

Student-Athlete's Guide on How to Study

Why Work on Study Skills?

Have you ever noticed two students who seemed to put in the same amount of time for a class, yet received very different grades? This could have been a result of study skills. This section is here to help you learn effective study skills that will help you better prepare for a test.

Successful students have learned and applied these study skills to their college career. These students know that when it is time to study they are focused and do not stop to go to a movie, check their e-mail, or chat with a friend. Instead they manage their time wisely and use the study skills presented here.

The strategies presented in this section will help you improve the quality of your study time as well as reduce the amount of wasted study time. You will feel more prepared and see greater success if you learn to apply these study skills to all aspects of your academic life.

Remember that habits are hard to break and so you should not expect to use all of these study skills at once. Instead focus on a few at a time until you are using them all successfully.

Studying, just like athletics, requires hard work. To become a successful student you must work hard at studying and stay focused. The best students like the best athletes, do not get good grades by accident, they work hard.

Getting Motivated

Some students spend their entire college career procrastinating and finding excuses not to study. In the end, they are the only ones who have been hurt by their decisions.

In the end, your success in college helps determine your success in life and finding a good job. Therefore, it is worth the four years of hard work when the pay off lasts over forty years.

Choose to succeed because of yourself, not because of your coach, advisor, or parents. You are the one who will benefit by succeeding in college.

Take Responsibility for Yourself

As a college student, professors and coaches expect that you will act like an adult. Adults are responsible for themselves. To be able to enjoy the freedoms of college, students must take on the responsibilities of a college student.

If you have a problem, take the initiative to speak with your professor or advisor so they can help you solve it. Being responsible for yourself also means knowing when you need to study and creating time for you to study. As a college student, it is your job to do this, it is not your professor's job to remind you to study.

Although there may be less collected homework in college than in high school, it is still your responsibility to complete any assignments. Professors create assignments to help you learn the material and perform better on assessments.

Successful students responsibly do what they need to do to succeed in their courses as well as managing their time. As a college student, you are now responsible for planning your life!

Study Skills

Believe in the Goals You Set

Successful students, just like athletes, create goals for themselves. By creating goals, you know where you are going. Even if you are unsure of the exact path or major you will choose you can still create goals to help you along the way. That way you will be on the track to success when you do pick a major.

Successful students understand that for goals to be effective, you must believe in them. For example, if you don't truly believe that you can make the varsity basketball team, you never will. You must believe to achieve!

Short-Term Goals

At first goals can seem so large that you will never be able to reach them. When this occurs, you must break down your goals into short-term goals. These goals are temporary, they may even be as short as from day to day or week to week.

Short-term goals can apply to getting a grade in a class. You can break each assignment into smaller goals. By having smaller goals, it is easier to do your best on something small than a large, long-term goal.

Remember to be realistic when setting short-term goals. You may believe that it is more realistic to shoot for a "B" in a course instead of an "A". Your goals should reflect what you want to do, while striving to do your best.

Getting Interested

Not every course will be your favorite course. Yet generally, your favorite courses and the courses you did well in were subjects you were interested in. Try to get interested in a course, even if at first it does not seem to be exciting.

Come to class with an open mind and a willingness to learn. This will help you become interested in the subject as well as help you succeed.

Get Involved

To help keep you interested and focused during classes get involved. By asking questions and participating in discussions. If you get stuck on a problem or concept, get involved by asking a tutor or the professor. You can also join a study group. The study group will give you the chance to meet other students as well as succeed in the course.

Think Positive

One of the best ways to help yourself succeed is to think positive. See a challenge as a way to prove yourself. Ask questions, participate, and find an interest in the course. You will be amazed how much you succeed when you think positive and get involved.

Studying vs. Friends

College gives students a lot of freedom and this freedom can make it difficult for students to concentrate on their studies. Many times students choose their friends over studying.

It is up to you to balance your schedule and create priorities. Your success in college should be a top priority. This may mean missing a movie or lunch with friends to finish an assignment. Just remember that friends will stick by you and understand even when you have to choose to study.

By managing your time wisely and using the study skills presented in this section you will be able to hang out with friends and make studying a priority. Just remember that when it comes down to your success in college, studying over hanging out with friends will help you ace that exam.

