late. As soon as you begin to think about going to college, **request catalogs** and **applications** from every school you might be interested in, even if the materials for the semester you plan to apply for aren't yet available. These are essential in evaluating your choices, and you can always request new ones when you apply.
- Create a **file** for everything related to college, and keep it organized. Make a list of everything you need to send and the deadlines by which it must be sent. Disorganization will not only detract from the quality of your applications, but can make the whole process seem overwhelming. Keep your parents informed about your applications. You will need to plan with them to work out financing. And with the anxiety so often involved in these decisions, you'll need them for emotional support as well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Many colleges require one or more letters of recommendation. If possible, solicit recommendations from **teachers** long before they are due. It is impolite and dangerous to demand them at the last possible minute. Although you should select those teachers who know you best, it is a good idea to give them a copy of your transcripts and a list of your activities. This will help them write positive letters that refer to your specific accomplishments.
- Rarely is it a good idea to send more recommendations than a school requests, especially if all the letters tell the same story. **Diversify** your recommendations across as wide a range of subjects as possible. This will show potential schools how versatile you are, both academically and socially.

### SOURCES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers
- Coach
- Guidance Counselor
- Pastor
- Music Instructor
- Job Supervisor
- Volunteer organization
- Boy/Girl Scouting
- Extra-curricular Activities Coordinator

## THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

- Most colleges require a **personal essay** as part of their application. While the question posed might be worded differently among applications, they all basically want you to explain why you are suited to attend their school.
- The best way to handle multiple applications is to begin by writing a **general** personal statement expressing who you are and why you desire to continue your education. Then, customize your essay for each school to which you are applying. You need only conduct the soul-searching once.
- It is important to have others close to you read your personal statement before you send it to strangers. Not only are they more likely to find any spelling or grammatical errors, but they can help you refine the focus of the essay. Share your statement with teachers, counselors, friends, family -- the more feedback you get on your revisions, the better statement you can produce.
- Don't use your personal statement to explain any **deficiencies** in grades or test scores. Don't make excuses for not being that imaginary ideal student. If there were any specific circumstances you feel detracted from your academic performance, or if you were the subject of any disciplinary action by your high school, compose a concise explanation and enclose it on a separate piece of paper. Have a teacher or guidance counselor look it over first.

## MAKING THE CHOICE

- The hardest part of the process can come after you have received acceptance to multiple colleges. Deciding which choice is best is a complicated decision and is rarely made without help. Be sure to involve your **parents** in the decision-making process so that you can know how much financial support you have available. Stay informed at school and in the community about scholarships for which you might qualify.
- Many students dream of going to a particular university; unfortunately, most must compromise. Still, for most students, there are abundant institutions that would make a good match. If you have determined that the only schools that have accepted you are not a match, don't panic. There are many alternatives. Consider asking schools that rejected you about **probational enrollment**. Or spend a year working, attending a local community college, and filling out applications to schools you haven't considered. Military enlistment is the answer for many who can't quite afford to attend the school of their choosing.
- Another option is to enroll at an institution other than the preferred one for a year or two, and then transfer. It is becoming increasingly common for students to complete degree programs in this manner.

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

For many high school students, success means admission to the desired college or university. Here are some things you need to consider.

### ACADEMICS

- Take the most rigorous classes available at your high school. Not only are these classes usually weighted in your favor in computing your GPA, but admissions officers like to see applicants who **challenge** themselves academically. Teachers of advanced classes will tend to treat you with more respect, and, when you ask them for recommendations, will have a much better impression of your capabilities.
- Put forth the effort to earn the best grades that you can. This should be your first priority. If offered at your school, take as many **Advanced Placement** or **International Baccalaureate** classes as possible. Not only can these classes lead to college credit (as you will soon learn, college credit represents both time and money) but signify on your transcript that you are just the kind of student colleges are looking for.
- If your school district permits it, you might want to consider **dual enrollment** at a local university or community college. This will show your eagerness to learn and willingness to undertake a challenge. Moreover, it can help you get a better idea of what you want out of college, and the credits you earn will usually transfer. Often, college courses taken under dual enrollment programs are free or at reduced cost.

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Competitive colleges are sometimes reluctant to admit students who had no extracurricular activities in high school, but you **don't** need to be a member of every club. It is best to be involved in a handful of activities in which you are **genuinely interested**, so that you can speak or write about them with enthusiasm. Leadership positions are always impressive, but they do entail responsibility, and are certainly not worth sacrificing your grades.
- Extracurricular activities with an **academic focus** are generally best, as they show a sincere commitment to learning and thinking. For example: science fair, brain bowl, debate team, model United Nations, math team, engineering competitions. Being involved in your school's **student government** is another activity that will look good on your applications.
- Engagement in **athletics** can also help you earn admission to the college of your choice. Even if you lack the ability or interest for recruitment for college teams, participation in sports shows the admissions staff another facet of your personality. Being athletic can make you more well-rounded and staying in shape will improve your mental focus.
- Volunteer work** looks good on applications. While it is intrinsically good to volunteer to help others, it can also improve your chances for admission. Some schools **require** students to volunteer in order to graduate. If you have been involved in any such activities, be sure to indicate so on your application.