

FREE REPORT #1

***HOW TO STUDY LESS AND
EARN STRAIGHT A's***



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Do you ever feel like you have too much to do and not enough time to do it all? For most super-busy college students, the answer to this question is a fervent 'yes.' But unfortunately, it takes time to do well in college courses. You have to read material, go to class, study for tests and write papers if you hope to ace any class. It's exhausting. Luckily, there are ways to study less and still get good grades; it's all about maximizing your short study time. In a nutshell: you have to go to class, dedicate regular time to studying, and get to know your professors. Read on for more specific tips about how to get through each semester with straight 'A's and minimal time wasted.

Tip #1: Find a study group. Get to know other people in your class and ask some of them to study with you. A study group of four to five people will help everyone learn material faster. If you meet once a week for an hour or two, you won't have to cram before exams. Have each member prepare detailed outlines for certain chapters and share them with the group. When you meet, go over the outlines, ask each other questions and review past material. Meet more often before a test to discuss potential exam material.

Tip #2: Go to class. It's tempting to skip out on big classes where attendance doesn't matter. But actually showing up for class time is the best thing you can do to earn an A. Not only will you be much more likely to learn the material when you hear it explained, but you'll also get on your professor's good side. A professor is much more likely to give your grade a boost at the end of the semester if he gets to know your face in class. So even if showing up for class is all that you to prepare for a course, you'll probably be in better shape than someone who studies nightly but never makes an appearance.

Tip #3: Be on time. If you're going to make the effort to go to a class, try to be on time in getting there. Everyone has problems now and then that prevent prompt arrivals; it's okay if you're tardy a couple of times. But try to avoid becoming that student who always walks in 10 minutes late. A big part of getting an 'A' is making your professor happy. Repeatedly walking in late won't make you look good in your professor's eyes, and you'll also miss all the important preliminary material for the day's class. Don't do it.

Tip #4: Set aside a few minutes per class per night. You don't have to study all the time to do well, but you can't do away with studying altogether either. The trick to good grades is regular small doses of work. Try giving each class at least 20 minutes of your time each weekday evening. That means about one hour and 20 minutes of studying per night for a five-class course load. Use this time to review material, learn concepts and skim through chapters. Of course, there will be nights that require more than 20 minutes when you have a project due or a test coming up. But sticking to a set amount of study time each day will make these projects and testing periods much easier to get

through. Although it requires a daily commitment, this technique will save you time in the long run.

Tip #5: Get out of your room. Most people don't study well in their bedrooms. There are too many distractions to stay focused. For the most effective studying, go somewhere else. The library or student center both are great places to go for serious study time. Coffee shops, computer labs or even a friend's house work well too. No matter where you go, make sure you won't have access to the things that distract you most--these could be your computer, TV, cell phone or even your bed if you're prone to naps. Although it's annoying to leave the comfort of your room for study time, you'll definitely get more done in less time if you do.

Tip #6: Take advantage of office hours. Your professors hold office hours for a reason--to help students like you. Use this resource whenever you can. Don't be afraid to go to your professors' office hours for help with a difficult homework assignment or to dispute a test question. Most professors are more than happy to help, which means you won't have to waste hours of your free time confused about an assignment. Office hours are also an invaluable resource in a large class where it's hard for a professor to match everyone's name and face. If you go to office hours, your professor will know you and will be more likely to give you a break if you do poorly on an assignment.

Tip #7: Register for classes that relate to one another. Switching gears from physics to literature in a one-hour study period can be difficult. It's much easier to focus when all of your assignments share a common knowledge base. With that in mind, sign up for classes with overlapping material. For example, if you're taking a 19th-century European history class, register for a 19th-century literature course as well. This way, your studying for one class will help you in the other. If you can develop an entire course load with overlapping material, your study time will be greatly reduced.

Tip #8: Network. If you have a large group of contacts, more than likely someone you know will have taken your classes in the past. Find people who have taken previous classes with your professors and ask them about test procedures. See if you can borrow notes and old tests from friends to help you study. These materials will help you target your studying to the topics most likely to be on tests in your class, so you won't have to spend too much time going over material that won't matter.

