

Environment for Studying

Before the actual studying begins, it is important to find the appropriate environment. Studying should be regular and should be built into your schedule just like any other commitment such as class time, mealtime and social time. Routines for studying should take into account study times, settings and study styles. This handout could be used to determine which place would work best for you.

What study times are best for you?

- Morning study times, hours: _____
- Afternoon study time, hours: _____
- Evening/night study time, hours: _____

Experimenting with various study times might be helpful. When you find a time that fits your rhythm, schedule these study times daily.

What environments are best for you?

- Absolute silence – no distractions whatsoever, empty room
- Library – some people around but quiet, experiment with different study areas/floors in the library
- Background noise such as quiet music or quiet television
- Loud or noisy background such as a coffee shop or louder television.

Make sure you find an environment that works best for you.

What study style is best for you?

- Study alone
- Study with a study partner
- Study with groups
- Study with a coach



You might find that you use more than one of these study styles depending on the subject. Easier material is sometimes studied better in a group; more difficult material may be studied better with a coach and/or alone.

3. SQ3R Study System

Purpose: To help the student read efficiently and effectively.

1. **Survey** - Get an idea of what the chapter is about and how it's organized. Determine the length of the chapter and how long it will take to read.
 - a. Read the title.
 - b. Read the introduction.
 - c. Read all the headings and subheadings.
 - d. Look at maps, charts and graphs.
 - e. Read the last paragraph or summary.
 - f. Read questions at the end of the chapter
2. **Question** - Formulate questions before reading or during the reading of the text.
 - a. What is the chapter topic?
 - b. What are the major points of the topic?
 - c. Are there any significant terms defined?
3. **Read** - When reading, look for the answer to each question and be aware that new questions may be suggested by the reading.
 - a. Highlight important information.
 - b. Write in the margins to clarify or highlight important points.
4. **Recite** - Stop after each section and try to answer each question without looking. When unable to answer, look back at the section and try to recite again from memory. Reciting out loud may be helpful. Do this after each section!
5. **Review** - After reading the entire assignment, review helps to solidify the information.
 - a. try to answer all questions on each subject heading
 - b. review reading notes (see **Rite** step below).
 - c. review lecture notes.
 - d. make a note of which headings need extra study.

NOTE: Two additional steps may be added.

"Rite" - (useful between step 4 and 5). Make brief, organized notes on the readings indicating the main ideas of the readings.

Reflect - This step follows step 5. The reader thinks about how this new material relates to old material and the implications.

These steps are useful for a very complete study strategy designed to help the student understand and remember the material.

Test Preparation

The following test preparation tips are adapted from Sotiriou (1989) and Johnson (1994).

Managing Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is often caused by unpreparedness. It can manifest itself in many ways: sweaty palms, accelerated heart rate, headaches, mental blocks, sweating, crying, stomach upset and so on. But there are steps everyone can take to reduce anxiety and become a confident test-taker. Some of the most powerful strategies include the following:

An Organized Study Plan

Use calendars, schedules or planners. Do assignments on time and keep up with the homework. Arrive early for classes. Utilize regular reviews to help anticipate, process and comprehend the material.

1. Daily Reviews - 10-15 minutes

Review lecture notes and reading assignments before and after class. This will be helpful for the right frame of mind and will move information from short-term to long-term memory.

2. Weekly Reviews - 1 hour

Review each subject at least once a week for an hour. Try to understand the concepts being studied, not just scattered facts.

3. Comprehensive Reviews for Exams - 2-5 Hours (including breaks)

- a. Highlight the textbook and refer to the textbook when studying in order to recall the salient points.
- b. Read through class notes. Highlight class notes and write corresponding information from the text into the class notes.
- c. Rewrite study notes if necessary or helpful.
- d. Study information from class notes and text in ways that are most helpful (e.g., visually, auditorally, kinesthetically – or a combination of these).
- e. On the day of the test, briefly reread study notes.

4. Prepare Mentally, Physically and Emotionally

Mentally

- Use study strategies. Go to the test completely prepared.

Physically

- Get enough sleep (especially the night before).
- Exercise lightly before the test (also get regular exercise).
- Arrive early for test and get a good seat.

- Make sure you have eaten a good meal before the test (try not to skip breakfast).

Emotionally

- Understand that moderate test anxiety is normal — even useful.
- Associate the test with positive events (high score, praise from teacher and peers, personal satisfaction and increased knowledge).
- Make sure to have a reward after the test.
- Learn to relax:

Practice deep breathing

1. Inhale gently through the nose — fill both your lungs and your stomach
2. Hold briefly
3. Exhale slowly — feel the body deflate and relax
4. Repeat four or five times

Practice muscle relaxation

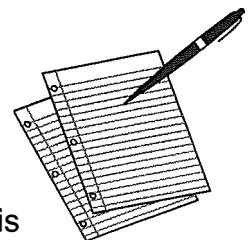
1. Tighten and briefly hold tense muscles
2. Release
3. Repeat — feel muscles loosen upon release

Visualize a calming, soothing place

Keep things in perspective – in the larger picture of life one test probably does not make or break a person.

5. Before the Test

- Know what kind of test to expect (e.g., essay, short-answer, multiple choice, true-false).
- Know what material will or will not be covered on the test.
- Use information from lecture notes, handouts, textbooks, videos or any other sources that might be covered on the test.
- Study days in advance. Repetition is the only way information is stored in long-term memory.



6. During the Test

- Preview the test. Read through the test and know what to expect.
- Read all instructions carefully.
- Manage time well. Don't spend too much time on any one item.
- Answer the easier questions first. Come back to others at the end.