

STUDY METHODS

NOT VERY EFFECTIVE

MORE EFFECTIVE

Time

You spend just enough time outside class to do homework & read text.

You spend about 8 hours per week **outside** of class. (average needed by typical student in 4-credit-hour course to do well)

Note-taking

You copy what's on the board (or xerox the notes in the library).

You copy everything on the board plus the teacher's extra explanations, examples, answers to questions. You put a ? next to anything that's not clear, to check later. (Several studies showed that only 1/3 of students take accurate notes.)

After class

You don't look at your notes again until it's time to study for an exam.

You go over your notes after each class to fill in extra details and make sure it all makes sense. If not - ask teacher or tutor. (One study showed that students who do this remember 1.5 times as much as those who do not; this could be the difference between 60% and 90% on a test.)

Reading text

You come to a difficult section and think, "You either get it or you don't. Maybe it's not important." You give up.

You read difficult sections of the text several times. A little more makes sense each time. You write down a sketch or outline of the main points in your own words.

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Study questions

You start working on the Study Questions (S.Q.) a few days before the exam.

You think about the S.Q., but don't write answers out. OR - you write out definitions of the terms, but do not have much time left for the discussion questions.

You look for **the** answer to a S.Q. in the text or lecture notes, and when you think you've found it, you stop looking.

When answering S.Q.'s, you copy sentences or paragraphs from the text, lecture notes, or handouts.

Exam preparation

You look over things and think "I understand that."

You cram as much as possible on the exam card, copying whole sentences, illustrations, lists, etc.

MORE EFFECTIVE

You work on the S.Q. every week, keeping up with the material as it covered in class.

You write out answers to **all** the S.Q., remembering that short ones require about a paragraph and long ones require a page of information.

You make answers to S.Q.'s as thorough as possible. You look at different parts of the text or notes to find everything relevant to a topic.

You rewrite the material in your own words to make sure you understand everything.

You **test yourself**, looking away from the material and making yourself write down answers or speak them out loud. Repeat until you do it well. Research has shown that self-testing is one of the best ways to succeed.

You put a few **key** words or sketches on your card to jog your memory. Most of the information is already in your head. The key words help with hard spelling or help you remember all the main points in a discussion.

You stay up half the night cramming.

Most of the hard work has been done in the weeks before. You do some reviewing to refresh your memory & get 7-8 hours sleep. (Sleep helps consolidate memory.)

After exam

If you didn't do well, you tend to blame bad luck, bad genes, unfair test, etc. Maybe you make a vague resolution to "study harder." But you study the same way next time.

If you didn't do as well as you'd like, you make specific changes in your study methods and budget more time for them.