Internalizers vs. Externalizers: Which Type of Student are You?

Psychologists have determined that when it comes to learning and success in school there are two types of people: internalizers and externalizers.

Internalizers believe that they can control what happens to them so they try to do their best. Externalizers believe that other can control what happens to them so they make excuses. They typically have little control over their life and believe that both success and failure is because of other people.

Study Skills

Externalizers make excuses as to why they cannot study or succeed. They have a negative attitude towards school, studying, and grades. Their excuses sound like: "That teacher is too hard.", "My roommate never leaves me alone, I can't study.", or "That teacher never gives out anything higher than a B." These types of excuses and bad attitude prevent students from succeeding.

Internalizers commit themselves to success and look for opportunities to do well. They think positive and try to find an interest in each course. If an internalizer performs poorly, they look to ways to improve and learn from the experience.

If you believe that you are an externalizer try to think more positively. Take responsibility for your actions and success. Learn from your mistakes and seek help instead of complaining.

***Avoid Games Losers Play**

It's okay to feel sorry for yourself once in a while, but if you do it frequently you may be playing a game. A game occurs when a person follows a sequence of actions or words that manipulate others into responses that provide a hidden psychological payoff. The moves are superficially plausible, but the real motive is hidden.

Game playing is like "conning" someone but differs in that a "con" is conscious whereas game playing usually goes on without conscious awareness.

The game students play often have payoffs that prevent them from being successful in school. It may be that you play some games that hinder your effectiveness.

* From **Student Success** by Tim Walter and Al Siebert, New York; Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976, 93-94.

Yes, But

A good example to start with is the "Yes, but . . ." game.

"I can't seem to concentrate."

"You could study in your room instead of in the cafeteria."

"Yes, but it's too noisy there."

"Why don't you shut your door and play your radio."

"Yes, but my roommate always talks to me."

"Why don't you . . ."

"Yes, but . . ."

On the surface the person seems to be asking questions about how to keep from being distracted. The real purpose of the interaction, however, is to prove to others that nothing they suggest is going to work.

Ain't It Awful . . .

Minimartyr is walking down the hall after class and, as usual, starts a conversation by saying

"Ain't it awful the way she loads work on us?"

"Ain't it awful the way she grades?"

". . . how the tests are written?"

". . . how the lectures are so boring?"

". . . the way we have to sit in those hard seats?"

Wooden Leg

"How can anyone expect me to do well with the trouble I have? If you had the problems I have-my parents and I get into these arguments on the phone each week; I have these headaches; I can't sleep; I'm broke . . ."

"I know someone who has lots of the same problems."

"My problems are worse. No one has problems as bad as mine."

Harried

Whirlwind takes on everything and volunteers for more. A dynamo of activity, Whirlwind works frantically on dozens of projects. There are meetings to attend, phone calls to make, people to see, and details to arrange. Studying? "Have to put that off until later." Whirlwind is busy but doesn't get much accomplished. Remember: The more goals you have, the less likely you are to reach any of them.

Study Skills

Stupid

"Oh, no! There I go again. Look how dumb I am. I always do these stupid things. I always find some way to foul things up! I always make some dumb mistake."

True.

If It Weren't for Him or Her

"I could get good grades in math if it weren't for the instructor."

"I would have a good grade average if it weren't for my advisor making me take those tough courses."

"I would go to class if the instructor weren't so boring."

"I could study better if it weren't for my roommate."

"If it weren't for him or her" is often played by students who want to justify why they aren't attending classes or studying. These students don't want a good instructor. What they want is a good excuse, a good rationalization for not attending class or studying.

These games all have predictable patterns and the same thing happens again and again. The student doesn't want change or to find a way to deal with what happens. The gains from playing a game are worth more than whatever costs there may be—including not being successful as a student.

Steering Clear of the "I Give Up" Trap

Don't get discouraged and fall into the "I Give Up" trap. Some students use failure as an excuse for not trying anymore.

Learning effective study skills such as how to write papers and take good notes takes time and practice. If something doesn't work the first time and it seems like your efforts didn't pay off, don't give up. See your tutors and instructors and keep trying.

