

How to get Good Grades



In Ten Easy Steps

Step 1: Believe in Yourself

“To succeed, we must first believe that we can” M. Korda

In order for you to succeed, you have to believe in yourself and in your abilities. Whether you are an athlete preparing for competition or a student tackling a difficult subject, it is important that you believe in yourself. You need to recognize the talents and abilities you have, and you must believe that you can succeed!

Step 2: Be Organized

If you are organized, you have what you need when you need it.

1. Use a Student planner, either paper or electronic
 - Take a student planner with you to every class
 - Record each assignment under the date it is given
 - Write down the date each assignment is due
 - When an assignment is completed, check or cross it off
 - Track test dates and activities
2. Break down assignments- Large assignments are much easier to do if you break them down into smaller parts. After you break a large assignment down, write the smaller parts in your planner.
3. Use three-ring binders for class notes- Three ring binders work well because handouts can easily be inserted, and if you miss a class, you can copy someone else’s notes and insert them where they belong.
4. Use folders for schoolwork- Have a different coloured pocket folder for each class. In these folders, keep your current assignments, along with returned assignments and tests.
5. Keep your locker and backpack neat- Never stick loose or folder papers inside books, your backpack or your locker. Always put them in the correct folder or notebook.
6. Get organized before you go to bed- Each night, put completed homework in the right folders and get everything organized for the next day. If there is something, you need to remember to do in the morning, leave yourself a note.

Step 3: Manage Your Time Well

With good time management, you have time for the things you need to do, and still have time for the things you want to do.

1. Use class time and study halls- Always use the time teachers give you in class to ask questions, start on homework, or get help.
2. Create your own study plan- Some students study best at night; others like to study earlier in the day.
3. Eliminate disruptions- Identify anything that could interrupt or ruin your study plan. Then figure out how to eliminate or avoid it.

Step 4: Be Successful in Class

1. Be in school every day, on time- When you miss school, you miss class presentations, notes, discussions, assignments, quizzes and tests. It does not matter how good you are about making up your work, you can never make up all of what you miss, even if you are out of school for only one day.
2. Learn how to adapt to different teachers- In the classroom, the teachers are in charge and they make the rules. Part of your education is to learn how to adapt to different sets of rules, personalities, and teaching styles.
3. Be prepared of each class- Have everything you need with you when you go to class (books, paper, and pencils). Also, have all of your homework done. When you have done your homework, you get more out of the class, the material being taught makes more sense, and you can participate in discussions. Being prepared also means that you come to class well rested and ready to learn.
4. Always do your homework- Do not look at homework as something you should do. Think of homework as something you must do.
5. Participate in class- Participating in class makes the class more interesting. It also helps keep your mind focused. Get involved in class discussions, and ask and answer questions.
6. Treat others with Respect- treat your teachers and classmates the same way that you want to be treated. Be polite, look at your teachers when they are speaking, and listen when others are talking.
7. Put your phones away- Your phones are great learning tools and can help you with your learning, but during class discussions, lessons and presentations they are a distraction. Put them away and give the material your 100% undivided attention, and save the texting for later!
8. Take responsibility for your grades- If you get a good grade on an assignment or test, be proud of your accomplishment. If you receive a poor grade, do not make excuses. Take responsibility for your grade and then figure out how you can get a better grade the next time.

Step 5: Take Good Notes

Tests usually cover material that has been presented in class. It is, therefore, important to have good notes from which to study.

1. Be an active listener- In order to take good notes, you must pay attention and actively listen to what your teacher is saying.
2. Take notes to help you pay attention- You can think much faster than anyone can talk. When you take notes, however, your mind has something additional to do, and you do not have time to think about anything else. Taking notes, therefore, helps you stay focused. Taking notes, of course, also shows your teacher that you are interested in the class and that you are paying attention.
3. Recognize important information- You can usually tell when a teacher is saying something that is important for you to know. In your notes, underline or put a star beside the most important information. You will then know to give it special attention when you are studying.

