

# **Surviving Your Freshman Year of College**

## **(A Guide to Hit the Ground Running)**



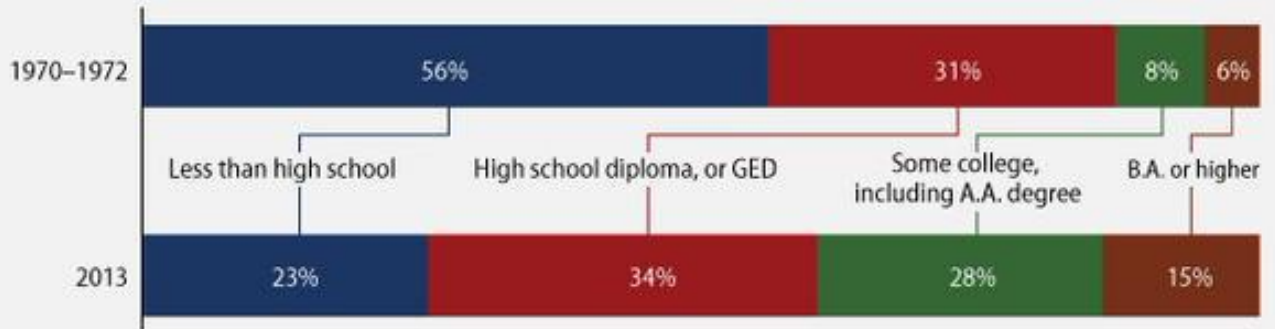
### **HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM**

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FIGURE 2b

## Educational attainment for young adults living in poverty has increased

Educational attainment of 24–35 year olds with below-poverty incomes, 1970–1972 vs. 2013



Source: CAP analysis of March Current Population Survey, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series.



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## Who Are We?

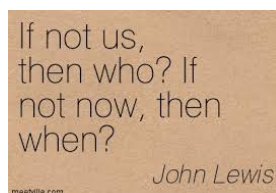
**THE HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM ("HSASP")** is a twenty-year old program which began at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark's West Side Unit, 161 Littleton Avenue, by offering tutorials to children of all ages who needed homework assistance.

The program was expanded to include secondary school students who (i) needed assistance with high school standardized tests and (ii) were not meeting with their guidance counselors in an organized timely manner resulting in missed opportunities for college admissions and scholarships.

HSASP is a volunteer community who strongly believes in the potential of our children because not too long ago, ***we were you.***

## Why Do We Care?

Our core belief is a simple and selfish one: the better educated, the stronger you will position to self-govern and serve the community. We wrote this guide, a compilation of articles, to empower you throughout your college career, particularly, your freshman year.



## **Congressman John Lewis, civil rights leader** **John Lewis - March from Selma to Montgomery, "Bloody Sunday," 1965**



**(John Lewis in beige raincoat)**



Ronda Lee, Attorney-turned writer, entrepreneur, *mentor*

### **Advice for College Freshmen**

*Posted: 08/12/2014 12:19 pm EDT Updated: 10/12/2014 5:59 am EDT*

June 1989, I graduated high school and immediately began packing for college. I was a first generation college student. I was ready to live on campus, which I imagined to be like Cosby's "A Different World." August arrived and freedom beckoned me. While my other 300 dorm residents cried and begged their parents to stay the weekend, I kicked my parents off campus shortly after they unloaded the van. By the end of the weekend, the girls on my floor dubbed me their "fearless leader" and decided that I should run for dorm president.

Being from Chicago had its advantages. I knew running as an unknown was disastrous. Therefore, I decided to run on a ticket with two other girls from my floor. There is strength in numbers. It worked to our advantage that our campaign slogan borrowed from the New Kids on the Block -- "We Got the Right Stuff."

Election night, I became dorm president winning by an 80 percent margin becoming the first African-American president of the dorm -- impressive because in a dorm of over 300 girls, only five were African-American. Freshman year was a blast academically and socially. Unfortunately, lack of financial aid meant not returning. I took a year off between freshman and sophomore year before transferring in-state. Transferring did not hold me back. I stuck to my motto of study hard during the week and play hard on the weekends. I graduated with distinction and later went to law school.

In 2006, I began mentoring a group of Chicago high school teens on college and career preparation. Most were going to be first generation college students. I shared my experience as a first generation college and law student. Every August as a few students prepared to leave for college, I would give them a gift and a letter. My niece just arrived on campus for her freshman year. As I was preparing to send her this letter, I thought I should share it.

You will be leaving for college soon. A college education opens many doors. However, much depends on what you make of the experience. You need to learn to be proactive, network with colleagues and professors, develop and nurture your talents, and have fun at the same time.

#### **Buddy System**

You need to have a network of three to four close friends on campus that you can chill and be yourself around. During the first six weeks, come out of your shell and get to know as many freshmen as possible. You may not like them all, but make the effort. The people you meet in college will most likely be your friends and job connections after you graduate college.

### **Study Groups**

Your study group should not include your party buddies, unless they are smart and serious about their GPA. My study group was made up of geeks that took good notes and were as serious about succeeding as I was. In every class, you should befriend the geeky note taker in case you are sick and miss class, that person will always have notes. November all partying stops and everyone gets serious about prepping for finals.

### **Speak Up**

You pay a lot of money to go to college. If you have questions, speak up and ask or go to the professor's office hours if you are afraid to ask in class. Get to know your professors. You will need them for scholarship recommendations, job applications, internships, etc. I am not saying brown nose, but do not be the kid that the professor does not know is in his class. Some professors have coffee/tea at their home for students, go to a couple. Your future success in the professional world will depend on your networking skills. Do not be overbearing, but let them know you exist.

### **Academics**

Almost every college has a tutoring center. If you are not "getting it" by the fourth week, talk to your professor or get tutored. If your midterm grades are not at least a C or better, think about dropping or withdrawing from the class. Stay on top of your assignments and turn them in on time. Most profs deduct points or a grade for late assignments. The first week you will receive a syllabus with every assignment due for the entire semester. No one is going to beg you to turn in assignments. Make-up work exists for medical or family emergencies only.

### **Give Back**

Noblesse Oblige means the noble/fortunate are obligated to help. You have been fortunate to go to college. I ask that on your break, you volunteer to share your experience with high school youth.

### **Miscellaneous**

Use the buddy system when hanging out late at night. Go to a football and basketball game. It is part of the collegiate experience. Give friends and family your address. It is old school, but people cannot tweet a care package to you. Have fun, just not so much that the dean or police calls home.

We looked at several sources on the Internet and found that these are the main contributing factors:

## **Why do students drop out of college?**

1. **Homesickness and feeling that you don't fit in.** It's a whole new world out there, and you may not be ready to embrace it.

2. **Educational burnout.** While college gives you control and flexibility over your schedule, the hard demanding schedule, challenging courses, and boatload of homework certainly has turned a lot of students away from the desire to continue.
3. **Academic unpreparedness.** Sometimes, high school didn't really prepare students for college. Other times, students slacked off in high school and paid the price during their post-secondary years. The high school goal was to pass (so that students could get into college); in college, it is to succeed.
4. **Personal or family issues.** You may have had an unfortunate illness in the family or you yourself just got totally get stressed out from the workload.
5. **Financial constraints.** Tuition costs [continue to soar](#), and scholarships or grants are not always available. Additionally, financial situations can change from year to year.
6. **Too much fun — but not enough education.** Some students take advantage of their friendships, which could put them on academic probation due to suffering grades or absence in classes.
7. **The school isn't a good academic fit for the student.** You've selected a great school that is very arts-centric. However, you realize that you like the sciences better. Similarly, you may hate the average class size of 100 and prefer much smaller classes for more individualized attention.
8. **Setting sights on the wrong major.** You may have wanted to be a doctor but after taking several science classes, you decided that you're rather go into marketing. Does your school have a marketing major? If not, you're likely to go elsewhere.
9. **No guidance or mentors.** In high school, teachers and counselors were there to guide you, as high school classes are typically smaller than the entering freshman class. It's a lot harder to get the personalized attention that you've been used to and that could turn people off quickly.
10. **External demands, particularly within part time or full time employment.** Can we say Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook? When the job puts too many demands on you, you may have to choose, and money usually wins out.
11. **Time to move out.** If the cold winter just doesn't suit you, you may decide to go elsewhere. You may want to go closer to home or to be closer to a significant other.

## College Freshman Summer Reading

You just found out that your college requires all incoming first-year students to read a novel (or other lengthy text) before they arrive in the fall. Is this for real? Do you have to do it? The summer before you start college is supposed to be your last "break" before being introduced to the academic rigors of higher education. So what's the deal with summer reading assignments?



