



STUDENT STUDY TIPS



Study Tips

Preparing to Study:

In order for your study to be effective, it is important to have a dedicated study area. This area should:

- 1. Be available whenever you need it.**
Your study area does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If your study area is shared with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.
- 2. Be free from interruptions.**
It is important to have uninterrupted study time. You may have to hang a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door or take the phone off the hook.
- 3. Be free from distractions.**
Research shows that most students study best in a quiet environment. If you find that playing a stereo or TV improves your mood, keep the volume low.
- 4. Contain all the study materials you need.**
Be sure your Study Place includes reference sources and supplies such as pens and pencils, paper, ruler, calculator, and whatever else you might need. If you use a computer for your work, it should be located in your study area .
- 5. Contain a large enough desk or table.**
While working on an assignment or studying for an assessment, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.
- 6. Have enough storage space.**
You need enough room to store your study materials. Be sure you have enough storage space to allow you to keep your desktop or other work surface clear of unnecessary materials that can get in the way.
- 7. Have a comfortable chair.**
A chair that is not comfortable can cause discomfort or pain that will interfere with your studying. A chair that is too comfortable might make you sleepy. Select a chair in which you can sit for long periods while maintaining your attention.
- 8. Have enough light.**
The amount of light you need depends on what you are doing. The important thing is that you can clearly see what you need to see without any strain or discomfort.
- 9. Be a comfortable temperature.**
If your study area is too warm, you might become sleepy. If it is too cold, your thinking may slow down and become unclear. Select a temperature at which your mind and body function best.



Taking Notes in Class

In classes, your trainers will talk about topics that you are studying. The information they provide will be important for you to know when you undertake assessment. You must be able to take good written notes from what your trainers say.

Taking good notes is a three-stage process in which there are certain things you should do before class, during class, and after class. Here are the three stages of note-taking and what you should do during each stage.

1. Get Ready to Take Notes (Before Class)

- Review your notes from the previous class session before you come to class. This will help you remember what was covered and get you ready to understand new information your trainer provides.
- Complete all assigned readings before you come to class. Your trainer will expect that you have done this and will use and build upon this information.
- Bring all note-taking materials with you to class. Have several pens and pencils as well as your notebook.

2. Take Notes (During Class)

- Keep your attention focused on what your trainer is saying. Listen for “signal statements” that tell you that what your trainer is about to say is important to write in your notes. Examples of signal statements are “The most important point...” and “Remember that . . .”
- Be sure to include in your notes information that your trainer repeats or writes on the chalkboard.
- Write quickly so that you can include all the important information in your notes. Do this by writing abbreviated words such as med for medicine, using symbols such as % for percent, and writing short sentences.
- Place a ? next to information you write in your notes, but about whose meaning you are not sure.

3. Rewrite Your Notes (After Class)

- Rewrite your notes to make them more complete by changing abbreviated words into whole words, symbols into words, and shortened sentences into longer sentences.
- Make your notes more accurate by answering any questions you had when writing your notes in class. Use your textbook and reference sources to obtain the information you need to answer your questions. If necessary, ask your trainer or other students for help.
- Check with other students to be sure you did not leave out important information.

Having good class notes will help you to be better prepared for tests.



Good Listening In Class

It is important for you to be a good listener in class. Much of what you will have to learn will be presented verbally by your trainers. Just hearing what your trainers say is not the same as listening to what they say. Listening is a cognitive act that requires you to pay attention and think about and mentally process what you hear

Here are some things you should do to be a good listener in class.

Be Cognitively Ready to Listen. Come to class cognitively prepared to listen. Make sure you complete all assigned work and readings. Review your notes from previous class sessions. Think about what you know about the topic that will be covered in class that day.

Be Emotionally Ready to Listen. Come to class emotionally ready to listen. Your attitude is important. Make a conscious choice to find the topic useful and interesting. Be committed to learning all that you can.

Listen with a Purpose. Identify what you expect and hope to learn from the class session. Listen for these things as your trainer talks.

Listen with an Open Mind. Be receptive to what your trainer says. It is good to question what is said as long as you remain open to points of view other than your own.

Be Attentive. Focus on what your trainer is saying. Try not to daydream and let your mind wander to other things. It helps to sit in the front and center of the class, and to maintain eye contact with your trainer.

Be an Active Listener. You can think faster than your trainer can speak. Use this to your advantage by evaluating what is being said and trying to anticipate what will be said next. Take good written notes about what your trainer says. While you can think faster than your trainer can speak, you cannot write faster than your trainer can speak. Taking notes requires you to make decisions about what to write, and you have to be an active listener to do this.

Accept the Challenge. Don't give up and stop listening when you find the information being presented difficult to understand. Listen even more carefully at these times and work hard to understand what is being said. Don't be reluctant to ask questions.

Triumph Over the Environment. The classroom may too noisy, too hot, too cold, too bright, or too dark. Don't give in to these inconveniences. Stay focused on the big picture - LEARNING.