4. Go over your notes as soon as possible- While the information is still fresh in your mind, take five minutes to go over your notes
5. Note taking strategies:
 - Put the name of the class, the date, and the page number at the top of each page of notes
 - Give your notes a title and underline it
 - Skip lines between topics
 - Use symbols and abbreviations to help you take notes faster
 - Don't worry about grammar and punctuation
 - Leave a wide space or margin on the left side of the page, as your taking notes, listen for key words. If you hear a key word, rite it in the left-hand margin. Keywords can also help you review for a test.
6. Get copies of notes and handouts in you are absent- If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to ask your teacher about assignments, handouts, and tests. **It is also your responsibility to make up any work you have missed. Also, get copies of any notes you have missed and put them in your notebook.**

Step 6: Read to Learn

Knowing how to read a textbook makes it easier to understand and remember what you read!

- Survey- Surveying gives you a quick overview of the material you are going to read.

Reading Strategies Can Include:

- Read the title, headings and everything in **bold** and *italic* print
- Look at the pictures, graphs, and charts
- Read the introduction, summary, and review questions
- Look at vocabulary words

Step 7: Study Smart

Students who "study smart" find that they spend less time studying, and yet they get better grades.

1. Find a good place to study- Although it is usually best to have one place where you study regularly, it does not matter where you study, as long as it has a surface for writing, it is well lit, quiet, and comfortable. Your study area should also be equipped with paper, pens, and pencils.
2. Some students need it to be quiet when they study; others like to have music playing in the background. If you like to listen to music while you do homework, try playing classical music very softly.
3. Get started- Getting started on your studying is often the hardest part. Do not put it off until later, do not make excuses, and do not wait until you are in the mood. If you have a hard time getting started, begin with something you can finish quickly or a subject you like.
4. Organize your study time:
 - Before you start to study, make a plan
 - If you have lots to do, prioritize your work

- Focus on one thing at a time
 - If you have a large thing, break it down into smaller parts
 - Always allow more time than you think you will need
 - If you have something to memorize, work on that first, then go over it again at the end of your study session
 - Do difficult assignments first, while you are fresh and alert
 - Alternate types of homework
 - Know when and how to take breaks
5. **Know how to study for tests:**
- Know what the test will cover and what kind of test it will be
 - Have all your reading done ahead of time
 - Pay close attention in class the day before a test
 - If your text book has review questions, know all of the answers
 - Go through your textbook and make sure that you know the meanings of all words in bold and italic print
 - If a teacher gives a review sheet, study it until you know everything on it.
 - You really know something if you can explain it in your own words
 - Review often and review aloud.
 - Write down any names, dates, formulas, and/or facts you need to remember on index cards. Take these cards with you the day of the test and go over them as often as possible.
6. **Know how to memorize and remember information:**
- Use flashcards to memorize vocabulary words, facts, and lists
 - Write down what you want to memorize and stare at it. Close your eyes and try to see it in your mind. Say it, and then look at it again. Do this until you know it!
 - Before you go to sleep, go over any information that you want to remember. **Your brain will commit it to memory while you sleep!**
 - Use acronyms to help you memorize
 - Use the first letter of the word you want to remember to make up a silly, ridiculous sentence.
 - Look for an easy or logical connection
 - Information is easier to remember if it is grouped or categorized
 - Use ridiculous, unforgettable images to help trigger your memory.
7. **Develop your public speaking skills:**
- To help add enthusiasm and energy to your voice, pretend that you are telling your best friend something important
 - Use props whenever possible. Props give you something to look at and something to do with your hands. You can also put notes on the back of your props.
 - Good speakers make eye contact with the people in their audience.
8. **Know how to write a paper-** The key to writing a good paper is to spread it out over as much time as possible. Writing a paper should be a process, not a one-time event. When you have a paper to write, go through the following steps:
- Choose a topic that interests you
 - Gather information