## The Reasons Behind Summer Reading Assignments & Programs

Colleges and universities are increasingly participating in summer reading assignments and programs for a variety of reasons. These programs help build a sense of community with the incoming class of students. They also introduce incoming students to a campus's standards of academic engagement. (Participating in the planned activities surrounding summer reading will quickly demonstrate the difference between high school and college-level discussions.) They also send a clear message that, when you do arrive on your campus in the fall, you will be expected to continue with your academic pursuits, regardless of how excited you are about everything else that happens during one's time in college.

### Why Should I Do It?

Most incoming students aren't too sure about why they should read a text or other assignment before arriving in the fall. There are a few good arguments about why you should. First, you don't want to look like a huge dork by being the only person who didn't do the homework. (You went to college to continue your education, and you didn't even do the first assignment?!) Second, it's a great way to meet people. Reading the book may have taken a lot of time and effort, and you may not even have liked it. But at least you can participate in an interesting discussion with your peers and not have to sit terrified in the classroom or auditorium, hoping no one notices or calls on you. Isn't it worth that extra bit of effort during the summer?

### Do I Have to Do It?

Each campus has different requirements for summer reading. It's probably a pretty safe bet that you won't get kicked out of school for not doing it. But people will notice (especially that professor you didn't know you wanted to impress until you arrived on campus). College is different from high school because you are given a lot more autonomy over your academic career. If you don't want to do the homework, no one is going to yell at you. But you risk losing the chance to interact with your peers, professors, and other members of the community in what is most likely going to be an exciting series of events. **You don't really *have* to do much in college, but there are certain things that you definitely *should* do, and summer reading is one of them.**

## The Big College-to-Do-List

### 1. Contact your roommate.

That first conversation is pivotal for getting to know each other, for building your [relationship as roommates](#), and for figuring out who's going to be bringing what. A great roommate can make all the difference in school.

### 2. Have everything you need purchased, packed, and ready to go.

Knowing [what to bring](#) is just as important as knowing what *not* to bring. Deciding on what kind of computer you'll have is also a big decision that will influence several aspects of your college life. (Can you bring it home? Is it powerful enough to run graphics programs or economic models you'll need for your major?)

### **3. Have a solid understanding of your financial aid situation.**

The last thing you want to have happen is for finances to get in the way of your academic progress. (Yes, it really *does* matter if you miss that deadline for submitting your FAFSA!) Make sure your finances are in order -- and that you understand all you need to do while you're in school.

### **4. Make and understand your budget.**

You'll need to know, from your first day on campus, how much money you can spend on certain things, whether or not you'll need an [on-campus job](#), and how [much money](#) you should have at the end of every month so you don't have to beg your roommate for food come December.

### **5. Set yourself up to be physically healthy.**

Picking the right meal plan and knowing how to make healthy choices in your new environment will greatly aid your time in school. Who wants to miss a midterm because of a stress-induced cold?

### **6. Familiarize yourself with college lingo *before* you arrive.**

If your RA tells you that the problem you're having with [your TA](#) can best be handled by the dean, will you know what all of that means? What if your cute lab partner is complaining because [adjunct professors](#) weren't invited to convocation? College life is full of acronyms and new lingo: do what you can to familiarize yourself with it before you arrive.

### **7. Know how to get the most out of Orientation.**

Everything from meeting people to making it through your first week takes a lot of courage -- but pushing yourself through will make a huge difference during your entire time at school.

- ***Have a plan for keeping in touch with people back home.***

It's a good idea to know how to manage relationships with your boyfriend or girlfriend, parents, and even siblings. If you talk about how to keep in touch before you leave, everyone will know what to expect.

### **9. Have a strong time management system ready to go.**

Figuring out how to manage their time is often [one of the biggest challenges](#) for college students. Set yourself up early with a system that you know will work for you.

### **10. Know how to keep yourself -- and your stuff -- safe while in school.**

The last thing you need to be worried about while in school is dealing with something that may have been preventable. [Losing your computer](#), for example, can wreak havoc on your academics -- and, if someone breaks into your room while you left the door open, can wreak havoc on your [roommate relationship](#). It's easier to stay safe than to deal with theft.

## **Making First Contact with Your Roommate**

### **I Just Got My Roommate's Name and Contact Information: What Do I Do First?**

You just received your roommate's name and contact information. You're a little nervous, a little excited. Your mind is buzzing . . . where to start first? Facebook? Myspace? Google? Your

friends? Try as you might, you can't tell very much about someone from his or her name, hometown, and contact information. So where to begin?

### **Before You Call**

There are a few things you should keep in mind before [contacting your roommate](#) for the first time. First and foremost, remember that both of you are very likely nervous and excited about similar things: leaving home, [starting college](#), [having a roommate](#), [figuring out your meal plans](#) and [where to buy books](#). This is a great place to start to connect.

Second, before contacting your roommate, try to think about what you know your living 'style' to be like. Keep in mind that this may be different than what you want your style to be like. Do you like a [clean](#) and organized room? Yes. Are you good at keeping it that way? No. Make sure you know how you actually are so that you can set realistic expectations for both of you. Try to be honest about your own patterns and what you know you need to feel balanced. [College life](#) is stressful, so if you know you need to go out dancing until 3:00 a.m. to relieve that [stress](#), come up with a plan for how to handle returning home really late without waking your [sleeping roommate](#).

### **During the Call**

Try to remember that you don't need to work everything out during your first phone call or email. (Email is great, but you most definitely should try to connect via phone, if possible, before meeting [on move-in day](#)!) You can decide who brings the mini-fridge, the TV, etc., later. For the first phone call, do your best just to get to know the other person. Talk about his or her high school experience, goals for college, major, why you both picked the college you did, and/or what you are doing between now and when you start in the fall.

While many roommates end up being [great friends](#), don't put that expectation on yourself or your [new roommate](#). But you should set a pattern of being friendly. Even if you end up living totally different lives once you're at school, it's still important to be on friendly and respectful terms with your roommate.

## **What to Pack for College**

### **What to Bring -- and What Not to Bring -- to Campus**

*By Kelci Lynn Lucier*

Figuring out what to pack when you head to school may seem more overwhelming than trying to get your entire high school career on one tiny admissions application. With a little planning and foresight, however, it doesn't have to be as complicated as it might seem at first.

### **First Thing to Remember: You'll Buy Stuff When You Get There**

You don't have to plan for your entire academic year when packing, especially if you're on a [really tight budget](#). You can buy pens, extra binders, and lots of other things as the year goes on. Additionally, if you aren't sure if you need to bring a small desk lamp or if the school will already provide one for you, for example, just research it in advance. See if the school's website

says anything. Check out Facebook and ask other students. Call the residence life office and ask what's already in the room.

Keep in mind, too, that you are building a new life of sorts for yourself. Don't try to duplicate your room at home so much as find things that will represent your time at school.

Lastly, this list doesn't include all of the things that should go without explaining, like clothes and a backpack. This list is meant more to let you know of things that you might forget to pack and that, if you bring them, just might make your college life a little easier.

### The Don't-Forget-'Em Essentials

- **Quarters** - possibly one of the highest-demand items on a college campus. Grab a roll or two before you go. (Tip: if you run out, ask a fellow student who works as a waiter/waitress.)
- **Detergent and fabric softener** - if you buy a big box because it's cheaper in bulk, make sure you have a way to carry down a little bit at a time. There's no need to carry 25 pounds of detergent down three flights of stairs every time you need to wash your clothes.
- **Laundry basket, hamper, or bag** - Given that space is usually at a premium for college students, this should double as a way to carry your clothes from your room to the washing machines.
- **Febreze** - Speaking of that dirty laundry . . .
- **Shower caddy** - You'll most likely need to carry your shower items (soap, shampoo, conditioner, razor, etc.) from your room and back.
- **Shower shoes** - The showers at school may not be as clean as the ones you're used to. Make sure you have something to prevent catching (or stepping in) anything nasty.
- **Robe** - Not everyone wants to walk from the shower to their room in only a towel.
- **First aid kit** - Something simple will do to help cover up and heal little injuries here and there.
- **Sewing kit** - This may seem like a lifesaver when you're on your last pair of clean socks . . . and your toe pokes through them.
- **Small toolkit** - These can be a little hard to find, but are worth the effort. A basic toolkit with a small hammer, screwdriver (with different kinds of tips), wrench, tape measure, and a few other essentials will come in **very** handy during your time at school.
- **Hangers** - It's no fun to arrive at school with tons of clothes that have to live on your bed or closet floor for the first few days.
- **Cup, bowl, plate, fork, knife, and spoon** - One set should work for grabbing pizza late at night, [sharing](#) the 2-liter soda [your RA](#) bought during midterms week, and [eating healthy snacks](#) while studying between meals.
- **Can opener** - There's just no way to get that can of soup open without one, **especially** when it's really late and you're really hungry.
- **Small items for [clean-up](#)** - Depending on what you prefer, this could be Clorox wipes, paper towels, a rag or two, or a few sponges. But that cup of soda is inevitably going to spill.
- **Keychain** - While you can wait to get this until you arrive, make sure it's on your list. Most students have a keychain that holds their keys and student ID; get a sturdy one that will be hard to lose.
- **Extra-long sheets** - Check with your school before buying sheets. Most college residence halls have extra-long twin beds, which are a different size than standard twin beds. You'll need a specific size of sheets to fit them.

