



# Study Strategies

## 1. USE BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION ON YOURSELF

If you attempt to study the *same* subject at the *same* time in the *same* place each day, you will find that, after a short while when you get to that time and place, you're automatically in the subject groove. Train your brain to think French on a time-place cue, and it should take you no longer than ten minutes a day to get into the French mood. Not only will you save the time and emotional energy you once needed to psych yourself up to study French or whatever else, but the experts say you'll also remember more of what you are studying.

## 2. DON'T SPEND MORE THAN AN HOUR AT A TIME ON ONE SUBJECT

In fact, if you're doing straight memorization, **don't spend more than 20 to 30 minutes.**

**First** – When you are under an imposed time restriction, you use the time more effectively. (Have you noticed how much studying you manage to cram into the day before the big exam? That's why it's called cramming.)

**Second** – Psychologists say that you learn best in short takes. (Also, remember that 2 or 3 hours of study without noise or other distractions are more effective than ten hours trying to work amid chaos). **Studies have shown that as much is learned in four 1-hour sessions distributed over four days as in one marathon 6-hour session.** That's because between study time, while you're sleeping or eating, etc., your mind is absorbing what you've learned.

## 3. KEEP ALERT BY TAKING REST BREAKS

The specialists say you'll get your most effective studying done if you **take ten-minute breaks between subjects**. Dr. Walter Pauk, Director of the Reading and Study Center at Cornell University, suggests you **take a short break whenever you feel you need one**, so you don't fritter your time away in clock watching and anticipating your break.

Another technique for keeping your mind from wandering while studying is to **begin with your most boring subject or your hardest one** and work toward the easiest and/or the one you like best.

#### 4. STUDY SIMILAR SUBJECTS AT SEPARATE TIMES

Brain waves are like radio waves. If there isn't enough space between inputs, you get interference. The more similar the subjects are, the more interference. So, separate your study periods for courses with similar subject matter. Follow your hour of German with an hour of chemistry or history, not with Spanish.

#### 5. AVOID STUDYING DURING YOUR SLEEPING TIMES

Psychologists have found that everyone has a certain time of day when he or she gets sleepy. **Don't try to study during that time.** Instead, schedule some physical activity for that period. If you do have a pile of schoolwork, use that time to sort your notes or clear up your desk or study with a friend.

#### 6. STUDY AT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE TIME FOR YOUR COURSE

If it is a lecture course, do your studying soon after class; if it is a course in which students are called on to recite or answer questions, study before class. After the lecture, you can revise and organize your notes. Before the recitation classes, you can spend your time memorizing, brushing up on your facts, and preparing questions about the previous class. Question posing is a good technique for helping the material sink in and for pinpointing areas in which you need more work.

#### 7. MEMORIZE ACTIVELY, NOT PASSIVELY

**Researchers have found that the worst way to memorize is to simply read something over and over again.** Not only does this method take the most time, but it also results in the *least* retention of information. If that's the way you memorize, forget it. Instead, use as many of your senses as possible. Try to **visualize** in concrete terms to get a picture in your head. In addition to sight, use sound; **say the words out loud** and listen to yourself saying them.

#### 8. TAKE MORE TIME FOR YOUR READING

It really takes less time in the long run. Read with a purpose. Do not just read through chapters from beginning to end. Take notes, mark and highlight.

#### 9. REVIEW & REWRITE YOUR LECTURE NOTES

Review lecture notes within 24 hours of class. You will retain much more information this way and will spend less time trying to study everything when it is time for finals.