



Encyclopaedia Of Study Tips

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Study tip #1:

As soon as possible when you start your course, **get a copy of the course syllabus if this is available**. This is very important because it will define what will be covered through the year so you'll get a 'bird's eye view' of what you need to know. Some lecturers even give an outline of their courses. Make sure you ask for a copy.

Study tip # 2:

Try to find out what form the examination will take ie short answer, multiple choice, short or long essay type answers. This will affect the way you prepare for the exam.

Study tip #3:

If there is assessment during the year, **find out how much weight the exam carries**. You may find it's more important putting extra effort into assignments and tutorials during the year rather than all your energy into the final exam.

Study tip # 4:

Get hold of as many past exam papers as you can lay your hands on. Everyone knows the importance of this but you must collect as many as possible.

Study tip #5:

Find out what additional reading material and literature (other than lecture notes) is required for the course. Track it down early and you won't be in the last minute rush leading up to exams when everyone

else is after it and you're on the waiting list at the library. This is when the photocopy machine is crowded and the libraries full of students doing last minute research.

Study tip #6:

Organise your study material into a structure. Recall is much better when information is committed to memory in an orderly and structured way. It will 'come out' in the same way it 'went in'. In other words, if you've filed away your facts carelessly, you won't be able to retrieve them when and how you want them.

Study tip #7:

Write your lecture notes again as soon as possible after the lecture, and incorporate them into a framework with headings and sub-headings that can easily be remembered. Sometimes lecture notes can be very disorganised with no structure or headings because you were in such a hurry getting everything down that all you have is pages and pages of facts.

Study tip #8:

Write the headings and sub-headings of your lecture notes as questions rather than statements if appropriate. This tends to stimulate the thinking response and can start to prepare you for questions and answers in the exam.

Study tip #9:

Use multiple sources to supplement your lecture notes ie when

you're re-writing out your lecture notes into an organised framework, use reference books, journals etc to give added body to your notes. This will broaden your knowledge of the subject and increase the significance of facts when they're presented in different contexts with new examples and applications.

Study tip #10:

Maintain a questioning state of mind in lectures and when you're studying. This means writing as many headings and sub-headings as questions, asking questions in lectures, asking your friends questions, and asking yourself questions. This will keep your mind active in lectures and prepare your mind for questions when they are asked in the exam.

Study tip #11:

Write down as many questions as you can at the end of your lecture notes. Especially take note (and write down) any questions that your lecturer asks during class because it may be a hint or suggestion of what might be asked in the exam.

Study tip #12:

Make a 'master list' of as many questions as you can on the subject you're studying. You can get these from past exam papers and those that you've written in your lecture notes. These questions should be in a similar format to those in the exam, ie not one-word answers but perhaps short or long essay format. These questions should cover all of your study material. You'll find that there are only so many questions you can ask about a subject before they become repetitive.

Study tip #13:

Make a list of as many 'key words' as possible and find out what they mean in a dictionary. A 'key word' is usually one word in a question that unlocks what the question is really asking eg compare, contrast, criticise, define etc. There are 17 of these 'key words' and their meanings available in "***Studying For Exams Made Simple***" (available from <http://www.college-study-skills.com/studyguide.html>). If you don't know the precise meaning of these words, you may answer a question inappropriately even though you could have given the correct answer.

Study tip #14:

Write down the answers to all the questions you've been putting together. Use your lecture notes, reference books and journals to gather as much information as possible for your answers. Examiners are impressed by evidence of extensive reading and research.

Study tip #15:

Every so often put together a few questions and give yourself an exam. Correct yourself at the end and see how well you went. This will help you learn from your mistakes and show up areas that you may need to focus on more. You can even give yourself a time limit so you experience some of the anxiety you feel in a real exam.

Study tip #16:

When you answer a question, always approach it in 3 stages. Firstly, interpret in your own words what the question is really asking.

Secondly, write down an overall framework, structure or plan which will define your answer. Lastly, fill in the body of the answer.