- **Flash/jump/thumb drive** - Perfect for printing at the library, saving your work when working with a group on someone else's computer, and bringing to class for presentations.
- **Laptop lock** - Make sure your laptop is as protected as possible, no matter how [safe you feel](#).
- **Power strip with surge protection** - Residence hall rooms are notorious for not having enough plugs. Make sure you can safely plug in what you bring.
- **Extension cords** - With rooms being small enough already, the last thing you need is to have to move things around just to reach an outlet.
- **Printer paper** - You just finished writing your essay, you're tired, and you want to go to bed. Who wants to spend twenty minutes searching for printer paper?
- **Small fan** - Many residence halls don't have air conditioning and can get pretty hot during the summer. A tiny fan will do wonders for your room.
- **Umbrella** - If you're packing during a sunny day, this may totally slip your mind. But you'll be grateful for it the first time it rains on campus.
- **Fridge and microwave** - Essentials for most college students. Make sure, though, that you [coordinate with your roommate before bringing either of these](#). Additionally, make sure that whatever you bring doesn't exceed the limitations on what's allowed in your hall. (You can find out more about size and electricity limits by contacting your campus residence life office.)
- **Cell-phone charger** - Oh, the horrors of forgetting this. If possible, get one with an extra long cord; outlets are usually in short supply and, if you like to sleep with your phone by your bed (or use your phone as an alarm), you might not be able to do so if the cord's too short.

### Examples from the Don't-Bring-'Em List

- **Candles** - These are rarely allowed in residence halls, and even on-campus apartments, because of the fire hazard. Even if you aren't going to light them, they still may not be allowed.
- **A fridge or microwave that exceeds the size and electricity limits for your room or apartment**
- **Hot plate** - These are also usually not permitted in on-campus housing.
- **Expensive equipment** - You may think that bringing very high-quality stereo equipment may make you a popular student on your floor. That may be true, but doing so may also make you [a target for theft](#).

If there are other things you're thinking of bringing, it's more important to have a rule for [how to decide what to bring with you](#) than it is to worry about what's-right vs. what's-wrong. Just use that smart brain of yours to make wise choices.

Lastly, make sure you [know how to keep all your stuff safe](#) once you arrive. Who wants to spend all that time packing just to have your things disappear?!

### Dealing With Dorm Life

Living in a dorm is a new, and strange, experience. This may your first time away from home, and it may be your first experience of having a roommate. While it may seem a brave new world, it is really not too difficult a world to navigate. Some cooperation between you and your new roommates can make dorm living a lot less stressful, a lot more rewarding.

Try using these tips to make your new dorm life run smoothly:

- Develop clear lines of communication with your roommates right away.
- Create a schedule that is amenable to you and your roommates. Set aside time for studying, socializing and sleeping. You might try using a joint calendar to note each others exam dates, important athletic competitions, crunch time for term papers and other dates that may affect the routine of the dorm.



- Be mindful of each others personal space and possessions.
- Be respectful of one another.
- Communicate like adults, sensibly and clearly. Screaming will get you nowhere.

### **How to Stay on Track on Campus**

Dorm room, roommate, eating, sleeping, studying, social life, cash-flow—you land on campus and suddenly all of these things can seriously impact your survival. Everyone talks about nurturing good

habits, but what exactly does that mean?

Your college application has been accepted. You've found the financial aid you need. Now, you find yourself on campus, in a dorm room with a roommate, learning to balance studying, sleeping, social life and your cash flow. It is important to nurture good habits while at university, but what exactly does that mean?

## **Planning for, Beginning, and Succeeding in Your First Year of College**

### **Your First Few Weeks**

Beginning with the (super fun!) craziness of Orientation, your first few weeks in school will fly by before you know it. Learn how to make the most of that critical time.

### **Staying on Top of Your Coursework**

While you may be having the time of your life in college, it's important to keep the end goal in mind: graduation. Staying on top of your academics ensures you'll have time for everything else you want to do while in school.

### **Making Sure You Have a Personal Life**

Balancing your time, classes, money, job, and eight million other responsibilities can make any college student feel like they have no life whatsoever. Keeping your personal life healthy and active, however, can be done with only a little strategic effort.

### **Keeping in Touch with Friends & Family at Home**

Whether you're going to school across the country or attending classes across town, keeping your relationships up with your friends and family is always a challenge during the first year of school. While it can be a challenge, however, there are ways to keep in touch with the folks who loved and supported you *before* you officially became a college student.

## Keeping Yourself Healthy & Safe

Stress, safety issues, getting sick from all the germs in your residence hall: managing your health and safety in college can sometimes seem overwhelming. Luckily, however, it's not -- as long as you treat yourself to a little TLC every now and then.

## Financial Responsibility on Campus

Before you head off to college, learn and practice [basic money management](#). Once you understand the value of money, how to earn it and how to budget it appropriately, you will find handling your finances while away at college much easier.

Tips for campus fiscal responsibility:

- **Make a Budget** – Making a budget, and sticking to it, is essential to any successful financial plan. Your budget should cover all of your essentials, including tuition, books and supplies, food and all monthly bills. If you are working, you will want to assess how much of your income needs to go to monthly essentials. When you receive money from home, treat it as if you had earned it. A workable budget can take a lot of the stress out of your college experience.
- **Avoid Splurges** – A sound rule of thumb for anyone on a budget, but particularly for college students. While it is tempting to buy that new iPod, or head out on the town for the weekend of the big game, you may find that those indulgences leave you short of funds at the first of the month. When you find your entertainment out-lay is exceeding your budget, it's time rethink your spending habits. Everyone splurges a little every once in awhile, that's human nature. But making a habit of spending responsibly will keep your finances sound, and stave off those broken bank blues.

“Be careful with your money. Personal finances weren’t initially an issue for me, but they caught up with me later in the year. I was able to borrow most of my books from other students, saving me some money. I had money in my bank account for going out and having fun, but that account drained more quickly than I expected. I had to pick and choose whom I wanted to go out to eat with or go to the movies with, and I couldn’t go out on a very regular basis. Near the end of the year, most people were staying in and trying to conserve what little funds they had left until the end of the year. I definitely fell into that category.”

— **Mike Petro, sophomore,**  
**Rose-Hulman Institute of**  
**Technology, Terre Haute,**  
**Indiana**

- **Pay Bills on Time** – Make a habit of opening any bills as soon as they arrive. Don't set them aside to be looked at later, only to be forgotten about until your payments are late. Make a note of due dates, and be sure to make your payments on time. Any bills you are receiving will be directly connected to your credit history and score. Protect your credit while in college, and don't end up graduating college only to start fighting an uphill financial battle.

**STAY AWAY FROM THOSE CREDIT CARDS OFFERED DURING ORIENTATION!**



## **The Road to Success begins with the right study skills!**

### **Study Tips**

Of course the prime aspect of a successful college career is [maintaining good grades](#). The successful college student develops good study habits, sticks to a regular study routine and puts course work before playtime. Here are a few general tips for keeping up with your college studies:

#### **The Road to Success Begins with the Right Study Skills**



- Review class notes each day after class to keep the content fresh in your mind.
- Form study groups with trusted classmates to review particularly tough material.
- Stay committed to your study schedule and don't let yourself get distracted by the campus night life.

#### **Use Classroom Time Wisely**

Nothing is more important than staying focused and at your peak in the classroom. Falling asleep, zoning out or missing class all together undercuts your college career, and negates all the hard work that got you into college in the first place. Keep to these rules of thumb to get the most out of your college classes:

- Get plenty of sleep at night.
- Concentrate on the lecture.
- Participate in class discussions whenever possible.

Participation helps you retain information much more easily than simply learning by rote.

- Come prepared. Always have your essentials with you when attending class. Textbooks, notebook, laptop, etc. No one can succeed without the right tools at hand.

- Record particularly detailed and complex lectures and transcribe them later. Transcribing lectures will help to solidify the information delivered in your memory.