If your tutors and teachers see that you are really trying, they will be more willing to help you do better next time.

A Quick List of Study Tips

Here are some quick summary steps to help you becoming a successful learner.

Get Going

1. Start studying early, make a schedule of when you will study.
2. Identify the steps/tasks you need to accomplish.
3. Set realistic goals.
4. Track the progress you have made on your goals.
5. Reward yourself for achieving your goals.
6. If tasks seem too large, break them down into smaller tasks.

In Class

1. Arrive to class early and prepared.
2. Take legible, neat notes during class.
3. Participate.
4. Ask questions.

Reading

1. Break the assignment into manageable parts.
2. Read in a quiet, comfortable environment.
3. Preview the text before you begin reading.
4. Formulate questions about the reading before you begin.
5. Take notes or highlight while you read.
6. Review what you have read.

Studying For Exams

1. Start early
2. Review your notes
3. Join a study group
4. Use memory tricks
5. Teach someone else

Study Skills

Making the Most of Your Study Time

Set Goals

Setting goals helps students succeed. By setting goals students know what they need to achieve as well as setting a schedule for when they should achieve it. For example, when reading a lengthy chapter set a goal to read three sections a day, leaving one day to review the chapter. Make sure your goals are realistic. If you do not have the concentration to study for two hours straight, break your study time into two one hour sessions with a break in between. Set goals that are realistic and work with your lifestyle.

The In-Between Times

Think about all of the fifteen to thirty minute breaks during the day that you have. You might have breaks in-between classes, practice, or activities. Use these breaks wisely. Bring your notes, textbook, or flash cards with you and on these breaks study. The breaks are short, but when you add them up they equal a lot of study time.

Study Environments

Be wise in choosing your study environments. You want it to be comfortable and quiet. If there are a lot of distractions, you may find it hard to stay focused. Also, make sure that the environment is one that will help you stay alert and focused. If you are too comfortable, you could fall asleep. Everyone has his or her own preferences for studying, find one that fits your style.

Time Management

To be successful in college student athletes must master time management. It can be helpful for students to plan out their schedule and see when they have free time. When students have free time they can schedule themselves study time. Students must learn to balance their socializing with study time. This may mean giving up going to the movies to study for a test. It is also important for students to schedule study times that are realistic. It can be very hard to study early in the morning or late at

night. Create a schedule that is realistic and works for your personal schedule. Once you create a schedule, stick to it!

Study Groups

Study groups can be a helpful answer for some students. Effective study groups can help answer questions as well as bring in new explanations of concepts. A student may not feel alone in a class if they join a study group, it is like a support system for that class. For a study group to be effective keep these factors in mind:

- Join a study group to learn, not to socialize. Sometimes you can learn more in a study group that does not include your best friends.
- Come prepared. Read the material before your study group and prepare questions to discuss during the study group.
- Stay on topic. If the group begins to get off topic for too long, end the conversation and get back on the topic.
- Create a plan. This way the whole study group will know what is being discussed at each study group.
- Introduce group members. Students are more likely to ask questions and interact when they know the other group members.

Doing Your Best in the Classroom

Show Up!

Half the battle of succeeding is showing up! It is hard to do well in a class and understand the material if you do not attend class on a regular basis. By having regular attendance you also show the professor that you care about the class and want to succeed.

Be Prepared

Show up to class ready to learn. This means reviewing/reading the class materials **before** class begins. Bring all materials required for that particular class: paper, pencils, pens, book. You should be ready for class when class time begins.

Study Skills

Participate

Don't just be a passive learner participate! When there is class discussion add in your thoughts. Make sure you are an active participant in group discussions and activities. By participating, you show the professor that you are interested in succeeding.

Seek Answers

When you do not understand something in class, ask. Many times what you have a question about so do other students. If you feel uncomfortable asking a question in front of the class, ask the professor after class or at his office. Do not wait until you are completely lost to seek help.

Meet with the Professor

If you do not understand a topic or concept, be sure to meet with the professor to explain your concerns. You can also meet with a professor to discuss assignments or grades you have received. Remember professors as well as student athletes have busy schedules, so try to meet with professors early.

Stay Positive!

