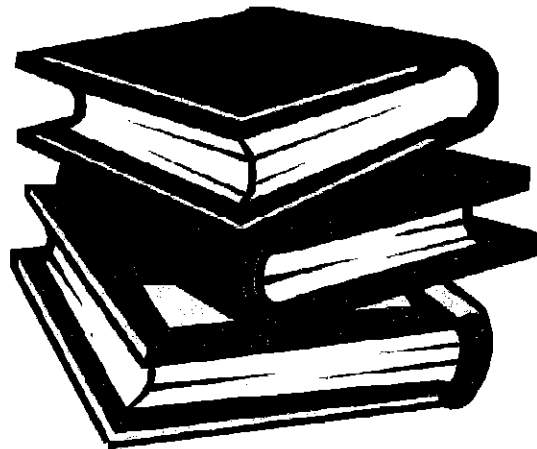


# *STUDY SKILLS*



Adapted from: Lower Dauphin High School

# Visualize SUCCESS!

The first step in having a successful school year is getting to know your teachers. Read your syllabi carefully. Get to know the layout of each classroom – where do your teachers post assignments? Where does completed work go? What do you do when you are absent and you would like to see what you missed? Check their website – what information is available to you there? Teachers want to see student experience SUCCESS so talk with them about your goals and ask for help when you need it – they will be glad to support you!

## THE 4 “P’S” TO STUDYING

### BE POSITIVE

If you have struggled in the past, you can break bad habits. There is always room for change and improvement.

- ✓ You may get discouraged because some students may not have to study and work as hard as you; some things may come easier to others than for you! Each student is different and has a different skills, so don't give up!!
- ✓ Positive thinking is important!!
- ✓ Picture yourself passing a test. Believe you can make the grade.

### BE PATIENT

It may take time, but by using these techniques as part of your normal study routine it will help build upon the effective study habits one may already possess.

### BE PRODUCTIVE

Effective study habits can lead to better grades; taking charge now can help in the future, at college or in your career.

### DON'T PROCRASTINATE!

#### YOU CAN BEAT IT BY:

- ✓ Starting assignments right away
- ✓ Put off the distractions, not the work.
- ✓ Plan for more time than you need.
- ✓ Tell others your plan and they can help you stick to a schedule (maybe your parents...?)
- ✓ Look forward to getting it done.
- ✓ Reward yourself for your accomplishments.

*“Champions aren't made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have the skill and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill.”*

*- Muhammad Ali*

# BEFORE YOU START STUDYING: PLAN

## Choose a place to study:

- Get rid of things that could distract you (phones, computer games, etc.)
- Find a spot that's comfortable and well-lit
- Study in the same place everyday
- Choose an area that is free from clutter and well organized
- Turn off the TV and reduce background noise

## Choose a time to study:

- Pick a time that works best for you (right after school, after dinner, before bed)
- Study every day, it helps keep you in a routine
- Choose a time you are most focused

## Plan how long to study:

- Study at least 90 minutes everyday
- Study in short bursts, and then relax, stretch, get something to eat or drink, get some exercise

\*\*You may need more time, depending on your classes or certain assignments (papers, projects, or tests).

## Gather your supplies:

- Get the supplies you will need (books, paper, pencils, note cards etc.)
- Keep your supplies in one place
- Keep all returned homework, quizzes and other papers. You can use this material to prepare for finals or other major tests.



## Find a study buddy:

- Choose a friend or classmate to help you, it allows you to share class notes and ask questions
- Make study groups with your classmates – meet at the local library or at someone's house
- Ask for help when you need it: Parents, Teachers, school website, tutoring websites

## Use your resources:

- After school tutoring opportunities
- Check Blackboard for updated grades
- Teacher's websites: use to look up homework assignments



# BEFORE YOU START PLANNING: ORGANIZE

Disorganization can be something as little as forgetting to write down dates for events. It could be as traumatic as misplacing items, losing things on a daily basis and forgetting to hand in graded work. No matter where you fit in, being disorganized can make school and life miserable. Here are some ways to help get you on the right track....

## 1. Use an assignment notebook

- Write down each homework assignment
- Make a note of what books you will need for the assignments
- Be sure to mark off your assignments once they are complete

## 2. Have a different notebook or folder for each subject

- Color code your notebooks and folders for each subject
- Put the date on each page. Then you'll know when you took your notes.
- If you use a three-ring binder, use tab dividers to separate your assignments and papers
- Be sure to label each tab with the subject name.

## 3. Keep papers that are returned to you

- They can help you review for tests.
- They can help you write reports.
- File the papers by date.