#### **Study and Homework Groups**

Never underestimate the power of your peers, especially when working through a difficult problem set or reading assignment. Dividing and conquering is an effective way to reduce your workload -- and to make sure you understand the material. You might even make a friend in the process.





*A tired mind is a slow mind – Get plenty of sleep and watch your GPA rise.*

**Time Management: Make It Work for You!** - Take control of your time by understanding the value of planning ahead. Learn about planning tools like calendars and apps, plus tips to beat procrastination and succeed with projects and papers.

### **Step 1: Create a Calendar**

Creating a calendar or schedule forces students to visualize their obligations, whether it's paper, a dry erase board, or on a smartphone app, says Nicolas Tynes, vice president of programs at [Harlem Education Activities Fund \(HEAF\)](#).

### **Step 2: Know You Have to Prioritize**

Students, just like everyone else only have 24 hours each day to fit everything in (no matter how many energy drinks they consume) so they have to create a list of priorities to decide what matters are urgent and which ones can wait, says Shawnice Meador, director of Career Management & Leadership Development for [MBA@UNC](#)

### **Step 3: Learn How to Multi-Task**

Finding ways to multi-task and combine commitments can help students best utilize their time, particularly if they are commuting to class or work, says Tynes.

"Students can look at how they're using all aspects of their day—during their commute are they using that time to also study? Are they using it to meditate, sleep, are they using it to do some pleasure reading or socialize with their friends?"

Busy students should also seek out opportunities to merge their school, work and social lives by getting involved in professional organizations and attending networking events, school-sponsored lectures and professional development workshops, suggests Meador.

"These events are often free or low cost, and can really be worth the time and investment," she says.

### **Step 4: Seek Out Support Resources**

If students are feeling overwhelmed, talking to academic and/or student advisors, professors, a peer-based or professional resource on campus can shed some light on problems or issues.

"Communication is a key when questions, issues, obstacles or concerns arise so that students can access the necessary resources and partner with their school in strategies for success."

Seeking out assistance from upperclassmen in their specific major or field also gives students more tailored, relevant advice about their situation, suggests Descano.

"It could be little: how people take notes, how they study, finding people who commute with you," she says. ***"Even if you're feeling overwhelmed, just to talk to someone and not keep it all buried in, but leveraging your parents, your friends and your advisors and asking for help."***

### ***MAKING A SCHEDULE BASED ON YOUR NEEDS ❖***

**DIRECTIONS:** Read all of these directions before you make up your weekly schedule. Check off each direction as you complete it.

**1st** Record class and lab times in appropriate day/hour blocks on a time schedule sheet.

**2nd** Record meal times.

**3rd** Record all regularly scheduled personal activities such as meetings, employment and athletics.

**4th** Record any special activities you need to do or want to do on a regular basis.

**5th** Review the information on the other side of this sheet about the Learning Cycle before you add any more information to your schedule.

**6th** Schedule a preview time (5-30 minutes) immediately before each class whenever possible. During the preview, review all or some of your notes in preparation for the upcoming class. If you have two or three classes in a row, preview from last to first class. Thus, if you have Chemistry and Art at 10 and 11, you might write "P: Art/Chem" in the block before your 10 o'clock class.

**7th** Schedule a review time immediately after your classes (5-30 minutes) whenever possible. Use this time to edit and summarize your notes. You could also look over any assignments that were given and begin to plan when and how you will do them. Thus for the schedule described above, you might write "R: Art/Chem" in the 12 noon block.

**8th** Schedule your intensive study/ review time for each class. Try to schedule some study time each day for each class. Learning is more effectively and efficiently accomplished in shorter regular sessions than in longer irregular sessions. Also, use more of the day (i.e. morning, afternoon) for studying. Evening is often an ineffective time to study. When you schedule study time, be task-oriented rather than time-oriented. Think in terms of "blocks of time" and what specifically needs to be accomplished, not hours of study time. Start your study period with the courses you like least or that you're not doing well in. Try to study the same subjects at the same time each study day. Although this seems to be a mechanical way of scheduling, you will find that such a routine can help you develop a pattern for efficient and effective learning.

**9th** Schedule a weekly review (WR) for each course. Do it at the end of the week if possible. This weekly review gives you an opportunity to spread out all of the past week's notes along

with the reading assignments to see what you have been learning in the past week during class and study time for each course. You can also look ahead to plan the next week and determine how much reading you need to do, what projects are due, and if any tests are scheduled.

**10th** Keep open some day or evening time for daily physical activity. Remember, research indicates that regular exercise will not only give you a general sense of well-being, but can reduce tension and help you accomplish a tough class, study, and work schedule.

**11th** Label some empty blocks of time as OPEN for academic or personal needs.

**12th** Schedule some time during Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for you to play, relax, or do whatever you want to do.

*This is your reward for sticking to your schedule. In addition, you'll enjoy your free time more.*  
—Academic Skills Center, Dartmouth College 2001

## THE MASTER SCHEDULE

Any plan to schedule time and activities must have at its center a MASTER SCHEDULE, that is, a schedule of activities that is **fixed**. A master schedule needs to be drawn up only once a semester: unless, of course, changes occur in the basic program.

**Why Time Scheduling?** Students who deliberately undertake to schedule their time are not ones who have decided to spend all their time studying and doing nothing else. They usually have decided to use efficiently the time they have to spend studying anyway, and to "de-sensitize" themselves to the many distractions that are commonly occurring.

**How Much Time Scheduling?** Usually a **minimum** time schedule is best. In other words, plan what you know is necessary, and add to it later only if necessary. But plan as your first schedule one you know you can keep, and one that it is important to you to keep.

With the **MASTER SCHEDULE** as your source, you may concoct any type of schedule that fits the uniqueness of your courses, your part-time or full-time job, or your personality. What matters most is that the schedule **works** for you.

*During my first year in college, I found that I was trying to do too much. In addition to regularly participating in two student organizations on campus (the Black Student Alliance and the Excelling Leaders Institute) and sporadically joining others, I was trying to juggle a full course load and also work 25–30 hours per week.*

*These activities, along with balancing my social life and dealing with family struggles, just left me feeling exhausted and often terribly stressed. I often had little or no free time to maintain a regular study schedule because I was trying to fit work hours into any free time that I had. In retrospect, I would've worked far less, even if it meant making financial sacrifices, because I am sure that this was the root of my imbalance."*

—Joe Borrego, senior,  
University of Denver, Colorado

# MASTER SCHEDULE

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
7-8	-----7:45----	-----7:45--	DRESS & BREAKFAST		--7:45----	-----7:45-----	
8-9	-- DRILL	-- DRILL	----	-- DRILL	-- DRILL	DRESS & BREAKFAST	
9-10	SPANISH 2	SPANISH 2	SPANISH 2	SPANISH 2	SPANISH 2		DRESS & BREAKFAST
10-11	CHEM 6	PSYCH 6	CHEM 6	PSYCH 6	CHEM 6		
11-12	-----11:15----- -		-----11:15----- -		-----11:15----- -		
12-1	-----12:30-----		-- LUNCH --	CHEM 6 X-	-----12:30-----		
1-2							
2-3							
3-4		CHEM 6 LAB	PSYCH 6 X-				
4-5	PHYS. ED.		PHYS. ED.				
5-6							
6-7				DINNER			
7-8							CHEM 6
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12			SLEEP				

Academic Skills Center, Dartmouth College 2001

- **How to Pick Your College Classes**

### **Make Smart Choices by Knowing What to Think About**

The main reason you're in school is to earn your degree. Picking good courses at the right time, and in the right order, is therefore critical to your success.

#### **Talk to your adviser**

No matter how big or small your school is, you should have an adviser who helps make sure you are on track to earning your degree. Check in with them, no matter how sure you are about your choices. Not only does your adviser most likely need to sign off on your selections, but he or she can also help alert you to things you may not even have considered.

#### **Make sure your schedule has balance**

Don't set yourself up for failure by thinking you can handle more courses than you usually take, all with labs and heavy workloads. Make sure your schedule has some balance: varying levels of difficulty, varying subject matters (when possible) so you aren't using one part of your brain 24 hours a day, varying due dates for major projects and exams. Each course may be fine in and of itself, but when combined into a killer schedule they all may turn out to be a big mistake.

#### **Think about your learning style**

Do you learn better in the morning? In the afternoon? Do you learn better in a huge classroom, or in a smaller section setting? See what options you can find within a department or course section and pick something that matches best with your [learning style](#).

#### **Aim to pick strong professors**

Do you know you absolutely love a certain professor in your department? If so, see if you can take a course with him or her this semester, or if it would be wiser to wait until a later time. If you've found a professor with whom you intellectually click, taking another class from him or her can help you [get to know him or her better](#) and possibly lead to other things, like research opportunities and letters of recommendation. If you're unfamiliar with professors on campus but know that you learn best from a professor who engages a class (instead of one who only lectures), ask around and [check online](#) to see what experience other students have had with various professors and their teaching styles.

