

*“The comprehensive guide
to getting the most out of your studies”*

The Study Guide PRO

Fourth Edition

by **ABDERISAK ADAM**

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Foreword

Welcome on board! During the coming hours you and I will, hand in hand, discuss and learn about one of the perhaps most vivid experiences you might face in life, *i.e.* college/university studies. This book is intended to be applied as somewhat of a handbook if you'd like, covering most of what you need to know in order to succeed in college.

Perhaps you're a freshman, or a veteran, either way this book will hopefully deliver a great deal of value to you. If you are a first year student, college might be the first time you've ever left home, turning your life into more of an instable state followed by feelings of insecurity.

On the opposite, you might feel liberated from the rules and regulations of your particular dwelling, albeit life has changed and you better get you use to it. I hope you will find this book helpful in your academic struggles and by the way; thank you for purchasing it!

Abderisak Adam,
Gothenburg, Sweden

Start your engines...

Before moving on I need to ask you a few important questions, the first one being; *why are you even interested in college?* I know that the question sounds like it ought to be succeeded by a self evident answer but that's not always the case. Why are you willing to throw a couple of good years away on studying?

Ponder about this for a while since it's very important, another fundamental question is: why are you studying what you're studying? Did you choose this particularly course strictly because of arbitrary reasons or did you actually put some effort to try to derive some *reasons* and *benefits* for choosing what you chose?

People tend to follow their friends; hence they do whatever their friends are doing. They might even start studying something that doesn't interest them just to be a part of the same ol' gang. Don't let this way of thinking limit you from achieving your full potential. Others commit the horrible mistake of caving in to peer pressure.

Just because a particular course requires higher grades and higher levels of participation, doesn't necessarily mean that it is for you. This is one of

the main reasons so many students drop off from studying medicine or law, they weren't even interested in the first place.

Now, I think I'm finished with wagging my finger in admonishment so let's move on, *shall we?*

Don't behave like a gädä

"I will never learn French; it's just too bloody difficult!"

"How on earth could I possible learn to solve such an equation?"

Do you recognize any of the above statements? In that case, you might have been seized by the terrifying and awe filled phenomenon called *bad morale*. You've been underestimating your own capabilities; do you know what that means? It means that you have been underestimating your own capabilities! The previous sentence is not a typo; I repeated it in order to prove a point. By constantly repeating things over and over again they'll usually *-sooner or later-* be comprehended.

Having said that, without the right attitude towards studying it doesn't really matter how many times you rehearse since the foundation

itself is weakened and a tree can't give fruits if its foundation is instable. There's a very important lesson to be learned here, mainly: studying demands motivation.

The passionate student runs until he's become tired, walks until his legs can't carry him and finally crawls to reach his destination. No matter how lofty that mountain is, or whatever depth that lake reaches there is still hope, do not give up on the first shot and learn this basic study rule:

“Winners never quit and Quitters never win”

Now you're probably sitting there banging your head against the wall, dying to know what a gädda is. It's actually just a type of fish, widely consumed in Sweden and considered staple food by many Swedes.

Fine and all but what does this have to do with me and my college studies?

Good question Jimmy. A few years ago, a group of scientists performed a couple of interesting experiments, mainly by using this fish. They placed the fish inside an aquarium and fed it by pouring in some smaller fish. They then placed a barrier consisting of transparent glass in

between the gädä and the smaller fish resulting in the gädä constantly trying to reach its food without success (it was prevented by the invisible wall).

Finally it stopped pursuing the fish, thinking that it was useless to even try. The scientists then removed the barrier and were quite amazed at what they saw; the small fish actually circulated around the gädä without any counter reaction being executed, how come one might ask?

As it turns out the fish had been subjugated to acquire helplessness, a term that may be used in order to describe how a living being can become handicapped by its mere thoughts, thus forgetting about its true capabilities.

Are you like this fish, or do you have the actual courage to stand up with your both feet and proclaim; *“I will do my best in order to achieve my goals”* or will you in similitude to this fish swim around in a pool of emptiness and self denial?

The choice is *yours*.

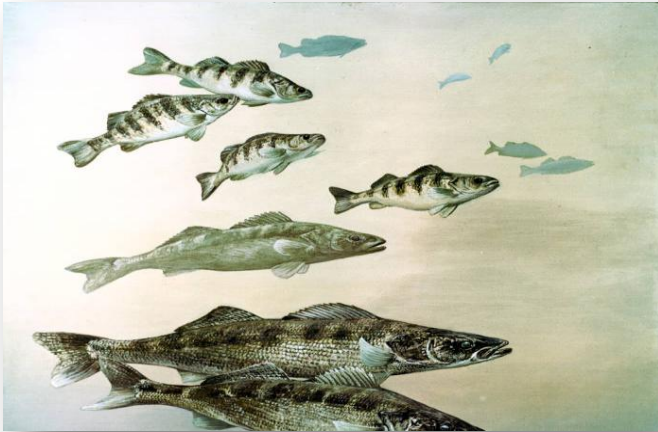


Figure 1: A swarm of ignorant fish.

That about covers it for the introduction, don't you think? In the coming chapters we will first familiarize us with some basic concepts relating to study techniques.

Following this we will gradually introduce more advanced techniques as we go. Without further due, let us now dive into the large ocean of study techniques.

Try *not* to drown.

Chapter I Basic Study Techniques

This section deals with the basic and fundamental study needs of any serious student. The information found here is somewhat crucial before we can move forward to learn more advanced techniques for studying. Fasten your seat belt, take off has already begun.

“You have to monitor your fundamentals constantly because the only thing that changes will be your attention to them. The fundamentals will never change.”

- Michael Jordan

For the freshman

If you're currently a first year student or about to start your university studies you'll be surprised at the great difference between universities and high schools. A lot of things are done differently and it may take some time to get adjusted to. In light of all of that it's important that you're prepared to adjust to some of those changes instead of doing everything the same way.

If you have a question or is unsure about a particular topic, do not hesitate to locate your nearest counseling center. Make sure you're acquainted with the names of the people who work there; it can save you a lot of time.

Below you'll find an attempt to illustrate the kind of realities you may face in your university studies.

Unless you already know people on campus the first week or so can be somewhat lonely. You may even have some concerns over developing friendships or getting to know new people. Don't worry about these sorts of things; they usually work out in the end. Also keep in mind that even though it may seem as everyone around you

knows exactly what to do the reality is that many are just as perplexed as you are.

You need to allow some sufficient time for these sorts of things to take place. Any meaningful new relationship shouldn't be expected to arise overnight. Think about your past and current friendships, it probably took a great deal of time to develop these and the same applies to your university friendships.

The fact that you're now in a 'strange environment' means that you have to learn to deal with new ways to handle things and could trigger a sort of emotional roller-coaster. These sorts of feelings tend to dissipate as time goes on so I wouldn't worry too much about that.

Living with roommates can present a challenge in terms of new problems coming up from nowhere. Remember to respect a person's property and space. These two things constitute breeding grounds for arguments to come. It is therefore vitally important if you intend to share a room with someone that you specify an agreement on how these sorts of issues should be handled.

Don't assume that your roommate will become your best friend. Such expectations are

unrealistic and it could become quite disappointing if it turned out to be false. Even though roommates may work out living arrangements that are accepted by both parties, it's not uncommon that they tend to have different friends.

Now let's get to the actual juice.

A university class is way more difficult than a high school class.

Be prepared for that, it's always good to know what's going to hit you *before* it hits you. It is said that the wise is the one who learns from other peoples mistakes. You should know that there will be more reading assignments, tougher exams that cover a lot more (often entire books) as well as papers that have to be written on tight deadlines. You're expected to do your assignments and your instructor isn't there to force you to study, you'll have to do that yourself. Instructors expect students to do more work outside the classroom.

If you wish to come out of it successfully you need to focus and take responsibility for your actions. Keep up with the class and don't miss any reading assignment. If you do happen to miss a class, it is up to you to do something

about it and try to catch up either by consulting friends and or speaking to your instructor.

The burden lies on *your* shoulders.

Increase your motivation

We all know that it's not easy to maintain a high level of motivation towards studying, especially when this is required for long periods of time. The good thing is that we can learn to pick up some guidelines in this area. Two among the most basic are:

- Setting up goals and priorities and thus keeping things in perspective.
- Developing and maintaining a positive attitude towards studying.

You should approach your college education as a type of competition. You're there to win and in every competition there's a price. The price however is not the degree itself but rather the knowledge and know-how you've learned. That is to say, the degree itself isn't the prize but the things you did in order to attain that degree. Be sure to set goals that are reasonable for each and every one of your classes and then establish a game plan on how to succeed in each class. Be

sure to prioritize and develop key study habits while doing so. Tell yourself not to leave a class until you've given it your best and understood the most important aspects of that class.

