

# Ten tips for effective study

## **1. Find a good place to study.**

You will need to find a space that is free from distractions such as television, loud music and noisy siblings. This space should have good lighting and, to avoid feeling tired, should have a good flow of fresh air. The surface of your desk should be clear and organised.

Get out only the material you require for a specific task you are about to start. Even if you don't feel like studying, go through the motions. The very act of writing often helps your thinking processes and your interest level will soon increase.

## **2. Get organised.**

Make a study schedule including all essential activities for the week. Times for activities such as meals, sleep, part-time work, sport, music lessons, and family commitments often cannot be changed. The time remaining is up for negotiation.

Block time for homework and study should be between 30-45 minutes. Take a short break of 10-15 minutes after or between sessions. Using a study schedule will help you become more organised and visualise how much study time and free time you have each week.

Some students use this: <http://getrevising.co.uk/>

## **3. Understand your homework and assignment tasks**

Separate study from homework and assignment tasks. Keep all your assignments-in-progress in a separate folder, so that they are all in one place. Before commencing homework or assignments carefully read through the instructions or task sheet so that you can prepare yourself for the task. Identify what you are being asked to do. Determine which resources, books and equipment you will need for each task. Identify what you need to learn, or complete, to avoid confusion and wasting time. If you are unsure of the task, write questions in your homework and assessment organiser that you can ask the teacher the following day. It is advisable to start your most challenging tasks and subjects when you are rested and feeling refreshed, as your concentration levels will be higher.

## **4. Manage your time and progress**

Assignments which need to be completed over a set period of time, need to be divided into smaller, more manageable tasks. It is advisable to schedule the completion of each task within the allocated set time for completion, therefore avoiding doing the assignment all at once and ensuring enough time for other study and personal activities prior to the date for submission. Keep track of your progress as you complete each task and seek teacher feedback as you progress, if appropriate.

## **5. Do one thing at a time and progress**

Focus on one homework or assignment task at a time. Using a set session of 30-45 minutes for one specific subject, task or assignment is a more effective use of time. It prevents you jumping from task to task and encourages you to focus on the subject matter. It also provides you with a time limit in which you should aim to complete rather than working aimlessly and failing to complete all homework or study commitments.

## **6. Use 'to do' lists**

Each day, or even the night before, compile a list of things to do. Before beginning homework or study, prioritise your list - highlight or number the most important or immediate tasks. Cross off completed tasks and carry over to your new 'to do' list, for the next day or week, any unfinished tasks. This will help you to prioritise and meet deadlines.

## **7. Revision and summary notes**

Revising what you have done in class should be part of your study timetable. Reading over your notes and checking your understanding of new topics learned in class is an important part of study. Set aside a period for revision of each subject for each week. This will help your understanding of the subject and avoid cramming for tests. Create a set of summary notes for each subject or topic:

- divide each subject into topics
- use headings and sub-headings to identify main sections
- enter information from class notes under headings to create 'summary notes'
- use a highlighter or red pen to identify key terms, concepts or formulae
- identify key questions or issues and provide answers for them
- regularly revise and add to your summary notes
- at the end of each term or semester create a new set of summary notes, from your existing summary notes, for exam revision

## **8. Follow your study schedule**

As much as possible, try to stick to your study schedule. Avoid interruptions, including telephone calls, favourite television programmes and visitors. If you want to watch a television programme or spend time with friends include it in your schedule and plan around it. Let your family and friends know what your schedule involves. Follow your schedule, motivate yourself, achieve your set goals, and then reward yourself.

## **9. Be flexible**

If a specific task is taking longer than expected, re-arrange your study schedule. Change to another subject or task and re-schedule the times you have allocated to each subject rather than wasting time. The change and sense of achievement will often bolster your confidence to tackle the difficult task later.

## **10. Reward yourself**

After each study session of 30-45 minutes, take a 10-15 minute break - have a snack, take a walk, and have a good stretch. This will help to keep you alert and focused. Your body can become lethargic if it is subjected to long periods of inactivity. Eat plenty of healthy foods and drink plenty water at regular times. Although eating sweet or junk food gives you a sudden boost, it is not a lasting energy source. If you have completed your set tasks and stuck to your study schedule, reward yourself - catch up with friends, go outside, practise some sports, go and watch a movie or a concert. If you have not achieved your set goals re-evaluate your study schedule.