

Studying Smart

Effective Habits for Effective Study

You can prepare yourself to succeed in your studies. Try to develop and appreciate the following habits:

Take Responsibility for Yourself

Responsibility is recognition that in order to succeed you can make decisions about your priorities, your time, and your resources.

Center Yourself Around Your Values and Principles

Don't let friends and acquaintances dictate what you consider important.

Put First Things First

Follow up on the priorities you have set for yourself, and don't let others, or other interests, distract you from your goals.

Discover Your Key Productivity Periods and Places

Morning, afternoon, evening; study spaces where you can be the most focused and productive. Prioritize these for your most difficult study challenges.

Consider Yourself in a Win-Win Situation

You win by doing your best and contributing your best to a class, whether for yourself, your fellow students, and even for your teachers and instructors. If you are content with your performance, a grade becomes an external check on your performance, which may not coincide with your internally arrived at benefits.

First Understand Others, Then Attempt to be Understood

When you have an issue with an instructor, for example a questionable grade, an assignment deadline extension, put yourself in the instructor's place. Now ask yourself how you can best make your argument given his/her situation.

Look for Better Solutions to Problems

For example, if you don't understand the course material, don't just re-read the material. Try something else! Consult with the professor, a tutor, an academic advisor, a classmate, a study group, or your school's study skills center.

Look to Continually Challenge Yourself!

From www.studygs.net. Partially adapted from the audio cassette by Steven Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Learning Style Assessment

Read the following questions and circle the letter of the answer that best describes you. Choose the answer that describes what you usually prefer. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. When learning how to use my computer, I prefer to
 - a. Read the manual first.
 - b. Have someone explain how to do it first.
 - c. Just start using the computer and get help if I need it.

2. When getting directions to a new location, it is easier to
 - a. Look at a map.
 - b. Have someone tell me how to get there.
 - c. Follow someone or have him/her take me there.

3. To remember a phone number, I
 - a. Look at the number and dial it several times.
 - b. Repeat it silently or out loud to myself several times.
 - c. Remember the number by the patten pressed on the keypad, the tones of each number, or writing it down.

4. For relaxation, I prefer to
 - a. Read a book or magazine.
 - b. Listen to or play music.
 - c. Go for a walk or do something physical.

5. I am better at
 - a. Reading.
 - b. Talking.
 - c. Physical activities.

6. In school, I learn best by
 - a. Reading.
 - b. Listening.
 - c. Hands-on activities.

7. I tend to be a
 - a. Thinker.
 - b. Talker.
 - c. Doer.

8. When I study for a test, it works best when I
 - a. Read and picture the information in my head.
 - b. Read and say the ideas out loud or silently.
 - c. Highlight, write notes, and outlines.

9. It is easier for me to remember
 - a. Faces.
 - b. Names.
 - c. Events.

10. On a Saturday, I would prefer to
 - a. See a movie.
 - b. Go to a concert.
 - c. Participate in athletics or be outside.

11. In a college class, it is most important to have
 - a. A good textbook with pictures, graphs, and diagrams.
 - b. A good teacher who gives interesting lectures.
 - c. Hands-on activities.

12. It is easier for me to study by
 - a. Reading and reviewing the material.
 - b. Discussing the subject with others.
 - c. Writing notes or outlines.

13. When I get lost, I prefer to
 - a. Look at a map.
 - b. Call or ask for directions.
 - c. Drive around the area until I recognize familiar landmarks.

14. When cooking, I often
 - a. Look for new recipes.
 - b. Talk to others to get new ideas.
 - c. Just put things together and it generally comes out okay.

15. When assembling a new toy or piece of furniture, I usually
 - a. Read the instructions first.
 - b. Talk myself through each step.
 - c. Start putting it together and read the directions if I get stuck.

16. When solving a problem, it is more useful to
 - a. Read a best selling book on the topic.
 - b. Talk over the options with a trusted friend.
 - c. Do something about it.

17. Which statement do you prefer?
 - a. A picture is worth a thousand words.
 - b. Talk to me and I can understand.
 - c. Just do it.

18. When I was a child, I
 - a. Spent a lot of time reading, taking photos, or drawing.
 - b. Had lots of friends and was always talking to someone on the phone.
 - c. Was always taking things apart to see how they worked.

Score Your Assessment:

Number of A answers _____ = Visual Learner

Number of B answers _____ = Auditory Learner

Number of C answers _____ = Kinesthetic Learner

Learning Style Strategies

VISUAL

Visual learners generally:

- Have difficulty with spoken directions.
- Find it hard to follow lectures and discussion.
- Usually need to see something in order to learn it.
- Learn best by seeing and watching demonstrations.
- Prefer to write things down.
- Have a vivid imagination, often think in terms of pictures.
- Like to be prepared with notes, charts, graphs, and the like.
- Are good spellers and can actually see the words in their minds.
- Are strong, fast readers.
- Would rather read than be read to.
- Like to doodle while listening to their teachers.
- Would rather do a demonstration than give a speech before a group.
- Like art more than music.

