

STUDENT SUCCESS GUIDE



*... helping students to
develop a plan for success*

*A guide to improving study skills,
testing skills and
time management skills.*

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Hello! *The retention specialists at Southeast Community College are here to assist you if you are experiencing academic difficulties. We'll help you develop a plan for success, and we have many resources on a variety of topics related to student success. This includes improving study skills, testing skills and time management skills.*

To make an appointment, please give your campus retention specialist a call or email us at the contact information below!



Thank you!

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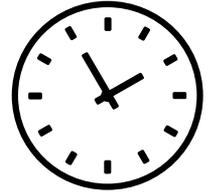
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TIME MANAGEMENT AND STUDY SKILLS

The effectiveness of your study schedule will depend on the care with which you plan it. Read through the information below and carefully consider each point when constructing your time management schedule. The success of your schedule will depend on how well **you** stick to it!



1. PLAN A SCHEDULE OF BALANCED ACTIVITIES.

College life has many aspects that are important for success. All aspects are either fixed or flexible. Some of the most common you must consider are:

- Fixed: eating, organization, classes, work
- Flexible: sleeping, recreation, study, relaxation, personal affairs

2. PLAN ENOUGH TIME STUDYING TO DO JUSTICE TO EACH SUBJECT.

Most college classes require about two hours of outside study time per credit per week for best results. So a good estimate of a 4.5 credit-hour class could require nine hours of study time per week. Basically, take your full credit load and multiply it by two and you will have your estimated time needed outside the classroom to successfully complete the courses. Of course, if you are a slow reader or have other deficiencies, you may need to plan more time.

3. STUDY AT A REGULAR TIME AND IN A REGULAR PLACE.



Establishing good study habits is extremely important. Knowing what and when you plan to study will save time in making decisions and retracing your steps to get necessary materials, etc. Avoid generalizations in your schedule such as “study.” Commit yourself more definitely to “study history” or “study chemistry.” Just as important is where you choose to study. Studying in a soft chair or lying on your bed is probably not a good idea. SCC’s learning resource centers, a study lounge, or private rooms all are ideal.

4. STUDY AS SOON AFTER YOUR LECTURE AS POSSIBLE.

One hour spent reviewing lecture notes and materials after class will do as much good in developing an understanding of the subject as several hours a few days later. Read over lecture notes, make additional notes, and generate and sketch down ideas about any possible assignments given during class.



5. UTILIZE ODD HOURS DURING THE DAY FOR STUDYING.

The scattered one- or two-hour free periods between classes can be, and easily are, wasted by many college students. Relaxing during this time sounds nice, but establishing habits of using this free time for studying will result in free time for recreation and activities at other times during the week.

6. LIMIT YOUR BLOCKS OF STUDY TIME TO NO MORE THAN 2 HOURS ON ANY ONE SUBJECT AT A TIME.

After one to two hours of studying, you begin to tire and your ability to concentrate decreases rapidly. Taking a break and changing to study some other subjects will provide the change necessary to keep up your efficiency and attention.

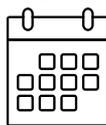
Try the 30-3-2 study schedule:

- Study for 30 minutes
- Take a 3-minute break
- Upon returning, take 2 minutes to mentally review what you just studied and preview what is coming next.

Also, try not to study when you are already tired. Studying at a time when you are usually sleeping will result in retaining little knowledge.

7. PROVIDE FOR SPACED REVIEW.

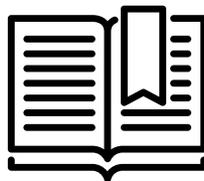
Once a week, review the work in each of your courses and be sure you are up to date with what assignments need to be done and when a quiz or exam will take place.



