

A BASIC GUIDE ON HOW TO STUDY

From an ACTC psychology and biology tutor



SCHEDULE STUDY TIME.

At the start of the semester, look at your class schedule and, if you have a job, your work schedule, and block in specific times to study **throughout** the week. Don't wait until a day or two before your exams and don't just use the weekends to cram. Instead, spread out your studying, as you will learn a lot more this way.

PLAN AHEAD.

Plan out your study sessions **ahead of time**. Determine what you want to study, set **specific, concrete** goals, and write them down in a checklist. This means writing down something like "Complete 5 chemistry problems from chapter 3" rather than "Work on chemistry problems."

START RIGHT AWAY.

Start studying **as soon as** the material has been presented. Do not wait until the week or the day before the exam. Sticking to the times you have scheduled for studying will help with this. Additionally, the sooner you start, the more time you will have to spend with the material. Be sure to go back to old material often.

SPREAD YOUR STUDYING OUT.

Do not study just one topic for the entirety of the study session. A beneficial study technique, called interleaving, involves studying several topics or subjects during the same study session. For example, rather than studying one topic in chemistry for an hour, you might spend twenty minutes on that topic before moving on to a topic in biology or psychology. **Switch the order** in which you study topics each time you study. You can find more information about interleaving here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=O_S-oniixlg.

PRIORITIZE THE STUFF YOU DO NOT KNOW.

Start with the hard stuff when your focus is the sharpest and limit studying things you already know. Focus on your weak points, **even if it takes more effort** than studying the things that come easily.

ELABORATE.

This means studying by asking yourself questions about the material, creating short quizzes for yourself to test your knowledge, and explaining concepts in your own words. If you cannot explain a concept in your own words without looking at your notes, then you will need to review that concept again.

COME UP WITH EXAMPLES.

Connect the idea to the real world. If you are having a hard time coming up with your own examples, Google some! Creating examples helps make the concept more concrete.

CREATE STUDY GUIDES.

Try creating your own study guides. Write down words to define, create questions asking yourself to compare and contrast or explain and provide examples of concepts. Try to anticipate what will be on the test, and turn those things into a study guide. The key here is to create an overview of the material in a chapter and try to act as though you are taking a test as you go through your study guide. **Do not** look at your notes when answering the questions that you wrote for yourself.