



H I N T S   O N  
L E A R N I N G  
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S T U D Y I N G



*This pamphlet is presented to you with the compliments of the local chapter of the PHI ETA SIGMA National Honor Society*

# HINTS ON LEARNING & STUDYING



Most of us would like to succeed as college students and in life, get good grades, acquire skills, judgment, and knowledge, make the world better place, and have enough time left over to enjoy the college experience. That sounds great, but it doesn't happen automatically.

You are more likely to succeed if you will take the time to review and practice basic rules of effective learning and studying. We have discovered a lot about how people learn, about motivation, and what it takes to succeed. **We highly recommend that as part of your preparation you (1) review good book on study skills, and (2) visit your campus learning center.** This booklet is about studying, learning, and succeeding in college. The ideas work. We hope you will try them.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

Learn to manage your time. This means getting things done that need to get done when they need to be done, staying in control, focusing your energy and effort, setting priorities, being flexible, and balancing your activities for stress management, health and well-being. Effective time management skills will serve you well throughout your life in almost any activity and profession.



There is no substitute for daily preparation. Get started the first day. Do your work on time. If work or other commitments make it difficult for you to attend class regularly, that may suggest serious problems and need for you to consider your priorities and talk with an adviser.

The demands of college life differ from what most new students have experienced before. Some classes require the completion of daily assignments. Others may specify only mid-term and final examination plus term paper, but may require extensive reading and library research, without daily deadlines. You may discover that you have much more freedom and responsibility for managing your time, with far fewer guidelines. If you have not clearly identified your priorities, established goals, including what you want to get from college, then it's easy to give in to every distraction that comes along.

By developing well-thought-out daily and weekly plan, you are more likely to maintain control, keep up with assignments, and effectively prepare for papers and exams. You will minimize cramming and last-minute preparation.

**How effectively you study and use your time is more important than how long you study.** Only you can decide what your priorities are and how much time you can give in order to get the results you want.

To keep your priorities, obligations, and activities in perspective take time to develop:

- a daily plan,
- a weekly schedule, and
- a personal planning calendar for the quarter or semester.

Begin by buying pocket or notebook planner, available in almost any college or other book or stationary store.

### **THE DAILY PLAN.**



- Establish the habit of holding your own personal planning session each day. Take few minutes in the morning or at the end of the preceding day to list what you need to accomplish.
- Prioritize your tasks. One of life's most difficult tasks is to discern between what is important, of value or essential, and what is not.
- Develop the willpower to accomplish those tasks that are most important and essential, and to defer or ignore the unessential.

### **THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE.**

- Develop weekly schedule on which you block out your classes; other fixed activities; time for individual and group study, preparation and review; personal care and meals; recreation; and time for daily planning. (See the sample schedule on the page following.)
- Revise as needed to keep your schedule realistic and flexible. You will learn more efficiently with carefully timed pattern of study and review for each class:
  - a) Wherever possible, block out time immediately following class for review and assignments for that class.
  - b) Set aside time for brief review just before you go to class.
  - c) Set aside few minutes at the end of each day for quick review of the day's work, and weekly time for comprehensive review.
- A period of fifty minutes is about the maximum length most of us can study intensively before needing ten minute break. This will also help you maintain your concentration.
- Block out total of two to three hours for study and assignments for each hour of class. (Labs and activity classes may require less.)
- Leave some blocks of time open. Your week will seldom go exactly as planned; you need flexibility. ***If you find that you frequently depart from your schedule, you may not be in control of your time.***

### **THE TERM CALENDAR.**

- Keep calendar of every important date for the academic term, to include



tests, due dates of papers, meetings, dates, birthdays—anything for which you need to plan.

- Know what lies ahead, how much time you need to complete effectively paper or prepare for a test, and how to avoid the conflicts and pressures of overlapping assignments and obligations.
- *The goal is for you to see the big picture for the term.*

## LISTENING & NOTE-MAKING SKILLS



To become good note-maker, you may need to sharpen your listening skills. You want your notes to be accurate, legible, and understandable; to capture main points, ideas and relationships; and to identify questions. You need to be able to stay tuned in and manage distractions, day dreaming, and fatigue.

- Keep your notes in an 1/2 11 notebook with dividers to separate the various subjects.
- Draw a vertical line down each page about two inches in from the margin.
- Write your notes on the right side of the line. Use the left side for brief comments, keywords, questions you may want to ask, and for other notations that add emphasis or clarity.
- Analyze your notes. Do you seem to capture the essential points? If not, ask your instructor to review your notes with you and make suggestions.



**You can manage distractions.** During lecture or while studying we are bombarded with all kinds of thoughts, interruptions and fatigue that divert our attention. Some instructors and topics hold our interest more than others. Pressures and personal problems can mount up.