Study tip #17:

Make sure you know and have practised the 24 essential study skills you need to master if you want to be a 'mental athlete' in your exams. These study skills are listed, explained and shown how to practise them in "*Studying For Exams Made Simple*" - a six step system for getting A's in your exams (available from <http://www.college-study-skills.com/studyguide.html>).

Study tip #18:

Treat your college career like a business. This means not missing classes, which you should look at like 'business meetings'. If you miss a business meeting in the real world, it affects productivity. Use all the available tools of big business such as computers and filing systems etc. You're investing a lot of time and money in your career, and this time you're spending studying is from some of the best years of your life.

Study tip #19:

Try to choose courses and subjects that you really like because they're most likely the ones that you'll do best at.

Study tip #20:

If possible, try to choose courses based on the lecturers giving them. Meet and talk with prospective lecturers and perhaps sit in on their classes. Talk to other students about their opinions of courses. Keep a

record of their responses. Many students do badly in courses and subjects because they didn't like the lecturer and have no incentive to try to please them by getting good results. Unfortunately, you often have no choice in this so try to do well for yourself and not someone else.

Study tip #21:

Try to prepare for lectures beforehand. Read through the appropriate sections of the textbook so that you have some knowledge and a framework for the lecture notes when they're taken in class. You may also find that reading about a subject can produce a few questions, which you can ask in class. Better to get answers for them now rather than a day before the exam.

Study tip #22:

Don't be afraid to ask questions in class. Chances are that most of the other students have similar questions and discussing it in class will help you remember the answer in the exam. Even if the question causes some embarrassment, you will probably never forget the answer to that one!

Study tip #23:

Try to sit near the front of the class. You'll feel more like asking questions because everyone is not turning around to listen to you, and you're less likely to fall asleep because you're more involved with what's going on and you probably will be spotted by the lecturer. Don't be afraid if the lecturer asks more questions to the students at the front because it will keep you thinking more actively during class.

Study tip #24:

Try to read aloud when you're studying at home. This enhances reading comprehension and stimulates both the right (visual) and left (verbal) sides of your brain. The person who uses both sides of the brain is the most successful in either right or left-brain professions.

Study tip #25:

Try to exercise the less used side of your brain. If you're a right brain type (artistic, dreamer, intuitive,) then try to watch scientific TV series or educational shows. If you're a left-brain type (into science, maths, accounting etc) try a few right brain courses such as music, art or theatre.

Study tip #26:

The first and last minutes of a class are often the two most important periods. Sometimes a test the next day is announced, or important extra reading or research mentioned during these times.

Study tip #27:

Never miss any extra credit work. It can be the difference between an 'A' or a 'B'.

Study tip #28:

Become an expert 'test taker'. As mentioned in a previous tip, prepare as many questions you can find on a subject and practice doing tests over and over again. You can never practice enough. If you do this and nothing else you will get straight A's. The more you practise the better you get -

just ask any sportsperson. Keep in mind that there are only so many possible questions that examiners can draw on. The same questions either reappear or are slight variations from earlier exams.

Study tip #29:

Always turn in projects and assignments on time and make sure they are neat and edited. Top students write well and clear concise expression is essential to top grades. Make sure every page is perfect. The appearance of your papers makes all the difference in the world.

Study tip #30:

Develop and learn how to use your memory. Most of your success will depend on your memory and the ability to recall information. Read a few good books on 'how to improve your memory'. Some of the advice you'll come across is:

- Trying to commit things to memory when you're tired is a waste of time ie study in short sessions rather than one long one because the first and last items in a series are the easiest to recall when concentration is at it's peak.
- Certain vitamins can improve your memory quite a bit, therefore, eat well and supplement your diet with vitamins B, C, lecithin, choline and tyrosine.
- Use acronyms, rhyming strategies, links and key words.

Study tip #31:

Schedule study time to your biological clock ie determine when you study best. Some students are morning people and others are night owls,

with many of us in between. Our biological clocks are all different and we tend to study best when our temperatures are highest. So don't fight it but take advantage of it. Morning people should study first thing and of course the night owls tend to burn the midnight oil.