## 4. If you use a back pack, clean it out every day. That way, you won't lose your books or your homework.

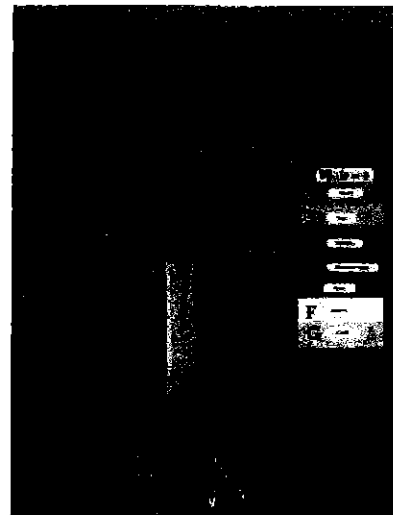
- Do NOT keep loose papers stuffed inside your books

## 5. Label your books, notebooks, workbooks, assignment notebook, folders with:

- a) Your name
- b) The name of the class
- c) The period you have the class
- d) The name of the teacher

## 6. Keep your locker organized

- Makes it easier to find your books, notebooks and papers
- Will make your transition between classes faster and smoother



# TIME MANAGEMENT

In Middle school students must learn to balance homework and play. The best way to gauge your time and how much you need for school work is by using an assignment book or weekly planner.

## Weekly Planner

- ✓ Make a daily schedule.
- ✓ Determine when you are in class, practice, babysitting, or doing chores.
- ✓ Plan the best time each day for homework and write it on the planner!
- ✓ Allow at least 1½ hours per day for homework.



See this schedule for an example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6:00 a.m.	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up	Wake up
7:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00 a.m.	School	School	School	School	School
9:00 a.m.					
10:00 a.m.					
11:00 a.m.					
12:00 p.m.					
1:00 p.m.					
2:00 p.m.					
3:00 p.m.	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Tutoring	Lacrosse	Tutoring	Tutoring	Lacrosse
4:00 p.m.	Tutoring	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse
	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse team dinner
5:00 p.m.	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse	Lacrosse team dinner
	Study	Dinner	Study	Dinner	Study
6:00 p.m.	Dinner	Swim practice	Dinner	Swim practice	Dinner
	Study	Swim practice	Study	Swim practice	Chores
7:00 p.m.	Study	Swim practice	Study	Swim practice	Chores
	Free time	Study	Free time	Free time	Free time
8:00 p.m.	Free time	Study	Free time	Study	Movies
	Free time	Free time	Free time	Study	Movies
9:00 p.m.	Chores	Chores	Free time	Study	Movies
9:30 p.m.	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed	Go to bed

Use this template to look at your day and organize it in a way that suits your style and personality!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
6:00 a.m.					
7:00 a.m.					
8:00 a.m.					
9:00 a.m.					
10:00 a.m.					
11:00 a.m.					
12:00 p.m.					
1:00 p.m.					
2:00 p.m.					
3:00 p.m.					
4:00 p.m.					
5:00 p.m.					
6:00 p.m.					
7:00 p.m.					
8:00 p.m.					
9:00 p.m.					
9:30 p.m.					

# EFFECTIVE WAYS TO STUDY FOR TESTS

## Begin Early

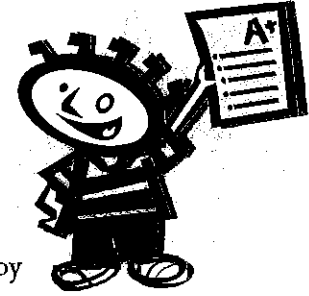
- Start studying as soon as the test is announced

## Identify trouble spots:

- Be able to identify areas of struggle
- Study the more difficult material first

## Study Tricks

- Mnemonic (ne-mon-ic) devices are extremely effective. For example, "Roy G Biv" = red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.)
- Make flashcards
- Use outlines and diagrams
- Create your own test with questions that you feel or know will be on the exam



## Pay Attention

- Don't ignore in-class reviews. Listen for clues like: "This is on the test".

## Review

- Go through all materials in advance and skim your notes the morning before the test.

## Rest and Feel Well

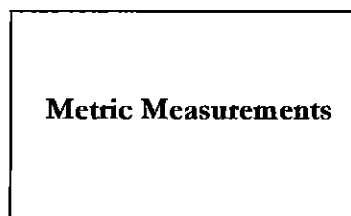
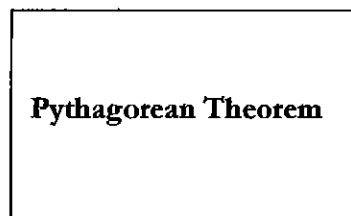
- Don't pull an "all-nighter" studying the night before. You'll do much better feeling rested after a good night's sleep.
- Eat balanced meals, don't skip breakfast -- it gives you energy for the day.

## Studying Techniques

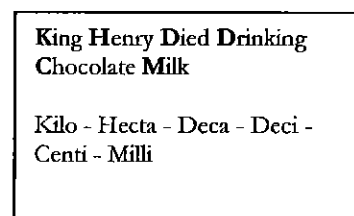
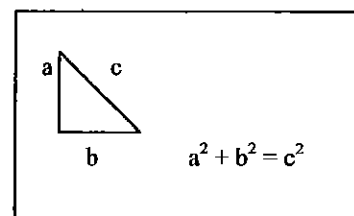
- Understand what you're supposed to do.
- Re-read all instructions in the syllabus or in the printed materials your teacher gave to the class.
- Review class notes. Your teacher may have given you the formula or examples which may help in solving a problem or answering a question.
- Say the problem out loud. Hearing and seeing a question or problem often helps clear the way to a solution.
- Ask a parent or a study buddy for help if you still can't solve the problem.
- Write legibly

## Sample Flashcards:

Front



Back



# Test Taking Skills

**Effective study habits give you confidence.** If you practice good habits, then good test taking skills can follow. Some students study but then feel anxious or worried when they sit down for the test. If you experience the inability to concentrate, mental blocks or even physical symptoms like “butterflies in your stomach”, here are some tips to reduce anxiety and be a better test taker!

