

# STUDY SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

Use this checklist to help you stay top of your work as you transition into college life.

## GETTING READY

### ORGANIZE:

- Take manageable first semester courses:
  - ⊕ Avoid taking all your classes on the same day.
  - ⊕ Avoid taking five heavy reading & writing courses.
  - ⊕ Make sure to have “1 easy A” course.
  - ⊕ Take one freshmen transition course if it is offered.
  - ⊕ If receiving extended time accommodations, avoid three back-to-back classes (on test day, the middle class will run into your following class).
- Review Syllabus: professor’s info (office hours), test & assignment dates, project due dates, reading schedule, etc., and be sure to enter them into your planner.
- Schedule: organize your time (daily & weekly).
  - ⊕ Include time for: study, meals, exercise, appointments, and leisure.
- Use a binder/computer: keep your notes organized by course (have a system where you can easily find specific notes).



### STUDY SPACE:

- Eliminate distractions (phone, comp.): know what works for you.
- Avoid studying on your bed (your brain associates bed with sleep)
- Try apps like [freedom](#), [serene](#), [rescue time](#).
- Implement study time into your schedule.

### MOTIVATION:

- Success comes from effort: but reward after task is important!
- Make realistic / achievable goals.

## TAKING IN INFORMATION

### TIME MANAGEMENT

- Use a planner (electronic or paper).
  - ⊕ Set reminders
- Create to do list (daily, weekly, monthly, semester).

### TAKING GOOD NOTES

- Remember: it is about the process of taking notes and not the end product.
- Two-column notes (main ideas vs. details).
- If you can, take notes without using a computer (synthesize vs. transcribe information)
- Share notes with peer (i.e. via google docs).
- Try technology: (i.e. [Glean Audio Note Taker](#))

### READING STRATEGIES (FOR TEXT BOOKS)

- Use the [SQ3R Method](#)—survey, question, read, recite, review—to actively retain information

- Read summary first, as well as introduction and conclusion if applicable.
- Take margin notes in your own words

\* Note: strategies only work if they are individualized and have a purpose.

## RETAIN INFORMATION

### VISUAL ORGANIZATION

- Use visuals that work for you:
  - ⊕ [Mind Map](#), Study Guide, Note Cards, Graphic Organizers, Colors/Symbols to show relationships

### IMPROVE MEMORY

- Recite out loud
- Use mnemonic devices (rhymes, acronyms, image-naming, etc.)
- Exercise and get a good amount of sleep each night

### CHECK FOR COMPREHENSION / STUDY STRATEGIES

- Break studying up into multiple, smaller sessions.
- Use [Pomodoro Technique](#).
- [Teach it to a child technique](#).
  - ⊕ Be ready to teach what you've learned:
  - ⊕ If you can teach it to someone else, you have a solid grasp on the material
  - ⊕ Think if somebody you know and teach it to them (use simple language)
  - ⊕ Create a lesson plan, highlighting the key concepts

## OUTPUT OF INFORMATION

### REDUCE TEXT ANXIETY

- Sleep at least seven hours a day & eat a healthy breakfast.
- Prepare:
  - ⊕ Attend lectures, engage in class, take notes, complete assignments, go to office hours, work with peers, work with a tutor, and study productively. = YOU ARE PREPARED
- Turn anxiety into excitement.
  - ⊕ Some anxiety is important for performance. It is called excitement; the 'good nerves.'
  - ⊕ Power of positive thinking.
- Read directions carefully.
- Practice breathing techniques.

### WRITING

- Read the prompt carefully.
- Brainstorm – Draft – (take a break) – Edit
- Utilize resources (writing/tutoring center, academic coaching).

### TEST TAKING

- Quickly scan over the test.
- Pick the hardest problem, and start with that.
  - ⊕ When you feel stuck, stop and move on.
  - ⊕ Work on another, easier problem. You will notice that, when you eventually return to the most difficult problem, you will be able to make progress.
  - ⊕ If you follow conventional wisdom and save the hardest problems for last, you are waiting for the most stressful time of the test, and that can make things much more difficult for you.