Everyone has classes and professors that are difficult. Do not let yourself become so upset and negative that it effects your classwork and grades. Instead stay positive and make it a goal to do well despite the difficult time you are having.

Taking Notes

Why take notes?

Many professors give a lot of information in the limited amount of class time. During lectures, it is important for students to take notes so that they will remember the material when it is time to study.

Before I begin

Before you begin taking notes in class, make sure that you have read/previewed the required reading, have plenty of paper ready, and have at least two pencils or pens. You should be ready to take notes when the professor begins class.

The Buddy System

It is helpful in class to sit next to one or two students that are good note takers. Before class begins set up an agreement to help each other take notes. That way, if you miss an important word or concept, you can quietly ask the person next to you. Remember your classmates are there to help you, not take notes for you!

What do I write?

While it is important to write down key information and concepts, it would be impossible to write down everything the professor says. Instead, stick to the main concepts and shorten your writing. Here is other information that you should write down:

- writing on the chalkboard or overhead
- when a professor emphasizes a concept/term
- examples that support a main idea
- key terms and definitions
- when instructors give verbal cues "this is an important question" "The main point is . . ." "The main concept is . . ."
- illustrations or diagrams that help explain the topic

Notes means Notes!

Notes do **not** mean full sentences. Instead use bullets or brief sentences when taking notes. Be sure that you know what your notes mean and that you have not left out any key words. Also, if you make a mistake, just cross it out and go on, erasing takes more time.

Abbreviate

There are some words that can be shortened or abbreviated. For example: and = & or United States of America = USA Make note taking easier on your hand by using abbreviations. You can even make up your own abbreviations for words that you use a lot in note taking. Just make sure you know what each abbreviation means.

Organization

It is helpful to organize your notes. One form of organization is an outline. This helps students place information under specific topics

Neatness

Be sure to write legible! It is of no help to you if you take three pages of notes, but can only read or understand one page of it. You do not have to use perfect handwriting, but it should be legible.

Study Skills

Reread

Don't wait to review your notes until you begin studying for the test. Instead, after class reread your notes and make any necessary additional notes. Also, before the next class begins, take a few minutes to review the notes from last class. It will refresh your memory and help prepare you for class.

Becoming an Active Reader

For students to succeed in college, they must learn how to read textbooks for information. You cannot passively read the chapter, instead become an active reader!

Before you begin reading

Find a comfortable, quiet place to read where you will not have a lot of interruptions. Your 'quiet place' does not have to be silent, but the noises should not distract you. Make sure you are comfortable, but not too comfortable, you don't want to fall asleep while reading.

Other factors to consider

When reading for classes there are other factors that should be considered:

- **Stay Positive-** If you begin reading with a negative attitude, you will dread the reading. Instead have a positive attitude.
- **Pace Yourself-** It is very difficult to read a large chapter in one sitting, therefore allow ample time to read the chapter in sections. You can do this by setting goals. Make goals that fit with your life style, yet still allow you to read the entire reading.
- **Start Early-** Don't begin reading the chapter one hour before classes starts. Instead start early, you will read more critically and will not feel rushed.
- **Be Prepared-** Accept the fact that some texts will take longer and more concentration to read. Don't get frustrated.

SQ3R

SQ3R is a common strategy to help students become effective readers. This strategy is particularly effective for reading difficult text.

Survey- By surveying or previewing a chapter the reader gets a feel for what will be covered and what the main topics of the chapter will be. When surveying it is important to look at headings, titles, pictures, diagrams, and bolded words.

Question- Now, the reader should review the main headings and create questions. There is not a specific number of questions a student should have, it is dependent on the student and the material. The more questions you write down, the more critical thinking you will do and will remember when reading the text.

Read- It is time to begin reading the chapter! Keep the questions you wrote down in front of you and answer them as you read. It would also be a good idea to take notes of important concepts, terms, and information as you read. However, do not write down everything, just the main details. If you own your own book it is a good idea to highlight important text or write in the margins.

Recite- After you finish reading a section stop and read the questions and answers that you wrote for that section. If you feel that you have grasped the concept, continue to the next question. If you still feel confused reread the section.

