

Tips to Good Grades in College

College inspired me to think differently. It's like no other time in your life.

Larisa Oleynik

Welcome to college! Every student entering an institution of higher learning will soon understand that education is a two-way street. Not only do you have expectations of your college, but also your college has expectations of you. We hope this reference card will help you learn more quickly and remember better the skills necessary for college success.

Become an Independent Learner

1. Learn what motivates you.
2. Know your goals.
3. Keep organized.
4. Believe you can be successful.
5. Enhance your levels of aspiration.
6. Establish an effective study area.
7. Use many resources for learning.
8. Recognize the importance of rehearsal and review.
9. Develop higher level thinking skills.
10. Demonstrate responsibility for your education.
11. Seek opportunities for learning experiences.
12. Consider alternate possibilities.
13. Broaden your horizons.
14. Take studying seriously
15. Read widely and read often.

You've really got to start hitting the books because it's no joke out here.

Spike Lee

Your Textbook is Your Best Friend... How to Get the Most Out of It

Read the introductory material. Reading the Preface will help you get the most out of the text. It will explain how the text is organized, point out the features in the text, and may even give you some tips for studying.

Read the text boxes. In high school, you may have skipped over these boxes. But in college, the text boxes are used differently. They often contain key information not found elsewhere in the text or they may consolidate key text points in an organized way.

Use the figures, charts, diagrams, and other visuals. Often these summarize the material or explain how the concepts work in the real world.

Read the chapter summaries and answer any review or practice questions. The chapter summaries can be used as a way to check your knowledge. If you can talk about each of the topics and explain the key points without looking back at the text, you know that you have got it!

Keep your book after the class is over. This is especially good advice once you have decided on your major. As you take more courses in your major the texts you used in your earlier courses can be used to help you remember what you have learned.

How to Impress Your Professor

1. Attend class.
2. Do your homework and come to class prepared.
3. Bring your textbook to class.
4. Arrive on time, ask questions and participate in class.
5. If you don't understand something, ask the professor to explain.
6. If you have to miss class, let your professor know ahead of time.
7. Remember that your professor is a person, too.

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The main thing
is to keep the
main thing the
main thing.
Unknown

Zen and the Art of Note-Taking

Review your notes from your last class while you are waiting for class to begin. This will help you remember where your professor left off last time.

During class, listen for cues to important information. These cues include repetition of information or change in the professor's volume or speed. Your professor may even tell you that the information is important.

Take your own notes. Putting notes in your own words can help you better understand the material.

As soon as possible after class, review your notes and summarize the key points in the margin of your notebook. This way you are creating a study guide to test yourself later.

Connect lecture and text material. When you review your text, have your lecture notes open to the appropriate topics.

To Highlight or Not...How to Read Your Text

Don't rely on highlighting. Highlighting is often a passive activity because students typically are not reading to remember; they are marking the material so they can come back and learn it later. But in college you have so much reading to do that you hardly have time to read the material once, much less come back to reread.

Use text annotation. Text annotation is where you take notes in the margins of your text—pulling out the key ideas you need to remember. Annotate definitions, examples, lists or characteristics, names/dates/events, and other important text information. Try to condense the information as you annotate—no need to write in full sentences. Just get the gist.

Search for information on the "Big Six". Look for information that answers the following questions: Who? What? How? Why? When? Where?

Read the chapter summaries and answer any review questions. Chapter summaries can be used as a way to check your knowledge. If you can talk about each of the topics and explain the key points without looking back at the text, you know that you have got it! By answering review questions, you will become more familiar with the types of questions that can be asked about the topic.

... life is not a multiple choice test,
it's an open-book essay exam.
Alan Blinder (Princeton)

I Read, I Studied...Now How to ACE the Test!

1. Maintain your personal integrity...don't cheat.
2. Read over the entire test before beginning.
3. Check punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Write clearly. Print if necessary.
4. Write your name on every test page.
5. Ignore the pace of your classmates.
6. If you don't understand the question or what the professor wants, ask questions.
7. Try and answer all the questions.
8. Watch time limits.
9. Think positively!