8. PRACTICE SELF-RECITATION AS A DEVICE FOR INCREASING MEMORY.

Organize your notes in a question-and-answer format. Think in terms of questions and answers about the main ideas of the material as you review weekly. **When preparing for exams, try to predict the questions the instructor may ask.**

READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES



► SQ3R: A Reading Technique

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. It is a proven technique to sharpen textbook reading skills. SQ3R helps make reading purposeful and meaningful, so that you use your time most effectively. Here's how this strategy works:

► Survey

Preview the reading material assigned. Get an idea of what the chapter is about by reviewing the highlights. Look closely at titles, headings and words that are italicized or bold. Also, try reading the introduction and conclusion to each chapter.

► Question

After Surveying, create questions for each section. Ask what, why, how, when, who, and where questions as they relate to the content. Write down these questions to be answered later.

► Read

Read one section of a chapter at a time, actively looking for an answer to your question for that section. Pay attention to bold and italicized text that authors use to make important points.

► Recite

After reading each section, in your own words, answer your questions for that section. Then write down your answers. Repeat the Question, Read and Recite steps for each section. Write down important notes for later studying.

► Review

After completing each chapter or reading assignment, review your notes. Identify the main points of the reading by looking for the most important idea in each section. Recite, or write, a brief summary of the chapter or assignment. **Review your notes often!**

TESTING TIPS AND STRATEGIES



► Math Tests

- Practice, practice, practice!!!! Even though an instructor may not require homework to be completed and turned in, work the assigned problems. It is the **ONLY** way to learn and improve. Trying to cram the night before a math test **does not work** like it sometimes can in other subject areas.
- Write all the formulas you need to know and memorize on the sheet.
- When you get your exam, write down all the key formulas in the margin of your paper so if you forget them when you're in the middle of the test, you can look back at the formula.
- Show all your work!
- Even though you know the final answer may be wrong, don't erase your entire work because you may get partial credit for using the correct procedure.

► Multiple Choices

- Read test instructions carefully before you begin.
- Cover the choices with your hand and answer the question in your head first. Then check to see if your response is there.
- Be careful!! Often with multiple-choice tests, there can be more than one answer. Read each choice to a question and then make the best decision.

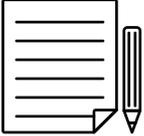


- Multiple-choice tests can be looked at like true and false questions. Eliminate choices you know are obviously not correct/false.
- Don't change your answer over and over. Generally your first instinct is right (unless you've misread the question).
- If you can't answer a question right away, put a mark next to it and come back to it later. **DON'T forget to come back to the question.** 
- Make educated guesses IF there is no penalty for wrong answers.
- Use clues from questions you can answer to help you with questions you can't answer.

► True/False

- If any part of the question is false, the answer must be false. But just because part of a statement is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true.
- Words such as "never," "always" and "every" usually make the question false.
- Words such as "usually," "sometimes" and "generally" mean that the statement can be true or false depending on the situation. Statements with these types of words are often true.
- Usually there are more true answers than false on most tests.

► Essay Tests

- Read questions carefully to be sure you know exactly what is being asked. For example, if a question asks to summarize, don't include every last detail. 
- Answer the easiest questions first and concentrate on answering one question at a time.
- Budget your time! Don't spend too much time on any one question and leave yourself short of answering all questions. Remember, easy questions first!
- Decide what kind of answer the question requires before you begin writing. Action verbs such as "illustrate," "list," "define," "compare," "trace," "explain," and "identify" require different approaches to answering.
- Create an outline before you write. Use the outline to organize your thoughts and let you get right to the point when you start writing. If you don't have time to finish writing, you may get partial credit for the ideas that you have outlined.
- If the question asks for facts, don't give an opinion.
- Keep your introductions and conclusions brief.
- Write clearly and concisely. Provide just one main idea per paragraph and include details to support that idea.

- Write neatly so instructors can read your answers.
- If there is time, proofread your work.