#### **Consider your work schedule and other commitments**

Do you know that you absolutely must have an [on-campus job](#)? Do you need an internship for your major? If so, will it require you to work days? Consider taking a class or two that meets in the evenings. Do you know you work best when you can plop yourself down in the library for eight hours straight? Try to avoid taking classes on Friday so that you can use it as a work day. Planning around your known commitments can [help reduce your stress level](#) once the semester is moving ahead at full-steam.

## **When to Take a College Course Pass/Fail**

### **The Pass/Fail Option, Instead of a Grade, Can Be A Great Option**

Most college courses require students to take them for a grade. In some instances, however, students can take a few courses as pass/fail during their time in college. How can you know when the pass/fail option is better than the regular grading system?

#### **What Exactly Is Pass/Fail?**

Pass/Fail is an option where, instead of taking a college course for a grade, you take it with only two options: pass or fail.

It isn't counted in your GPA as a regular course (though you do get the full course credits) and it will show up on your transcript differently.

#### **When to Take a Course Pass/Fail**

Taking a college course pass/fail might be a good option when:

1. When you don't need the grade for your major or [for graduate school](#).
2. When you are worried about a grade having an impact on your GPA or transcript.
3. When you want to take a course you're interested in with a little lower [stress](#) than normal.

#### **One Last Thing to Remember**

Just because you're taking a class pass/fail doesn't mean you can take it easy. You still need to study, do the reading, complete the homework, and pass the exams. Additionally, if you [withdraw](#) or fail the class, it will show up on your transcript.

## **Test Taking Strategies for College Midterms and Finals**

Most students stress about midterm and final exams. These exams are particularly intimidating to first year college students. Even sufficiently prepared students experience test taking anxiety. The test center can be a dreary place, but after learning necessary test taking skills, you'll be able to score high on any test.

It takes time and practice to master test taking skills, so utilize these tips to prepare for and take tests:

#### **Time Management Skills**

Finishing a test on time is difficult for many students. When taking long tests, plan how long you'll spend on each section before beginning the test. These strategies will help you better manage time:

- Sit where a clock is visible or wear a watch. Make a mental note when you begin, and periodically check the time.
- Briefly review all test sections before beginning, and determine how much time should be devoted to each one. For example, set aside a half hour for each section while taking a two hour test with four sections. However, divvy appropriate time for each section since it takes longer to complete an essay than a multiple choice section.
- Develop brief outlines with the arguments you'll make when answering essay questions.
- Don't waste time dwelling on a single multiple choice question. Answer questions you know first to save time for confusing ones. Students often answer confusing questions correct when they have time to analyze and eliminate incorrect answer choices.

### **Test Day Preparations**

Refrain from pulling an all-nighter the night before a test. Being groggy affects concentration. Utilize these tips to adequately prepare for tests:

- Set an alarm or have a friend call you when tests are scheduled during early morning hours.
- Eat protein rich food on test day. Protein is a reliable energy source while sitting and concentrating for extended periods of time. Avoid simple carbohydrates and excessive amounts of caffeine since consuming these substances often lead to energy crashes.
- Shower on test day. Being self-conscious about appearance is a distraction.
- Arrive early for the test. Having extra time will allow you to clear your mind and focus on the test.
- Come prepared to the test with blue books, note paper, pencils, calculators, and other permitted items.
- Briefly review notes just prior to the test. If you're sufficiently prepared, summarizing notes will refresh what you've learned.
- Time permitting, lightly exercise on test day. Exercise is an effective way to manage stress.
- Use the restroom before entering the test center or classroom.

### **Relieving Test Taking Anxiety**

It's normal to feel anxiety on test day. Stress often motivates students to study hard, but excessive stress can affect performance. Utilize these strategies to alleviate test taking anxiety:

- Participate in deep breathing exercises before taking the test. Continue doing this if you experience extreme anxiety while taking the test. Deep breathing is an excellent strategy to calm nerves.
- Take some time to stretch prior to sitting down for the test to relieve tension. If permitted or granted a break, stretch your limbs again while taking the test.
- It's ineffective to evaluate test preparation during the test. If you don't perform up to expectations, assess performance and make changes after the test.

- Don't overreact to a poor test score. Move on since you'll have opportunities later in the semester to make up for a bad score.
  - Meet with the teacher or an academic counselor if test taking anxiety is affecting performance. Counselors can teach you strategies for overcoming anxiety. Some teachers grant students who struggle with extreme anxiety additional time to finish a test.
  - Never compare yourself to peers, and don't get distracted by students who finish early. Devote all your attention to focusing on the test. The best way to decrease test taking anxiety is to study hard for the test. You must make time to study. There is no easy route to success. Even if you're prepared, it's still normal to feel nervous. Utilize the aforementioned tips, and you'll be fine.
- 

## Writing In-Class Essay Exams

1. **Begin by thoroughly reading the question.** Determine what specifically you're being asked to answer. Look for key words such as compare and contrast, why, or what.

2. **After reading the question, conduct some quick brainstorming to prepare a response.** If it helps, jot notes on scratch paper or the margins of the test.

3. **If overwhelmed, relax for a second.** Review your ideas and determine which ones most effectively answer the question. Eliminate irrelevant response ideas.

4. **Develop a brief outline with the following:**

a. *Prepare a simple thesis with supporting points to present your answer.* After you've developed it, re-examine it to ensure it adequately addresses the question. Organize your response around the thesis.

b. *Jot down a list of points to support your answer.* Disregard irrelevant ones. Every point you make should relate back to the thesis statement. In fact, each argument listed in the thesis should be restated in the topic sentences of each supporting paragraph.

c. *Organize your response.* Begin by stating the most important point and follow it with arguments that build upon it. Remember, every point must relate to the thesis.

5. **Once you've organized your thoughts, write a response.** Begin with a 1-2 sentence introduction to present the topic followed by the thesis statement. Use the remainder of the time to support your thesis.

6. **When supporting the thesis, provide specific examples.** You'll receive a lower test score if you do not provide specific reasons for your answer. Instructors are interested to see how well you understand the material. For example, if you claimed that D-Day was the turning point in



Europe during World War II, you must provide examples of why that was the case.

7. **Pace yourself.** It's important to have enough time to review your answers and check for errors. Your instructor will not expect a perfect essay, but responses must be legible and logical.

### **10 Tips for Writing A College Term Paper**

New college students often struggle adjusting to the rigors of college-level writing. It typically takes some trial and error before students become comfortable writing college essays. They often receive insufficient writing preparation while in high school. Utilize these tips to earn better grades on college essays:

**Tip #1: Before you get started, make sure you know exactly what the professor is looking for.**

Thoroughly read the assignment instructions. Clarify any questions with the instructor. Most instructors schedule office hours, so take advantage of this time to discuss ideas with your teacher. Students who do not follow assignment instructions typically receive lower essay grades.

**Tip #2: Make sure to come up with a topic that is a good fit for the assignment.** Students often select unoriginal essay topics. Set yourself apart from other students by choosing a unique topic. Likewise, choose a topic of personal interest, or you will struggle with the essay. If you struggle choosing a topic, conduct some brainstorming and seek suggestions from your instructor.

**Tip # 3: Prepare an outline.** Begin every essay by developing an outline. An effective essay is always well-organized. It's very difficult to effectively organize an essay without a good outline. It's not necessary to develop a detailed outline since your ideas might change as you conduct research and write the essay. After you've finished an outline, don't hesitate running it by your instructor.

**Tip #4: Always back up your claims and assertions with strong evidence.** You must support the claim made in your essay with evidence. Claims can be supported with empirical evidence, expert opinion, and logical anecdotes. For example, if you claimed that carbon emissions are warming the planet, you must support it with scientific evidence or expert opinion. Refrain from using excessive amounts of examples since isolated ones do not effectively prove your point. Writing about time spent in Chicago during a particularly hot summer does not adequately support your argument. However, if supported with scientific evidence, this can be an effective example.

**Tip #5: Write a stellar introduction.** Good essays contain catchy introductions. Consider using an interesting story or shocking statistic to capture the attention of your audience. Be creative and brief.

**Tip #6: Make sure your thesis statement is clear and that it provides a preview of what your**

**paper will address.** You must have an effective thesis in order to earn a good grade on an essay. Your essay should be organized around the thesis. Within the thesis, state your claim and the evidence used to support it. Use language from your thesis in the topic sentences of each supporting paragraph. Present your arguments in the same order listed in the thesis. The thesis should be clear and simple. Do not add ideas unrelated to it.