Finally, please don't waste your time. It's simply too precious to waste. An interesting method to keep yourself in the loop is found by using flash cards. Just put down some key points of all the important stuff from your lectures and keep them with you where ever you go.

It's a great way to review your material and utilize your time.

Tip • A good way to stay motivated is found by using incentives. Promise your-self a good treat (e.g. your favorite meal) if you pass your exams or a good long rest after a period of studying.

By promising yourself things you will feel more inclined to study. Begin right now by writing down 5-10 things you wish to do as soon as you finish your exams.

Finally you should avoid getting discouraged if you fail at one occasion or two. It's not about winning the battle; it's about winning the war.

The emphasis here lies on the fact that one needs to plan ahead in order to have something to pursue, without this one might get confused and abandon all studies. If you haven't done so already, I urge you to sit down tonight with a piece of paper and a pen and start writing down – in great detail what you want to do and why you want to do it. This must be succeeded by some sort of tangible plan. Please remember to do this as it's of great importance even though the final outcome does not lie in your hands.

It's not unusual to temporarily become lost or mislead in your educational journey. Just make sure you don't lose track of the bigger picture.

The other important aspect that we need to understand is the concept of patience and good attitude. Do not be convinced of your failure since this will most probably lead to it, bad self esteem is not compatible with a good study motivation. Then what is that one must acquire? Patience, that's the word. You cannot graduate and get your degree without showing at least some signs of patience, if you know that you're impatient then it's about time to try to change.

As the old Arabic proverb goes;

“When patience is sour, the result is sweet.”

And believe me, if you’ve set up your goals right, then a little perseverance won’t hurt.

Chapter II

The Art of

Concentrating

“Often he who does too much does too little.” - Italian Proverb

“If you chase two rabbits, both will escape.” - Unknown

Different types of distractions stands as one of your greatest enemies on the journey towards academic success. Knowing how to rid yourself from these atrocities is thus an indispensable tool for every student. If we were to carefully study this phenomenon we call 'distractions' we would find that it can be looked at from three different angles;

1. The symptoms of bad concentration.
2. The indirect causes of it.
3. The remedy.

The symptoms

Unfortunately most of us know these symptoms by experience, these include: feeling bored, anxious, tired, daydreaming and so forth. Since we all know of them, there's really no need to elaborate on this matter.

The causes

In order to cure something, one needs to know its causes. Since man is often driven to what seems more exciting and fun, the reason that you find it difficult to study is because you've found something (seemingly) more interesting. Usually the no.1 threat comes from the little but horrible black box named television. Other seemingly

innocent machines are computers, video consoles and mobile phones.

This is what we call the “electronic threat” and for some people it’s the worst kind of distraction. The second kind comes under the heading of “social threats”, i.e. you could have some bad friends who don’t care about your study needs spends all their time in vain talk and trivial pursuit. Be cautious about such friendships.

The third kind is what is referred to as the “immoral threats”, these are prolific in most college environments and they could destroy your entire future. They include activities like: heavy partying, consumption of alcohol and drugs etc.

If you can’t limit yourself from such activities you may be heading in the direction of a great down spiral; creating dozens of chain reactions until you find yourself in the midst of confusion and agony. Deprived, exhausted and spiritually empty you have no option but to cry out: “Help me, someone!”

You *don’t* want that.

The Remedy

The art of concentration is mainly about eliminating distractions, in the process of doing so the following tips might be useful:

- Study in a place without distractions. If you're in the wrong place to start with you won't get anything done.
 - Stick to your study schedule
 - When taking a break, don't sit around in the same place but get up and walk around for a bit.
 - Don't start daydreaming! Ask yourself questions about the material that you're reading so you won't doze off.
 - Review your notes prior to the lectures, don't go in unprepared. It will be easier to follow along when you have sense of what's going to be covered.
 - Be as attentive as possible. You need to resist all distractions, sit where you don't get disturbed by unruly class mates.
-

How to improve listening skills

Some people might argue that listening is just a biological ability which we possess and that there is no mental technique to improve it. Well, they are wrong! We have to learn to separate between two terms; hearing and listening. The former is what I swiftly described above.

The latter is totally different from the former. You see, listening -apart from hear-ing- has to do with your own personal intention, you can hear something while not listening but you can't listen to something without hearing it. If you're serious about improving this skill it is vital to admit the truth about your listening skills.

Are you a good listener or a bad one?

Ask someone (honest) from your family or a close friend if you're unsure, you might be surprised by the answer you receive. Secondly, I mentioned that listening involves intention and it sure does, you have to equip yourself with a vivid and good intention before you enter that classroom. Make a mental checklist while the teacher is speaking; try to predict what the teacher is going to say next.

By doing this, you help yourself stay in focus. Another good method is to simply remind

yourself constantly about the seeds you're planting by attending this class, i.e. how great it will feel when you finally graduate and never need to listen to a boring professor again.

Finally, learning how to listen is tough and demands a whole lot from you, but with the right intention you can make it!

Learn how to stay focused

If you truly want to concentrate you should develop a sense of urgency towards your studies. For instance, if you were on a sinking ship and the captain summoned everyone to brief them about the situation and what needed to be done. Would you be focused or would you have a difficulty in concentrating?

You would cling to every word that came out of his mouth because **IT MATTERS**. Unless your studies **MATTER** to you, you'll have a tough time concentrating.

Keep in mind why you decided to go through all of this even though you could be at home relaxing on the couch. It's because it mattered to you and in order to stay focused when studying, you need to stay focused on your primary goals.

Your dreams and ambitions are important but they shouldn't overtake your life, as the Chinese say:

“To believe in one’s dreams is to spend all of one’s life asleep.”

Don't be daydreamer, be a daydoer! Whenever you feel you're starting to drift away, take a short pause to remember your goals and what you've been through and how much this means to you.

As soon as you realize the importance of your studies, you should get back in the ring and simply do your best.

Tip • If you want to become more attentive and focused you need to know where you're at right now. That is, how good are you at focusing right now? A good way to get feel for this is found by keeping yourself accountable for your work. At the beginning of a study day, make sure you produce a list containing all the topics you want to cover that day.

Then when you've finished studying, compare the things you said you would have done with the actual work you performed. If you did a lot less then obviously you had trouble focusing and you need to train some more.

Evaluate every study day in terms of productivity where 10 is the highest and 0 the lowest. Save these records for the future so you can see if you've made any progress or not.

Chapter III

The Ideal Student

Although college could be fun and interesting it is still a place of competition.

Thus, you need to equip yourself with the basic student skills needed to succeed.

“Prevention is better than cure”

- **English proverb**

“It is easier to cover our feet with sandals than to cover the earth with carpets”

- **Indian proverb**

Every serious student should consider the following five points:

~ Define your priorities. Doing well in school should not be at the bottom of the list.

~ Study, study! Unfortunately there is no way other way out.

~ Self discipline. You have to compel yourself.

~ Always attend your classes. Unless you have a pretty good reason, you should always attend your classes

~ Manage your time. If you don't manage your time, you're wasting it. We'll come back to time management later.

Self-discipline

As human beings we tend to do things often by habit. Then why not transmit some-thing within your reasoning, such as the claim that *“I really have to study”* into a habit. To clarify the issue further, you're not just doing what you're doing you are actually wanting to do what you know you should.

This is a famous pattern, your thoughts turn into actions, your actions into habits and finally your habits turn into a character trait. It's now a part of you and there is no need to force oneself anymore. This may not come at once but with contingency from your behalf, the length of this difficult path decreases.

Managing your time

A day consists of 24 hours, the fundamentals of time management is really how one should slice these 24 hours in a way that gives the proper time needed to the different elements of your life. For this to be done, we need to consider three different requirements:

1. You should not take on more than you can handle.
2. Critically estimating the time each activity needs.
3. Acting on what you've written down.

And also, do remember that every single minute is important and too precious to be thrown away. You can't go back in time. This is why time is so much more valuable than money; you can never restore lost time while you can restore the value

of lost money! Another important thing to do is to keep a schedule.

You see, *if you're not ahead of schedule you're behind of schedule* since being right on schedule is very difficult. Any mishap or bad estimation could easily make you fall behind schedule. The worst case scenario is if it occurs right at the end of the semester, when there may be no recovery.

Introspection

It's important that you learn to keep yourself accountable. Always reckon yourself before your teacher does so.

- Understand, and be honest with, yourself. You can't trick or lie to yourself. Get things done when they're supposed to be done.
 - You need to assume the role of both the athlete and the coach, keeping an eye on yourself while doing your outmost to succeed.
 - Don't be afraid to face your insecurities or weaknesses. You shouldn't be ashamed to ask the professor if you're unsure about something. Likewise if your teacher poses a question to the class you shouldn't hesitate to answer if you know the answer. If you answer correctly it's a
-

sign that you know your subject and if you answer incorrectly you'll be corrected.

