

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Success in college may require developing a new set of techniques and skills—the “tricks of the trade” for being a student. Here are some suggestions for you to try. Use all that work for you, **BUT BE SURE TO GO TO CLASS!**

Listening

- Sit near the front of the classroom.
- If you don't understand what is being said, ask. Make your question as specific as possible. If the instructor doesn't get what you are asking, rephrase the question.
- If you are having trouble following the lecture, visit the instructor during office hours.
- If your instructor speaks with an unfamiliar or difficult accent, be patient and pay extra attention for a few sessions until you learn to understand it.
- Listen actively. Rephrase, summarize, and question what is being said. See if you can relate it to the reading or other course material.

Studying

- Find a quiet, well-lit study area with no distractions. Bring everything that you will need (books, notes, etc.).
- Set specific goals for each study session, such as, “I will read 15 pages of history tonight.” Allow a realistic amount of time to complete the task.
- Make use of free time during the day for study (between classes, before dinner). Plan small chunks of studying that you can fit into those times.
- Be sure to include review time on a weekly basis for each subject.
- Maintain your physical health. Get enough sleep, exercise, and nutritious food.
- Avoid big cram sessions. Students usually remember more if they learn material in several smaller study sessions rather than in one big session.

Reading Texts

- Not every word in a book deserves equal attention. First read for key points and main ideas, then fill in details.
- Use underlining or highlighting to mark key points.
- Use the margins to make notes that will help you recall key points and relate material to other chapters to material from lectures.
- Pause every so often and mentally summarize what you just read. You can even say it aloud.

Note-taking

- Listen for key points; don't try to write down everything the instructor says.
- Pay attention to each instructor's individual style of organizing lecture material and emphasizing key points.
- Use diagrams, charts, tables, and other visual aids in your notes to organize or illustrate ideas.
- Write down everything that the instructor puts on the board.
- Mark off a column on one side of your notepaper. Use this space to jot down key words and concepts, or to note unclear points you might want to check with the instructor or in the text.
- Review notes immediately after lecture, correcting parts that are unclear or illegible. Some people find it useful to rewrite the lecture notes.
- Note-taking is not just for lectures. You can also help your reading comprehension by taking notes on what you read.

Test Preparation and Test-Taking

- Know what kind of test to expect. Ask your instructor what format will be used (multiple-choice, essay, etc.). Examine old tests if possible. Many instructors put them on file in the library.
- Review course material weekly and try to see how new material relates to what has come before.
- Study in a group and quiz each other on the material, making up the kinds of questions you might expect to see on the exam. Or quiz yourself, making up and answering questions.
- Get plenty of sleep and a good meal before a test. Allow plenty of time to get to the test early.
- Before beginning the test, look it over to see what kinds of questions are included and how much time you should spend on each section.
- First answer the questions that are worth the most points or that you know well. Then go back and answer those worth the fewest points or that you are unsure of.
- If you suffer from test anxiety, stop by the Academic Support Center in ASC 1017 and ask when the next Test Anxiety Workshop is scheduled. Then attend it.