**Tip #7: Use reliable and authoritative references and sources for your paper.** Students often reluctantly cite sources but do so since it's usually an assignment requirement. Using good sources is the difference between a good and bad grade. Select sources that come from credible journals, books, or scientific studies. Do not use outdated or irrelevant sources and refrain from over citing a single source. Likewise, refrain from listing sources that are never used in the essay since it's dishonest. Do not hesitate using more than the minimum required for the assignment.

**Tip #8: Get rid of any B.S.** Instructors will dock your paper for irrelevant information used to fill space. Students often write long introductions and conclusions full of non-essential information to reach minimum page requirements.

**Tip #9: Don't plagiarize.** Never commit plagiarism. You'll more than likely receive a failing grade and risk formal school discipline. Plagiarism occurs when writers use others' work without properly citing it.

**Tip #10: If you're struggling, get help.** If you struggle with college-level writing, seek assistance from your instructor or peer tutors. Most schools contain peer tutoring centers, and instructors make themselves available to

## Getting to Know Your Professors Can Be One of The Most Rewarding Aspects of Your Time in College

“Make sure to visit your professors the first week of school during their office hours. You can introduce yourself and get to know your professor so that way you will feel comfortable going to his or her office for help if you ever are having trouble later in the semester understanding the material.”

— Sarah Cummings,  
senior, Hobart and William

You may be totally intimidated by your professors, or you may be eager to meet them but not know what to do first. It's important to remember, however, that most professors are professors because they like teaching and interacting with college students. Knowing how to get to know your college professors might just end up being one of the most rewarding skills you learn during your time in school.

**Difficulty:** Easy

**Time Required:** Minimum

**Here's How:**

1. **Go to class -- every day.**

Many students underestimate the importance of this. True, in a lecture hall of 500 students, your professor may not notice if you're

not there. But if you are, your face will become familiar if you can make yourself noticed a bit.

**2. Turn your assignments in on time.**

You don't want your professor to notice you because you're always [asking for extensions](#) and turning things in late. True, he or she will get to know you, but probably not in the way you want.

**3. Ask questions and engage in discussion in class.**

This can be an easy way to have your professor get to know your voice, face, and name. Of course, only ask questions if you have a legitimate question (versus asking one just for the sake of asking) and contribute if you have something to say. Chances are, however, that you have plenty to add to a class and can use that to your advantage.

**4. Go to your professor's [office hours](#).**

Stop in to ask for help with your homework. Stop in to ask for advice on your research paper. Stop in to ask your professor's opinion about some of the research he is doing, or on the book she's talked about writing. Stop in to invite him or her to your poetry slam next week. While you may at first think there's nothing to talk to a professor about, there are, in fact, [lots of things you can discuss with your professors](#). And having a one-on-one conversation is perhaps the best way to start to build a connection!

**5. Go to an event where your professor is speaking, or to a meeting for a club or organization your professor advises.**

Your professor is most likely involved in things on campus *other* than just your class. Go hear him or her lecture and stay afterward to ask a question or thank them for the speech.

**6. Ask to sit in on another of your professor's classes.**

If you're trying to get to know your professor -- for [a research opportunity](#), for advice, or just because he or she seems really engaging -- you most likely are interested in similar things. If they teach other classes that you might want to take, ask your professor if you can sit in on one of them this semester. It will indicate your interest in the field; additionally, it will undoubtedly lead to a conversation about why you're interested in the class, what your [academic goals](#) are while you're at school, and what interested you in the topic in the first place.

## **SQ3R Active Reading Strategy**

- SQ3R is an acronym for survey, question, read, recite, and review. SQ3R is an effective active reading strategy to better understand written content. It's also a great way to empower students who struggle concentrating on text. Additionally, students utilizing SQ3R have an easier time recollecting what they've read since they review content

several times in multiple ways.

Students majoring in the humanities and arts, physical and biological sciences, psychology, and other social sciences can benefit greatly from the SQ3R strategy. However, students studying math typically do not benefit by using this method. Regardless of whether students read scholarly articles and periodicals, textbooks, or published research, SQ3R can be utilized to enhance comprehension. Likewise, the SQ3R strategy is simple to utilize. SQ3R is a great method to use when struggling with memory retention and boredom.

### ***Survey***

Survey is the first process of the SQ3R method. Surveying is a process where students briefly mentally summarize the main concepts of a reading assignment.

Begin your summary by briefly skimming the text for table of contents, chapter headings, bulleted lists, sub-headings, and other clues providing insight into content. Having a basic idea of what you'll be reading will make it easier to understand content.

Likewise, having a basic understanding of content will make reading more structured, enable students to see how ideas are interrelated, and help them know what to look for while reading.

Pay close attention to bolded terms, italicized phrases, and topic sentences when assigned readings lack headings. Topic sentences and easily identifiable text usually provide insight into key concepts. Students who attentively look for key concepts typically better comprehend content than students who rely too much on headings.

If you have a hard time remembering key concepts, use a notepad to create an outline of these concepts.

Developing an outline, whether on paper or within your mind, is essential since complex concepts are only retained when linked with supporting concepts. Outlines can be reviewed after you're done reading.

Focusing on specific sections of a text is another component of surveying. The first thing to do is to re-summarize and analyze text. Identify what you previously understood before reading, and determine whether you possess previous experience with the new concepts you're learning. After reading the title, anticipate what you'll be studying. Once this is done, read the initial paragraph of the text. Most opening paragraphs preview the main topics addressed within the text. Thoroughly review the abstract if one is available, and review headings to reiterate main concepts. Next, read the topic sentence in each paragraph and the final summary to completely familiarize yourself with the main topics. Also take time to briefly review charts, photos, and other visual

aids.

### ***Question***

Questioning is the second phase of SQ3R. During this phase, students anticipate what questions will be answered after reading the text. Developing questions will supplement the outline you've developed.

Developing questions will also narrow your focus on the key concepts you're trying to identify. Reading comprehension is also important since you'll be actively looking for details within the text, even unanticipated concepts. Anticipated questions can eventually be utilized to prepare for tests and quizzes.

Create questions by rephrasing chapter headings into questions. Answer questions you've developed while reading with current knowledge. Write down new questions while summarizing text. Then, compare anticipated questions with those identified while reading.

After organizing main ideas and developing questions, you'll be sufficiently prepared to read the text.

### ***Read***

Now that you're organized, read the text. While reading, connect supporting ideas with main ones. Identify details that answer anticipated questions and jot down new insights.

Students utilizing the SQ3R strategy should abstain from marking text since it diverts attention away from reading. Instead, write margin notes and number text with the corresponding anticipated question.

### ***Recite***

Take some time to reflect after reading each chapter. Restate main ideas aloud and write them down in a notebook. Review anticipated questions and re-summarize main ideas without looking at the text. Re-summarizing ideas in this manner will improve short and long-term memory retention. If you neglect to recite what you've read, you will more than likely forget what you've learned.

### ***Review***

Once you're done with the recitation phase, re-summarize the entire article or chapter to connect supporting ideas with main ones. This is an effective way to assess understanding, organize main concepts, and enhance memory retention.

Review chapter headings, margin and other notes, anticipated questions, and identified answers while reviewing assigned readings. Additionally, review highlighted or starred text. Develop a brief summary of all the main concepts and recite them aloud. Many students benefit by recording summaries to listen to at later dates.

Repeat this process weekly since repetition improves memory retention. Additionally, it reduces stress since you'll spend less time cramming for tests.

## ***What to Do If You're Placed on Academic Probation***

### ***Know How to Handle a Delicate Situation the Right Way***

By [Kelci Lynn Lucier](#)

Being placed on academic probation while in college is serious business. You may have known it was coming, you may have had no idea it was coming -- but now that it's here, it's time to sit up and pay attention.

### ***What Exactly Is Academic Probation?***

[Academic probation](#) can mean various things at different colleges and universities. Usually, however, it means that your academic performance (either in a series of classes or through your GPA) is not strong enough for you to be making acceptable progress toward your degree. Consequently, if you don't improve, you may be asked (translation: required) to leave the college.

### **Learn the Specifics of Your Probation**

Just like schools can have different definitions of academic probation, students can have different terms for their academic probation. Read the fine print of your warning letter and make sure you understand *everything* that's in there. How do you need to change your academic standing? To what? By when? What happens if you don't do so -- will you need to leave the college? Leave just the residence hall? Not be eligible [for financial aid](#)?

### **Get Help**

No matter how confident you felt, clearly something did not work out if you're on academic probation. Check in with people for help: your [academic adviser](#), your professors, a tutor, other students in the class, and anyone else you can utilize as a resource. Sure, it may be awkward to ask for help, but doing is almost certainly less awkward than having to leave college before you had planned to.

