

How to Study

STOP: Before you go through the following techniques, make a conscious decision that you're going to succeed in your classes. Without that, nothing on this list matters. Made your decision? Good. Go ahead and go through the list of "how to study items".

1. Start with the Syllabus/Disclosure

Get familiar with your class disclosure document and with your class syllabus so that you are aware of upcoming dates, lessons, quizzes and tests. Most teachers will have an online calendar that will be updated as needed. It's a good idea to check the calendar for this class two to three times per week.

2. Glance over the Text-book or online equivalent (beginning of semester)

Read through the intro and the table of contents in your textbook so you are familiar with the different sections and where to go in your book to find the lessons. If some or all of the assigned material is online, become very familiar with the online platform that you'll be working with. Know where to find your lessons, supporting materials, and homework assignments as well as any other material that is important to the class.

3. Attend Class

Make sure to attend every minute of every class. Arrive several minutes before class starts. This way you have some time to ask questions that are specific to your needs. If you arrive even 5 minutes late, you've missed some of the most important information.

4. Study the Section Before Class

This is highly important. You can have a teacher that doesn't even speak English and still succeed if you read the chapter before class. This includes taking "Master Notes" on the chapter before you cover it in class. Master Notes are a complete set of notes that are taken from the textbook and should include vocabulary, working through examples, writing down and understanding properties, definitions, and formulas along with questions from information that you didn't understand while studying. Taking Master Notes before class means that during class, you can focus on gaining competency since exposure to the material has already occurred. In short, with a set of Master Notes already created, you're not hurriedly trying to absorb information that usually comes at you faster than you can process it or write it down. You can just build on a foundation that is already in place.

5. Lecture

Actively engage yourself in the lesson, **stay awake**, listen for the answers to questions that came up while previewing and taking notes on the chapter. Don't be afraid to ask clarifying questions on concepts you didn't fully understand or may have missed.

6. Take Notes

The majority of notes should be taken from the textbook before it is taught in class. Staying ahead of the material that is taught in class is one of the MOST POWERFUL study techniques. Class notes should include extra bits of knowledge that you didn't gain from studying the textbook. If you do not have a set of master notes already prepared for class that day, be sure to take careful notes on how to work through the examples given in class. These should include vocabulary, definitions, properties and formulas. Be aware that your class notes will never be as complete or well thought-out in a college class (where time is limited) as your master notes will be. Schedule some time to take master notes, so that you're prepared for class every day. Taking master notes decreases the time you'll spend on homework significantly. **Imagine opening up the homework assignment and already knowing how to do the problems.** This will become reality if you carefully study and take notes on that section from the textbook. You should get into the habit of creating a set of Master notes for all "heavy-duty" classes.

7. Review Notes/ Prep Summary Notes

Review your Master notes and/or notes from the lesson given in class and summarize any new concepts or vocab words that were learned. Re-work the problems from the textbook examples and/or class so you fully understand how you got your answers.

8. Read Through the Online supporting material.

Most classes have online supporting material that is very valuable to students. Become familiar with the online platform (canvas, powerschool, or any other platform being used) so you can efficiently find what you need to increase your understanding on a regular basis.

9. Do Example Problems Completely

Work through the example problems in your textbook and follow the steps they take closely so you will know how to solve similar problems on your own. This can also be done as you create your master notes. Be sure you understand the properties and principles that those example problems are based on (know the definitions, properties, and formulas you'll be using). Knowing why you're taking each step is just as important as knowing how to take those steps.

10. Schedule enough time to succeed

Be sure that you allow enough time in your daily schedule to be successful. Some students will need hours and hours and hours for this class. Other students will need a much shorter time. If you need more time, look over your schedule and decide where that time will come from. If you're struggling, you have not scheduled and/or taken enough time to go through the steps in this study skills packet. **You can be out saving the world, but if you're not taking time to take care of the responsibilities and requirements for that class, you won't pass it.**

11. Identify any Questions, Re-read

Identify any questions you might have from going through the online textbook/supporting material. Re-read the chapter and/or supporting material. You'll be surprised at how much extra understanding you'll gain by reading through it again.