- Doubts are normal to have. Don't tell yourself that you'll fail even if you've done so in the past. Let the past be the past and the future the future. Learn from your mistakes but don't get restricted by them. Seek out your weaknesses and attack them directly. Don't be naïve, don't restrict yourself too much nor believe that there are no limitations. We all need food and rest, at the end of the day we are only human.

Exams

Here we'll discuss some basic tactics to employ when writing an exam. Later on we'll expand this and cover more advanced techniques that will help you decipher exams.

Preparing

- Prioritize your material. Learn how to concentrate on the most important tasks at hand. Keep in mind that your teacher doesn't have the freedom of time. He or she can't fit in too complex problems into the exam. Learn to see the "typical" exam problems when you see one. Skimming through old exams gives you a sense of this.

- Study during the times that fit your schedule the best. Studying in a group or individually depends on many different factors, do you really get more done when you study with your friends or do you get less things done?

Base these types of decisions on calculated data, how well have you performed in the past when you've studied alone versus in a group. Do the most important tasks during the part of the day when you're most alert. Usually this is found during the earlier parts of the day but that doesn't necessarily need to hold for everyone.

- Summarize your entire course in as few words as possible. Writing in few words forces you to distinguish between vital information and details.

Also, the summary forces you to examine the subject in more detail while at the same time functioning as extra material that you can review prior to the exam.

- Go the extra mile: memorize things you're allowed to bring. If for instance you are allowed to bring your book, learn the different chapter names by heart. This will make it easier to find some particular piece of information during the

exam. If you're allowed to use a calculator, make sure you're well versed with how it works. Reading the manual can actually be helpful, especially in courses such as statistics or linear algebra.

- Always search for old exams. The more you can find, the better. If the exams are similar that means this way of studying will be more effective, however you should never limit yourself to only studying old exams. Although it is possible to pass certain courses this way, your understanding will be less than if you actually studied for real. There are no short cuts to understanding.

- Bring a watch if there's not one present in the room. If on the other hand there is one present, try to sit in a place where you can see it without having to get up.

- No need to feel anxious: you are there to win and nothing more. If other people could pass so can you. I have a friend who loves to undergo written exams; he claims the process of being judged is pleasant. This is the attitude we need to employ, just enjoy being judged!

During the exam

- Make sure you read the instructions carefully. You have no idea the number of times people have failed just because they misread something or missed something important.

- Some people would advise you to skim through the whole exam prior to writing it. I on the other hand have found that this could be potentially dangerous. It's easy to look through the exam and see all the major obstacles a head. That's why I'd recommend you to skim through the exam only for the purpose to *estimate its size* so you'll know how many questions there are left and how much to allocate to each question.

- You don't have to necessarily do the problems in order. If a particular problem is extremely difficult and time consuming you can always come back to it later on. Go for the ones where you're certain you pick some points. It's not very wise to spend a large amount of time in the beginning trying to solve the difficult ones. Remember even though it is more common from my experience that the later problems are the most difficult it doesn't necessarily have to be so.

- If the problem is pretty straight forward you can attack it directly, however if you stumble upon more intricate problems where you need to find a solution following many different steps it

might be wise to formulate an approach before actually attempting to solve it. That is to say, take a minute or two to formulate your over tactic in dealing with the problem. This way you won't have to correct yourself later on, I can stand to witness that going back and erasing everything you've written down on a isn't fun to do at all.

- Do precisely what is requested. In particular, don't waste time doing things that will not receive credit. For example, unless explicitly required, do not rewrite the exam problems on your paper.

- If you have no clue, attempt to guess yourself to a solution. This is to be done only when you're absolutely sure you have *no other trick* in your pocket. I've personally done this before with limited success. What you do is you write down everything (and I mean *everything*) that is even slightly related to the topic at hand. Write down any equations or formulas you think could be applicable, write about important principles, people, history or concepts that is even slightly adjacent to the problem. If you write a lot and put down basically everything you know about the subject some teachers (only some I'm afraid) feel kind of sorry for you and give you a few

points thinking; “well at least he/she tried their best”.

- Don't rush it nor forget about the time. As I mentioned earlier it's important that you allocate the right amount of time to each question. Look at the time every now and then and make sure you have adequate time to finish all the questions. In the ideal case you should have finished your exam long before it's over. This will give you some extra time to review your answers and look for mistakes. If you have time, first skim through all your answers looking for some rudimentary errors.

If there aren't any that you can see, move on to actually redoing the exam on a separate piece of paper. This time you can do it a little faster, in the end look at the two exams. The actual exam and the one you wrote down on your draft papers, did you get the same answers on both exams or did you perhaps add something the second time you did it which you had forgot about the first time.

- Ask questions if you have them. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher if you're unsure about something. Don't just assume things are in a particular way unless you're certain. If you do make any assumption that cannot be inferred

from the actual question then make sure you write that down on the exam. For instance, if it's a physics problem you may assume that there's no friction involved. However this assumption has to be relevant to the question at hand and cannot be made "just to make things easier". Usually you will know when to make an assumption and when to refrain from doing so.

- Make it clear and easy to follow. Teachers don't like to read through difficult exams, make it easy for the teacher to follow along on your thought process. Explain each step as you go and review it later on. Make sure you understand everything you wrote down, if you don't understand it neither will your teacher.

- If the exam that you're writing is in humanities or any other subjective course you may want to avoid referring to personal opinions unless stated so. Even though it may sound like a good idea it could carry negative ramifications in terms of your views going contrary to the teachers. This doesn't always have to be bad of course but it's usually safer to refer back to what the teacher/textbook.

- Conversely, restatements of the class/text material are easy for the grader to recognize as something deserving credit. Remember: Unless

the exam is multiple-choice, then a human being---who typically wants to grade the many exams in front of him/her as quickly and painlessly as possible---is doing the grading.

- Sit as long as possible. Unless you have something extremely important to do following the exam you ought to sit down and finish it without any haste. Even if you feel like you have nothing else to add there might come up something in last few minutes that you forgot to add. How many times haven't we left an exam and on our way home remember a mistake we did? Why go through this agony, instead sit down and finish it in peace.

After the exam

- Don't under any circumstances discuss the outcome of your exam with your peers. It's going to be extremely tempting I promise you but try your best to refrain.

Why?

Because it doesn't bring any good, that's why. What's the benefit in being told that you did it wrong if you were convinced you were right? The only difference is you know feel worse about it. The same thing goes for falsely believing in other peoples answers; just because a lot of people

answered it a certain way doesn't necessarily mean they were right. I know some people who have been told they were wrong and believed that but later on it turned out they were right.

- Move on. It's over, no matter how good or bad it went there's no benefit in worrying about it. The results will come when they come, don't put much energy in waiting to find out.

Further suggestions

- Keep in mind that most things, even very complex concepts are simple at their foundation. Learn to recognize the simple foundation these concepts are built upon. This will not only give you a deeper understanding of your topic but will also ease understanding the more difficult concepts.

- Look for general principles and methods. Learning through examples is one of my favorite ways of learning things. If the general principle isn't mentioned in the example you should try to 'reverse engineer' it in order to find out.

Albeit, it's important to keep in mind that learning by examples has its own limitations so don't put all your eggs in one basket.

- Pick up as many different methods of solving problems as you can. The more the merrier. The more examples you've done and the more methods you've learned the easier it will be to find the 'perfect tool' to use when the exam comes.

- Understand why it's done in one way and not the other. Sometimes both ways can be equally applicable; however in many occasions there are specific reasons why one method is to be used and the other to be dropped. Find out why this is so prior to the exam. If you can't figure it out yourself, ask the teacher for help.

- By teaching it to others you will learn it yourself. Why not discuss it with other people and see if you can make them understand. If you can't make them understand, perhaps you haven't understood it yourself.

- Learn by observing others in your particular discipline. Notice what ever worked for them and consider incorporating their methods into your way of doing things. This only holds true when their way of doing things is genuinely better, you don't exchange gold for eggs.

- To be efficient you shouldn't restrict yourself to one project alone, instead have several projects

going at once. Then, if you happen to get tired or bored you can change from one to the other. This way, you'll stay more productive and active throughout your learning period.

- Don't rely on “all-nighters”. There are no secret short cuts I'm afraid. If you stay up late you are only taking time from your morning. What goes in from one hole goes out the other. Instead learn to be more productive with your studies, insisting on studying a little every day during a longer period of time.

- Bring your textbook with you to class, if possible that is. This will enable you to look up something instantaneously instead of thinking “*I'll look it up later*” only to forget about it after five minutes.

- Unless you feel it's extremely uncomfortable, like I do, always write down your notes using a pencil instead of a pen. Being able to revise your notes is crucial and a pencil makes that a lot easier to do.

In closing:

Overall, there's one basic trait that distinguishes successful students from those that are not; both may have troubles understanding something but

the successful students refuse to give up and instead *forces* themselves to understand.

