

Good Study Habits

Effective study is part of the secret to school success. The purpose of study is to improve your learning and understanding. For some students study and learning comes easy. For others it is difficult and often results in wasted time, frustration and poor grades at school. It is easy to spend time at your desk or in the library thinking about study but the catch is you actually have to do it! No two people study in the same way. What works for one person will not necessarily work for another, but there are some general techniques that can help you to study better. Working on your study skills to make your learning more effective and efficient will improve your school grades.

ROUTINE:

Establishing a study routine is the first step towards effective study. Study should be a part of your regular routine just like eating and sleeping. Allocating time for study about the same time each day makes you mentally and physically better prepared to undertake your study tasks. The amount of time allocated throughout the week should reflect your level of study and the amount of work you have to complete. A student in year 10 will not have the same workload as a student in year 11. A year 11 student will not have the same pressure of examinations as a year 12 student. Make sure your study routine reflects the amount of time you need. Senior students must include time on weekends in their study routine.

PLANNING STUDY TIME:

Once you have established a study routine the next challenge is to make sure that you do not waste the time allocated. You must learn to be disciplined and focused in the way you use your study time. The best way to achieve this is to plan your time. This does not have to be complicated but by setting particular tasks to a particular time you know what has to be done and are less likely to spend ten or fifteen minutes staring at the wall before you begin. Look at the assignments you have to complete, the tests that you need to prepare for or homework that is due and give each task a particular time during the week. This way you know that things will be completed on time and nothing will be overlooked. At the beginning of each study session you should have a clear idea of what you need to achieve. As examination time approaches you should give each of your subjects set revision times in the same way. Preparation for examinations will usually require an increase in your allocated study time.

It is also important to recognise that you cannot effectively concentrate consistently over two of three hours. You need to take some short breaks which helps to restore your mental energy. Make sure that you are not interrupted by phone calls or visitors. After a phone conversation with friends it is difficult to return to what you were doing and your concentration has been disturbed. Let your friends know what your study routine is and ask them to call at other times. If this does not work make sure that you phone is switched off during your allocated study times. Taking this approach helps you to use the time you have more efficiently and makes your study more effective.

WEEKEND REVIEW:

Students who allocate study time on weekends usually find that they still have time for recreational and social activities. It is important to have time away from study doing things that you enjoy. Efficient time management allows you to study and socialize. Weekends are a time for review. Look at what you have achieved during the course of the week. Highlight those things which are still incomplete, things which need further attention and new tasks that you have been given. Look at your study routine for the coming week and allocate study tasks according to priority. Don't leave the difficult things until last. You should always try to complete the difficult things first. Weekend study times are an opportunity to catch up on things that you not have been able to complete during the week. They also provide time opportunity for test preparation and revision. All students benefit from weekend study but for senior secondary students' weekend study is a must!

RECOGNISING WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU:

We are all different. Some students study better early in the morning, others are more focused during the evenings. It is important to work out how and when you study best. The study environment is also important. Some students are distracted by external noise others are able to block out these distractions. Make sure that your study environment is comfortable for you. A well planned study program eliminates rush and panic. When we are rushed or placed under pressure we rarely perform at our best and are much less likely to enjoy the task at hand. Make sure that you understand the tasks that you need to complete. If you are not sure, ask your teacher or a friend for help. Spending time on homework or an assignment only to find you have not done the right thing is very frustrating and an inefficient use of your time. A well planned study routine requires self discipline. Students who have set clear goals for their secondary study find it much easier to be disciplined in their study habits. Having a clear purpose gives your study time meaning and directs you towards success.