

How To Study:

Lessons Learned from 11 Years of
Being a University Student

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Overview

- Pre-class (preview, prepare)
- Book (condensation)
- In-class (notes, location)
- Post-class (review)
- Distributed and Massed Practice (Study)
- Time management
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Pre-class (preview, prepare) & Book (condensation)

- Read material to be covered in class, before class, every time –this includes assigned readings, chapters being covered, and notes provided on websites
- How do you know what is important? Preview –look at the chapter headings, sub-headings, bolded text, italicized text, and chapter review (usually lists key terms, which you should know cold)

Pre-class (preview, prepare) & Book (condensation)

- HOW to read: do it paragraph by paragraph, take notes on things that are obviously important –do NOT highlight...that is a good speed reading technique but you don't need a book full of uncritically highlighted material

- Your goal is to sort out unneeded material from critical and otherwise important material. Realize it is a skill to critically think your way through information and determine what is truly worth knowing.

Pre-class (preview, prepare) & Book (condensation)

- Take time to write what is important from each paragraph in a spiral note book. This gives you a condensed version that is much quicker to read and only covers important material –so you can easily read it over and over again, as you should.

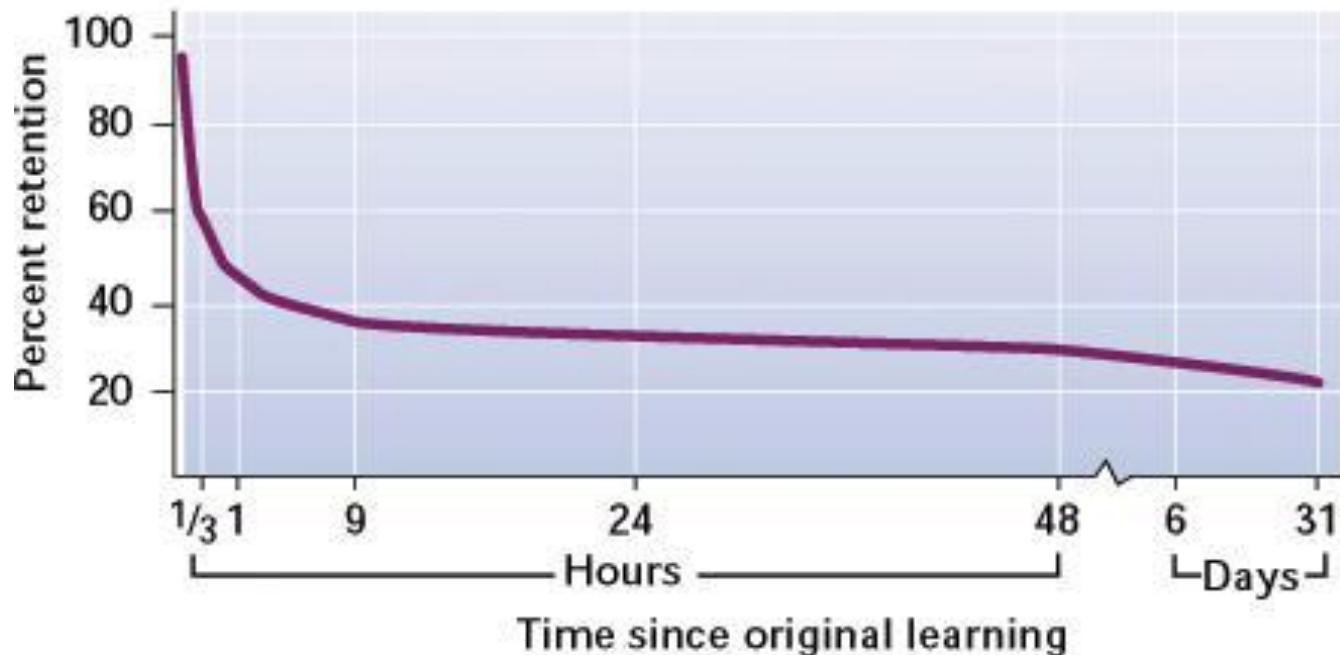
- Paragraph by paragraph reading with note taking may seem like it takes a lot of time up front, but you don't wind up drifting off and not remember the last five pages you read –give yourself a short break after completing a pre-set number of paragraphs, then get right back on it