Assessment Anxiety

What is Assessment Anxiety?

Too much anxiety about an assessment is commonly referred to as assessment anxiety. It is perfectly natural to feel some anxiety when preparing for and taking an assessment. In fact, a little anxiety can jump start your studying and keep you motivated. However, too much anxiety can interfere with your studying. You may have difficulty learning and remembering what you need to know for the assessment. Further, too much anxiety may block your performance during the assessment. You may have difficulty demonstrating what you know during the assessment.

How do I know if I have Assessment Anxiety?

You probably have assessment anxiety if you answer YES to four or more of the following:

1. I have a hard time getting started studying for an assessment.
2. When studying for an assessment, I find many things that distract me.
3. I expect to do poorly on an assessment no matter how much or how hard I study.
4. When taking an assessment, I experience physical discomfort such as sweaty palms, an upset stomach, a headache, difficulty breathing, and tension in my muscles.
5. When taking an assessment, I find it difficult to understand the directions and questions.
6. When taking an assessment, I have difficulty organizing my thoughts.
7. When taking an assessment, I often "draw a blank."
8. When taking an assessment, I find my mind wandering to other things.
9. I usually score lower on an assessment than I do on assignments and papers.
10. After an assessment, I remember information I couldn't recall during the assessment.

What can I do about Assessment Anxiety

Here are some things you can do before, during, and after an assessment to reduce your assessment anxiety.

1. Use good study techniques to gain cognitive mastery of the material that will be covered on the assessment. This mastery will help you to approach the assessment with confidence rather than have excessive anxiety. Employ the tips we provide at Preparing to Study.
2. Maintain a positive attitude as you study. Think about doing well, not failing. Think of the assessment as an opportunity to show how much you have learned.
3. Go into the assessment well rested and well fed. Get enough sleep the night before the assessment. Eat a light and nutritious meal before the assessment. Stay away from junk foods.
4. Stay relaxed during the assessment. Taking slow, deep breaths can help. Focus on positive self-statements such as "I can do this."
5. Follow a plan for taking the assessment such as the DETER strategy we describe at A Strategy for Taking Assessments. Don't panic even if you find the assessment difficult. Stay with your plan!
6. Don't worry about other students finishing the assessment before you do. Take the time that you need to do your best.
7. Once you finish the assessment and hand it in, forget about it temporarily. There is nothing more you can do until the graded assessment is returned to you. Turn your attention and effort to new assignments and assessments.
8. When the graded assessment is returned to you, analyze it to see how you could have done better. Learn from your mistakes and from what you did well. Apply this knowledge when you take the next assessment.

You have to know the material to do well on an assessment. You have to control assessment anxiety to show what you know.



The DETER Strategy for Taking Tests

To do well on an assessment, you must have good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do.

D = Directions

- Read the test directions very carefully.
- Ask your trainer to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.
- Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.
- If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

E = Examine

- Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.
- Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

T = Time

- Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.
- If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.
- Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

E = Easiest

- The second E in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.
- If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

R = Review

- If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.
- Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.

Using the DETER strategy will help you do better on tests and get better grades.



Writing Techniques

Writing is an important form of communication. Good writers use different writing techniques to fit their purpose for writing. To be a good writer, you must master each of the following writing techniques.

Description

Through description, a writer helps the reader use the senses of feeling, seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting to experience what the writer experiences. Description helps the reader more clearly understand the people, places, and things about which the writer is writing. It is the most common form of writing. You will find descriptive writing in newspapers, magazines, books, and most other forms of written communication.

Exposition

Through exposition, a writer informs, explains, and clarifies his/her ideas and thoughts. Exposition goes beyond description to help the reader understand with greater clarity and depth the ideas and thoughts of the writer. Expository writing, like descriptive writing, is commonly found in newspapers, magazines, books, and most other forms of written communication.

Narration

Through narration, a writer tells a story. A story has characters, a setting, a time, a problem, attempts at solving the problem, and a solution to the problem. Bedtime stories are examples of short stories while novels are examples of long stories. The scripts written for movies and plays are further examples of narrative writing.

Persuasion

Through persuasion, a writer tries to change a reader's point of view on a topic, subject, or position. The writer presents facts and opinions to get the reader to understand why something is right, wrong, or in between. Editorials, letters to the editor in newspapers and magazines, and the text for a political speech are examples of persuasive writing.

Comparison and Contrast

Through comparison and contrast, a writer points out the similarities and differences about a topic. Comparison is used to show what is alike or in common. Contrast is used to show what is not alike or not in common. Describing living conditions in 1900 and living conditions today would allow for much comparison and contrast.

By using the writing technique that fits your purpose, you will be able to communicate your ideas effectively.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is taking someone else's work, and claiming it as your own. Plagiarism is not accepted at our RTO, and will result in dismissal from your course.

If you are going to refer to other peoples work (either from print, internet, or any other form), you need to reference it. To do this, all you need to do is recognise where the information came from, and refer to that source in your assessment.

If you are unsure if you should be referencing work, just talk with your trainer.