### **Keep Getting Help**

Let's say you reach out for help, get a tutor, and work, work, work to study for your next chemistry test -- which you promptly ace. Your confidence goes up and you start to feel like you may not need as much help as you thought you did. Be extra careful not to let yourself fall into your old patterns -- you know, the ones that got you into academic probation in the first place - and to stick with getting help throughout the term.

### **Prioritize Your Other Commitments**

If you're placed on academic probation, you'll need to do a serious assessment of your other commitments. Passing your classes now becomes your number one priority (as it should have been from the beginning). Be honest with yourself about your other commitments in college and, as hard as it may be, cut out as much as you need to in order to make sure your academics are getting the time and attention they deserve. After all, you can't be involved in all you want to do if you're not allowed back in school next semester. Make a list of what you need to do (like working) versus what you want to do (like being heavily involved in your Greek's social planning committee) and make some changes as needed.

### ***Anti-Bully and Sexual Harassment Awareness***

Bullying and harassment occur on every college community across the nation. Victims of bullying (both students and employees) are forced to deal with the mental, emotional and physical side-effects of the harassment. There are a lot of national statistics on bullying in elementary and high school settings but very little data when it comes to a college setting; yet the issues of bullying and harassment are still visible.

### ***Keeping College Students Safe: Sexual Harassment and Assault on Campus - By Susan Borowski***

Which is worse: the fact that nearly two-thirds of both male and female students on college campuses report being sexually harassed, or the fact that this figure is not all that surprising? An American Association of University Women (AAUW) 2005 study called "Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus" reported that despite the high numbers of students reporting sexual harassment, 10 percent or less of victims reported their experiences to a university employee, and 35 percent didn't tell anyone. Eighty percent reported being harassed by another student or former student, with 40 percent of the harassment occurring in the dorms.

### **Freshmen Are More Susceptible**

Friel indicates that many sexual assaults on campus happen to freshmen girls early in the fall. She says, "It's their first time away from home; they're insecure; they're drinking more; they are more susceptible and trusting of others; they're excited to be there and looking to belong; and they don't want to make waves because they're new." They also fear being ostracized if they make a report if something should happen, which is a major reason why many sexual assaults go unreported—not just for freshmen, but for all grade levels.

Friel notes that there is a huge difference between underage drinking in high school and drinking in college. "In high school, kids can only drink so much, because they have to go home to mom and dad," she says. "When they're at a party, they are often with long-time friends they've known since they were kids, friends who have their back and will look out for them.

"In college, they've only known people for a few weeks. These are not long-standing relationships with people who can be trusted to watch out for them or protect them. With a

lack of oversight and protection, students need to look out for themselves much more than they did before.”

Friel acknowledges that alcohol is a large factor in sexual assaults, and those are the ones that are the most difficult to get to the bottom of. “Alcohol affects accuracy in recounting events of the night before,” she says. “But when the victim, victimizer, and witnesses all were drinking, it becomes a matter of credibility.”

### **Advice for Students**

Although women are sexually assaulted at a higher rate than men, men are assaulted on college campuses as well. All students should be advised to keep themselves safe from sexual assault by:

- Watching their level of alcohol consumption;
- Keeping an eye on their drink at all times to minimize the risk of drugs being added to them;
- Having a buddy system at a party, making sure they don’t let the other individual get into questionable circumstances; and
- Never assuming new friends will look out for them, but taking responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Friel has advice for students who are sexually assaulted. While campuses will often advise students to go to the school clinic, she says the clinics are set up to treat the student’s immediate injuries and give information on sexually transmitted diseases; not to collect or document evidence. They don’t have rape kits, nor do they photograph injuries. She advises going to the local hospital’s emergency room, where all evidence will be taken, documented and saved. That way, if a student wishes to press charges, the evidence is preserved.

Friel states that some hospitals may take photos, otherwise, the police will when a report is filed. Many hospitals have Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner programs, or SAFE; in some states, the programs involve nurses and are called Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner programs, or SANE. She suggests finding which hospitals near campus have such a program and going there, since they are specifically set up for this.

If a student doesn’t wish to do this, Friel advises that at a minimum, students should take photos (or have a trusted friend take photos) of any bruises or cuts to document the evidence, and hold onto any physical evidence such as clothing or sheets. If a student wishes to file a complaint later, the evidence will have been preserved.

### **Cyberbullying**

by [Chelsea Rice](#), Editorial Assistant, Carnegie Communications

As acceptance letters come in, students get excited about what their college years will hold, but one thing most don't plan for is dealing with harassment from their peers.



### **Don't people stop picking on each other when they graduate?**

Unfortunately, young adults continue to target and harass one another beyond the halls of high school. A college campus, once full of friendly faces, can still turn into a minefield for students if they're the target of bullying.

The environment on this residence hall floor, usually united with constant chatter in the common room and group dinners in the dining hall, suddenly shifted when one of the guys admitted to the online discussions. The news spread quickly. Girls demanded to see what was written and were horrified at the things said about them and their roommates.

Some girls completely stopped socializing with the rest of the hall, too embarrassed and shocked by what they saw. Other girls spoke up, hurt by the boys they lived with and trusted as their friends. The incident divided the floor and left students feeling vulnerable in the place they lived for the rest of the school year.

Today, this type of behavior is on everyone's radar and has a name.

**Verbal bullying** includes taunting, name-calling, making threats, and belittling the target.

**Physical bullying** can include hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, biting, and taking personal belongings.

**Psychological bullying** consists of spreading rumors, social exclusion, intimidation, extortion, and sexual harassment," writes Dr. Elizabeth Englander, a professor of psychology and the Founder and Director of the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College.

**Cyberbullying**, as named by today's media, occurs when someone is targeted or victimized online through forums, social network groups, or directly through instant messaging or texting.

### **Victims on campus**

Bullying, both on and offline, leaves students feeling anxious and exposed, as if they're naked in front of the entire world. Instead of focusing on classes, grades, and new opportunities, victims of bullying might stay home or skip class to avoid running into their harasser. They might experience isolation, depression, and anxiety as a result of being targeted or humiliated by a peer. In extreme instances, students have been driven to violent behavior or even suicide from being bullied.

Now a common method of harassment, cyberbullying is generally perceived differently than offline behavior; the online threats are more often dismissed because they don't seem as "real." The separation of a screen prevents the harasser from properly judging the consequences of their actions, or how they might affect someone else. "There is a perceived anonymity," says Dr. Kennedy. "They say things they would never say face-to-face because they can't see the other person's reaction."

## **What can you do?**

According to Dr. Kennedy, students don't think about the way they treat each other because they don't see their peers as offenders, abusers, or harassers. "The trouble with young adults is they don't want to hear about it because they think it doesn't apply to them, and then when something does happen they don't know where to turn," she says.

Remember there are resources to help if you are being victimized. Counselors, friends, and family can help you feel safe again when someone has targeted you in this way. "What I want students to understand the most is that they are never alone in dealing with this," says Dr. Englander, who also published research on college cyberbullying in 2010. "There are many resources and people they can turn to today for support and help with these situations."

## **Protect yourself**

A good way to prevent bullying is to protect yourself and your privacy. Think of social media networks as a wall in a bathroom stall that people scrawl things all over. Once you post personal details of your life online, they become material for anyone looking to target you. "Sharing any information about yourself online turns that information into public property," says Dr. Englander. She recommends even keeping your relationship status to yourself. Make sure you know your privacy settings too; the default settings aren't necessarily the most secure. Finally, try searching for yourself online. What pops up? If you don't like what you see, you might be able to do something about it.

By monitoring your own behavior online, you can help stop this trend. "We as a community can only prevent bullies from bullying," says O'Brien.

## **Combat cyberbullying in your community**

- Respect other people and treat them the way you want to be treated.
- Don't contribute to cyberbullying by forwarding or adding to cruel messages.
- Don't be afraid to stand up to the cyberbully and report his or her behavior to a teacher or trusted adult. The cyberbully is the one in the wrong.
- Never tell anyone your online passwords or your cell phone PIN. Never leave your cell phone lying around.
- Never share personal information, such as your home address or phone number, online.
- Never take naked or compromising pictures or videos of yourself or your friends on your cell phone. Even if you just share them among your friends, they can soon spread like wildfire. And it's illegal.
- Think before you react to something online.
- If you are being victimized online, block the person doing it from your Facebook page or instant messaging account and communicate only with people you know.
- Raise awareness of the serious consequences of cyberbullying with your friends and your community.

- Talk to your parents about what you do online; don't shut them out of your online life.
- If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online.

