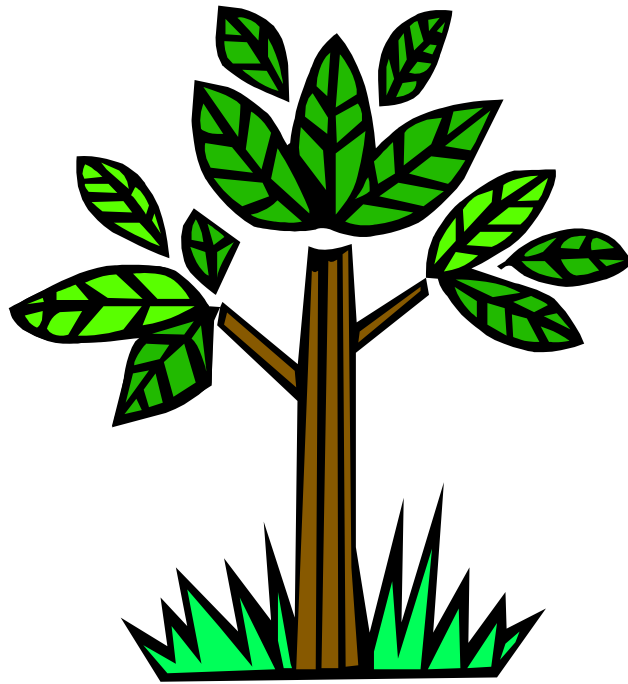


ACADEMIC SKILLS RESOURCE MANUAL



*Adapted from Dominican University of California
Updated by Learning Assistance Programs, MSMC*

Table of Contents



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....3

CHAPTER 2: QUICK IDEAS FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT.....4

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING STYLES.....5

CHAPTER 4: TIME MANAGEMENT.....10

CHAPTER 5: GOAL SETTING14

CHAPTER 6: IMPROVING CONCENTRATION.....18

CHAPTER 7: EFFECTIVE READING22

CHAPTER 8: ACTIVE LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING.....24

CHAPTER 9: ALLEVIATING TEST ANXIETY.....27

CHAPTER 10: TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES30

CHAPTER 11: STUDY GROUPS37

CHAPTER 12: HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT39

CHAPTER 13: RELAXATION AND STRESS-REDUCTION TECHNIQUES.....43

CHAPTER 14: HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PAPER.....50

CHAPTER 15: ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT73

CHAPTER 16: INTERNET RESOURCES73

Chapter 1: Introduction



Dear Student,

Because you are making use of this manual, you must be seeking assistance with your academic study habits. Although many students have problems with their study skills, not all take steps to remedy the problem. You, on the other hand, have decided to improve your study skills; thus, you are creating an excellent foundation for your academic career. Making the decision to develop your academic skills demonstrates your commitment not only to academic achievement, but to the self-knowledge that will prove invaluable to you in every aspect of your life. Being in college is not easy at any age. It takes courage, commitment, perseverance, and hard work. So take pride in your decision to pursue this journey.

This manual is meant to be user-friendly and not too technical. We want this information to be useful to you. The material included is felt to be vital information that will truly be practical and get results. The suggestions provided within are proven to work if used with patience and perseverance. No technique in and of itself will transform your academic life. This is a toolbox, but you are the carpenter. You do the hard work. With your hard work and the use of this and other resources, you will succeed here at Mount St. Mary's College.

Chapter 2: Quick Ideas for Academic Support



These important guidelines should be used to help you achieve your academic goals.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

- ◆ Get help before you are sure you will need it. Have your resources in place early so you don't panic later.
- ◆ Seek tutoring services at MSMC. You are entitled to up to 3 hours of tutoring per week per subject, as available, while classes are in session. Begin working with a tutor early in the semester, before you have trouble. Then if you find you don't need the extra help, discontinue. Visit the Chalon Learning Center or the Doheny Learning Resource Center to complete a tutor request form.
- ◆ Attend academic skill workshops offered at MSMC and elsewhere.
- ◆ Your local library has many resources.
- ◆ Your instructor is a resource for you. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get clarification on assignments and test contents.
- ◆ Your academic advisor wants to know if you need help so that he/she can set you on the right path to meeting your needs.
- ◆ Do you think you have a learning disability? Don't wait. Find out. Get tested. If you have learning disabilities for which you have documentation, you may be provided accommodations as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). For a referral list of practitioners you can contact for testing or to arrange accommodations for a documented disability, visit the Chalon Learning Center or the Doheny Learning Resource Center.
- ◆ Ask classmates for help. Students like to be of assistance. It reinforces the learning for them and makes everyone feel good about helping.
- ◆ Ask family and friends for help.
- ◆ You can purchase many refresher books. Brush up on subjects such as math and English before classes begin. The Chalon Learning Center also has resources available for check-out.
- ◆ Purchase your textbooks well in advance of classes. Read them early and give yourself a head start.

Chapter 3: Learning Styles



People absorb information in three common ways, referred to as learning styles. The three learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. These lists describe the characteristics of each style. Which one are you? Go to <http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilswweb.html> click on questionnaire, and find out!

VISUAL

- ♣ Learn best by seeing information
- ♣ Can easily recall printed information in the form of numbers, words, phrases, or sentences
- ♣ Have strong visualization skills and can look up (often up to the left) and “see” information
- ♣ Can make “movies in their minds” of information they are reading
- ♣ Have strong visual-spatial skills that involve sizes, shapes, textures, angles, and dimensions
- ♣ Pay close attention and learn to interpret body language (facial expressions, eyes, and stance)
- ♣ Have a keen awareness of aesthetics, the beauty of the physical environment, and visual media

AUDITORY

- ◆ Learn best by hearing information
- ◆ Can accurately remember details of information heard in conversations or lectures
- ◆ Have strong language skills, including well-developed vocabularies and appreciation of words
- ◆ Have strong oral communication skills that enable them to be articulate
- ◆ Have finely tuned ears and may find learning a foreign language relatively easy
- ◆ Hear tones, rhythms, and notes of music and often have exceptional musical talents

KINESTHETIC

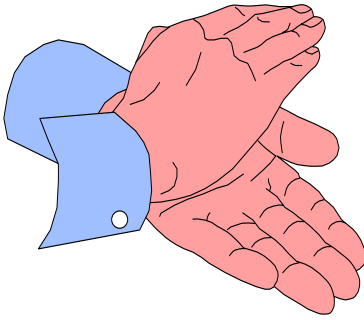
- ♣ Learn best by using their hands (hands-on learning) or by full body movement
- ♣ Learn best by doing
- ♣ Learn well in activities that involve performing (athletes, actors, dancers)
- ♣ Work well with their hands in areas such as repair work, sculpting, art, or working with tools
- ♣ Are well coordinated with a strong sense of timing and body movements
- ♣ Often wiggle, tap their feet, or move their legs when they sit
- ♣ Were often labeled as hyperactive

Learning Strategies for Each Learning Style



VISUAL

- ◆ Create stronger visual memories of printed materials by highlighting important ideas with different colored highlighters or by highlighting specific letters in spelling words, or formulas or equations in math.
- ◆ Take time to visualize pictures, charts, graphs, or printed information, and take time to practice recalling visual memories when you study.
- ◆ Create “movies in your mind” of information that you read; use your visual memory as a television screen with the information moving across the screen.
- ◆ Use visual study tools such as visual mapping, hierarchies, comparison charts, and time lines to represent information you are studying. Expand chapter mappings or create your own chapter mappings to review main ideas and important details in chapters. Add colors and/or shapes or pictures.
- ◆ Enhance your notes, flash cards, or any other study tools by adding colors and pictures (sketches, cartoons, and stick figures).
- ◆ Color-code study tools. (Different colors imprint into memory more easily for some people.)
- ◆ Use colors to accentuate specific parts of textbooks, notes, or any written materials with which you work or that you have created.
- ◆ Copy information in your own handwriting if seeing information on paper in your own handwriting helps you learn and remember more easily. Practice visualizing what you write.
- ◆ Use your keen observational skills to observe people and pick up on clues they may give about important information, emotions, or their general state of being.
- ◆ Always be prepared with a pen and notepaper (or a small notepad) to write down information or directions. (Written information is easier to recall more accurately.)



AUDITORY

- ◆ Talk out loud to explain new information, express your ideas, and practice information you are studying, or paraphrase another speaker.
- ◆ Recite frequently while you study. Reciting involves speaking out loud in complete sentences and in your own words.
- ◆ Read out loud. (Reading out loud often increases your comprehension or clarifies confusing information that is read silently.)
- ◆ Work with tutors, with a study buddy, or in a study group to have ample opportunity to ask questions, articulate answers, and express your understanding of information orally.
- ◆ For lectures, take your own notes, but back them up with a tape-recorded version of the lecture. (Request approval from the instructor the first time.) Review only the parts of the lecture that are unclear or confusing.
- ◆ When you practice reciting your notes, flash cards, study tools, or information from a textbook, turn on a tape recorder. Tapes made of your own voice often become valuable review tools.
- ◆ Verbally explain information or processes to someone or to an imaginary person. Explaining verbally provides immediate feedback of your level of understanding.
- ◆ Prior to a test, make tapes to review the most important information (rules, definitions, formulas, lists of information, dates, or other factual information).
- ◆ Create rhymes, jingles, or songs to help you remember specific facts.
- ◆ Read confusing information using exaggerated expression. The natural rhythm and pattern of your voice often group information in such a way that it becomes easier to understand.

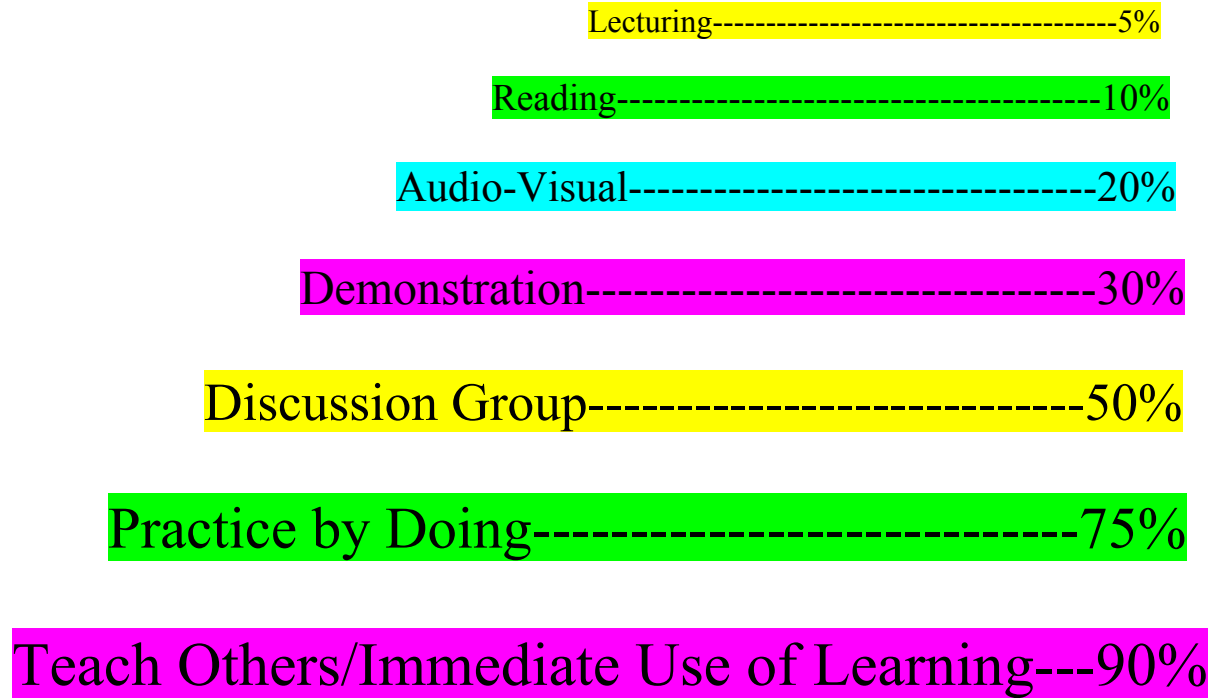


KINESTHETIC

- ◆ Handle objects, tools, or machinery that you are trying to learn. For example, handle the rocks you study in geology, or repeat applications several times on a computer.
- ◆ Create manipulatives (study tools that you can move around with your hands). These may include flash cards or cards that can be shuffled, spread out, sorted, or stacked as a way to categorize information.
- ◆ Cut charts or diagrams apart; reassemble them in their correct order.
- ◆ Use exaggerated movements and hand expressions. Drama, dance, pantomime, or role-playing assists the development of long-term memory. Muscles also hold memory, so involving movement in the learning process creates muscle memory.
- ◆ Type or use a word processor. Using a keyboard involves fine motor skills and muscle memory; it may be easier to remember information that you typed or entered into a computer.
- ◆ Talk and walk as you recite or practice information. Pacing or walking with study materials in hand helps some people process information more naturally.
- ◆ Work at a chalkboard, with a flip chart, or on large poster paper to create study tools. List, draw, practice, or write information while you stand up and work on a larger surface.
- ◆ Learn by doing. Use every opportunity possible to move as you study. For example, if you are studying perimeters in math, tape off an area of a room and walk the perimeter.

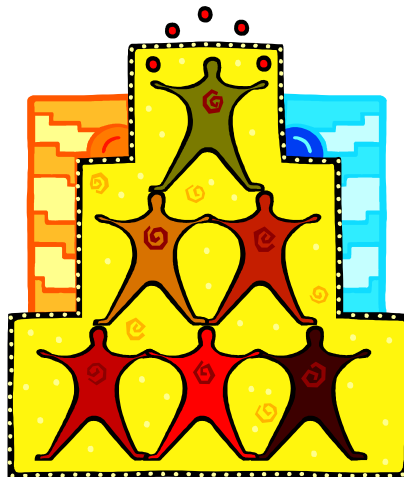
THE LEARNING PYRAMID

Average Retention Rate



Source: *Learning Pyramid* (May, 1996)

For additional help with Learning Strategies, visit the Chalon Learning Center or the Doheny Learning Resource Center to schedule an appointment with a trained staff member.



Chapter 4: Time Management



If you plan your time effectively, you will be able to accomplish what is important to you. This includes study, social time, physical exercise, and relaxation and recreation time. These guidelines can help.

- ◆ Find out what times of the day you have the most focus. Try to reserve those times for study.
- ◆ Find out what times of the day you have the most physical energy. Try to reserve those times for exercise and kinesthetically oriented study.
- ◆ Find out what times of the day you need to eat, rest, or be social. Try to reserve those times for these activities rather than study.
- ◆ Create a balanced life. Making the time for study will do no good if you can't force yourself to focus because you are enervated, feel isolated, or you can't sit still.
- ◆ Create strong patterns in your life. Once you get into the groove, it is easier to generate study.
- ◆ Establish good health habits. Don't neglect yourself.
- ◆ Create a semester wall calendar of class times, due dates for tests and papers, as well as dates when you will begin studying for tests and working on papers.
- ◆ Create a weekly schedule of study times and other activities. Be flexible, but create guidelines to follow. Stop recreating the wheel each week.
- ◆ Set aside twice as much study time per class as seat time for that class.
- ◆ Be realistic. You can do more than you think you can, but remember—the goal is to be successful in your studies. What you think you **should** be able to do and what you **can** realistically do may be two different things. A schedule that you can't follow will only make you feel badly about yourself and will never work.
- ◆ Prioritize. Do this daily, weekly, and monthly. (See chart on p. 12.)

- ◆ Put time into time management. It may seem contradictory that you are taking time out of your busy life to manage your time. However, it will save you lots and lots of time. When planning your weekly schedule, include time for time management.
- ◆ Do the tough tasks first.
- ◆ Break down large projects into smaller steps.
- ◆ Consolidate similar tasks. For example, if you need to make several calls, make them in the same time slot. Reorganizing thought and effort takes time.
- ◆ Be flexible about where you study. Study everywhere and anywhere.
- ◆ Be flexible, patient, and persistent. If you are getting exasperated, take a break—and then return to studying. Keep applying yourself **to form new habits**. After you have formed new study and life habits, it will take less energy and time to do the tasks you need to do.
- ◆ Conquer the tendency in yourself to avoid difficult tasks.
- ◆ Delegate activities and ask your family for understanding and practical help. Now that you are a student, you may not be able to do everything you used to do.
- ◆ Allow your self-concept to change. Include the role of student in your life. Cherish that role and make time for that new you.





Weekly Schedule



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						9 am: Walk Dog w/Trisha
6 pm: Family Dinner	5 – 6 pm: Meet Lisa at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Math 2000	Noon – 1 pm: Math Tutor 6 – 8 pm: Studying	5:30 – 6:30pm: DUC Bookstore 6:30 – 8 pm: Studying	5 – 6 pm: Meet Barb at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Environ. Issues	5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group	11 am: Swim at DUC 5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group
11 am: Swim at DUC 6 pm: Family Dinner	5 – 6 pm: Meet Lisa at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Math 2000	Noon – 1 pm: Math Tutor 6 – 8 pm: Studying	4 – 5 pm: TLC PowerPoint Tutorial	5 – 6 pm: Meet Barb at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Environ. Issues	5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group	11 am: Swim at DUC 5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group
11 am: Swim at DUC 6 pm: Family Dinner	5 – 6 pm: Meet Lisa at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Math 2000	Noon – 1 pm: Math Tutor 6 – 8 pm: Studying	6 – 8 pm: Studying	5 – 6 pm: Meet Barb at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Environ. Issues	5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group	11 am: Swim at DUC 5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group
11 am: Swim at DUC 6 pm: Family Dinner	5 – 6 pm: Meet Lisa at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Math 2000	Noon – 1 pm: Math Tutor 6 – 8 pm: Studying	6 – 8 pm: Studying	5 – 6 pm: Meet Barb at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Environ. Issues	5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group	11 am: Swim at DUC 5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group
11 am: Swim at DUC 6 pm: Family Dinner	5 – 6 pm: Meet Lisa at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Math 2000	Noon – 1 pm: Math Tutor 6 – 8 pm: Studying	6 – 8 pm: Studying	5 – 6 pm: Meet Barb at Cafeteria 6 – 8 pm: Environ. Issues	5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group	11 am: Swim at DUC 5 – 7 pm: Meet Study Group
11 am: Swim at DUC 6 pm: Family Dinner	Memorial Day No School					

Color Codes: Fun, Studying, Class, Holiday



Weekly Schedule



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT

Color Codes: Fun, Studying, Class, Holiday

FOR OTHER FORMATS OF TIME MANAGEMENT PLANNING SHEETS,
VISIT THE CHALON LEARNING CENTER OR DOHENY LEARNING
RESOURCE CENTER.

Chapter 5: Goal Setting



Goal setting is about taking control of your life and creating your own real results that are truly fulfilling to you. Most people don't think about their goals in an organized manner. The following process is an important part of setting and achieving goals.

- ◆ Brainstorm. Write down all the goals you can think of that would make you happy. Don't overthink it. Just let it flow.
- ◆ Put the goals into different categories: personal, professional, family, academic, recreational, and spiritual.
- ◆ Don't prioritize yet. Next to each goal, write a time to accomplish it: 1 month, 1 year, 5 years, etc.
- ◆ Below each goal, write down how you are going to accomplish it. Be sure to include all the details. For example, if one of your long-term goals is to become a doctor, what are all the steps? First, you must take the prerequisite undergraduate courses. You need to pay for this. You then need to take the Medical College Admissions Test (M-CA) and apply to medical school. For this, you need excellent grades. Remember, these are just ways to help you become clear. Don't get bogged down. Enjoy the process.

- ◆ Put a star next to those goals that you are sure you want to achieve. Put aside the ones you would like to achieve but that aren't absolutely necessary. This doesn't mean you won't work toward these goals. It just means you are prioritizing so you aren't trying to accomplish too many things at once. You want to make sure you can achieve the most important goals. If things are going well, add in others.
- ◆ Remember, your goals should be balanced. Cover all categories including personal, academic, and professional so you are planning for a sane and balanced life.

Write down other ideas you feel are important to creating your own achievable goals.



GOAL GRAPH

Area of Life:	Time limit	Priority
1. _____ How:		
2. _____ How:		
3. _____ How:		
4. _____ How:		
5. _____ How:		
Notes:		

Duplicate this graph for all areas of life for which you have goals. Include such categories as Marriage and Family, Education and College, Career and Professional, Social and Political, Religious and Spiritual, and Fun and Recreation.

Chapter 6: Improving Concentration



The following will help you with self-regulation. If you can't concentrate because you're either too jazzed up or too worn out, these strategies will help you get balanced, focused, and back to work.

THE CIRCLE OF TOTALITY

The Circle of Totality Theory states that to stay balanced and focused, it is good to vary the type of activity one does according to the sides of the brain and the sides of the body. The Circle of Totality is a course of activity that includes spatial and art activities such as drawing and dancing (the right side of the brain and the left side of the body) and linear mental activity such as mathematics and writing (the left side of the brain and the right side of the body).

Therefore, when you're studying it's a good idea to vary activities so you concentrate better. This is why it can be helpful to read a textbook, draw pictures with colors, write notes, and talk aloud about the subject matter. These activities, when used together, incorporate the Circle of Totality. Try it and see if it helps.

Improving Concentration



DIET, EXERCISE, AND SLEEP

- ◆ Make sure you have eaten so your blood sugar is not too low and your brain is getting enough nourishment.
- ◆ Don't overeat. This will make you sleepy.
- ◆ Don't have too much caffeine. You won't be able to focus and may get very tired later.
- ◆ Don't smoke. This contracts the blood vessels in your body and starves the brain.
- ◆ Get enough sleep but not too much. Getting too much sleep can make you sleepy.
- ◆ Exercise daily. Go for a walk, stretch, or work out. This gets the blood flowing to the brain and removes toxins from your body that can make you foggy.
- ◆ Try doing yoga or stretching when you are either tired or overstimulated.
- ◆ Drink plenty of water. Dehydration makes you sleepy.



Improving Concentration



OVERSTIMULATION

To compensate for being overstimulated, try the following:

- ◆ Do some stretching or yoga.
- ◆ Go for a run.
- ◆ Have a cup of warm milk or tea.
- ◆ Do deep breathing exercises.
- ◆ Listen to calm music.
- ◆ Ask for a shoulder or foot rub. Or try a very gentle tickle massage on the arms.
- ◆ Lie down on something soft.
- ◆ If you are cold, put on something warmer.
- ◆ Eat something soothing such as pudding.
- ◆ Use a stress ball or Koosh ball.
- ◆ Look at a lava lamp for a while.
- ◆ Light scented candles or put on some lotion.
- ◆ Sit in a rocking chair for a while. The motion calms.
- ◆ Stop and listen to yourself. Are you stressed about something and trying to avoid it?
- ◆ Solve any immediate problems. If this is not possible, write down when and how you will solve the problems and set the list aside for later.
- ◆ Use a body brush and gently brush your skin.

Improving Concentration



UNDERSTIMULATION

To compensate for being understimulated, try the following:

- ◆ Eat something sour.
- ◆ Eat something crunchy like pretzels or carrots.
- ◆ Use some Listerine or other mouthwash and/or brush your teeth.
- ◆ Chew gum, especially if it has a strong flavor.
- ◆ Smell things with strong odors.
- ◆ Do some jumping jacks, sit ups, or go for a short walk in the cold air.
- ◆ If you are too hot, peel some layers.
- ◆ Jump in a cool shower or splash water on your face. Run through some sprinklers.
- ◆ Laugh.
- ◆ Listen to rock 'n roll or hip hop music and sing or dance.
- ◆ Do some yoga and/or breathing exercises.
- ◆ Have a cold drink. Don't get dehydrated. If you want caffeine, green tea is the best.
- ◆ Read out loud, in an exaggerated fashion if you like.
- ◆ Use a body brush and brush your skin.
- ◆ Try a tickle massage on the arms or a foot rub.

Chapter 7: Effective Reading



You will spend a lot of your study time reading and analyzing texts for most of your classes. The tips in this chapter can help you become a more effective reader.

BEFORE READING

- ◆ Look at the title and the pictures. Think about what you already know about the topic or story.
- ◆ Consider the following problem statements. Then, after reading this section of the manual, write down strategies to compensate for any that are true of you.

“My textbooks are boring.”

“I can’t concentrate.”

“I’m easily distracted.”

“I fall asleep when I read.”

“I never study the right material.”

“There is too much information and I don’t know what is important.”

“I read for hours, but I don’t understand what I have read.”

“I don’t like to read.”

Effective Reading



WHILE READING

- ◆ Skim the book before settling in to read it.
- ◆ First look for the things you can understand. Don't get bogged down in the difficult parts.
- ◆ After reading each paragraph, write a summary sentence about the paragraph.
- ◆ Add details you think are important like numbers, names, and descriptions of processes.
- ◆ Use your highlighter liberally.
- ◆ However, highlight only what you want to look at later.
- ◆ Use different color highlighters for most important and somewhat important.
- ◆ If the words don't make sense, reread. Consider if you need a break.
- ◆ If you don't know what a word means, take the time to look it up. Otherwise, you may miss the entire meaning of a sentence or paragraph. Put the word in your notes with definition.
- ◆ Add drawings of your own to clarify what you have written.
- ◆ After reading and note taking, spend some time studying what you have just read and written.

Chapter 8: Active Listening and Note Taking



To get the most out of your classes, follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Go to every class and be on time.
- ◆ Open your mind when you walk in the classroom.
- ◆ Complete the reading assignments and work any problems before class.
- ◆ Bring the textbook to class.
- ◆ Sit in the front of the class. Students who do perform better on tests because
 - ❖ It is harder to fall asleep.
 - ❖ There is less distraction.
 - ❖ Material on the board is easier to read.
 - ❖ The instructor can see you more easily when you have a question.
 - ❖ Not all instructors are performers. Some instructors can project their energy to a large audience; many cannot. A professor who sounds boring from the back of the room might sound more interesting if you are closer.
- ◆ Arrive early and review your notes from the previous class. Note questions you want to ask.
- ◆ Deal with distractions by recognizing them and refocusing. If there is anything you can do to eliminate that distraction, do it. For example, if you are thinking about what you need to do later in the day, or what you need to buy at the store on your way home, quickly jot those things down on a piece of paper, put it in your pocket, and then get refocused on the lecture.
- ◆ Connect with the instructor by saying hello.

- ◆ Pay attention to the instructor's body language and facial expressions.
- ◆ Participate in class activities. Ask questions. Volunteer for demonstrations. Join in class discussions.
- ◆ Listen for introductory, concluding, and transition words and phrases, e.g., "the following three factors, in conclusion, the most important consideration, on the other hand." These phrases signal relationships, definitions, new subjects, conclusions, cause and effect, and examples.
- ◆ In general, write down ideas that the instructor takes the time to write on the board. You may want to copy diagrams, drawings, equations, names, places, dates, statistics, and definitions. Exceptions to this may be results from brainstorming exercises, or complex examples.
- ◆ Notice the instructor's interest level. If the instructor is excited about something, it is more likely to appear on the exam.
- ◆ Record in your notes if you spaced out and missed something. Fill it in later by asking a classmate.
- ◆ Title, number pages, and date all notes. Find the page in the textbook that refers to the section of notes so you can refer to that section later for a more complete look at the subject matter.
- ◆ Leave blank spaces in your notes. Make the page easy to read and comprehend.
- ◆ Write in phrases.
- ◆ Listen for introductory or summary remarks.
- ◆ Use your highlighter and underline.
- ◆ If facts are repeated, highlight them.



- ◆ Listen for pointer words, especially numbers.
- ◆ Skip examples unless needed to understand an idea.
- ◆ Use every possible abbreviation.
- ◆ Leave blank space if you miss something; ask later.
- ◆ Write down formulas, dates, graphs, and drawings.
- ◆ Put your comments in brackets.



Chapter 9: Alleviating Test Anxiety



Some students experience physical symptoms of anxiety before and during exams (an upset stomach, sweaty palms, etc.). Many of these students have trouble recalling information which they actually know. If this is a problem for you, try some of the suggestions below.

WHAT CAUSES TEST ANXIETY

- ◆ Lack of preparation as indicated by the following:
 - ❖ Cramming the night before the exam
 - ❖ Poor time management
 - ❖ Failure to organize text information
 - ❖ Poor study habits
- ◆ Worrying about the following:
 - ❖ Past performance on exams
 - ❖ How friends and other students are doing
 - ❖ The negative consequences of failure

Physical Signs of Test Anxiety

During an exam, as in any stressful situations, a student may experience any of the following bodily changes:

- ◆ Perspiration
- ◆ Sweaty palms
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Upset stomach
- ◆ Rapid heart beat
- ◆ Tense muscles



BEFORE THE EXAM

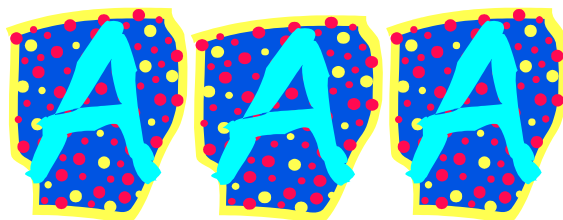
- ◆ Put things in perspective. Remind yourself that your entire future doesn't depend on this exam. There will be other exams and other courses. There are more important things in your life than a test.
- ◆ Over-study for the exam. This will increase your confidence. Also, if you know the material to the point of facility, you will be better able to answer test questions despite your test anxiety.
- ◆ Remind yourself of past successes. Think of a tough course in which you struggled but eventually succeeded. Tell yourself that if you did well on that past exam, you can do well on the upcoming exam.
- ◆ Don't give a test the power to define you. An exam won't tell you whether you're brilliant or stupid. Your performance on an exam mostly depends on how well you studied for the test, the quality of your prior education, and the test-taking strategies you use.
- ◆ Visualize completing the test successfully despite your anxiety. Play the entire "tape" in your mind—from the moment you wake up on the day of the exam to the moment you finish the exam.
- ◆ Use the word "quiz" rather than "exam" or "test" when you think about the upcoming evaluation. This will help put the importance of this one assessment in perspective.
- ◆ Practice anxiety control strategies. As you study, deliberately induce anxiety by saying to yourself the negative thoughts you typically have during an exam (i.e., "I'm going to fail."). Now, practice the Anxiety Control Procedure (described on the next page). Remind yourself that you will probably experience some anxiety during the test, but the anxiety won't hamper your performance because you've practiced controlling the anxiety.

DURING THE EXAM

- ◆ Try to avoid talking with other students right before the exam. Their anxieties may rub off on you.
- ◆ Choose a seat in a place with few distractions (probably near the front).
- ◆ Remind yourself of how hard you studied, how well you did on another exam, and how you've practiced anxiety control.
- ◆ If you begin to feel overly anxious, do this **ANXIETY CONTROL PROCEDURE**:
 - ❖ Turn the test paper over and close your eyes.
 - ❖ Breathe in slowly to the count of seven and exhale to the count of seven.
 - ❖ Continue this slow breathing until you begin to feel more relaxed.
 - ❖ Open your eyes, turn the test paper right side up, and give yourself a positive self-talk (i.e., "You're sure to do well. You studied hard, and remember, you got an 'A' on that final in physics."). This whole procedure should take only about a minute to do. It's well worth the time!
- ◆ Do not obsess about running out of time on the test. Check the time periodically (say, after you've finished a third of the test). But avoid checking too frequently, as this will only distract you and make you more anxious. Remind yourself that it's better to miss a few points by not quite finishing the test than to lose your concentration and thus miss many points.
- ◆ Approach your studying seriously, but think of the test as a game. Your goal is to collect as many points as you can in the time available. Don't worry about a particular question. If you're unsure of the answer, guess and move on. Remind yourself that you can miss a few questions and still get an 'A.'



Chapter 10: Test-Taking Strategies



The guidelines in this chapter will help you prepare for a variety of tests, including multiple choice, true or false, essay, and math and science tests.

PREPARING FOR A TEST

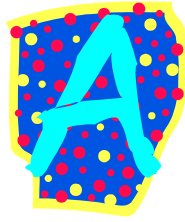
- ◆ Begin studying for a test about **three weeks** in advance.
- ◆ Complete long-term papers and projects in advance of scheduled exams so your time is as free as possible to study for the test.
- ◆ After each homework assignment and class session, review notes.
- ◆ Keep up with your assignments.
- ◆ Don't rush things. Stay patient and organized.
- ◆ Organize all your class outlines, class notes, and notes you have taken while doing your reading assignments. Put like topics together.
- ◆ It is very important to refer to the textbook, not just notes. Look at subject notes and then refer to the related pages in your text. Studying from the text will give you an in-depth look at the subject. **Notes alone are never enough.**
- ◆ Find out how the teacher writes the test and what he/she is looking for from the tester. Especially with essay tests, the style of response is important.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask your instructor what will be covered on the test: which chapters, lab experiments, lectures, outside readings, etc. Ask questions about confusing material during each class session and before studying for a test. You can't remember what you don't understand.
- ◆ Give yourself a 10-minute break for each hour of studying.
- ◆ Study alone first and then with others. Others reflect to us missing pieces of the study content that we will continually ignore.

- ◆ Divide study content among the group so each student becomes the teacher. **The best way to learn something is to teach it.**
- ◆ Review previous quizzes and correct past mistakes so you don't repeat them.
- ◆ Take facts and try to apply them to a case study.
- ◆ Get enough sleep the night before a test. Cramming until late at night won't help you remember if you haven't already learned the material.
- ◆ Have faith in yourself. If you have prepared correctly, you WILL do well.
- ◆ Don't cram right before the hour of testing. This creates anxiety and a fight or flight response in the body. The body's blood supply will be routed to the large muscles and more primitive brain centers. **Higher thinking processes will be inhibited!**
- ◆ Eat a balanced meal before testing. Eat protein.
- ◆ Don't eat a lot of sugar right before a test. When sugar is released into the blood stream, the pancreas produces insulin to balance blood sugar levels. You may find that in the middle of the test, when you need to concentrate the most, you can't because your blood sugar level has plunged.
- ◆ Don't overeat. This will make you sleepy or give you indigestion, which will distract you from concentrating.
- ◆ Even if you are nervous, make yourself eat something. You don't want your blood sugar plunging during the test. The brain needs the sugar. Otherwise, you won't be able to think clearly.
- ◆ A little caffeine is fine before a test, but don't overdo it. You won't think clearly if you are speedy.