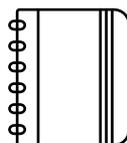
► Short Answer

- Prepare for short-answer tests by using flash cards with definitions of key terms and phrases discussed in class.
- Try to anticipate questions that will be asked on the test and prepare for them. Your instructor may emphasize in class what will be on the test.
- Make an educated guess if you don't know an answer. A partially correct answer will gain you more test points than leaving it blank.
- Respond with simple, concise sentences. Try to pack each sentence with important information.
- Read the question carefully and make sure that you answer everything that it asks. Some short-answer questions have multiple parts.

NOTE-TAKING SKILLS

The Basics

- Get to class early to preview past notes.
- SIT NEAR THE FRONT OF THE CLASS!!!
- Have a specific notebook for each course or subject.
- Title and date each new lecture of notes.
- Listen for what the instructor may be emphasizing. Focus and concentrate on the main points of the lecture.
- Having clear and concise notes are much more effective than long and drawn-out notes. After class, combine and rewrite notes to simplify the reviewing process when later studying for the test.



Developing a Note-taking Strategy That Works For YOU is Important!



BEFORE LECTURE, take time to revise previous notes and look ahead to what materials are to be covered in the current lecture. **During lecture**, select the information (main points, examples, repetition) that is stressed by the instructor. Some students will have 10 pages of notes after lecture, while another student might have one page. Ten pages might be too much and one page might not be enough. But writing down everything that is said is usually not necessary.



AFTER LECTURE, combine and rewrite notes to simplify the reviewing process when later studying for the exam. After rewriting or revising your notes, do a quick review, about 15-20 minutes. This will help you remember the information discussed. Always try to review your notes within 24 hours of lecture and review them often! **DO NOT** wait to do all of your studying the night before the big test. No cramming!



TIPS FOR WRITING

There are many things to consider when beginning the process of writing a research paper. Below you will find some simple rules to follow. Remember to use the tutoring centers at SCC if you need help or have questions. You also may take a final draft to the tutoring centers and have it read. Staff will provide some assistance with suggestions to improve your paper.

Introduction, Body and Conclusion

It may seem simple or obvious, but a paper must contain these three elements or it will not make much sense.

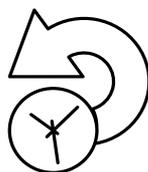
Thesis Statement and Topic Sentences

The thesis statement is a sentence or two that contains the topic or focus of your entire paper. It tells the reader what the paper is going to be about. It is typically found in the beginning of the paper near the end of the first paragraph.

Every paragraph needs a topic sentence. A topic sentence is usually the first sentence in a paragraph. It gives the reader an idea of what the paragraph is going to be about.

Plan a schedule backward from the due date.

At SCC, the quarters are 10 weeks long. If you receive a writing assignment that is due at the end of the term, a time schedule may look like this:



► Weeks 1-2

Decide what your topic is if you have a choice and conduct a little research about the topic. It's just good to kick some ideas around in your head as early as possible. Try to find out if there is good information available about the topic to draw a conclusion. **DO NOT** rely on most of your information to be from a single source. Also, be sure the information is not out of date.

► Weeks 3-4

Develop a detailed outline of the information you plan to cover from start to finish. You should have all or most of your resources selected before you begin the outline. Form a main heading and sub-headings. This will help determine and/or create the flow of the paper.

► Weeks 5-8

You should be doing most of the writing, rewriting, revising, and finishing the first rough draft. You want to get the draft done early so you can be sure everything is going smoothly and to be sure no important information is being left out. Sometimes it's best to put the draft away for a couple of days and go back and read it. When you work on a paper every day, it is easy to skip over minor details that can turn into major problems!

► Week 9

The paper should be finished and ready to be viewed by friends for proofreading. You also want to strongly consider taking your paper into the tutoring centers for a writing specialist to proofread. Remember to cite all sources!



► Week 10

All polished up and ready to turn in for grading.

Try to set specific dates according to your schedule, length of the paper and length of time you have to write the paper.