Don't take ignorance for an answer; understand the things you're studying! Looking for short cuts isn't the way to go, rather in most cases it's time consuming and does more harm than good. In short, study hard and always try to understand what you're studying.

Studying more efficiently

One of the main ingredients in college study life is the ability to understand 'you'. In order to do this, we've set up some questions for you to answer beginning with *how do you study best?*

Do you have an organized system or do you just study arbitrarily without any forethought about how you actually learn?

What time of the day do you like to study and why? As for the question, where to study, we already went through this in chapter 5 while in chapter 8 you'll find information on how to manage your time and work in an organized way. That only leaves the last question unanswered, but before we move on to that, let us take a quick journey to the realms of biology.

Understanding how your memory works

When we first learn something, information enters the brain by a neural trace in what's called the sensory memory. If you pay attention to this information it might end up in the STM (Short Time Memory).

Now if you keep on working diligently to process this information, it might end up in what is referred to as the LTM (Long Time Memory). The difference between these two is that in the LTM, though it takes more time, information stays almost permanently (when occasionally reviewed) while the STM works swiftly but it might lose almost 80% of what entered it in a single day.

Now let's go back to answer the question I posed; *“what time of the day do you like to study and why?”* Let me give you a personal tip on this matter, first of all: forget studying in night time unless you've sleep most of the day.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that you'll probably end up sleeping with the literature beneath your face. I recommend you to only review and go through your assignment once or

twice before sleeping and then set the alarm clock to go off early in the morning.

And when I say early, I mean *really early*. Learn to combat sleep before it becomes a sturdy foe. You will hopefully have awoken with your mind fresh and ready for some study action, you'll be surprised on how quick information is stored during these few hours.

Tip • Once you've ascribed to a study method that fits your needs be sure to stick with it! A lot of times, students change the way they study from one course to the other.

This will most likely lead to confusion and disorganization; I would recommend you to refrain from that unless you're unsure of the best study method for you. In that case, it would make sense to try different methods until one finds the one that works.

The SQRW technique

What exactly is SQRW?

Well Jimmy, it's a study method where you try to get the best out of your textbook studies. It's a 4-step strategy where each letter denotes one step in the process. Let's go through it and see how it could make your study life a little bit easier!

What does it stand for?

- **S stands for Survey:** That is what you need to do with each chapter in your textbook. Survey the title, the pictures, the graphs, maps or tables if any, the introduction, summary and conclusion. This will give you an overall grasp of what the chapter is about.
 - **Q stands for Question:** Ask questions in your mind and you'll find you stay focused when reading and it also makes for better remembering. Ask why, who, where, when, what and how!
 - **R stands for Read:** So read to understand, read to answer the questions in your mind and read to remember. As you answer each question, make sure you stay focused on the subject.
-

- **W stands for Write:** Simply write each question and answer down and read through it carefully. *Voila!* You're ready to participate in your class discussions.

Note taking skills

The most comprehensive note taking systems require attention from your part. You must be alert enough in class to take legible, meaningful notes. You can't rely on "*writing everything down*" because a lot of information in a given lecture won't help you to learn the material. If you have problems determining the specific relevant points in a particular class, you can always ask the professor to clarify them for you.

The 2-6 Method

The 2-6 refers to the way you divide the space on your notepaper. Make two columns, using the red line on the left of the page as your border. Then, when you take notes in class, use the 6 column for the notes and the smaller 2 column on the left as a highlighting system. Write main headings and important points on the left, including material you think you will be tested on.



Figur 2: *The more you write, the better your notes will become.*

Chapter IV

How To Live”

5 Extra Years

This is a post about the art of living *more* not *longer* since there's nothing we can do about the latter.

Do you want to know what it implies to live *more*?

- *You get more things done in less time*

- *You can live life more; 5, 7 or even 10 years which would otherwise be in vain.*

Are *you* crazy? (Considering the title, one might say I am the one who's crazy)

I am sorry for asking this question but a lot of people when it comes to issues relating to time usage indeed seem to be crazy.

Do you find yourself spending countless of hours in front of the TV set or just surfing the Internet for no real purpose. These and other vain activities - are without any doubts- great obstacles in the way of your success. Now I think I know what you are wondering; *how on earth can I live two extra years, this guy is apparently a wacko.*

I'm not joking here, nor is it any kind of myth, just simple common sense. It is grounded upon two basic principles;

a) How long you might live

b) How you manage those hours.

Let us start with asking the question; how many hours do you sleep? In my example I will be assuming somewhat around 7-9 hours, lets pick 8 as it's perhaps the most common. And let us say that you might live until you reach 70 (although no one but He who is above can tell, this is just a simplified example). Now let's do the simple math (*very simplified form*):

Little Math • First we'll have to assume a couple of things.

- The person in our example sleeps 10 hours a day.
- He decides to sleep 2 hours less every day.
- He lives until his 80th birthday.
- In our example, the person is currently 20 years old.

Are you with me this far? Great, now let's calculate how many hours of sleep those 2 hours would constitute.

$$2/24 \approx 8,3\%$$

$$80-20 = 60 \text{ years to live}$$

$$8.3\% \text{ of } 60 \approx 4,98$$

That is approximately 5 years!

And all he did was wake up 2 hours earlier than usual, and no, there is usually no harm in sleeping only 6 or 5 hours per day.

Amazing, consider what you could do with 5 years. That's about the length of your university studies, always use your time wisely.

Don't waste your life in sleep, wake up early and seize the day!

Skimming is winning

Ever scanned through phone books in search for a friend's name? Did you then read every piece of information or only selective pieces of information? The concept of skimming is much like scanning, the one big difference being: "in scanning you're aware of what you're looking for, in skimming you're not.

Since you don't know exactly what you are looking for you should try to find clues in the text before proceeding any further. Take a brief look at the cover, title, source and table of contents. This will enable you to develop at the least a sense of what's to be expected. After you've done this it's important that you look for any interesting keywords, sometimes they are **highlighted** and other times they're not. Also look for names, places, ideas, and numbers. When you start to envision the central idea it becomes a lot easier to digest specific parts of information.

In the beginning you'll only notice bold type, italics, digits, or capitalized words. These are by far the easiest to spot. However as you become more efficient in skimming you'll start to pick up new or atypical words and phrasings. The more you skim through things the more efficient you'll become in harnessing information from a textual source. This is a crucial skill every student should possess. Not only does it save you time to be able to find a particular idea amidst an ocean of text but it also saves you from the agony of searching in vain.

The efficient skimmer has a wide pan of perception which enables him or her to make closure quickly. Remember to skim through any given textbook prior to sitting down and reading it. When you're well acquainted with the ideas presented in the book it will become easier to digest or discard them. Remember to practice a lot. If you don't skim through a text every now and then chances are you're effectiveness will decrease. It is therefore prudent that you always keep yourself active when it comes to reading in general and skimming in particular.

If you have an important decision or choice to make it might be a good idea to skim through all the different arguments mentioned, both the

pros and cons before you make that decision. The same can be said about writing exams; the more efficient you are as a skimmer the easier it will be to spot a mistake on an exam.

Some people prefer to highlight important concepts and ideas when skimming. This could be a good thing to try out in the beginning as it helps you localize the most important pieces of information. However, when it comes to the long term, the goal is that you develop this skill independent of any note taking so you won't need to highlight in order to see it. It's already highlighted and imprinted in your mind.

Do you use a schedule?

If not, then let me assure you that you've been missing out. I would seriously recommend you to buy a portable calendar (they exist in several different sizes) or download an e-calendar/portable app to your phone.

Make sure that you have a specific time in which you write down what you're going to do tomorrow/next day and so forth. Otherwise it's very easy to lose record of one's plans. The key to this is as we mentioned earlier; perseverance. You have to learn to be patient in what you do so

avoid making up bad excuses for not studying, you're only fooling yourself.

It doesn't really matter if you had football training yesterday (i.e. referring to soccer, not the lame American kind...), became sick, got married, happened to be shot by an old lady near your car or if you were skiing and just happened to fall down from mount Everest landing on an ice bear who ate your toe.

Never the less you still have to study. Secondly, do not become a perfectionist. Learn to set up *challenging* while at the same time *achievable* goals. This also implies means that you shouldn't take up too many courses, there has to be time left for actually studying.

Learn the two letter imperative

That is, learning how to say **NO**. If you do not learn this, you will find yourself just wasting precious time in change for nothing special. You may not enjoy turning people down but sometimes it becomes almost mandatory in order to succeed in your studies. To set up your priorities you have to learn this, that's why you find some many people turn in into procrastinators due to their inability to prioritize.

My tip would be to use the *ABC method* in order to handle events. Organize all the things that need to be done today in the “A” section, those who should be finished within a week in the “B” section and finally those who should have been carried out within a month in the “C” section. You can try this method to see if it works for you or develop your own; the important thing however is not how it’s done just as long as it’s done.

