

Study Tips



Study Skills for Students

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This booklet is dedicated to my children Sarina, Soniya and Shashi

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Read this booklet a few times a year, and especially when you are preparing for exams, so that you remember to do the right things.

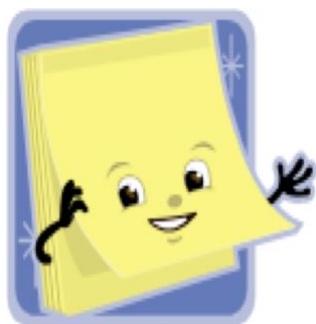
Be well organised! There are three areas in which you can be well organised – your time, your room and your personal belongings.

Organise Your Time



It is useful to have a well planned routine. Arrange your week so that you allow for set times and days for homework and for revision. Plan your revision well in advance. A regular amount of revision each week is better than cramming it all in at the last minute.

A weekly timetable is a useful way of doing this. You could attach this to a magnetic whiteboard or to a wall.



You can also plan your time for a study session using Post-It Notes. You could use them to write down set times for starting and finishing particular topics. The more precise you are when you are planning your work, the easier it will be to get things done.



Be realistic in your revision plans, do not over-commit yourself. When planning your time, fit in regular breaks for relaxing and hobbies. Try not to revise when you are tired or upset.

Minimise distractions when you are revising – tell others so that you will not be interrupted, turn off your mobile phone, TV, radio, etc.



In general, earlier in the day is better for revising than late in the evening. Although you may find yourself occasionally working late into the night, make that the exception rather than the rule.

Try to revise in the same place at the same time so that revising becomes a natural habit.

Organise Your Study Area

A tidy well-organised room can help to improve your studying.

Try to keep your study area clutter-free.

Keep things in set places, and get into the habit of putting things away after you have used them. Label drawers and folders. This will save you wasting time trying to find things.



Having a magnetic whiteboard or noticeboard near your study area may help too. You can use this to write down important things that you have to remember, e.g. chemical formulae or foreign language words.



Organise Your Personal Belongings



If you have a college bag, make sure it is organised and not in a mess. Have name tags on your belongings so that they can be returned to you if you lose them.

You may find it helpful to have a ring folder for keeping class notes or class / lecture handouts.

If you keep notes on your mobile phone, try and have those notes synchronised with your computer / tablet so that you can easily view them and make any changes.

Make Good Notes

Before attending a lecture, it is useful to read some background information about the topic. Having a summary in your mind helps your brain to better absorb what you will be hearing when you attend the lecture.



If you make notes during a lecture, try to write them in your own words.

If there is no handout of the content of the lecture, and you have problems in keeping up with what is said, see if you can record the lecture on a mobile phone or voice recorder, after getting permission from the teacher / lecturer.

Some bits of software, such as Dragon, can enable recorded speech to be automatically transcribed into text. Electronic pens such as LiveScribe perform a similar function.

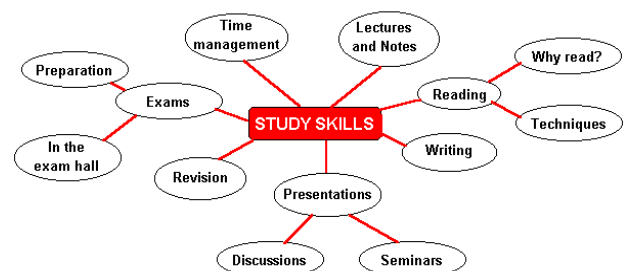


Try Mind Maps

Try and organize a topic you are revising into ways that break it up into meaningful parts.

Try and find or draw a 'mind-map' or diagram that summarises the topic you are revising – this could be like a tree with branches, or a wheel with spokes, or large 'moons' connected to smaller moons.

Try and make links between different parts that you have created in your 'mind-map', so that when you think of one part the other part will also come to mind.



Use Memory Tricks

Memory tricks ('mnemonics') involve making links or associations that make the information easier to recall on a later occasion.

For example, if you had to remember that the ozone layer in the atmosphere consists of **Manmade** and **Natural** pollution, you could take the first letters of these two words, **M** and **N**, and then think of the sweets called **M & Ns** as a 'memory trick' to help you remember this. You could also picture **M** and **N** sweets falling from the sky to remind you of the ozone layer in the atmosphere!



Do Mini Mocks



Test yourself regularly ('mini mocks') for things you have revised. Bringing items to mind again and again over increasing intervals will help you remember them better.

A good trick is to write as much as you can about a topic on a ruled sheet of paper. If you used a mind-map or something similar when revising, try and use this to help you remember what to write. When you have finished, fill in the bits you missed with a red pen. You should remember more each time you try!



'Recall and Review' is where you test yourself and then re-read the original to see what you have forgotten. You could set yourself reminders on your mobile phone to prompt you to use this technique.

If you regularly try and recall things you have revised, even when you are sitting in a bus or having a shower, this will help the items stick in your memory.

Have Good Exam Techniques

Make sure you get a good night's sleep before the exam.

Read the questions carefully. Underline key words. Plan your answers. Work out how much time you will spend answering each question.

It may help to picture the room where you revised the topic in question, or the books/notes that you read at the time.

If one question is very difficult, start with other questions you can do more easily and allow enough time to come back to the difficult one at the end.

If you can't find a word or name you are thinking of, going through the letters of the alphabet may help.

Try and think of any mind-maps you made or memory tricks you used.



TOP STUDY TIPS

(Keep this Summary on your wall / whiteboard for the duration of your studies and look at it now and again)

- ✓ Revise little and often. Plan your revision months in advance rather than leaving things to the last minute.
- ✓ Organize your time each day and each week so that you set aside time for homework and revision in a distraction-free environment.
- ✓ Use reminders on your smartphone to help you be well organized with your time.
- ✓ Make sure your workspace is well-organized. Think of using magnetic whiteboards or wall-calendars.
- ✓ Use mind-maps and other ways of organizing what you have to learn to help it make more sense and stick better in your mind.
- ✓ Use any 'memory tricks' or association techniques to help you remember key words or headings.
- ✓ Regularly test yourself for what you have recently learned ('mini mocks'). Set reminders to help you do this. If possible, also have 'Recall and Review' sessions where you test yourself and also then review what it is you did not recall, so that you can concentrate more on these bits, making links between them and the bits you did recall.
- ✓ Look after your well-being. Deal with any fatigue and sleep issues, and take time to relax.