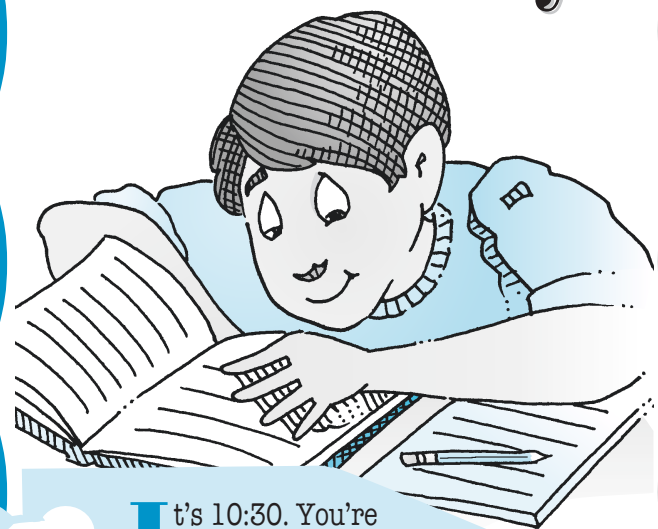


How To Study More Effectively



It's 10:30. You're studying—sort of. Okay, the TV is on and you've spent the last half-hour doodling instead of writing your paper. But you have been sitting there since 7:30 ... and you still have math problems to do.

Why do you seem to accomplish so little when you study? You have friends who spend a lot less time studying—and earn better grades. What do they know that you don't? Here are some secrets that can help you make the most of your study time.

Make it a habit

When is your study time? If you're like many students, you don't have a regular time to study. Instead, you fit in your studying around talking on the phone, working, playing on a team and watching the latest episode of your favorite TV show.

Of course, this means you often don't do much studying at all.

Starting today, set a regular time to study. Make sure your study time has priority over all those other things that take up time.

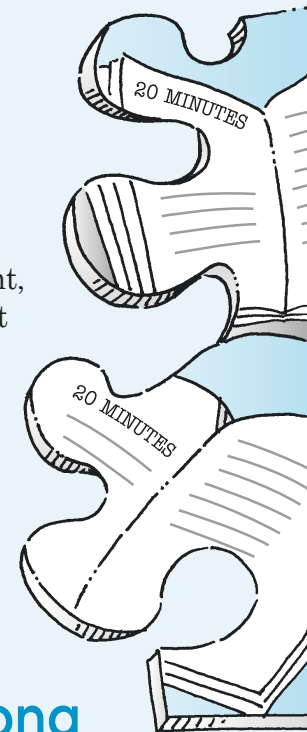
Sure, you can still play a video game. But you'll have to study before school or at night. If you have a babysitting job, study *before* it's time to take care of the kids.

Choose a time when you're at your best. If you're an early-morning person, you might schedule your regular study time before, not after, school.



Study in shorter periods

Brain research shows that you learn more in two 20-minute sessions than in one 40-minute session. If you have a long reading assignment, break it up with a short stretch or a cold drink. Break a long math assignment into two parts and read some English in between.



Divide long assignments into shorter chunks

As you get older, your assignments get longer and longer. And, as you no doubt found out when you tried to do your entire science project the night before it was due, sometimes you *can't* do everything at the last minute.

When you are assigned a long-term project, divide it into smaller parts. Set due dates for each part and write them on a calendar you keep near your study area. So even though the history project isn't due for two weeks, you know you need to do online research today. Finishing part of the project early will prevent a major panic attack later.

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Have the right tools at hand

You can't bake a cake if you don't have measuring cups and pans. And you can't study without the right tools. Make sure you have pens, pencils and paper at home *and* at school. You should also have a few reference books—a dictionary, thesaurus and atlas. Keep these items close at hand so you don't need to wander all over the house every time you want to check a fact.



Set study goals

When you sit down to study, set daily goals for yourself. Write down your goals—it feels so good to check them off as you finish them.

Check your daily planner or assignment notebook. Make sure you know what's due tomorrow so you can complete those assignments. Then look at your calendar for long-term assignments coming up. If you want to start writing your book report on Thursday, you should finish reading the book first.



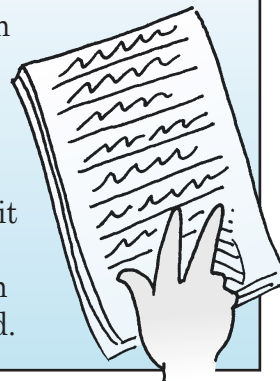
Start with the tough stuff

Most students have one subject they like less than others. The key to studying effectively is to start each study session with that subject.

That's when your brain is freshest. Once you finish your most difficult subject, the rest of your study time will go by in a breeze. And maybe, once your grades start to improve, that least-favorite subject won't be your least favorite any more.

Review

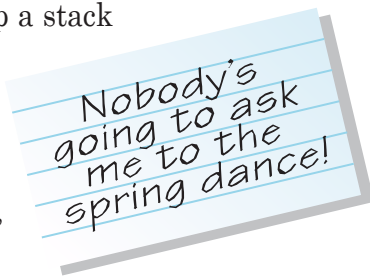
Spend five or 10 minutes every day reviewing your notes from each class. While the material is still clear in your mind, you can clarify those abbreviations you wrote in class. Just a few minutes spent reviewing will make it much easier to recall the information when test time rolls around.



Stay on track

Sometimes, your head gets so filled with other worries that you can't concentrate on studying. *Try this:* Keep a stack of index cards by your side when you're studying. When you start to worry ("Nobody's going to ask me to the spring dance" "I'm not good enough to start on the team"), write each worry on a card. Then turn the card over—you'll deal with it later—and concentrate on your studies.

At the end of your study session, look at what you've written. You may find some worries you can actually do something about—if you're worried about your grade in math, do a little extra studying. And at least the worries you *can't* do anything about didn't distract you from doing your homework.



Nobody's going to ask me to the spring dance!

Make sure you turn in your homework

The last step in doing homework is making sure it gets back to school. Once you're finished with assignments, put them in your backpack and put your backpack where you'll be sure to grab it in the morning.

You can learn to study smarter, and not always longer. Putting these tips into practice will help you make the most of your study time.