Combining activities

It is said that late president Gerald Ford couldn’t chew gum and walk at the same time, let us try to avoid falling into the same misfortune by actually trying to do several activities at one time such as studying while commuting to school or listening to taped notes while walking or maybe even making up list (mentally) of what to do while showering.

These are of course just some examples of how one can mix different activities in order to save time.

Finally, remember that your schedule ought to be personalized to fit your situation; otherwise it

will be very difficult to follow. I'll end this chapter by saying:

“It’s so much easier to find something to do with extra time than to find extra time to do something”

Chapter V You Are At War

You are at constant war with yourself! How often don't we ask; can I pass this course *or not*? Will I get the grades that I'm looking for *or not*?

In order to win this war you need to understand its fundamentals while at the same time applying some basic tactics to form an overall strategy.

Here's how to do *exactly* that.

Studying is more than just a simple process, it's more like a battle, a struggle or war if you'd like. This, against your own self, where the soldier (i.e. you) has to learn to fight laziness and how to employ and use great weapons such as "self-restriction" and "self-discipline". The two terms should be more dear to you than your own cell phone (yea, you heard me right, your precious cell-phone).

As with every war, generals acquire and use different tactics in order to achieve their goals. The different tactic described here are very important in order to win the war, but unfortunately with war follows propaganda. Thus you need not only to win the war but to abolish the black propaganda that is being spread among the laymen.

Let us before we start, examine one common piece of, propaganda that has reached a lot of people, namely:

"College is for smart people and I am not smart".

Now let us consider a young teen with bad self-esteem who adheres to the previous mentioned propaganda, the poor thing has developed a type of inferiority complex. What do you think this will lead to?

Most probably this person will start avoiding challenging courses, lag behind and finally integrate this myth into a reality. Thoughts are indeed very effective.

This chapter, O you devout soldier is nothing more than a manual that tries to separate propaganda and falsehood from reality. The mission statement is clear, the only question is; are you ready?

Tactic I: Early training

Propaganda:

- *There is no such thing as study during summer.*
- *I will study, as soon as school starts, trust me!*

Answer:

The earlier you start studying, the better. Don't adopt the '*everything is going to be all right; I don't need to do anything*' mentality. It's dangerous in that it feeds procrastination and damages your study results. Serious students look upon their studies as something important. If an athlete wants to achieve excellence they don't sit around waiting for the big tournament to come, rather they prepare in advance.

This is what you need to do. The sad thing is, most students who are about to start their first year (or second/third year for that matter) aren't really ready. They come unprepared and will therefore have it difficult keeping up. If you prepare yourself prior to your college studies you get a head start and are already a head of the others.

The funny thing is that most of these students have prepared to get into college but they haven't prepared to get out of college. Getting in is the easy part, it's graduating that is difficult. You've already spent a considerable amount of time preparing to get into college, don't risk all of that by not preparing for the actual studies.

Avoid taking on the *'I am on board attitude'*. If you decide to put your 'battle axe' to the side and not study for a couple of months you are in fact damaging much of the momentum that you've built up all these years. This is not to say that you should study 24/7 every day. Be moderate in your studies, don't go overboard nor do to little.

If you decide to turn of the switch and not do anything for a while it's undoubtedly going to be very difficult to turn that switch on again. That's

why it should be left on even if it means studying as little as an hour or half an hour per day.

Does this mean that you should study during your breaks, such as during the summer?

Not to scare you too much but yes but only in moderate doses. It's not like you're outside every second during the break, there are always days when you don't have much to do. Why not decide to catch up a little and start reading?

Remember, by being active you are keeping the momentum and the momentum should always be kept.

Tactic II: Attending classes

Propaganda:

- *I don't need to attend; it never gives me anything anyway.*
- *The exam will only include what's in the textbook, why come?*
- *It's not a big issue if I miss one or two classes, right...?*

Answer:

Not right. You do have to attend classes, missing them could cost you a lot. And trust me, there is no need to fabricate bad excuses, the experienced teacher will notice it faster than the time it takes a cheetah to catch its prey. The information does exist in your textbooks but it needs to be explained in order to be understood.

Missing lessons will result in missing a lot of information, missing useful assignments and most probably result in lower test score, and you are not interested in that. And also, the status quo is not stable in academic life, things change.

Projects might change, your teacher might take on another methodology in teaching, whatever happens, you have to be there to grab hold of this

new piece of information, missing classes is missing your college degree! This might give rise to a known phenomenon that many unfortunately have experienced, i.e. “the slippery slope to futility”. By missing classes, you’re getting behind, even if someone else takes notes for you it will not be the same as actually being there.

Furthermore this might start a chain reaction in which you find yourself getting more and more behind until there is no way to get back, it’s over. And I mean over, capich, nothing, none, nada, sifr, cypher, inget, waxba. You get the picture.

What happens when you can’t be present? Let a friend tape the lesson, this way it becomes easier later on when processing the info.

Having said everything above I would like to add that there could be times when it might be wiser not to go to class. For instance, if the teacher is so bad at teaching that you feel you become more confused by going to class than by not going I’d say the choice is clear.

I personally remember having one teacher who literately recited out loud from the textbook. I learnt to read as a six year old so I saw no further purpose in attending his class.

Tactic III: Professorology? What the...

Propaganda:

- *Who does he think he is anyway?! I'll do whatever I feel like!*
- *Dude, he is just tripping. We don't need to do it that way!*

Answer

We live in a time in which youngsters, especially in the west have somehow become more and more disrespectful towards those in authority (sometimes a good thing, sometimes not). Let me wag my finger to you as an admonishment, your professor is the professor, which means that they're in charge of the class.

If you do not give this person some respect you will find it harder to succeed in your academic life. I know it could be much of a shock, but professors are humans also. Yes, you heard me right, just like you and me.

They strive a lot in order for you to learn (and for their paycheck every month...) and this requires that you show some kind of motivation so that the teacher will not get discouraged and

involuntarily decrease the quality of the lessons. Try to learn their style, what do they highlight, how do they highlight it?

Ask yourself these types of questions in the beginning of the course which will enable you to comprehend the teacher and thus comprehend the material. A great way of doing this is by simply asking the students who've had him before about his style of learning and what the teacher tends to emphasize. Such pieces of information are extremely valuable.

Oh, and also you better start lifting weights!

Uh...why?

You should lift weights because you need to raise your arm more often. Ask questions when you don't understand, the Chinese say:

"It is better to ask and seem stupid than to be quiet and remain stupid"

Tactic IV: Help, help!!

Propaganda:

- *Help is for those who lack intelligence.*
- *I'm doing pretty fine by myself, thank you.*
- *There is no help to find anyway, right?*

Answer:

Once again, not correct. Asking for help is not done by people who are inferior, it's done by people who are study oriented. People who actually care about their study results. Now, I am not forcing you to seek help when you don't need any, but you do have to ask yourself this question: - *Have I really achieved the study results, or will I achieve it without any external help?*

If you can give a clear cut yes to this, then you may not be in need of any help but do not let the option be removed from the table.

Tactic V: Establish regular study habits

Propaganda:

- *I will study when I feel like it.*
- *I'll start as soon as my favorite program ends...*
- *Why make studying a habit, just do it when you feel like it!*

Answer

Education is not always fun, it tastes really bad sometimes. For new students, the first semester could be somewhat of a chock, filled with excitement and perhaps worries. The fun part is that you don't have your parents or any other adults nagging on you to finish your homework, the not so funny part is that you don't have your parents or any other adults nagging on you to finish your homework.

Believe it or not, a lot of the students you find at campus have worked themselves up to college by mere coercion. They have been forced, screamed at and even had severe sanctions (e.g. been grounded) imposed upon them and then they find themselves all of sudden alone without anyone to force them.

What do you think will be the outcome for these students? One thing is for sure, they need to adapt and change or they will go back sitting at home watching lousy TV shows in their underpants. College is mainly about studies; don't look at it as a joke or the system will see you as one.

I know that seeing a beautiful summer day takes the mind away from studies, but don't let your lusts drive you away, slap yourself in the face and just do it!

Get rid of the studies and then you can relax. In the exact order as mentioned and not the other way around.

Tactic VI: Do not give up

Propaganda:

- *I can't take it anymore, college sucks!*
- *I won't graduate until I'm like 50 years old.*
- *That's it, I've had it. This course stinks.*

Answer

Lest we forget, a lot of the college dropouts out there do not do so due to inabilities. They drop out because of fear, self-doubt, laziness and other reasons relating these. At the end of the day, you have to ask yourself these two questions: “*Am I afraid of this course?*” and “*Have I really tried to pass it or am I just throwing in the towel to early?*”

What's the difference between you and all the other people who actually passed the course? They didn't give up and you did, that's the difference. Giving up quickly will result in anxiousness, making you wonder if you really could pass it. Save yourself from these feelings, go in there with the eye of a tiger, unwilling to give up until you've either won or had your jaw severely broken. The latter is not recommended by the way...

