

# BEST STUDY TIPS

## Textbook Reading

- Set yourself up for successful reading:
  - Choose a high-energy time to read*
  - Don't pick a chair (or your bed) if it's too comfortable!*
- Always use techniques to preview a chapter before you actually begin reading:
  - Read the chapter title and section titles*
  - Read the introduction (or first paragraphs) and summary (last paragraphs)*
  - Read the captions of all the graphics (maps, charts, illustrations)*
  - Read the bold-faced terms*
  - Read the objectives and/or review questions\*\**
    - \*\*Use handouts from the instructor in place of textbook learning objectives and review questions*
  - Purchase study guides/course packs*
- Re-read a section until you understand what you are reading (Read OUT LOUD)
- After reading a paragraph or section, stop and play JEOPARDY
  - What is important here?*
  - What is a possible test question?*
  - Write questions in the textbook margins and underline the answer*
- Read captions, footnotes, graphs, maps, etc in textbooks. These make good quiz and exam questions
- **Finish reading a section of text before highlighting** (15%-25% of a page only!)
- Don't assume that what is highlighted has been learned. To learn and remember information you must organize it, express it in your own words and test yourself ORALLY periodically
- Note taking from your text provides a truer test to your understanding of the material than merely highlighting
- Use Post-Its or tabs to mark important info
- Use note cards to record important points from the text. THEN REVIEW THEM!

## Getting the Most Out of Your Study Time

- Use daylight hours to study. Use breaks between classes.
- Plan a time to study immediately before a recitation-type class
- Plan a time to study immediately after a lecture class.
- Studying and then sleeping at night is more efficient than setting your alarm clock to get up early to study because during sleep your brain is engaging in organizational processing.
- Take breaks during study time to enhance retention
- Every time you begin to study, spend 10 minutes in **review** of previous assignments/readings— Learning is cumulative and you must make use of previous learning to enhance new learning by continuously making associations and connections.
- Study difficult (or boring) subjects first while you are fresh
- Use waiting time to flip through flash cards or to review lecture notes

## Lecture Notetaking

- Always read the material over which an instructor will be lecturing BEFORE the lecture
- Sit in the front of the classroom
- Take notes in ink on one side of the paper
- Date your notes
- Use loose-leaf notebook paper and a three-ring binder
- Use the "BIG I" (sometimes called Cornell Method) note taking format:

*Draw a line down the center of each page*  
*Record main ideas to the left of the center line*  
*Record supporting details to the right of the center line*

- Make up your own shorthand system, using symbols and abbreviations
- Ask questions if you don't understand the material. If you don't "get it" in class, you won't "get it" when you review your notes.
- Write a summary of the day's lecture within 24 hours  
*Record the main points and what you need to remember, writing in complete sentences*  
*OR summarize by making a chart, flash cards, map, timeline, etc*
- Review your lecture notes DAILY—right before class and the next lecture is a good time. Seeing material over and over helps make it part of your long-term memory

### **Studying Math**

- In math courses you MUST work out problems on the homework on your own. Understanding what the instructor does in class is not the same as being able to solve the problem yourself.
- Even if they are not assigned, work the problems that have answers in the back of the book.
- Do math homework immediately after class before what you just learned gets "cold"
- Schedule a math course at a time when you can be mentally sharp.

### **General**

- NEVER skip a class and STAY the entire class period  
*Participate either orally or Ask questions*  
*Avoid distractions such as talking with other class members while the instructor is talking*    **TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE!!!**
- Record important deadlines and test dates in your planner or calendar at the beginning of each semester
- Set up a way to organize handouts, syllabi, notes, etc for each class
- Keep a photocopy or electronic copy of major assignments you've turned in
- Create an organized, well-lit, and quiet study space
- Eat well, exercise, and get enough rest
- Make it a goal to have 1 of your instructors know you by name by the end of the semester
- Ask for help early in the semester. Use available resources—study groups/review sessions/help labs
- Visit the Learning Resource Center's web site: <http://lrc.msu.edu>
- Visit <http://fyi.msu.edu> for helpful information for first-year students