Review- It is important to review what you have read to refresh your memory as well as bring up any questions you might have. Here are some techniques for reviewing:

- Reread your notes or what you have highlighted
- Answer review questions in the chapter
- Quiz yourself using the questions you created.
- Create a chapter outline
- Write a summary of the chapter or one of the sections.
- Recite important concepts to yourself
- Review the chapter with a classmate
- Create a diagram to explain the chapter or concepts
- Make flash cards to review important terms or concepts.

Study Skills

Read Critically

While you are reading it is important for you to evaluate what you are reading. As you read, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this make sense?
- Is this factual?
- How would I put this in my own words?
- Can I think of any examples to explain this?
- Does the author present evidence for his/her argument?
- Is the evidence logical? Does the evidence come from a reliable source?
- How is this concept similar or different to what I have already read?
- What questions would I ask the author?

Tools to Understanding

To better help you understand the text it is helpful to use some or all of the following:

- **Dictionary**- use this to look up unfamiliar words during or after you read a section
- **Take Breaks**- don't become overwhelmed, when you need to take a short break. Maybe you could get a snack and then come back to the reading refreshed.
- **Vocabulary**- readers with a higher vocabulary typically have an easier time reading and understanding text. To improve your vocabulary, continue reading on a regular basis. You can read narratives or informational text.
- **Set Goals**- commit yourself to setting goals. Make your goals work with your lifestyle. For example, set a goal to read three sections of a chapter everyday. Remember, the key to goals is sticking with them!

Writing Papers

Start Early!

The key to a good paper is having enough time to complete it! Therefore, to be able to finish the paper and revise it, students must start early. It is a good idea to begin the writing process as soon as the professor has explained the directions for the writing process.

Before you begin to write

Before you begin to write you should brainstorm what you want to write. This can take place in a variety of ways. You can write whatever comes into your head or you can group ideas together. By brainstorming you begin thinking critically about the ideas that you have, what you are going to write, and how you are going to organize it.

Outline

Whether you are writing a story or an informative paper, it is a good idea to outline your paper before you begin. It is easiest to start with the body paragraphs and then outline the introductory and conclusion paragraphs. The outline does not have to be in complete sentences, but it should include the main ideas and information that will make up your paragraphs. By making an outline before writing, the writer can stay focused when they write their drafts.

Sloppy Copy

It is very hard to make the first draft of a paper your best draft. That is why your first draft is called your 'sloppy copy'. Writers use the sloppy copy to get their ideas down on the paper and form the basic outline of their writing. When you are writing your sloppy copy your main goal is the content of the paper, don't worry about spelling or grammar, which will come later.

Revision

After you have finished your sloppy copy, it is time to revise. Revision is not correcting spelling and grammar. Instead it is a time look at the content in your writing and the organization. During revision you may reword sentences, add new sentences, cross out sentences, or reorganize paragraphs. To help you, you can have a friend read it or read it aloud. This is an important part of critiquing your paper, don't skip it!

Editing/Proofreading

Now it is time to correct your spelling and grammar. You can use a dictionary or ask someone to help you edit your paper. Don't rely on SpellCheck or GrammarCheck, they do not catch every mistake and sometimes they are wrong. Be sure that you edit your paper, many professors are very particular about spelling and grammar.

Study Skills

Read it Aloud

By reading your paper aloud, either to yourself or another person, you are more likely to catch mistakes and see where revision should take place.

Let a friend read it

By having someone else read your paper they are more likely to catch mistakes that you overlooked. You can have a friend, family member, classmate, or professor read your paper. This is especially helpful if you have more than one person read your writing. Remember that you do not have to use their suggestions, but it is important to take them into consideration.

Be Clear

When a professor is reading your writing, your writing should be clear. The reader should be able to understand what you are writing and be able to pick out the main points of your writing. The reader should not be confused or get lost in your writing.

Type the Final Draft

Most professors require that you type your final draft. This is helpful to students who do not have the best penmanship. The paper also looks more professional when it is typed. Remember to reread your paper after you have typed it for any mistakes!

Neatness Matters

Whether it is typed or handwritten, neatness matters. Your paper should be turned in on neat paper that does not have stray marks or wrinkles in it.

Lateness Hurts

Professors expect that students will turn in assignments on time. Therefore, many professors will deduct points from a paper when it is late. If you are having problems meeting the deadline, talk to your professor **prior** to the deadline.

A Note on Plagiarism

The University of Central Florida takes plagiarism very seriously. Students are not permitted to copy author's or other student's ideas or writing. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the guidelines of plagiarism. Some professors now submit student work to Turnitin.com to see if a student has plagiarized. Students found plagiarizing will be subject to disciplinary action. For more information on plagiarism please review the Golden Rule Handbook.

Studying for Exams

Start Early

Begin studying at the beginning of the semester by keeping up with the assigned reading and homework. When you know there is going to be an exam, begin studying for it a few days of a week ahead of time. This will give you ample time to review the material. Remember cramming does not work, instead start studying early!

Review Notes

Begin studying by reviewing your notes. It is an especially good idea to rewrite your notes or rewrite them on flash cards. By rewriting your notes you are studying your notes.

Join a Study Group

Sometimes two brains can be better than one! Join a study group early and meet with the group to study for exams. An effective study group is one in which the members come prepared!

Quiz Yourself

One study method is to quiz yourself from your notes or concepts in the textbook. You can do this by making flash cards or trying to restate the main idea of certain concepts.

Memory Tricks

Memory tricks, like mnemonics, are a great way to help you remember information. Mnemonics is when you have a word stand for a concept or definition. For example: Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally stands for order of operations, Parenthesis, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction.

Other memory tricks include putting concepts to song or thinking of an interesting example to help you remember a concept.

Teach Someone Else

The best way to make sure that you know something is to teach it to someone else. By putting it into your own words, you are better able to understand the concepts.

Study Skills

Test Taking: General

Stay Positive

Think of an exam as a way to show-off what you know. If you stay positive, the exam will be much more enjoyable.

Before the Exam

Before the exam begin studying early! Know what will be covered on the test and what types of questions will be used (essay, multiple choice, true-false). Try to think of questions or concepts that might be asked on the exam. The best way to succeed on a test is to properly prepare.

Arrive Early

Arrive to class early on the day of the exam. This way you will avoid any delays that might make you late, such as parking, and you will be calm and ready to begin the test. By arriving early you will also be able to ask your instructor or classmate any last minute questions you may have.

RELAX!

You will be able to think more clearly if you relax. To help you relax you can breath in and out five times, stretch your neck by looking at the ceiling and then the desk, or close your eyes for just a moment.

READ!

Always read all of the directions to the test. There could be an unexpected instruction that you would not want to miss.

Before you Begin

Before you begin taking the test, skim through and briefly look at the questions being asked. This will help refresh your memory and let you know any difficult questions that you might want to answer first.

Ask for Clarification

If you do not understand the question or test directions ask the instructor. It is important to understand the question before answering it.

Skip It!

If you get stuck on a question, skip it! First circle the question number, so you will remember to come back, and then go onto the next question. After you have relaxed, you might know the answer.

Watch the Clock

Before you begin your test you should know how much time you are given to complete the test. This will give you an idea of about how much time you have per question. Remember that multiple-choice questions will take less time and essay questions will take longer. During the exam, glance at the clock every now and then to be sure you will have enough time to complete the test.

Check your Answers

Before you turn your test in be sure to review all of the questions and your answers to make sure they are correct.

Surveying Essay Exams

Read Carefully

To have a great essay you must answer the question, so make sure you know exactly what the question is asking. Some essay questions will have more than one part, so read carefully.

Underline

Underline key phrases or terms in the essay prompt that will help you answer the question. Remember to underline words that tell you how to answer your question, such as: compare/contrast, evaluate, explain, prove, summarize, etc.

Outline

Before you begin writing your essay, plan! While you are planning think of ideas/facts you want to include in your response. A good way to plan your essay is to put it in an outline. This will help organize your response. Give ample time to outline your essay, but remember to allow enough time to write the essay.

Write your essay

When you begin writing your essay, you should restate the question in a statement. Remember to use clear language that gets to the point of what you are trying to write. Include examples and key points to back up your writing. In your conclusion, remember to summarize your essay. Always use good, legible handwriting that a professor would want to read.