12. Do Assigned Homework Problems

Work through all of the assigned homework problems, use Online Homework Help if you need hints to get started on a problem. **Do it for real.** Some students find ways to cheat. Instead of giving in to the temptation to copy off of other students' work or find the answer sheet online, **hold yourself accountable for learning the concepts.** Copying down answers on your paper does nothing to increase your knowledge. Increasing knowledge is the reason that you're at school in the first place. If you can correctly explain to yourself, a friend, or sibling how to solve the problem, then you understand it, otherwise, you still have questions that should be answered. **Remember; you're here to learn and master the concepts. Getting an A is only a byproduct of learning the concepts. If your focus is on getting points instead of knowledge, you won't actually learn much; you'll just keep trying to get points. Once your goal is to gain as much knowledge on the subject as possible, tests will suddenly become easy to pass, critical thinking will develop more fully, and points will come naturally.**

13. If the content is not mastered, Do More Problems

If you don't feel comfortable with any given concept after finishing the assigned homework, look through past/future homework assignments to work through similar problems until you feel you have mastered them. There are hundreds of extra problems available on every concept. If you went through and created a set of Master Notes before class, the homework will be a breeze and will go MUCH faster and easier for you. In our high school and middle school math classes, we have ALEKS, which is the perfect individualized student textbook. This program tailors itself to your specific needs and gives you as many opportunities as needed to master each concept. It will work on the exact concepts that you need, which means that you're working on the exact problems that you need extra help with at your current level of mathematics. If you don't have an aleks account, ask your teacher for extra resources.

14. Identify questions for the teacher

If you're struggling on a concept or problem and you have completed all of the steps above, mark it so you can ask your teacher for further guidance. Find time before or after school to seek help from your teacher. Most teachers make themselves available after class in order to help any students that need it. Teachers will often ask if there were any questions from the homework. If you're in an on-campus college class, find out when your teacher's office hours are and get your questions answered. Questions can and should also be asked in class. If the teacher goes through and shows you how to do a problem, re-work that problem or problems like it on your own so you gain that understanding for yourself. **Again, hold yourself accountable for learning the material. If you can do it by yourself on the homework, you can do it on the test.**

15. Write My Own Test and Answers

Start anticipating/gathering potential problems or questions the teacher might put on a future test. Make sure you know how to solve and answer these questions.

16. Review for Quizzes

Check the class syllabus/online calendar for future quiz dates so you know when they are coming up. Quizzes will generally include concepts from the most recent lessons that were covered.

17. Take quiz

If you have followed the recommendations above, the quiz will be easy and you'll do well.

18. Review results

Review and rework any missed problems from the quiz and identify any errors you made. Ask questions and work through those problems as well as extra practice problems until you become proficient.

19. Study for the Test

Studying for the test begins when the new chapter begins. Every example given in class and every homework problem is a chance to begin preparing for the test. Make sure that you understand. Again, if you can correctly explain how to work through the problem and get the correct answer to yourself or to a friend, this indicates that you understand. Otherwise, more work is needed. Studying for the test should not be a cram session right before the test. If you find that you're learning how to do the problems for the first time in preparation for the test, go back and re-read this study skills guide so that doesn't happen again. Studying for the test should only be a review to sharpen up skills that you have already mastered but need to refresh yourself on. Work through all types of problems that were presented to you throughout the chapter. Ask the teacher for a test review if one is not presented to you. **Do not allow excuses to keep you from succeeding.** If you are not given a test review sheet, go back and work through your homework and quiz problems as well as the questions you compiled while anticipating what would be on the test.

20. Study Reserve Exams

Ask the Teacher if they have a previous exam to study, and if they don't, check the reserve. SLCC has a reserve and makes past tests and final exams available to students. In most math classes, these can be found on your canvas class.