- Make an outline
- Write a first draft
- Read your paper out loud
- Think of ways to improve your paper
- Rewrite it
- Have someone else read it
- Write the final draft
- Check for punctuation, spelling and grammar errors
- Make sure that your paper looks neat, and hand it in on time

Step 8: Be a good Test Taker

To do well on any test, you must study hard and be prepared. You can further improve your test performance by using these test taking tips:

1. Get off to a good start- have everything you need for the test with you when you go to class. As soon as you get your test, rite anything that you want to remember at the top of your test. Put your name on the test and read the directions carefully.
2. Develop a plan- Before you begin answering questions, quickly look over the entire test and make a plan.
3. Mark the questions you want to return too. Put a dot or a check mark by any questions you are not sure of. Do not spend a lot of time on difficult questions, and do not panic if you do not know the answers to the first few questions. Sometimes it take a few minutes for your brain to get in gear.
4. **Multiple choice questions skills:**
 - When you read a multiple choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices
 - If you are not sure of an answer, eliminate the choices you know are wrong by crossing them out, and then make an educated guess.
 - If two of the choices are similar or opposite, one of them is probably the correct answer.
 - Read all of the answer choices. At least a couple of the answers will probably sound like they could be correct. Do not be tempted to mark the first answer that sounds good.
 - Always go with your gut, your first answer is usually the correct one
5. **Look for key words in True/false questions-** Statements with *all, always, never, every, and none* in them are usually false. Statements with *usually, often, sometimes, most, and many* in them are usually true. Read True/False questions very carefully. One word will often determine whether a statement is True or False.
6. **Know how to approach essay questions:**
 - Read each questions and then start with the easiest one
 - Before you do any writing, do some brain storming
 - Begin writing, using clear, concise, complete sentences and write neatly
 - If you don't know the answer to an essay question, take a couple of minutes to write down what you do know about the subject
7. **Improve your math scores**
 - Before you start to solve a problem, try to estimate what the answer will be

- If you are having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture or a diagram
 - Do not spend too much time on one problem, if you get stumped, go on, and come back to it later
 - **Show all your work! Even if the answer is wrong, you will get part marks for the work.**
- 8. Be prepared for open book test-** These tips will help you locate information during an open book test:
- **Highlight your notes**
 - **Write down any information you know you are going to need on a separate sheet of paper**
 - **Put self-stick notes in your textbook to help you find specific information**
- 9.** Check your answers- if you have time, check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may have made a careless mistake. Use all of the time that you are given!
- 10.** Go over all returned test- once your test is returned, go over each question you missed and write in the correct answer. You may see one of these questions again.

Step 9: Reduce Test Anxiety

A little anxiety before a test improves your concentration and alertness. Too much worry, or test anxiety, can lower your test score.

To reduce test anxiety, study enough to feel confident that you know the material. Then try to replace the worry and negative thinking with thoughts that are positive and relaxing.

Some of the following suggestions may help you out:

- Start studying early, cramming only increases test anxiety
- Mentally practice going through the test
- The night before a test, review the material, and then get a good night's sleep
- Walk into the test with your head up and shoulders back, tell yourself you are ready and that you are going to do fine.
- Try these relaxation techniques:
 1. Take a deep breath, then slowly release your breath, along with any tension
 2. Start at the top of your head, flexing, and then relaxing each part of your body.
 3. Close your eyes and visualize warm sunshine washing over you, melting away your tension, and relaxing your muscles.
 4. Think of a place where you feel very relaxed and calm. Close your eyes and visualize being in that place.

Step 10: Get Help when you need it

Most questions can be answered and most problems resolved, just by talking to the right person (secretary, principal, teacher, and your guidance counselor. If you need academic help or if you have a class-related problem, talk to your teacher. If you are dealing with any of the following, please talk to a parent, guidance counselor, or an adult you trust as soon as possible: alcohol, drugs, pregnancy, abusive relationship, eating disorder, bullying at school, depression, problems at home.

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