## For Short Answer Tests

1. Budget your time well – if some questions are worth more points, spend more time on them.
2. Do easiest questions first – don't dwell on harder ones. Mark it so you can come back to it later.
3. Look for clues in the question.
4. Answer all questions – even if you don't know the complete answer. Some information is better than none!
5. Use all of the time you allotted in a class period.

## For Essay Exams

1. Read all questions first – underline key words and jot down your initial thoughts.
2. Organize your ideas through a rough outline on scratch paper or in the margins of the test.
3. Do easier questions first – this will help with your confidence!
4. Proofread, proofread, proofread and check your work!

## For Objective Exams (Matching, Multiple Choice)

1. Solve in order – answers in previous questions may help you to answer others.
2. Read each choice carefully – be aware of words like “often”, “sometimes”, and “always” – select the answer that is most correct.
3. Be sure you understand what's being asked – multiple choice questions can be tricky.
4. Go back to any skipped questions at the end of the test. Make educated guesses if you are not sure. For multiple choice tests, eliminate the answers that you are certain would be incorrect and choose from what's left. Look for clues such as agreement between numbers, gender, or logic.

## Controlling your anxiety...

- Think positively and say nice things to yourself! We sometimes have negative thoughts about our abilities when we don't do well. That doesn't help your stress level or your anxiety so avoid it! Think only positive and calming thoughts.
- Learn to relax. During a test -- briefly close your eyes; take a long, deep breath. Concentrate and let yourself think clearly.
- Prior to the test – maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly. Maintain regular sleeping habits – get plenty of rest (especially the night before a test).

***When you get your test back – pay attention to the correct answers and ask about those you got wrong. You may need to know that information for the next test/quiz and for the final exam. Meet with your teacher if you have any questions about the material or about the test itself.***



## SHORT RANGE SCHEDULE: WEEKLY AND DAILY

Each week use your planner and write down assignments that you get at the beginning of the week (including tests, and smaller assignments). Set aside time every night to work on those weekly/daily assignments. Each day write down what you have to do as far as academics, work, and activities.

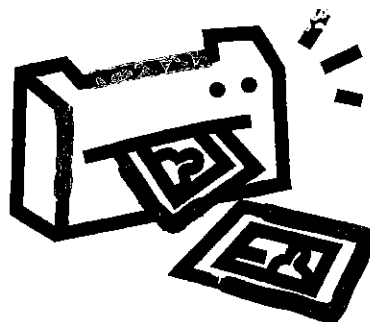
Monday
3:00-4:45 <i>Geography worksheets - finish packet</i>
5:30- 6:30 <i>Write an outline for English essay that's due Friday</i>
7:00-8:30 <i>Soccer practice</i>
9:00- 9:30 <i>Review Spanish vocab for test on Wed</i>

## LONG RANGE: PLAN FOR ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS

### Research Paper

A research paper is an academic task that requires careful planning. The first step is to break down the work into small tasks. Below is a sample list of steps for a 10-15 page paper that is due in two months.

1. Select a topic
2. Do some preliminary research to be sure your topic fits the requirements
3. Decide on working thesis statement
4. Continue your research making sure along the way that you are supporting your thesis
5. Make an outline or use some pre-writing strategies such as a graphic organizer
6. Write a rough draft (mark the rough draft with comments/question you may have)
7. Edit and rewrite – ask your teacher for input to know if you are covering the required components
8. Re-read the details of the assignment – have you met all of the goals?
9. Prepare/type the final draft
10. Ask other people read it for you to check for errors and for the flow of the paper (parents, friends, tutors, teachers, etc.)
11. Organize footnotes and bibliography – be sure you have checked all areas that need to have citations
12. Proofread for typing and grammatical errors
13. It's ready to hand in!



# NOTE TAKING STRATEGIES

*The first step to become a good note taker is to become a good listener.*

## Listening:

- Try to pick out the important details,
- Think of personal real life examples that relate to what the speaker is saying.
- Picture scenes being described, or draw diagrams in your notes for clarification.
- Ask questions and participate in class discussion.

## How to take notes:

- Don't try to write every word.
- Use your own shortcuts, including abbreviations, symbols, diagrams and drawings.
- Try to draw parallels between your own experience and knowledge and the lecture.
- Look for a structure in your instructor's lecture. If he or she says there were three main issues at stake in the Civil War, look for those three issues to be clearly defined, and listen for details about each one.
- Try to review your notes as soon as you can after class, mark the most important points, and do a little reorganization if you need to, for instance drawing an arrow from a topic that belongs in a different spot than where you have it written.

### Note Outline Format

I. Main topic
A. Subtopic
1. Detail
2. Detail
B. Subtopic
1. Detail