## It's Okay to Have Fun

College life shouldn't only be about studying, exams and counting your pennies. Your stay at university is one of the best periods in your life, and it is definitely OK to enjoy it. Be sure to

allow yourself some play-time. College isn't a walk in the park, and it's good to schedule some downtime for yourself. You may find you perform better when you allow for some light diversion.

“Keep your room stocked with healthy, inexpensive snacks like nuts, granola bars, yogurt, fruit, or crackers with peanut butter. Eating more often, as opposed to heavily, will help keep your energy levels and metabolism high!”

— Alex Ragland, senior,  
Austin College, Austin,  
Texas

If there is one rule of thumb however, it is "**Everything in moderation**". It is tempting to let yourself get carried away with campus life and let your studies slip, but try to stay focused.

## College Terms Defined Too Embarrassed to Ask? Learn What All Those Acronyms and Terms Mean

- **Academic Probation:** If your grades fall below a certain level, your campus may place you on academic probation. This traditionally means that you need to raise your GPA or face the possibility of being removed from your school for academic reasons.
- **Adjunct Professor:** A professor who is usually part-time or not on campus with a long-term contract (and, consequently, not eligible for tenure).
- **Alumna:** Female graduate or former student.
- **Alumnae:** Female graduates or former students.
- **Alumni:** Male graduates or both male and female graduates.
- **Alumnus:** Male graduate or former student.
- **Area Coordinator (AC):** This person usually oversees an area of your residence hall, or an area of your campus. They have more responsibility, and may sometimes supervise, Resident Advisers (RAs).
- **Area Director (AD):** This is usually just another title for an Area Coordinator (AC).
- **Board of Directors/Board of Trustees:** Most colleges have a board that oversees all parts of the campus. Traditionally, the board hires (and possibly fires) a president; manages the college or university's finances; and is responsible for all major policy decisions. Many college and university boards comprise alumni, faculty, staff, community leaders, and (sometimes) students.

- **Board of Regents:** Similar to how a Board of Trustees oversees a single college or university, a Board of Regents traditionally oversees a state system of public colleges or universities.
- **College:** In contrast to a university, a college traditionally only offers undergraduate degrees and programs. (There are, of course, some exceptions to this definition.)
- **Commencement:** Usually another name for graduation.
- **Convocation:** On some campuses, each year starts with a convocation ceremony where the new class is officially welcomed and the academic year formally begins.
- **Dean:** A Dean is someone traditionally in charge of a major area of a college. For example, there may be a [Dean of Students](#), a Dean of the Faculty, and a Dean of Arts & Sciences.
- **Discipline:** On a college campus, a discipline is often synonymous with a major. It usually refers to a field of study. (Of course, if you are charged with violating campus or community rules, you may be required to have a disciplinary hearing...and that definition is more traditional!)
- **Discourse:** A conversation, exchange of words, or dialogue, usually incorporating a wide range of views and opinions.
- **Faculty:** The faculty, or a faculty member, is generally anyone who teaches at the college.
- **FAFSA:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This form is required for any student who wants to be considered for federal aid of any kind. Make sure you get your form in [by the deadline!](#)
- **Fees:** Fees can be charged for anything from seeing a doctor in the campus health center to returning your library books late. Additionally, you may see something listed as "student fees," which cover some student services that the school provides and/or may be the basis for the student government budget.
- **Financial Aid:** Anything related to the way you are paying for school. Loans, scholarships, grants, work awards, and any other resource you use are all considered part of your financial aid.
- **Graduate Assistant/Graduate Adviser (GA):** A GA is often the same thing as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI).
- **Graduate Instructor (GI):** A GI is often the same thing as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI).
- **Graduate Student Instructor (GSI):** A GSI is often a graduate student who helps out in your classes. They make grade papers, lead seminar discussions, and sometimes teach classes.
- **Grants:** Similar to scholarships in that you don't need to pay them back. Some grants may be connected to your course of study or allow you to do research while still having your financial needs taken care of. (For example, you may earn a grant to cover your [room and board](#) while you do [summer research](#) with a professor.)
- **Hall Coordinator (HC):** A hall coordinator is typically in charge of your entire hall and oversees Resident Advisers (RAs).
- **Hall Council (HC):** A Hall Council is a small governing body that serves as a student voice and helps make decisions and plan programs for your hall community; frequently the same thing as a Residence Council.

- **Hall Director (HD):** Hall Directors are often the same things as Hall Coordinators (HCs).
- **Instructor:** An instructor is often someone who is teaching at a college or university but who does not have a PhD. They often, however, have quite a bit of experience in their fields and are otherwise very qualified. Treat an instructor like a professor, since their roles -- and power -- in the classroom are often the same.
- **Living-Learning Community (LLC):** These are becoming more and more popular on college campuses. An LLC is a community where students who live together also take one or more classes together. There are often events in the hall that connect to what is being covered in everyone's coursework.
- **Loan:** Money your school (or a bank, or even a relative) is giving you but that you must pay back at some point. Some loans have no interest; some loans don't collect interest until you graduate; some loans have terms that are connected to your plans after graduation (loans that are forgiven over time for teachers, for example).
- **Mortarboard:** The term "mortarboard" usually refers to the academic cap worn during graduation and other ceremonies. Additionally, at a college or university, "Mortar Board" may refer to a [national student organization](#) that recognizes the highest academic achievers on campus.
- **Office Hours:** Professors are usually required to hold office hours on a regular basis throughout the semester, which is when students are able to drop in or make an appointment to meet with them. Often, if you can't make it to a professor's office hours, you can work with them to schedule a different time that works for both of you. If you can take advantage of office hours, you should! It can be a great opportunity to get feedback on your papers or other assignments, and a great chance to get to know your professors a little bit better.
- **Pedagogy:** A theory about, or style or method of, teaching.
- **Professor:** Most students come from high schools where their teachers were called . . . teachers. In college, most of your "teachers" are called professors. This indicates that you are 1) in a college environment, and, more often than not, 2) being taught by someone with a PhD. Drop the "teacher" reference the moment you start unpacking!
- **Provost:** A provost is one of the highest-ranking people on campus. The provost traditionally serves as the Chief Academic Officer of a college or university. Typically the #2 person on campus, a provost is in charge of many aspects of an institution.
- **Room and Board:** The cost of having a place to sleep (room) and [food to eat](#) (board) while at school. If you [choose to live on-campus](#), this is usually a preset fee. If you [choose to live off-campus](#), this may be an estimate. This may also change a bit, depending on which [meal plan you select](#).
- **Resident Adviser (RA):** Usually an undergraduate student, an RA is in charge of smaller sections of a residence hall. You can go to them for help with adjusting to college, problems with your roommates, and advice on just about anything.
- **Residence Council (RC):** A small governing body that serves as a student voice and helps make decisions and plan programs for your hall community; a Residence Council is frequently the same thing as a Hall Council (HC).

- **Residence Hall Association (RHA):** This is typically the same thing as a Hall Council (HC) or Residence Council (RC).
- **Resident Coordinator (RC):** This term is a bit more fluid than the other titles you'll see in your residence hall, and can mean someone similar to a Hall Coordinator (HC) or an Area Coordinator (AC). They usually oversee an area of your residence hall, or an area of your campus. They have more responsibility than, and sometimes supervise, Resident Advisers (RAs).
- **Resident Director:** Resident Director is often the same as a Resident Coordinator (RC).
- **Scholarship:** Money being given to you for your studies. You usually do not need to pay scholarship monies back. Scholarships can come from your school, an organization, or a contest.
- **Service Learning:** Service Learning is an approach to learning (i.e., classroom learning) that is often complemented by experiential learning (i.e., volunteering, immersion programs).
- **Teaching Assistant (TA):** Often the same thing as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), a TA is often a graduate student who helps out in your classes. They make grade papers, lead seminar discussions, and sometimes teach classes.
- **Tenure:** Tenure is something unique to higher education. A traditional path of someone who wants to teach at a college is to get their PhD, and then get a job as a professor on a campus. For the first six years or so that they are teaching, they are usually in a "tenure-track" position. This means that they are focusing on teaching, doing research, getting published, and contributing to the campus community. If all goes well, the professor is then granted tenure. Earning tenure is equivalent to ensuring one's job on a campus. If you have a tenured professor teaching your class, it means you have someone who has been at the school for a while and been judged, by a committee of their peers and the [academic dean](#), to be an essential member of the faculty and campus community.
- **Tuition:** The cost of your classes. Some schools charge tuition based on how many units you are taking, while others charge a base rate per semester as long as you stay within a certain range of units.
- **University:** In contrast to a college, a university traditionally offers both undergraduate and graduate



***THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA!***