When assembling something:

A visual learner will tend to read the directions or look at the illustrations beforehand.

When learning a math concept:

A visual learner will learn best by seeing it written out on the blackboard or in a book.

Visual learners should try to:

- Make a mental photograph or mental video of what you want to remember. Put action and color in the picture.
- Use flash cards and look at them frequently (to identify information you need to know for exams).
- Use different colors to highlight or underline your reading and lecture notes, each color designates the level of importance of the information.
- Draw pictures to remember what you are learning.
- Use symbols or pictures in the margin to emphasize important points.
- Draw a map or outline of important points.
- Use graphics to aid in learning, such as illustrations, maps, slides, videos.
- Color-code your notes and files from different courses.
- Write down as much as you can.
- Pay close attention to charts, notes on the blackboard, printed handouts, and other written information.
- Take notes in all your classes.
- Try to rewrite your notes if you have the time.
- Write down your homework assignments and due dates.
- Write lists of all things you need to do and to study.
- Always keep a memo pad and a pocket calculator with you.
- Try to form a picture in your mind of a tough word you are trying to spell.

AUDITORY

Auditory learners generally:

- Need to hear it to learn it.
- Can't follow written directions easily.
- Don't pick up cues from the body language or facial expressions of others.
- Learn best by verbal instructions from others.
- Are easily distracted by sounds/noise.
- Remember best by repeating things out loud or to themselves.
- Often will remember names and forget faces.
- Like classroom discussions and learning other students' thoughts and opinions.
- May talk to themselves.
- Find writing difficult and are better at telling.
- Can spell better out loud than in writing.
- Like jokes better than comic books.
- Like music more than art.

When assembling something:

An auditory learner will tend to prefer to listen while someone else talks through the directions.

When learning a math concept:

An auditory learner will learn the concept best if the teacher explains it verbally.

Auditory learners should try to:

- Discuss what you have learned with others.
- Participate in study groups and class discussion.
- Teach others what you want to learn.
- Use music to study if it does not distract you or break your concentration.
- Use music as a study break.
- Add rhythm or music to the items you are trying to remember.
- Recite aloud or silently in your mind while you are reading.
- Use flash cards and say the items on the cards.
- Use a tape recorder to recite and review important points from the reading or lecture.
- Make use of taped textbooks and lectures and listen to tapes frequently.
- Listen carefully to all information discussed in class.
- Sit close to the lecturer to avoid distraction by others.
- If you find that you distract yourself with books, pens, etc., clear your desk and study area. Only handle the text or the notebook that you need at that time.
- Say important instructions or information, problems you are working on, and the information you are reading out loud.
- Make up jingles that rhyme or cute phrases to help you remember important items.

KINESTHETIC/TACTILE

Kinesthetic/Tactile learners generally:

- Learn best through a hands-on approach.
- Enjoy physical activity as part of the learning process.
- Have difficulty sitting still and attending to the task in class.
- Learn best by being directly involved.
- Like to stand close to the people they are talking to listening to.
- Love to doodle and draw rather than pay close attention in class.
- Speak slowly.
- Touch people to get their attention.

- Use a finger when reading.
- Gesture a lot.
- Have trouble remembering geography unless they've actually been there.
- Like to act things out.
- Learn by manipulating and doing.

When assembling something:

A kinesthetic/tactile learner will tend to simply start putting it together without the benefit of instructions.

When learning a math concept:

A kinesthetic/tactile learner generally needs to actually use the concept to understand it fully.

Kinesthetic/Tactile learners should try to:

- Read while walking or pacing.
- Study outside.
- Take notes on lectures.
- Highlight or underline your reading materials and lecture notes.
- Write summaries of the material to be learned.
- Outline chapters.
- Think of practical applications for abstract material.
- Act out the material as in a play.
- Use puzzles, games, and computers.
- Make a game out of flash cards. Count the number of answers you get correct. Set a time limit and see if you can get through the cards in the time allotted.
- Take something apart and put it back together.
- Study in short blocks of time rather than extended periods.
- Take frequent breaks while studying.
- Have as many experiential learning opportunities as possible, such as lab and studio course or fieldwork.
- Study in a small group or work with a study partner.
- Remember you are not necessarily “impatient” or “impulsive”; you merely have the need to move on to other activities after a while.
- Change study locations each time you take a break to help stretch your legs and give you a chance to move around.
- Jot down words whose spelling you're unsure of to see if it “looks” correct.
- Handle materials by considering building models or giving demonstrations to the class, as opposed to handling in more traditional written reports or term projects.

My Ideal Study Area

At Home

	Current Study Area	Ideal Study Area
Noise		
Movement Nearby		
Lighting		
Chair		
Work Surface		
Supplies		

I commit to:

At School

	Current Study Area	Ideal Study Area
Noise		
Movement Nearby		
Lighting		
Chair		
Work Surface		
Supplies		

I commit to: