

Study Tips in a Nut Shell

Notes from *Successful Study* by James C. Coleman and Frieda Libaw
with a few personal considerations by E.L. Burns.

The job of learning:

- Learning means work.
- Being a student is no easy job.
- Three hours in class means at least six hours out of class.
- College work is no “snap,” but it should stimulate and broaden the mind. It should make you see and appreciate more of life.
- No one should be bored in college.

What to do:

- Get organized.
- Budget your time for in-class and out-of-class work.
- Study hard.
- Find some interest in each subject.
- Have a time to study.
- Don't get too comfortable
- Avoid disturbances such as noise and loud music.
- Do your studying and then fool around.
- Don't try to do all your studying in one night before a test.
- Don't take it for granted that you have a course made.
- Combine information from your textbook, lectures, and your own research.
- Enter into class discussion
- Let your professor know you're alive.
- Shoot for an A – not a B or a C.
- Don't be afraid to accept responsibility.
- Study your hardest subject when you are most alert.
- Make use of those odd minutes as well as blocks of hours for study.

Lesson time:

- Read the lesson *before* it is discussed in class so you will have a better idea of what the instructor is talking about.
- Listen to what is being said.
- Think about what you hear.
- Try to evaluate what the instructor says – think critically.
- Try to think ahead of the speaker to foresee his arguments and guess what his conclusion is going to be.
- Take part in class discussions – ask questions.
- Take systematic notes.
- Reread text and study notes – do some independent research.

The textbook:

Read the title of the book and the name of the author. Get in the habit of remembering names, books, and authors. You will get to feel that the book is the living author telling you what he thinks about things and that it is not just a lot of dead printed words. Let the book “come alive.”

Who is the publisher? Where was the book published? What is the latest copyright date? Become knowledgeable!

Read the preface, skim the table of contents – thus discovering the purpose of the book and a general outline of what it covers. Is there an index? It may save you useless leafing through the book.

The chapter:

Is there an introduction at the beginning or summary at the end of the chapter? If so, read them. They are a “bird’s eye” view of the chapter.

Read and think from the headings. If there are questions at the end of the chapter – read them. They will give you a purpose for reading the book.

Read the chapter section by section, actively searching for the answers to your questions. Check, challenge, and evaluate what the author says. Underline. Make notes in the book margin.

At the end of each section, look away from the book and recite the answers to your questions. Write the answers down if you can remember them better that way.

Cover:

- Definitions
- Words and phrases in italics or bold face print.
- Causes and effects
- Authors and their works
- People and their theories or accomplishments
- Methods
- Lists – categories – classifications

Review the chapter by reciting the sub-points covered under each heading. Review your underlining and margin notes. Review your corresponding lecture notes.

Exam time:

- Look the test over.
- Read the direction. You may save yourself work.

Examples:

1. Answer questions #1, #2, or #3. Note the “or.”
2. Check answer(s) means there may be one or more than one answer.
 - Do the easy questions first.
 - If you have a choice of questions, try to do the ones that count the most.

Essay questions should contain the facts, show their relationship to one another and support your conclusions from your own readings and thoughts.

Objective tests:

1. Answer all questions you are sure about first and put a small mark by the ones that give you trouble.
2. If you guess, put down the first answer that occurs to you.
3. It is usually not wise to change an answer, unless you are sure another answer is right.
4. Chances are that *always, never, all or none* make a false statement. However, each statement must be read critically.
5. In multiple choice questions, first eliminate the obviously wrong answers, and then make your choice from the remaining ones.
6. If you can narrow your answer to two choices, it is usually better to guess than to not mark it.
7. In matching, match the items you are sure of, then decide on the more difficult ones.
8. In completion questions, if possible, insert a technical term or key phrase exactly as it appears in the textbook.
9. If you can’t remember the exact textbook answer, put down an answer in your own words that is an approximate word or phrase.

Finally, look over your test paper. Have you answered all the questions you were supposed to? Are your questions numbered correctly? Can you make any corrections in spelling, punctuation, or grammar? Can you fill in any last minute information? *Is your name on each page of your test paper?*