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Revise/Proofread

After you have finished writing your essay reread your essay. Be sure to revise and correct any spelling or grammatical errors. It is okay to neatly cross out or erase words/sentences.

Watch the clock

It is important to know how much time you are given to complete your essay. Be sure to periodically look at the clock and make sure you will have enough time to finish and revise your essay. If you are stuck on a particular part of your response, leave a few lines and come back to that section. If you finish early critically revise your essay to make sure your writing is clear and that you have provided enough examples.

Taking Multiple Choice Tests

Read Carefully

Many students make careless mistakes simply because they do not read carefully. Slow down and read **all** of the directions. Some directions will tell you that there is more than one possible answer! It is a good idea to read the questions twice.

Read the question. Read it Again!

Be careful! You can miss important information if you read a question quickly. Instead, slow down and read the question. After you have answered the question, read the question again to make sure you answered what the question was asking.

Underline

Generally, in multiple choice questions there are key phrases or topics to help you answer the question. Underline, with your pencil, the key phrases or topics in the question. It is also a good idea to underline words that might throw you off, like *not*, *only*, *except*.

Eliminate

After you have read the entire question and **all** of the answer choices, eliminate the choices that are definitely wrong. Unless the professor says so, it is okay to write on the test. When you know an answer choice is wrong, cross it off with your pencil.

Skip It!

If you get stuck on a question, skip it! First circle the question number, so you will remember to come back, and then go onto the next question. After you have relaxed, you might know the answer.

When all else fails . . .

If you are still having problems after you have read the question and answer choices twice, underlined key phrases and words, and eliminated wrong answer choices you should make an educated guess. It is okay to guess, just as long as you have done everything to help yourself answer the problem.

Check the clock

Before you begin your test, see how many questions there are and how much time you are given to complete the test. Then add one to the amount of questions you have and divide it by the amount of time you have. That is *about* how much time you should spend on each question. For example: There are 20 questions and you have 40 minutes. ($40/21 =$ a little less than 2 minutes per question). Remember that some questions will take less time and some will take more time. During the test keep an eye on the clock so you will know about how much time you have remaining.

Before you turn in the test

After you have finished the test, take a minute to reread all of the questions and your answers.

Other Kinds of Exams

True-False Tests

Read Carefully- Make sure you read the entire statement carefully. Look for any clues to answering the questions.

Underline Qualifiers- Some statements are absolutes and these give you clues that they could be false. Some examples are: always, never, usually. Underline these words so they stand out to you.

Exceptions- If you can think of one exception to the statement, it is false.

Study Skills

Don't Look for Patterns- It is rare that a professor would have the True-False answers in a pattern. Instead, answer to the best of your ability.

Problem Solving Exams

Prepare- To prepare for a problem-solving exam (math or computer science) you should work out practice problems and know the process for solving different problems.

Show your work- Remember to show your work on the exam, some professors will give you partial credit. It is also easier to rework a problem or find your mistake if you have clearly worked out the problem. Also, make it easy for the instructor to find your answer by clearly labeling it or circling it.

Open-Book Exams

Preparation- Before you come to class, be sure to study the material. Open book tests tend to be more difficult, therefore you should come prepared by knowing the material and being familiar with your notes and textbook.

Answer what you know- Don't spend valuable time looking up answers you already know. You should answer these questions first and then spend the remaining time looking up answers in your book and notes.

Use the Index and Table of Contents- Use the textbook Index and Table of Contents to look up specific topics and concepts. This will help you narrow your search to just a few pages.

Take-Home Exams

Start Early- Take-Home exams give you more time to complete the test, therefore it is expected that your answers will be longer and more specific. Start early so you will have ample time to put your best effort into answering the questions.

Use class materials- Site examples and concepts in your responses by using your textbook and class notes. Take advantage of being able to use these resources.

Type it!- Unless the professor says otherwise, students should type their answers when given a Take-Home exam.

References

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Halonen, Jane, Santrock, John. College Success. 2002, Wadsworth Group, Canada.

Iamnext Academics: Study Skills

<http://www.iamnext.com/academics/archives.html>

Student Academic Resource Center (SARC) homepage for learning skills

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~sarc/learningskills.html>