Study tip #32:

Make use of study groups, parents, tutors, instructors, tapes etc when you're studying.

Study tip #33:

Don't waste a whole year trying to pass a subject when you can see after the first few weeks that it will be a complete waste of time. Either it's not quite what you thought it would be, you're not interested in it after all, or it's more difficult than you thought it would be. Better to bail out early rather than late so you can devote more time to your other subjects.

Study tip #34:

Don't waste your time rewriting textbooks. You won't learn much and probably get bored and disinterested. Passive learning is pointless. You're better off studying actively by maintaining a questioning state of mind by formulating as many practice questions and answers as you can think of.

Study tip #35:

Stay as physically fit as you can. This means watching your diet and getting enough exercise. You'll be amazed at the increase in your mental energy when you're physically fit. An apple tree won't bear much fruit if its

roots are unhealthy. Neither will your brain function to it's maximum if you are unhealthy physically.

Study tip #36:

Always keep your ultimate goal in mind when you're studying.

Write it down and put it up on the wall in front of your desk at home. Make it emotional and give it a time by which it should be achieved. Make it an achievable goal. Break it down into lots of small goals if that helps. Read it aloud every morning when you wake up and before you go to bed at night.

Study tip #37:

Spend some time relaxing. You can't possibly go flat out all the time.

Set aside some time during the day to do something you enjoy. Something to take your mind off studying and exams for awhile.

Study tip #38:

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. If you're studying the same way each year and still getting poor results...well I'll let you decide! My suggestion would be to read "*Studying For Exams Made Simple*" (available from <http://www.college-study-skills.com/studyguide.html>) and use a tried and tested 6-step system already worked out for you. It's better to chop a tree down with a sharp axe rather than a blunt one. Same result but much less effort ie study smarter not harder.

Study tip #39:

If you're suffering from nerves and anxiety and this is starting to

affect your performance, then if all else fails, perhaps talk to your parents about visiting a psychologist who can suggest how you can minimise these negative emotions. Often there will be a resident psychologist at the university you're attending who may be able to help. Even talking to your lecturers about your feelings may be of some benefit.

Study tip #40:

There is a system of studying called **SQ3R** which stands for **survey / question / read / recite / review**. This means that you should do a quick overall preview of your study material looking at headings and finding out the meaning of words you don't know. Look for main ideas and form an impression of the subject. You should then try to form questions in your own mind about the topic. Then read through in more detail, recite by putting into your own words what you've just read, then review the main points to finish up.

Study tip #41:

Don't leave your revision until the last minute. Easier said than done! The best way to revise is to do as many questions and answers as possible.

Study tip #42:

Put together a written revision timetable. If you've collected say a dozen questions on a subject (which cover the whole subject), and each question takes 30 minutes to answer, then put together 6 small exams, each an hour long ie 6 hours of revision. If you have 5 similar subjects then that's a total of 30 hours revision which, if you do a couple of hours a

night is a little over 2 weeks of revision before an exam. Always plan to have enough time for revision so you avoid cramming the night before.

Study tip #43:

Don't study too hard the night before the exam. It's a mistake to try to absorb too much information at this stage and will probably give you 'mental indigestion'.

Study tip #44:

A few days before the exams check your diary against the official examination timetable. Make sure that you have all the exam times correctly copied into your diary. Check the locations of your exams. Think how terrible it would be if you turned up at the right time on the right day but the wrong place!

IN THE EXAM.....

Study tip #45:

Arrive early for the exam. Make sure you leave home or wherever you are so you get to the exam at least 15 minutes early. There's nothing worse than rushing to an exam and arriving late. You're only adding stress to an already stressful situation. Some examiners won't even allow you into the exam if you arrive late. Arriving early allows you to gather your thoughts, perhaps relax a little and think positively.

