

# Tips for How to Study...Effectively!

## Tips for Encoding Information

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### Spacing Reviews and Repetition

- ✓ *Learning occurs in spurts.*

The best way to use study time is to **work for short periods of time on different subjects or tasks**. Spacing reviews and activities is important because it helps to **maintain interest and concentration**. It also enhances comprehension and retention of the information covered. Encoding information into memory is maximized by studying for short periods of time and going over the same material repeatedly.

- ✓ *The attention span of most people is 20 to 30 minutes.*

Study time should be divided into sessions of similar length for working on different activities or subjects. Switching from one subject to another **avoids boredom and daydreaming** and helps you process information in a variety of ways.

### Writing Summaries

- ✓ Summaries function to reduce the amount of information to be remembered and to organize the information in a way that aids encoding.

### Practice Tests

- ✓ Sample questions allow one to assess one's retrieval success before the exam; areas of weakness are identified and addressed prior to taking the actual test.
- ✓ Make your own using lecture notes, practice problems, old tests, or have a classmate create a test for you

### Information Dumping

- ✓ Information dumping refers to quickly writing down all information that one feels he/she may forget or confuse otherwise. It is done before looking at the test questions.
- ✓ If you fear you will forget or confuse names, dates, formulas, or statistics, dump that information on the back of the test as soon as it is distributed. You should also dump visual aids, organizational aids, and other "tricks" that were used to encode the information. Then refer to the dumped information for answering questions.

### Other Strategies

- ✓ Develop a plan for studying, considering what must be done and how much time one has to do it.
- ✓ Organize your hours to include ample time for completing the activities, relaxing, and sleeping.
- ✓ Make up a schedule and stick to it. Allowing for rewards or considering how your goals will be fulfilled by sticking to the schedule are good ways to get motivated.
- ✓ Repetition, encoding is enhanced when one reviews the material several times.
- ✓ Use spare time wisely, short periods of "down time" between classes or before meals may be used effectively as review sessions.
- ✓ Use strategies that are specific to your Learning Style

## Tips for Encoding Technical Vocabulary

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### Rephrase

- ✓ After reading or listening to the definition several times, try to rephrase the definition into your own words.
- ✓ Encoding more effective with information that is familiar.

### Reduce

- ✓ Eliminate all unessential words in the definition.
- ✓ Focus only on the key words that must be present in order to understand the definition.
- ✓ The less there is to encode, the more likely one is to remember the information.

### Associate

- ✓ Try to link the term and key words to something you already know.
- ✓ Associate the information with past experiences, personal feelings or beliefs, pictures in the text book, songs heard on the radio, or images seen in movies.

## Visualize

- ✓ Try to mentally picture the term and key words.
- ✓ Visualize actual objects or people referred to in the definition.
- ✓ Visualize objects that represent the words or ideas in the definition.
- ✓ Visualize what would happen if someone ate it, wore it, found it, believed it, or practiced it.

## Concentration

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*Concentration is the ability to direct your thinking.*

- ✓ Create a study environment without distractions.
- ✓ Stick to a routine; accommodate day/nighttime energy levels.
- ✓ Study when fewest competing activities in progress.
- ✓ Stop study when fatigue or lack of attention occurs.
- ✓ Keep a pad of paper nearby to jot down distracting thoughts.
- ✓ Set study goals before you begin.
- ✓ Design adequate rewards after goals are met.
- ✓ Break up content of study by mixing up study and building in variety.
- ✓ Take regular scheduled breaks.

## Study Environment Analysis

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*Select three locations where you study. Answer these questions TRUE OR FALSE for each location. The more FALSE responses, the better the study area!*

- ✓ Other people often interrupt me when I study here.
- ✓ Much of what I can see here reminds me of things that don't have anything to do with studying.
- ✓ I can often hear radio or TV when I study here.
- ✓ I can often hear the phone ringing when I study here.
- ✓ I think I take too many breaks when I study here.
- ✓ I seem to be especially bothered by distractions here.
- ✓ I usually don't study here at regular times each week.
- ✓ My breaks tend to be too long when I study here.
- ✓ I tend to start conversations with people when I study here.
- ✓ I spend time on the phone here that I should be using for study.
- ✓ There are many things here that don't have anything to do with study or school work.
- ✓ Temperature conditions here are not very good for studying.
- ✓ The chair, table, and lighting arrangements here are not very helpful for studying.
- ✓ When I study here I am often distracted by certain individuals.
- ✓ I don't enjoy studying here.

*Original source unknown.*