Apart from the reason mentioned above, there's another reason not to quit early; namely the fact that some teachers often do evaluate effort even though it doesn't seem like it. As we clarified earlier, teachers are human beings and they do notice the ones that are striving apart from those who aren't. This varies from course to course.

Final Tactic: Failure has great benefits!

Propaganda:

- *I'm already down, why get up now?*
- *That's it, I've tried and I failed miserably.*
- *Why did I even try? I knew I would fail.*

Answer

The first year in college is the toughest. You're not used to most of the things in this new environment and it will probably take you time to adjust and adapt to new circumstances. The classical mistake that many students fall into is simply giving up because they didn't attain the results they wanted.

I might as well tell you this now, before being successful in college you're most likely going to run into at least one mess. No matter whether we like it or not; the academic life is filled with risk taking, a form which sometimes end in failure. Failure should benefit you and not discourage you; the wise learn from their mistakes and refuse to wail about their misfortunes.

In the event of a failure do not panic, take it easy and ask yourself how you contributed to this failure. Are there any lessons to be learnt from this? If so, what are they? Remember not to blame everybody else for your failure, look at the mirror first before judging others. It's often there you'll find the agent that brought forth the failure.

Finally, do not be afraid to change your major if you feel that it's not really the subject you wanted. Realizing this as early as possible could save you a lot of time.

With this, I proclaim this war to be over, you are free to go. *Uh... well not really.* There are still some very important chapters left...

Chapter VI

Advanced Techniques

The style of this book will now slightly change. It's time to move away from admonishment, motivational texts and basic study needs to actually learning the techniques one should apply in ones studies.

Do also note that some of these techniques are very powerful (especially within the memorization tools) but then also very complicated..

Memorization Techniques

The mind is a fascinating little thing. In thousands of years has philosophers and the like discussed and pondered about its reality. During this time spawn, different people from different cultures have achieved remarkable results. Some have memorized thousands of decimals of pi (π) other memorizing entire books, cover by cover, word by word.

What will this chapter teach me, you ask?

You will hopefully learn some empirically measured methods on how to ease memorization process. Albeit, the different ways to process information and access it, isn't something you learn over a cup of coffee. It demands a) a little effort and b) some perseverance.

Remember that the different methods of remembering information should always coexist with two other things. The former being association, the art of using ones imagination in order to link/relate a certain issue with another entity and the latter being repetition. There's a famous Latin proverb that says: "*Repetitio est mater studiorum*" or "Repetition is the mother of study"

It's about time now to introduce the phrase (which will be used frequently from now on) *mnemonics*. This word refers to the art of *remembering information that would otherwise be quite difficult to recall*. There are different kinds of mnemonics and I will try to reduce their number by just picking those that I consider being of greater value.

Although they are all different and demand different types of requirements from your behalf, they still apply the same kind of basic strategy *i.e.* by coding numbers/letters with the help of pictures in different contexts.

Different memory techniques explained

Before I list the different types of mnemonics, I would recommend you to first try to understand these following principles:

a) Association b) Imagination c) Location

All of these principles can be easily modified for your own situation.

Tip • A few pointers to consider.

- Relating something to heat/cold.
- Twisting objects or resizing them.
- Merging things together or parting them.
- Relating information to a certain smell, sound, feeling, vision etc

Furthermore, if you succeed this by imagining the objects being put in a matter that creates a vivid picture for you, the vision will become stronger. Finally, in case you already have a mnemonic that resembles the new one, you can easily separate them by imagining the two different scenarios taking place in two different locations (e.g. different cities or countries)

Now, we've cleared that out so I think it's time to move on to actually listing the techniques we are going to study.

These are:

#	Name	Difficulty	Effectiveness
A	Number/Rhyme Mnemonic	Simple	Effective
B	Number/Shape Mnemonic	Simple	Effective
C	Alphabet System	More complex	More effective
D	Journey Method	Simple	Very effective
E	Roman Room Method	Simple	Very effective
F	Major System	Very Complex	Highly effective

A. Number/Rhyme Mnemonic

This will be our first example of a peg system, i.e. a system that uses a list of numbers (in this case 1-10) and then applies different shapes/rhymes to those numbers. Let's say that we want to remember the following U.S presidents in their chronological order:

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush

We start by drawing our peg system:

1. Sun
2. Shoe
3. Tree
4. Door
5. Alive
6. Nix
7. Lemon
8. Skate
9. Line
10. Hen

Notice that they all rhyme with their respective number, just try reciting them in order until you managed to remember this list, starting with one - sun etc. If these words aren't that stimulating, you can always replace them with more vivid ones.

Ok, now let's list the presidents with the different numbers in mind:

1. The sun burning a ROOSE on a hot VELT.
 2. A TRUETHful MAN eating a dirty shoe.
-

3. A tree on Eise {ice} HovERing above the ground. [v=w]
4. Behind the door we found KEN (the doll) talking with NED (Flanders).
5. Johnson was alive when Kennedy died.
6. Nix “said” Nixon when accused of a felony (i.e. Watergate).
7. A beautiful FORD car in the color of a lemon.
8. A big skate[board] moving a CART.
9. A man standing in line shot me with a ray gun (Reagan).
10. A hen was accused of terrorism, there’s a terrorist behind every BUSH.

B. Number/Shape Mnemonic

The number/shape technique works just like the above system with the difference that the numbers are visualized as objects performing some sort of act against their respective subjects. Since there’s no point in discussing this any further, I’ll just illustrate it by using two examples.

The peg system could look something like this:

1. Stick, spear
 2. Swan, (beak, curved neck)
 - 3,4,5 etc..
-

The results could then look something like this:

1. Somebody threw a big spear towards an old FORD. (Pr. G. Ford)
2. A Swan took care of it's physical needs behind a dirty BUSH.

If visualizing numbers presents a stronger picture to you, then use this system, otherwise I would recommend the first one discussed.

C. Alphabet System

This system uses a peg like structure like the one before but instead of using numbers it employs letters from the alphabet, thus making it a little more sophisticated. This technique works by associating pictures (by means of using letters) with the subjects one needs to remember. A simple scheme could look something like this:

A - Alligator

B - Basket ball

C - Cyclone

D - Drone...

Now let us say we want to remember the names of contemporary car models such as: Toyota, Ford, Ferrari and Volvo.

A - Alligator - Toyota – An ALLIGATOR taking a bite the size of an iOTA of a TOMatoe.

B - Basket ball - Ford - A man getting hit by a BASKET BALL right in the FORhead.

C - Cyclone - Ferrari - a FERRet was blown away Really far by a CYCLONE.

D - Drone - Volvo - a DRONE drank an entire VOLume of VOMit.

As you've probably noticed, this system is more complicated than the other two we described earlier but don't let this be a reason to despair. There are means by which we can ease the problem and I will go through some of them now.

Tip • Making Mnemonics Stay

- Use vivid images; they are a lot easier to remember.
- Think of different senses when coding information, like sight and smell.
- Put them in movement, this makes the picture stand out.
- Let the mnemonics be composed of positive images.

Different symbols and signs can be used (e.g. stopping hand, a traffic light etc). The main point is that your mnemonic must be related to the subject and present a vivid picture at the same time.

That concludes it for the peg based systems; we are now ready to take on a more powerful method of memorization and also one of my personal favorites.

D. The Journey Method

The journey method can be applied when you want to remember long lists of known pieces of information in a precise order. With pegs systems, the problem that often arise is that it can only carry a few objects (in our previous example; 10) but with this method it is now possible to remember lots of objects (in the hundreds) in their particular order which makes it more flexible and powerful than the previous mentioned system.

The journey method works by thinking of known landmarks and then using these landmarks as a traveling route for your journey. Objects are then placed chronologically within the journey. Let us illustrate this with an example.

I want you to visualize a route that you take occasionally or daily, make notice of all the different landmarks present.

Now let's say you want to remember the following list of grocery items: milk, bread, light bulb, bananas, soap, candy and eggs. Notice that in this case it doesn't really matter in which order they come but to illustrate this technique we will try to remember them in this order anyway.

Your journey might look something like this:

- 1) Front door: When you open the door you see that someone has spilt milk on the pavement.
- 2.) On your way to the car: You see a lot of people eating bread, perhaps it's "bread day" today? you ask.
- 3.) Inside your car: Apparently the lights are not working again.
- 4.) On the highway: You see this motorcycle in front of you slipping on a banana skin and falling from his bike
- 5.) When parking: You notice a big bill-board about soap.
- 6.) While walking near the cars: You find lots of candy beneath one of the cars.
- 7.) Upon entering a building: Some kid throws an egg in your face. I think you get the picture.

The interesting thing with this technique is that you can merge it into other memorization systems; an example of this will be given later on.