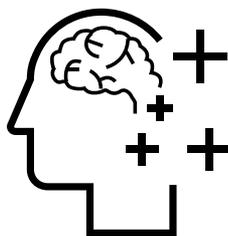
My Notes:



WHAT DOES TEST ANXIETY FEEL LIKE?

Most students experience some amount of anxiety before and/or during a test. When this anxiety affects the outcome of the test, it becomes a problem.

- Some students experience mainly physical symptoms such as headaches, nausea, faintness, or feeling too hot or too cold, etc.
- Others experience more emotional symptoms such as crying easily, feeling irritable, or getting frustrated quickly.
- A major problem of test anxiety can be its effect on thinking ability; it can cause a person to blank out or have racing thoughts that are difficult to control.

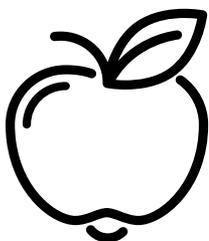


WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CONTROL TEST ANXIETY?



Before the Test:

- Be well-prepared and approach the test with confidence.
- Include as much self-testing in your review as possible.
- Maintain an overall healthy lifestyle: get enough sleep, eat right, exercise, schedule some personal “down” time, and have a reasonable amount of social interaction.
- As you anticipate the exam, think positively, e.g., “I can do OK on this exam. I’ve studied and I know my stuff.” Think of the test as a way to show how hard you have studied and how well you prepared!
- Get organized! Before you go to bed the night before the exam, organize anything that you will need for the exam: pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, calculator, etc. Double check the time of the exam and the location.
- Get a good night’s sleep the night before the exam. This is probably the most important thing to do. Lack of sleep can cause even more stress.
- Don’t go to the test with an empty stomach. Fruits and veggies are great to reduce stress. High-stress foods to avoid include processed foods, fried foods, junk foods and too much sugar. Also, minimize caffeine intake before the exam. Try taking a small, healthy snack to the exam to help keep your mind off your anxiety.



- Get to the exam on time. Never be late, but not too early.
- Avoid talking to other students about the exam material just before going into the exam, especially if this will make you more anxious.



During the Test:

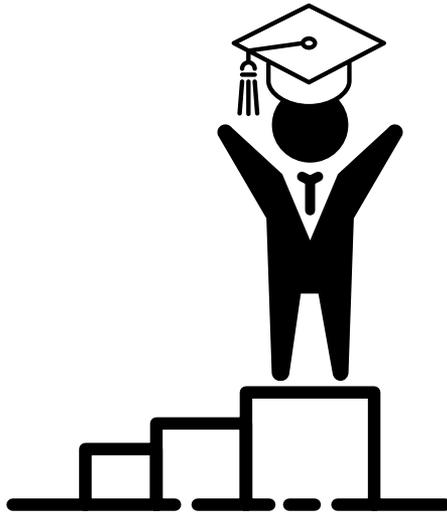
- Sit in a location in the exam room where you will be distracted as little as possible and where you feel most comfortable.
- As the papers are distributed, calm yourself by taking some slow, deep breaths.
- Make sure to carefully read any directions on the exam.
- As you work on the exam, focus only on the exam, not on what other students are doing or on thinking about past exams or future goals.
- If you feel very anxious during the exam, take a few minutes to calm yourself. Stretch your arms and legs and then relax them again. Do this a couple of times. Take a few slow, deep breaths. Do some positive internal self-talk. Say to yourself, "I will be OK, I can do this." Then direct your focus on the test. Associate questions to their corresponding lecture and/or chapter.
- If you go blank, skip the question and come back to it later.
- Don't panic when other students finish before you. Testing is not a race, and there is no first-place trophy!



After the Test:

- List what strategies you felt worked and then consider what did not work.
- When the exam is over, treat yourself. If you don't have any other commitments, maybe you can take the night off. If you need to study for other exams, you may have to postpone a larger break. But a brief break may be the "pick-up" that you need.





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