

HOW TO STUDY

MANAGE YOUR TIME. In addition to a daily "to do" list, you should have a separate calendar that lists only the papers and major exams for the current term. Tape that calendar over your study desk-or in some other prominent place. Refer to it often. While planning is important, don't over schedule your time. Helpful: exploit "spare" moments throughout the day. Be sure you're always carrying something you can work on while waiting for a bus or standing in a movie line.

REMEMBER THE 80/20 RULE. Many students are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of reading they must wade through. Realize that 80% of the important information is contained in 20% of the assigned work. Concentrate your attention on the primary textbook and lecture notes, and skim the "outside" or "suggested" readings when time permits.

THE BEGINNING ... AND THE END. As a rule, the most important places - or periods - are the beginning or end of anything. This applies whether we're talking about the beginning and end of a paragraph ... or a book ... or a class lecture. .or the term. Important: Everyone slacks off at the beginning and tried to make up for it at the end. Instead, a little investment and focus at the start can go a long way.

DON'T SKIP LECTURES - EVER! Your professor highlights the important information and - more important - reveal their points of view. Since they will determine your grade, it pays to show up.

CONTINUALLY RE-READING CLASS NOTES IS A WASTE OF TIME. Most students "study" by re-reading their lecture notes and the passages they've highlighted in the textbooks. Better: Use the same amount of time - or less - to rework you notes. Paraphrase, reorganize, abbreviate, summarize and diagram your notes.

WORK TO UNDERSTAND - RATHER THAN MEMORIZE. It's easier and more interesting to understand something that makes sense than to repeat it by rote. Spend 80% of your study time trying to understand your subjects ... and 20% or less trying to memorize information. Any information you do need to remember can be crammed into your short-term memory just before a test.

LEARN TO WRITE AN EXCELLENT ESSAY. Being able to develop an informed opinion about a topic and express it well. is an important life skill, as well as a college skill. Most college exams are in essay format. If you cannot spell or write well, you will be at a disadvantage. Helpful: work on your vocabulary every day – it's another life skill.

IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR TEXTBOOK, GET ANOTHER ONE.

Example: You don't understand the textbook your statistics professor has assigned.

Solution: Find another textbook that covers the same material in a way that you can understand. Even if you like your assigned textbook, another author's point of view or illustrations can always help you.

IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR PROFESSOR, SIT IN ON ANOTHER SECTION. Ask permission first, unless it's a huge lecture, in which case your presence won't be noticed.

LEARN TO USE A PERSONAL COMPUTER. Regardless of your course of study, you should become proficient at word processing, spreadsheet and database programs. These are important job skills, as well.

CHOOSE YOUR COURSES WISELY. Since the best courses fill up early, plan at least a term or two in advance. Introduce yourself to the professor, and ask to sit in on a class or two. Ask current students what the lectures, assignments and exams are like.

TAKE A CORE CURRICULUM FOR LIFE. Regardless of the requirement for your major, make sure you take at least one or two courses in economics, history and math. If these aren't your strong suits, take them pass-fail. You'll need to rely on them sometime in your life.

(from Winds of Change magazine's Annual College Guide for American Indians, 1994-95)

Advice to students