E. The Roman Room Technique

This technique is really old and you've probably seen it in school during a language course. It works well when you want to remember pieces of unstructured information where the relation between the objects is unimportant.

If you studied French or Spanish in high school you've most likely been introduced to it. The technique works by imagining a room and then associating pieces of information to known objects within that specific room.

The room can be your own room, class room or any other room really. The important thing is that you know your way around the room.

Let us illustrate this with an example:

“Imagine a room, for instance your living room. Now visualize some of the objects that are found in that room such as a table, lamp, sofa, bookcase, telephone, clock, chair etc. You may want to remember a list of random names such as *David, Jasmine, Mark and Mustafa*.

Visualize walking through your front door and then stepping into the living room. To your right you see David, your childhood teddy bear. He's

lying on top of a table MARKed with the initials of the company that made it, Mustafa & Jasmine ©. it says.“

The technique can be extended by introducing other rooms and thus expanding the known objects. To summarize it; the journey method is good when storing related items while the roman room method works well for storing lists of unrelated objects. Now, I hope you grasped all that information since it's now time to learn the most sophisticated system presented here.

F. The Major System

Before I begin, I want to clarify that this method is rather complicated and can only be used by those willing to invest some time to learn it. It works by converting numbers into word segments, these words or letters into images and then linking these sequences into each other by using a proper context.

The foundation of the system is built on the following numbers followed by their respective consonant. You can alter them to what suits you.

Step 1: The Fundamentals

0 - s, z, soft-c - remember as 'z is first letter of zero'

1 - d, t, th - remember as letters with 1 down stroke

2 - n - remember as having 2 down strokes

3 - m - has three down strokes 4 - r -
imagine a

4 and an R glued together back-to-back

5 - L - imagine the 5 propped up against a book end (L)

6 - j, sh, soft-ch, dg, soft-g - g is 6 rotated 180 degrees.

7 - k, hard-ch, hard-c, hard-g, ng - imagine K as two 7s rotated and glued together

8 - f, v - imagine the bottom loop of the 8 as an effluent pipe discharging waste (letter image of F in alphabet system)

9 - p, b - b as 9 rotated 180 degrees.
You have to learn these before proceeding.

Let us now illustrate this with an example:

Step 2: Example: Phone Number

Let's say you want to remember a string of numbers such as a bank account number:

40 32 65 37 89 12

Step 3: Converting numbers to letters

We start by assigning each number its equivalent in letters:

rs – mn – jl – mc – vp – tn

Step 4: Forming words

And then follow this by making words out of the letters.

Rice – moon – Yale – mic – jar – vip – tuna

Step 5: Using the Journey Method

Finally, we can now apply the journey method to remember the words in their particular sequence:

“You were inside a restaurant eating some rice and looking out the window, that’s when you saw the moon. You decided to go out for a walk. While walking you happened to run into an interesting building, Oh, would you look at that; isn’t that Yale (University)?

Some guy was inside the house talking while holding a mic in his hand, and some of the people attending this meeting were sitting in the VIP section. And weirdest of all, they were all eating a jar of tuna!”

Now, as you can see, all we need to do is to remember this little story and convert the words back into numbers. It’s easier than it sounds, with this type of method you can remember thousands of numbers in just a few hours!

Expanding the systems

Tip. • What to do when you forget something

Try to remember the situation you were in when you memorized it. What were you thinking about when it happened? Also try to recall where you were sitting at the time.

If the lost piece of information was part of list you could slowly recite the list over and over again until the missing item pops up again.

Chapter VII

Writing

Exams

At the end of the day, you need to do good on your exams.

You need to understand how to prepare for your exams, what to do during the exam and what to do following it.

This section provides you with precisely that, a guide to tackling exams.

I want you to answer this following question; how do you view exams in general?

Do you hate them? Do you get a disgusting feeling of aversion throughout your body when the word is mentioned? If you do, I think it's time to change your attitude towards exams. I am sure you have experienced how it feels to get an A couple of times, don't you just love that feeling?

Well, I am sure you do and that's exactly why you should focus at getting good test results instead of thinking about how difficult the tests might be. Think positive and get positive results.

Two weeks before the test

- Make sure that you have all the study materials that you need in your possession. Look through your notes, do they cover all the necessary information in an adequate way or do you need to borrow and copy someone else's notes?
 - Make sure that you're absolutely certain about which chapters to read, you do not want to read unnecessary information.
 - Done that already, now what? Make a study scheme. Remember this golden rule of studying:
-

“Don’t study long pieces of information under a small period of time but study small pieces of information under a long period of time”.

Read through all your study material 2-3 times a day (without hard memorization) and make sure to finish any exercises you may have (don’t forget to ask the teacher if your solutions were valid before putting them to memory).

One week before the test

- Continue reading all the study materials you have 2-3 times a day. You should by now be ready or almost ready to take the exam.
- Ask a member of your family or someone else fitting to pose you questions about your subject. This is really good, since they might see things from a different perspective.

The night before the exam

- Do not sleep too late; you do not want to miss your exam tomorrow.
 - Wake up as early as possible, you do not want to be in a hurry when arriving to the place of the exam.
-

- Eat breakfast. Remember that you have to include food containing sugar such as juice or the like, your brain runs on this and you don't want it to stop in the middle of the highway.

The day of the exam

- Do not forget to bring a watch; the classroom might not have one.
- Never start daydreaming in the middle of a test. It's important to try to finish it as quickly as possible in order to have time left to review your answers.
- If you do not know a question, skip it. You can always come back to it later on, there is no need to worry.

Questions with Alternative Answers

The beautiful aspect of this type of exam is that you can more or less guess yourself to the correct answer. You can do this by following these simple guidelines:

- You should always start by excluding the obviously incorrect options.
-

- If the option is formulated in a highly explicit manner, it's usually an incorrect answer. Look out for words starting with "*always, never, everyone, none etc*" since these type of sentences are nullified as soon as one simple counter example can be brought forth. That's why the correct answer often contain words like; *usually, sometimes, almost never etc.*
- Options which are degrading for instance against ethnic groups or women are usually wrong answers.
- In case your options include different entities being repeated in each and every answer, then omit the ones that exclude any of the otherwise repeated entities. For example, the question says:

Question. • What were the names of the leaders of the elected parties (to parliament) in the Swedish 2006 elections?

- A) Göran Persson, Lars Ohly, Peter Ericsson and Maud Olofsson.
- B) Göran Persson, Lars Ohly, Peter Ericsson, Maud Olofsson, Lars Lejonborg and Sven Andersson.
- C) Lars Ohly, Peter Ericsson, Maud Olofsson, Lars Lejonborg
- D) Göran Persson, Lars Ohly, Peter Ericsson, Maud Olofsson, Lars Lejonborg and Fredrik Reinfeldt.

Let us now analyze the different options. By applying the technique which we mentioned before we can easily exclude option A and C since option A doesn't include the name Lars Lejonborg (all the other options do) and option C excludes the name Göran Persson, thus leading us to choice between either B or D.

This means that we now have a 50% chance to guess right compared to the 25% chance we had in the beginning. In case you are wondering, option D is the correct one.

Finally, never forget to re-read the text until you've grasped its meaning!

- Options expressing a self evident answer are usually incorrect. That is to say, avoid answers which only manifest the obvious.

- Always read all the options before answering. Remember that you're not supposed to pick any seemingly correct answer but the one that is the most correct.

- In case you're unaware of a certain words linguistic meaning you could always try to break down the words into suffix or prefix. For instance, knowing that the prefix "demo" means people and the suffix "cracy" means ruling you could guess that democracy means "ruling by people".

- If you're totally unaware of the correct answer and there is no score penalty for guessing wrong, then go for either option B or C. Studies have shown that the correct answer is more likely to be one of these.

- If you are fairly sure that you have picked the correct answer then do not change it because of doubt. Certainty should not be exchanged for

doubt. Studies have shown that the first attempt is usually the correct one.

- The correct alternative is often also a truthful statement. The composer(s) of the test are uneager to spread lies to the people by making a fault assumption a correct answer in a test.

Chapter VIII **Writing Research Papers**

Writing your research paper can be a lot of fun but at the same time also somewhat troublesome.

This section offers a few tips to consider during this journey.

Writing Research Papers

Writing research papers can be both fun and challenging. As humans we tend to write more passionately if we are faced with a favorite subject, thus it's preferable to choose to write about something which interests you. This will most likely make the process easier as well as more enjoyable.

Before writing it

1. Make sure you give yourself enough time to work. Always estimate the work needed to be done prior to writing it. This way, you'll know how much energy and time you'll need to allocate to the project. Organization is key to writing a successful paper. If you're disorganized you'll lose time and the quality of your work will suffer,

A good way to stay organized is to use a daily schedule to keep track of the tasks needed to be done. Here you'll list what's already been done and what remains to be done. This will give you a nice overview to follow the process as it unfolds.