- It helps to sit up front in class. You are more likely to be attentive.
- You will be more attentive if you prepare for the lecture by reading the material, review your notes and identify questions before class.
- Ask yourself questions during the lecture. How can use this? How does this relate? Listen for answers, or raise questions with the instructor.
- As thoughts intrude you may need to write quick note to yourself about the distraction and set it aside until after class.
- When your mind wanders mentally you can decide whether or not you are going to give in to the distraction. You can tune the lecture out, or you can bring your mind back to the topic at hand. *The choice is yours.*

## **A STRATEGY FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDY & READING**



Did you ever complete reading assignment and wonder what it was about? Reading with out comprehension and retention is wasted effort, yet is one of the most common study problems. The following four-step approach will help make your reading time more efficient and increase your comprehension and retention:

- 1) Survey the material you intend to read such as chapter in textbook. Do this briefly by looking through the material—reading the various topic headings, the captions on illustrations, summary paragraphs, and questions at the end of the section or chapter. The survey gives you sense of the organization and major themes of the material.
- 2) As you read, turn the headings of each section into questions, or where appropriate, use questions found at the end of a chapter, and then as you read read for answers. As you do this you can read more intensely, rapidly, and with purpose.
- 3) After you have finished section or found the answer to your question, stop! Without looking, try to answer the question in your own words. If you cannot, go back over the material before the next step.
- 4) After completing your reading, review your questions to see how many answers you recall. Go back over the material until you are comfortable with it.

Consider summarizing the reading by writing your questions, and brief answers in your notes or word processor. If you participate in study group you might also develop questions for the group that you anticipate the instructor might ask.

Fact-laden survey courses may require extensive memorization. review of good book on study skills should introduce you to helpful memory improving suggestions.

### **A PLACE TO LEARN**



accomplish while you are there? If you want your study to be productive, you have to control your environment. That requires analysis to determine what enhances your concentration and productivity.

Select place that you can clearly identify with study

and **nothing** else. Your desk may do-your bed? Probably not. A residence hall may provide a good environment, or it may not. It helps to keep your-workplace free of distractions. Just keep the tools of study at hand— textbooks, paper, the latest edition of good college dictionary.

Libraries are excellent alternatives, both on-campus and in the community, or any other location where you can maintain your concentration until you **choose** to give into distractions.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS



We could say much about college writing and term papers, but those are usually the central focus of a first year class. We offer only three suggestions:

- Learn to type and to use a word processor an extraordinary tool.
- Use a good dictionary and thesaurus.
- Take plenty of time for your writing assignments, edit and rewrite your papers— several times if necessary—and seek help if needed.

## SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE

Some of us are reluctant to take advantage of the several professional sources of help for the asking available at most colleges.

Get to know each of your instructors and your academic adviser. They should list office hours or be available after classes. They appreciate your questions and comments. The relationships you develop with faculty will enrich your experience and be of great value in the development and pursuit of your goals.



Learn to use your college library as soon as possible. Tours and instruction are probably available. Other sources of help include residence hall staff, personal and career counselors, the student learning center, and others which will be listed in your student handbook or directory.

## PREPARING FOR EXAMINATIONS



Plan ahead for examinations. The one unalterable rule for doing your best on examinations is preparation.

### ***When do you start preparing for examinations?***

The very first day of class. You will fix material in your long-term memory and have it available for recall by preparing through series of deliberately scheduled periods of review.

Research findings have demonstrated the effectiveness of studying in groups of two or three, in what we call **paired or collaborative learning**. There is probably no better way to learn something than to teach it to someone else. You can divide up the material for concentrated study taking turns leading the discussion and quizzing each other. Keep the task in focus—a responsibility of each member of the group.

Learn what will be expected of you in the examination. Will it cover details or concepts? An essay or multiple choice? Test yourself before your instructor tests you. Predict what questions will be on the test. If it will be an essay test, practice writing answers to questions.

If it is an objective examination, first survey the test. Be sure you understand any and all directions. Make certain you understand the scoring rules. Answer the questions you are sure of first, then return to the harder ones. Guess only if there is no extra penalty for wrong answers, and remember your first idea about the answer was probably your best.

An essay exam requires that you survey the questions and allocate your time in proportion to the value of each. Pay careful attention to the key words in each question. Be complete and concise in your answers. Write legibly and allow time if possible to edit your answers.

Keep returned exam papers for reference on future exams. If you don't do well on test, meet with the instructor whose role it is to facilitate your learning. Before you do, correct every answer; look up all unanswered questions; rewrite misspelled words; learn from your mistakes.

Happy learning!

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*This booklet is distributed as a service project of PHI ETA SIGMA, national freshman honor society. Phi Eta Sigma was founded in 1923 to encourage and reward high academic achievement among the men of the freshman class. In 1937 the organization was admitted to membership in the Association of College Honor Societies. In 1974 the constitution was amended to admit women as well as men. There are now 300 chapters located in colleges and universities throughout the United States.*

*Eligibility for membership is based solely on scholarship. All freshmen who earn grade-point— average equivalent to or better than one half of the highest grade and one-half of the next highest grade in their first term, or semester of college will be elected. Membership is also extended for achieving the same minimum average on the basis of an entire year's work.*

You may obtain further information about the Society from local members or by writing to the Grand Secretary-Treasurer of Phi Eta Sigma, John Sagabiel, 525 Grise Hall, Western Kentucky University Big Red Way Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101-3576. You may view our national web site at [PHIETASIGMA.ORG](http://PHIETASIGMA.ORG).