Tip #9: Specialize. Don't just be a sociology major. Be a child sociology specialist. Micro specialize within your field to save time; you'll get to know one subject really well and spend a lot of time reviewing basic information. Soon, getting 'A's in classes related to your specialty won't be hard because you'll know the basic material inside out.

Tip #10: Take summer classes. If the thought of summer courses doesn't make you gag, take advantage of them. You'll get to hang around campus longer, which is a plus if you love college life. Also, summer classes are usually a bit easier than their traditional

counterparts, so they're ideal for getting hard classes out of the way. Another good thing: taking summer classes means you can schedule lighter loads in the spring and fall, which means less study time will be required during the school year.

Tip #11: Target your reading. Be honest: you don't always read the textbooks for class. In fact, most students don't, and, unfortunately, it hurts their final grade. But you don't have to read every word of a text to get the gist. Try reading each chapter's introduction and conclusion in detail, and then read the first and last sentences of each paragraph. If you come to something that looks important, read it in full. This way, you'll still get most of the benefits of reading your textbook without wasting too much time. Keep in mind that this technique won't work in every class, but it will work for courses where reading is supplementary, not the primary focus.

Tip #12: Take notes. Use class time to your advantage. Since you have to be there, make it worthwhile by taking good notes and staying focused on the lesson at hand. If you pay attention in class, you won't have to spend as much time reviewing material because you'll already have a good grasp of it. Active writing is a good way to force yourself to stay engaged if you tend to drift into a classroom daze.

Tip #13: Participate. Along the same lines as the above tip, participating in class will help you retain information better because you'll be more likely to pay attention to what's going on. Also, students who contribute to class discussions are more likely to get professors to notice them. And it's always good for your professors to know who you are. They'll be much more likely to help you out if they know that you're a good student who tries hard.

Tip #14: Use technology to your advantage. These days, everything is available online. Your library had tons of resources available through online databases; use this information to help you with class projects. You won't even have to go to the library, which means you'll save time. Also, your professors may use an online Web site to post power point presentations, helpful links, handouts and other information. Check this resource often and review the material posted there. Your professor left it for you for a reason, so it will definitely be helpful.

Tip #15: Have a friend read over your written work. A 'B' paper can move into the 'A' category with a little editing. For all your written assignments, have a friend who's good with grammar and spelling read over your work before you turn it in. Try reading your paper aloud too; you'll catch most major flaws that way. A carefully edited paper will stand out among a crowd of student essays, which will make a good impression on your professor.

Tip #16: Take care of yourself before an exam. When you have a big test, the best thing you can do to improve your score isn't staying up all night to study; it's getting a good night's rest and eating a nutritious breakfast. Avoid cramming. You'll just wear yourself

out and won't retain much information. If you've been keeping up with the work and reviewing in the days before a test, all you'll need to do the night before is know when to put the books down and hit the sack. Eight hours of sleep and a hearty breakfast are all the last-minute preparations you should need.

Tip #17: Approach finals seriously. It may be the end of a semester, but that doesn't mean it's time to party. If you've done a little bit of studying every day, final exams should be a piece of cake. However, you still need to review for them. Starting a week before the test, take about one hour each night to review material. This way, you should have covered everything before the test without the need for all-day study sessions.

Tip #18: Take lower-level required courses. You have to take some classes to fulfill certain distribution requirements for graduation. These usually include math, writing and science courses. Take the lowest level class that will satisfy the requirement, even if you think it will be too easy for you. This way, the work won't be difficult and you can devote time to other things.

Tip #19: Schedule courses at times that work for you. Even if that 8 a.m. course is said to be amazing, don't sign up for it if you won't be able to make it on a regular basis. Think about when you wake up in the morning and schedule your first class at least an hour after that time. Similarly, if you get sleepy in the afternoon, don't plan any classes during that time. Even if you do make classes at times that don't work with your natural schedule, you won't be fully engaged, which means it will take more time for you to review the material later.

Tip #20: Find courses you like. You're much more likely to study efficiently if you enjoy the content you're learning. So other than required courses, try to take classes that interest you. Even if an interesting class appears to have more work involved, choose it over an easier-but-boring option. It takes much less time to learn an interesting subject than to force yourself to pay attention to a dull one. And your work will reflect your interest, which means you'll get a better grade too.

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