21. Take The Test

Make sure that you come to class prepared with all of the materials that are allowed on the test (scratch/notebook paper, pencil, calculator, etc). Be calm and relaxed because you are well prepared with the knowledge gained by following the previous steps. Use your test taking strategies for unexpected questions, but there is no need to be nervous. Your score will reflect how well you have prepared BEFORE the test. Worrying about the fact that you're taking a test is counterproductive.

22. Review the Graded Test

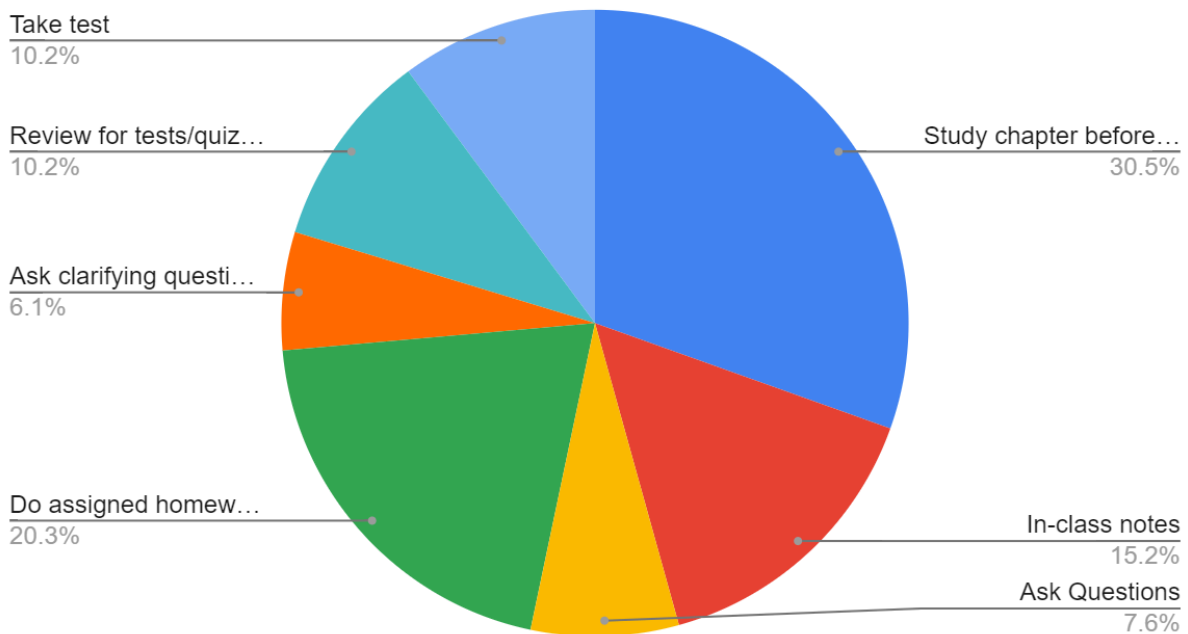
Review the results from your test, go back over missed problems and identify where any mistakes were made. This is highly important since those problems don't go away when the test is over. You have to understand them because you'll see them again on the final exam. Ask questions if needed.

23. What do I study if more is needed?

There are those days when you just don't quite understand the concepts that were presented in class (usually this results from not studying and taking notes on the section before class). First, make sure you're practicing these techniques. If more is needed, go to your teacher and let them know that you're struggling. There's no shame in this. Most teachers will know about plenty of extra resources or they can present things in an alternate way. **If you ask questions, you get answers.**

Knowledge and power are waiting for you.

Level of importance



Taking personal responsibility for your education has an importance level of 100%.

Closing thoughts: These study techniques are designed to turn the weakest of all students into the strongest. But you have to follow them in order to gain the success that they can bring. They are written so that you'll learn how to learn. Once you master these, it's possible to pass any class with the highest marks.