



Study Strategies

Tools for Helping Students Reinforce Their Learning

There are many ways to study, but some of the most effective techniques require active involvement with the subject. For example, rewriting or verbally explaining topics to someone else is more effective than just reading a passage. Here are some helpful hints to maximize your learning and improve your study skills:

Organization:

- Set a regular schedule and routine:
 - Work in a comfortable environment with good lighting and minimal distractions.
 - What tools do I need to have access to?
 - What is my schedule? What time will I start, and how much time will I spend on each subject each day?
 - When and how will I be accessing my teacher?
 - Remember to include brain breaks :)
- Read the directions from your teachers carefully.
- Print off directions and highlight or cross out as you complete each step.
- Use a calendar to mark due dates & test dates. Keep this somewhere where you can see it every day.
- Create a daily To-Do List: Go over your tasks, prioritize, and divide into manageable chunks. Cross off or highlight as you complete each task.
- Schedule breaks.

On Your Own:

- Create a glossary of terms from your notes and textbooks.
 - Look up any unfamiliar words and write out their definitions.
- Create a mind-map as you move through a topic.
 - Place the main topic at the centre.
 - Add terms and concepts as you encounter them, drawing lines to demonstrate connections and relationships.
 - Use different colours to demonstrate groupings of concepts.
- After reading a passage, write a brief summary paraphrasing the content and identifying the key ideas.
- Build concept tables:

Concept A		Concept B	
Definition:		Definition:	
Examples:		Examples:	
Advantages:	Disadvantages:	Advantages:	Disadvantages:

- Create flip charts or flash cards: definitions, pictures or images, facts, dates, etc.
- Read your materials slowly and carefully - don't rush through.
- Highlight and review topic sentences and summaries at the end of chapters.
- Active Reading: Use post-its to jot down notes, underline or highlight important text, or talk out loud and ask questions about the reading material to help with working memory.
- Look for context clues.
- Use mnemonics or creative devices. (i.e. "BEDMAS," "All Good Boys Deserve Fudge")
- Create a graphic organizer to help remember formats and steps.
- Create test questions.

Together:

- Explain course concepts to someone else.
- Read material out loud to someone.
- Play games:
 - Mental Math: card games such as Multiplication War, Cribbage, Backgammon, Sudoku.
 - Critical Thinking: chess, monopoly, checkers.
 - Word Games: Scrabble, cross-words.
- Trade test questions with a friend.

Relaxation:

- Prepare your materials ahead of time so you feel ready for the test.
- Exercise and be active every day.
- Moderate your breathing.
- Chew some gum.
- Get up and stretch.
- 5-4-3-2-1- Mindfulness:
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can feel
 - 3 things you can hear
 - 2 things you can smell
 - 1 good thing about yourself
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Talk about how you're feeling with a trusted friend, parent, or teacher.

Don't Procrastinate:

- If you can do a task in 10 minutes, do it.
- Break large tasks into smaller chunks.
- Set a timer: work for 15 minutes and then take a break.

YOU CAN DO THIS!



Homework Guidelines and Expectations

As a parent or guardian of a secondary school student, you have likely had the following conversation with your child:

You: “Do you have any homework tonight?”

Child: “No.”

You: “Okay.”

It is not uncommon for students in secondary school to avoid homework and studying, as they have many more ‘important’ things to do (such as spending time with friends or playing video games). However, in an effort to help our students develop positive habits and work ethics, we would like to change that conversation. Simply put, **secondary students have homework every night.**

Homework consists of 4 tasks:

1) Anything that a teacher assigns as homework

Example: “For homework tonight, read pages 7-14 and answer questions 1, 3, 5 and 7.”

2) Any work that did not get completed in class.

If a student is meant to complete a task (assignment, project) during class time, and it does not get completed by the end of class, it still needs to be completed and therefore becomes homework.

3) Studying, reviewing and revising for tests.

Students should be reviewing their notes, highlighting important information, making note cards or study guides, and practicing what they’ve learned on a regular basis, rather than leaving all studying to the last minute. *And if a student has exhausted the first three options, then...*

4) Free reading.

Reading is exercise for the brain. It helps develop vocabulary and imagination.

Creating a Routine:

We recommend that students set aside a consistent time each evening for homework, and that they sit down in a quiet space for that period of time each night. The space should be free of distractions (such as music, tv or mobile phones), but should be near a supportive adult who might assist them if needed.

Recommended times:

Students in Grade 7 can expect to have approximately 30 minutes of homework each night. The amount of homework will increase gradually, with Grade 12 students having at least two hours of homework each night. It is important that we start developing positive habits and routines at an early age, so that our children will be ready for the demands of high school and post-secondary studies.

Therefore, when your child comes home from school, the question to ask will no longer be “Do you have any homework?” but rather:

“It’s study time! Which of the 4 homework tasks will you be working on this evening?”