



Study Skills

Learning how to study effectively requires intentional techniques and practice. As a college student, you are not only acquiring the knowledge and skills related to your academic program, you are also learning how to learn, analyze, retain, and recall information.

The Study Cycle

The study cycle is a five step process that can help you to study more efficiently. The key to this process is not skipping steps. Although this process may seem complex if you have not practiced similar skills in the past, it may actually save you time because of its effectiveness.

1. **Preview.** Prepare before class by reading any chapters in the course text that will be covered (even if it is not assigned reading). If your instructor provides notes or slides prior to class, review them ahead of time. Enhance your focus by highlighting or underlining important text, making notes in the margin, and stopping at the end of each section to summarize the main points in your own words.
2. **Attend class.** Work to be attentive and engaged in your classes in order to learn most effectively. Learning content directly from your instructor is the best way to understand their expectations and specific content areas to focus on. Take notes during class in your own words and write down any questions you have.
3. **Review.** Within 24 hours of class, review your notes and add in information to fill any gaps in the content. This process can be brief, but it is essential because reviewing information while it is still fresh in your mind can help with retention. If you have questions that weren't answered during class, set up a time to talk with your instructor during office hours or consider connecting with a tutor.
4. **Study.** Schedule in several focused study sessions each week for each of your classes. These sessions can be brief depending on how long you can stay focused and efficient. Set specific and realistic goals for what you want to accomplish during each study session.
5. **Assess.** Check in with yourself to make sure what you have been doing to study has been working. Quiz yourself on the content (using questions from a study guide, flashcards, or from questions in the course textbook), review and assess your progress with learning objectives, or discuss what you are learning with classmates. Be open to changing your approach if needed.

How to Study

Short, intense, and frequent study sessions are more effective than a prolonged cramming session the night before a big exam.

1. **Set a goal.** Use the first few minutes of your study session to set a goal of what you want to accomplish. For example, "study key terms from chapters one and two of my Anatomy and Physiology text" is a clear and specific goal. Setting this goal, and even writing it down in a visible spot, can help to keep you focused.
2. **Study for 30-50 minutes.** Find ways to interact with the material you want to learn.
 - **Flashcards.** Create flashcards of main ideas or key terms. Quiz yourself or work with a classmate to quiz each other by viewing only one side and using recall or your notes to determine the connected word or concept.
 - **Become a teacher.** Select key concepts and explain them out loud. Verbalizing the concept, either alone in an empty room or with a study partner, can help you to quickly identify areas of missing information. This process also requires you to put information in your own words which helps promote understanding and recall.
 - **Practice problems.** Find ways to quiz yourself on the content. Use a study guide provided by your instructor, quiz questions from the course text, or create your own quiz on the material. Answer the questions, review your work, and focus on areas for improvement.



Additional Resources

Stress can make it difficult to focus and learn, so finding ways to manage stress can help you to be more effective when studying. Check out the following resources on this topic available online.

- Understanding Academic Stress in College
 - <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/understanding-academic-stress/>
- Tips for Managing Academic Stress in College
 - <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/tips-for-managing-academic-stress/>
- 6 Ways to Take Care of Yourself During Exam Time
 - <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/6-ways-to-take-care-of-yourself-during-exam-time/>

- **Create examples.** Come up with real life examples relevant to your experiences related to the content you are studying.
- **Concept maps or diagrams.** Creating images can help us to better understand complex content. A concept map is a visual representation of how information is connected. They can take many forms, but typically start with a key idea (such as “network security”) and then branch out connecting a number of related ideas (such as “access control”, “firewalls”, etc.).

3. **Plan.** After studying for your predetermined amount of time, write down a few notes that will help you for your next study session for this class. What concepts do you know well? Which ones do you still need to work on? Where would be a good place to start next time you study this content? This brief step can save you valuable time at the start of your next study session.
4. **Reward.** Do something to reward yourself for the time invested in studying. Take a walk outside, enjoy a coffee or tea, or play a brief game on your phone. If you are planning to start another study session after a break, set a timer so that you don’t get distracted.

Environment and Timing

Factors related to space and time can have a significant impact on how successful (or unsuccessful) your study experience can be.

- **Timing.** Most people have times of day that they are more focused. Pay attention to when this time may be for you. Take advantage of that time to study the most difficult or complex content.
- **Location.** Identify locations in which you feel focused when studying. For some, this could be at home. For others, the distractions at home make it much easier to focus on campus, in the library, or in the tutoring lab.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Turn off the sound on your phone and tuck it away so that you don’t see the screen lighting up if you get a text or call. Close out all browser windows unrelated to your coursework. Use earplugs or turn on instrumental music or white noise to drown out distracting noises. Having a hard time staying off of social media or other addicting apps? There are monitoring apps that can help you with setting and sticking to limits.

Tutoring


Working with a tutor can be a great way to make your

studying efforts more efficient and effective. All students attending Anoka Technical College are encouraged to take advantage of free tutoring services, which include peer tutoring and 24/7 online access to Tutor.com in D2L. Learn more online here: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/tutoring-services/>

Accessibility Services

Accessibility Services assists students with a permanent or temporary documented disability. Accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis and are designed to allow students to participate fully in the program of their choice. If you live with a disability, you are encouraged to consider if Accessibility Services may be able to help you in reaching your academic goals. Learn more online here: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/accessibility-services/>

Counseling Services

Counseling services are available to support Anoka Technical College students. A counselor can talk with you about any concerns or difficulties you are facing, provide support, and help in developing strategies and skills to promote wellness and goal achievement. Counseling services are confidential and free. You are encouraged to reach out for support. 

To learn more about counseling services, visit: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/counseling-services/>

To schedule an appointment with a counselor, visit the weblink above or call 763-576-7860.