2. Start out your research with a solid Thesis Statement. This is referring to the question that you propose to answer in your paper. Some professors are very keen to have this stated before beginning your research. This varies from teacher to teacher so make sure you know what specific instructions to follow before beginning. If you're unsure you can always ask your teacher.

Tip •

- Keep it simple; sometimes less is more.
- Make sure it's specific. It's easier to work with a narrowly selected subject than with a massive idea.
- Make sure your propositions could work. The suitability of the thesis must work otherwise you're simply wasting time. Do a little research to make sure there's adequate material available on your topic.

3. Take some time to get to know the libraries you'll be using. Each library and database has its own system for referencing materials. If you're unsure it could be wise to ask someone who's conducted similar research for advice. Librarians

are also nice targets for advice seeking. If your deadline is approaching it's even more important that you know where to find all the materials. You have no time to lose, every minute counts.

Introduction

It's important that you begin your paper in a way that grabs the reader by the eye balls and forces them to continue reading. It ought be concise and to the point. Avoid putting opinionated statements like "I think..." or, "My views are...". These types of statements reduce your credibility.

Main Headings

Now you begin answering the questions you posed in your introduction. Be sure that you are systematic in the way you do this. Go through each point in your argument and explain it thoroughly. If you're for instance dealing with a historical paper, you could begin with the background and history of your material.

Sub Headings

In this section you break down your Main Heading into smaller paragraphs. Be sure each

paragraph has a clear and well thought out point.

Remember to include all the pieces of information you want to cover. If you haven't done so already you should make notes of the most important keywords and ideas that you want to include in your paper. This could be for instance a particular date, some specific numbers showing growth or decline etc.

Keep embedding these ideas into your paper and make sure it's logically consistent. Follow this method until you've reached your last, concluding statement.

Your conclusion is the epitome of your work; it should be the final synopsis of the paper and contain a brief summary of the statements your thesis set out to answer.

When you've finished your outline you should have covered all the main points you posed in your thesis statement. Make sure this is the case.

Rough Draft

Never feel constricted to write due to grammatical worries. It's only natural that your thesis will look a little off shape in the beginning. In the beginning it's therefore prudent that you write as freely as possible while closely following your outline.

Avoid padding your paper with excessive quotations. It is after all not a quote book but a research paper. Once you've finished the rough draft you can then start checking for inaccuracies and completeness of facts.

If you think a certain section is somewhat too long or short you can rewrite it until you feel content with it.

Final Draft

Revise your paragraphs for unity and coherence. It's vitally important that your sentences flow naturally and uphold to grammatical rules. Reword your sentences for effectiveness of structure, grammar and punctuation. If you use a word/phrase too often it could be wise to change it to a closely related word/phrase. Have a dictionary nearby to check your spelling and usage, or, if you have a computer, run a spell check.

The computers spell check is a good way to start your proof reading but it can't constitute the whole proof reading. That's why it's important that you read the paper aloud to yourself to see how it flows. By doing this you'll be able to correct any awkward sounding sentences.

Improve your writing skills

We are lazy! Let's just face it, the human race inclines towards laziness and laziness. We look for easy solutions everywhere and this is also the case when it comes to education. We have this weird thing where we wait until the last day to write down our assignments, how come?

Do they really think that as soon as the clock hits midnight they will suddenly be touched by this profound insight and the dark clouds of uncertainty will make room for the radiance of the sun?

Perhaps, but most likely it's because of bad self motivation. You have to start writing on your assignment the same week it's handed out, what does one really gain by postponing it?

Nothing of course, apart from a whole deal of stress. It would be a good thing to try to write a lot under your free time, this helps a lot when

the time comes for yet another assignment. Having a hard time not knowing how to begin your work?

My first recommendation is: Never worry about grammatical rules!

I know, it sound as a pretty bad advice but it really works. Just write, it doesn't matter if it sounds horrible you can always go back and correct your draft later on. The important thing is to start writing and not get stuck in the first sentence.

What it means to actually read a text

Reading a text involves more than just eye movements, in case you're reading a novel that might be enough but if you're studying a course you might want to consider including more factors.

For instance; reading a text should always be followed by highlighting and perhaps even reciting the material. Different studies have shown that the more senses involved in reading, the easier it becomes to remember the text.

Tip • Share Notes!

If you're tired of writing notes by yourself you could join/form notes writing groups instead. You and your friends could take turns in writing notes, make copies of it and then distribute the notes amongst yourselves.

This is not to say that you should lick the paper in hope of introducing yet another sense but merely a simple note reminding you that reading is a very complex process.

Before studying a text in depth you should try to get a good picture of what the text is about. Go through the page of contents as well as skimming through all the pages, reading headlines, bolded and italic text in order to get a glimpse of the thoughts.

Now, try to convert the text in easy everyday language. Be sure that you've understood the text correctly, if you're unsure it's better to ask the professor, this feedback could be crucial. And also, while reading, try to highlight all the keywords you find but be sure only to underline keywords.

Some people have this habit of highlighting

everything, which makes the whole process pointless. Finally, be sure not to be passive while reading. Being active in reading is my biggest advice to you concerning this issue.

Do not study in front of the TV or while talking with friends or the like, you should only study while your mind is active.

Chapter IX

Holding a Speech

In this final chapter we'll deal with oratory skills and how do you dazzle your audience.

These 10 tips are good to keep in mind before holding a speech or delivering a lecture.

Do you feel nervous about speaking in public? Well, if you know your thing it's really not that hard. Here are 10 tips on how to hold speeches that will dazzle your audience completely:

1. Confidence

You have to have a positive sensory orientation towards your speech, learn to have confidence. Unfortunately there are no secrets to this; you have to rehearse over and over again until you're confident that you can make it.

Do remember that most people can easily distinguish between the certain speaker and the uncertain one; this is why you should never read your speech directly from a piece of paper. It gives an extremely bad impression.

2. Spice your speech

Make your performance remembered, make it tasty and try your outmost not to bore people. We all dislike hearing a boring professor speak, why commit the same mistake? A good way to spice your speech is by adding quotes to it, the more the merrier.

By the way, young folks are part of this culture where one uses some keywords over and over again which could make your whole presentation contaminated. Watch out for words such as; "like", "well", "you know" etc. A good way to counter this is by using alliterations, i.e. A

sentence where all the initial letters in every word start by the same letter.

For example: *Cool! Crusty's car crushed Carl.* The important thing is; be innovative when it comes to speeches!

3. Your posture

Your “body language” could turn out to be more crucial than you think, some people even claim that it might be more important than the speech itself! Make sure you have a firm control over your body and try your outmost to diminish the use of unnecessary movements. This might distract the audience and your recital might even be viewed as void.

4. Eye contact

Be cautious concerning your eye movements. You should avoid starring at someone/thing provocative, you do not want to be angered, annoyed or aroused when speaking.

5. Water

I think that this one concerns the guys a bit more; we (male gender) have this thing, we speak louder and less calmer then women. Who knows, you might even become thirsty or lose

your voice in the middle of the presentation! If you're equipped with a bottle of water, your problem is fixed, plus you get a few extra seconds to fetch your thoughts as you're drinking.

6. Cards

Ever watched one of those lousy – in my view - talk shows they air all the time? I'm sorry if I brought back bad memories from the days you use to watch this garbage, but in case you paid attention back then you probably noticed how all the talk shows hosts use cards when speaking. This is an excellent move; you should employ this as well for a number of reasons:

- a) Looks professional.
- b) By using keywords and sentences, you can summarize a long speech.
- c) You avoid using normal (US letter or A4) paper, if your hands shiver when you speak in public, the piece of paper might shiver as well, very embarrassing indeed.

7. Tools

Do you know how to make a power point, flash (or the like) presentation? If the answers yes,

then what is stopping you? In case you do decide to use a sideshow, be sure to avoid weird animations or music, this might distract your audience. Keeping it simple but classy usually works the best.

8. Your clothing

People don't usually think of this, but be aware of the clothes you wear that day. You don't want to wear tight/revealing clothes. The whole point of the speech is for people to listen to your words, not be aroused or taken by your looks.

9. Speak well

This must be emphasized; speak in a gentle and respectful matter. You have to avoid using bad words or phrases, such as the notorious "f" word.

10. The End

Try to make your ending summarize your whole speech, be innovative and make sure you don't neglect this part. A good ending compensates a bad introduction. With those words, I hereby proclaim... The End

Epilogue

Congratulations! You have just finished reading this book. Please take the time to go through it again if anything was unclear. If you have any feedback on what could be improved, you are welcome to contribute by going to: www.study-habits.com

Remember, we're open 24hrs a day, 7 days per week and there is plenty of free parking!

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Be sure to check back from time to time.

I also promised you a free premium membership to our upcoming student community; this information will be e-mailed to you as soon as this news service arrives.

Abderisak Adam

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