STUDY HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Successful students have good study habits. No doubt, they manage their time effectively, probably making a weekly schedule and devoting a certain amount of time to studying each day. But what else are successful students doing differently. Here are a few insights in the form of tips so that you too can develop strong study habits.

**Tip #1: Read critically** – A primary means by which you acquire knowledge is through reading. Do not assume that just because you have "read" the assignments that is the end of it. You must learn to read with a purpose. In studying, you may read the same assignment three or four times, each time with a different purpose. You must know before you begin reading what your purpose is, and read accordingly. Also, build your vocabulary! When you run into a word whose meaning you are not sure of, you have got to look it up. If you do not understand the meaning or use of the word, you might miss the point of the argument or not grasp the tone of the author. Always define any new word.

**Tip #2: Identify the important details that support the main idea** – Every main idea in your reading is supported by at least one important detail. These supporting details are the basis for the main idea. Identify them, and you will have a link between an idea and the information that supports it. Thereby helping improve your understanding of the main ideas, which will help you tremendously in your next exam.

**Tip #3: Review all the time** – Review your class notes at the end of the school day and briefly before the next class; this requires that you take good notes in class and summarize important points from your textbook. Schedule some time at the end of the week for a longer review, especially on weekends. Yes, weekends should be fun time. But there is also time to do some review. This will help you be ready to go on Monday morning when another school week begins. Take all the time you need to learn a topic, and don’t beat yourself up if it takes you a while to learn the subject matter. The key to learning something well is repetition; the more times you go over something the better chances you have of retaining it permanently.

**Tip #4: Test yourself** – Continually test yourself to see what you know. If you got something wrong on a quiz, an exam, or on the homework, find the right answer and memorize it. Carry flashcards with you everywhere, and test yourself or have someone else test you, and focus on the flashcards that you missed or hesitated on.

**Tip #5: Choose a quiet place to study** – It is important that you find a quiet space where you can be the most focused and productive. If you are easily distracted, you should not study near a television or in a crowded location. Instead, choose a quiet room, a library, or a bookstore where people study instead of socialize.
Tip #6: Set a specific time to study – Set aside time dedicated exclusively to study. Choose specific days and times throughout the week that work best for you to study, and stick to your commitment. Try to study at the same time each day. This establishes a routine that becomes a regular part of your day. Also, reward yourself with breaks; sit back and close your eyes for a minute if you need to clear your mind. Make enough time in your schedule to get enough sleep.

Tip #7: Do not procrastinate – A delay in studying is called “procrastination.” Not only does waiting until the last minute leave you with less time to study, but it also puts you in a stressful situation in which it is difficult to recall the material. Cramming at the last minute for an exam will not help you retain information. If you procrastinate, you will find it difficult to get everything done when you need to. You may rush to make up the time you wasted getting started, resulting in careless work and errors. It is more effective and less intimidating to study regularly for shorter periods of time than to study during one long, exhausting session.

Tip #8: Set specific goals for your study times – Goals will help you stay focused and monitor your progress. Simply sitting down to study has little value. You must be very clear about what you want to accomplish during your study times.

Tip #9: Do not study too much at one time – It takes time for your brain to form new long-term memories, and you cannot just keep studying flat out. If you try to do too much studying at one time, you will get tire and your studying will not be very effective. Space out the work you have to do over shorter periods of time. Study in 20-50 minute periods. You will see that taking short breaks will restore your mental energy. Take 5-10 minute breaks (no more!) and do something physically active to get your blood flowing and make you more alert. The most difficult assignment will require the most effort. So start with your most difficult assignment since at the beginning of your studies is when you have the most mental energy.

Tip #10: Avoid distractions – Distractions interrupt your work, and it is not that easy to get back to what you were doing. During study time, turn off your cell phone or put it on silent, and place it out of sight. Also, ask your friends politely not to call you during your study time so that they do not distract you from what you need to do. If you are using a computer to study, do not get sidetracked by social media accounts or games. Also, while many students choose to listen to music as they study, this can also be a distraction.

Tip #11: Collaborate – Call a classmate when you are having difficulty with an assignment because "two heads can be better than one." Similarly, turn your study time into a group effort. Get some friends together—friends who are actually interested in studying, that is—and have everyone bring over their flashcards. Pass them around and quiz each other. If anyone is unclear on a concept, take turns explaining it to each other.

The goal is to improve your study habits not only so that you can achieve higher grades, but also so that you retain information and develop the type of work habits that employers look for.