Study tip #46:

Avoid talking to your friends just before the exam. You'll tend to compare what you know with them and usually feel that they know things that you don't. The talk tends to be negative and probably increase your anxiety even more.

Study tip #47:

Read very carefully all the instructions on the exam paper ie how many questions are required, whether you have any choices or must answer all the questions, and whether some questions are worth more than others etc.

Study tip #48:

If you have a choice of questions, **read through the whole exam paper** to identify those questions which you feel you can best answer. You'll probably recognise a lot of questions, which are similar to those you prepared yourself. Others may require answers similar to the answers you prepared during the year but have been asked from a slightly different perspective.

Study tip #49:

Proportion your time for each question depending on the marks each may be worth. If all questions are of equal value, allocate your time equally between the required number of answers.

Study tip #50:

Before answering the question, read it through very carefully, noting the 'key words'. It helps to take a highlighter pen into the exam and use it to mark 'key words' in the questions. Do this as soon as you begin the question.

Study tip #51:

Make sure that you **don't spend too much time on your first question** only to find that you have no time for the last question.

Study tip #52:

Choose an easy question to start with to allow yourself to warm up your thinking processes.

Study tip #53:

Make sure that you include only material relevant to the question and avoid padding your answers.

Study tip #54:

Answer the questions in the sequence already described ie analyse and define, form a structure, and fill in the body of the answer, so that it develops in an organised manner.

Study tip #55:

Make sure your answers are neat and legible, grammatical, punctuated, and spelt correctly. Answers produced in this way will

unconsciously appeal to the examiner and may influence the final mark.

Neat papers are likely to get higher marks than sloppy ones.

Study tip #56:

Take the trouble to **have a quick look over your answers before handing in your paper**. It'll give you an opportunity to pick up any errors and to make last minute changes. You can often pick up a few extra marks by doing this.

Study tip #57:

If you find that you've missed out a question or run out of time, don't panic. Write outline notes showing how you planned to write your answer if you had the time. You'll also pick up a few extra marks by doing this.

Study tip #58:

Compare your exam results with a couple of friends to make sure that your paper was fairly graded. Sometimes the examiner can make mistakes when they're marking so many papers and there is always the possibility that it was yours.

Study tip #59:

Review your exam paper as soon as you get it back. This will give you an idea of the type of questions that might appear in the next exam and also help you decide what you might do differently next time. This is also another chance to learn from your mistakes.

Study tip #60:

In the exam, **try to find a seat away from any distraction** eg don't sit near a window where you can lose yourself gazing into the distance, or where the morning or afternoon sun can shine into your face. You want to focus only on the exam and the question you're trying to answer.

Study tip #61:

Sometimes you will still come across questions for which you simply have no answer. When this happens, don't panic. Educated guessing involves the following:

- Try to eliminate the choices in the question that you know are incorrect.
- 'None of the above' is usually a poor guess while 'all of the above' is generally good.
- The longest multiple-choice answers are good guesses.
- Never leave a question blank - give it your best guess.
- Exaggerated answers are usually 'false'.

Study tip #62:

If you look at the exam paper and your mind goes blank, jot down some notes. Make notes about something that you know about, even if it's only vaguely related to the questions. Then start writing an answer. This will free up your thoughts and your 'block' will soon be over.

Study tip #63:

For essay examinations, try the "memory dump" technique. If

permitted, write down everything you've memorized - facts, names, dates, ideas, events, and so on BEFORE you do anything else. Sometimes reading through the essay questions can distract you from what you've studied. The "memory dump" technique requires that you write down everything possible BEFORE you begin writing essay answers. This way, you are less likely to forget something important.

For more tips, suggestions and techniques for getting A's in your exams, go to www.college-study-skills.com

If you have any great study tips to add to this list, please email me at robert@college-study-skills.com

If you'd like to know even more study tips and how they can all be used as part of a study system which you can use to get straight A's, go to <http://www.college-study-skills.com/studyguide.html> where you can get **"Studying For Exams Made Simple"**.

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