In-class (notes, location)

- Don't bring instructor-provided notes or those you took from the book to class –take fresh notes after reading those you already had
- Dedicate a spiral notebook to each class
- Always bring a couple of pencils/pens
- Take notes as close to verbatim (word for word) as possible; make a short-hand to do this easier
- Sit near the front of the class, if not in the front row –makes it easier to hear, see, and TRAIN your attention as we all drift off from time to time
- Attention varies for everyone, and you have to MAKE yourself pay attention to all of a class and to get right back on attending when you find you have drifted off –if you are taking verbatim note, you will notice more quickly you are off-task

Post-class (review)

- Read the notes you took from class within 1 to 12 hours of the end of class, EVERY TIME, because forgetting is extensive and happens fast
 - Read notes from previous classes and from previous readings, before class, EVERY TIME
 - SELECTIVELY highlight your notes as you review them over and over, both those from the book and those from class
- The more you use it, the less you lose it –working with info **more** is key to better retention, period. How to do this efficiently and sufficiently is the question! That is what this presentation is all about!



How much time should you devote?

- Know this: the university (all of them) expects you to spend 3 hours outside of class for every hour you spend in class (for 12 semester hrs you should thus be spending 48 total hours/week, including class, doing nothing but focused study –not including breaks).
- No one actually does this, but if they really and truly did, they would only make As –so how much time should you spend?
- Dedicate sufficient time to **really** study, and make sure you are able to focus on it.

Distributed and Massed Practice (Study)

- If class was 4 hrs/day, and school's a full-time job, why not add another 1 - 2 hrs/day (weekends included)? You may have a job –so you have two!
- Study daily on every subject, even if it is only 15 minutes (studying regularly over time is distributed practice). If you have 4 classes, this adds 7 hours a week to your studying.
- Find a place (may not be your place) that is quiet and free from distraction and use it consistently
- When a test is coming up, increase the amount you study daily and, the day/night/morning before a test, study a lot more (5 to 10 hours). Studying a bunch at one time (cramming) is massed practice.

Time Management

- Buy a calendar or use Outlook or another computer calendar program
- Always read your syllabus for each class and note when all tests are scheduled as well as all other projects or goals
- Make every class your top priority –there is no reason to miss class unless you are deathly ill or some emergency arose (and drinking too much last night is not an emergency! Take some aspirin and drink some water and show up!)
- Carve out time in your schedule to study **daily**
- Make sure you carve out way more time in the days just prior to tests

Pre-test

- Show up to tests on time and prepared
- Show up early if at all possible and find a place outside of the classroom where you can sit and run through all your notes again and again, right up until the test starts
- Avoid talking to people about what they think the test material is all about –if they don't know by now, too bad for them. They'll only confuse you by debating and questioning
- Get comfortable and breath very deeply and make sure you have pencils sharpened, things put away very well, and be confident you know what you need to know in order to do well

During Test

- Don't pay attention to others, only your test
- Immediately write down any helpful things –formulae, charts, graphs, lists, ***mnemonics***
- In multiple choice tests, cover response choices and read questions carefully –try to answer in your head first, then read every answer choice, marking out clearly wrong choices, put question marks by those you aren't sure about, and star those that are definitely correct -make sure you bubble the correct spot!
- In essay tests, write an outline to each question before you write your response. That will help you stay on-topic and on-track going through the test. Also, be very aware of the time and make sure to speed up early enough if you need to

Post-test

- If you have a cumulative final, study the previous exams material for each new test you take, and review it each week –of course your focus is on each new exam’s material up until the final, but when the final comes, you will have it all in your mind without ridiculous amounts of extra study trying to figure out what was on prior tests
- If you have no cumulative final exam, FORGET the old material and focus exclusively on the new material –if you ever need the old material again, you know where to find it!
- College teaches you to find information quickly and comprehensively, and evaluate it critically to figure out what is important and what is not –that is a value-add to your future employer!

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VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE AT:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKlCebxCXAE&feature=youtu.be