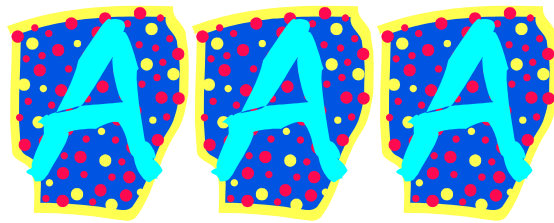
TAKING A MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST

- ◆ Figure out how much time you have for each question. Include the fact that you will answer some questions quickly. Then figure out how much time you can spend on a question before it is time to move on.
- ◆ Never panic. Never rush. Your body will go into the flight or fight mode, and you will have a hard time thinking. Keep the big picture in mind.
- ◆ Breathe. Breathe. Breathe.
- ◆ Know whether you must mark the one best correct answer or all correct answers.
- ◆ Read the stem of the question all the way through, then each possible answer all the way through.
- ◆ Don't read quickly. You will miss vital details that will make the difference between a correct and incorrect answer.
- ◆ The key to multiple choice tests is in the details; otherwise, they would be too easy.
- ◆ Take the time to underline the important words in the question such as these: "always, never, best, safest," and underline numbers, diagnoses, places, and lengths of time.
- ◆ If a test is graded solely on the number of correct answers and does not carry additional negative points for incorrect answers, take a guess. If you leave it blank, you will get it wrong. If you guess, you will have a chance of getting it correct. Mark your question so that if you have time, you can return to it later.
- ◆ Take care when changing an answer. Don't overthink answers. Most of the time a person's first answer is correct, but not always.
- ◆ When looking for the correct answer, there will usually be two answers that you know are wrong. Cross them out. Then consider the two that remain in all of their aspects.
- ◆ "All of the above" answers are often correct. If you know two of three options are correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility.
- ◆ If you aren't sure about a number answer, toss out the high and low and consider the middle range numbers.



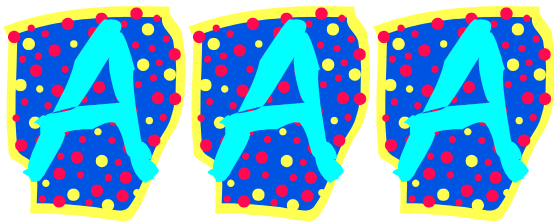
- ◆ If you have no idea what the answer is, check for the most inclusive option—the option that contains the most information.
- ◆ Make sure the answer you pick addresses all of the parts needing to be answered in the stem. If two parts are presented, make sure the answer covers both parts. Sometimes, the best answer is not the correct one because it covers only part of the answer.
- ◆ For health science tests, the number one factor for a correct answer is safety. The answer must present the safest option for the patient.
- ◆ Use common sense. Critical and clinical reasoning skills are required. There are different levels of testing. Usually, the correct answer goes beyond simple memorized facts.

For additional information on reading, note-taking and test-taking strategies, visit the Chalon Learning Center in H-207.



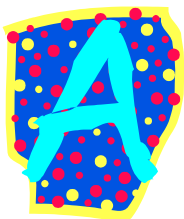
TAKING A TRUE/FALSE TEST

- ◆ Most true/false tests contain more true answers than false answers. When in doubt, guess true. You have more than a 50 percent chance of being right.
- ◆ Pay close attention to qualifiers, negatives, and long strings of statements.
- ◆ Qualifiers are words that restrict or open up general statements. Words like “no, never, none, always, every, entirely, only” restrict possibilities and usually imply false statements. They imply a statement must be true 100 percent of the time. Qualifiers like “sometimes, often, frequently, ordinarily, generally” open up the possibilities of making accurate statements and usually indicate true answers. They make more modest claims that are more likely to reflect reality.
- ◆ Negatives are confusing. If the question contains negatives, like “no, not, cannot,” circle the negative and read the sentence that remains. Decide whether that sentence is true or false. If it is true, the opposite or negative is usually false.
- ◆ **Every part** of a true sentence must be true. If any one part of the sentence is false, the whole sentence is false, despite many other true statements. Therefore, read long sentences carefully and pay attention to each group of words set off by punctuation. Sentences with long strings of words are most likely—but not always—false statements.



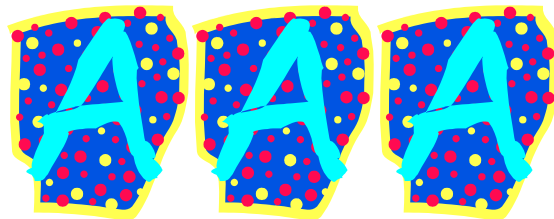
TAKING ESSAY EXAMS

- ◆ Providing correct information is important, but the presentation and logic of that information is also important. Planning your test is the key to doing well.
- ◆ Write down everything you don't want to forget to include on scratch paper or on your test.
- ◆ When describing a process or event, write in correct sequence and build a logical argument.
- ◆ Read all test questions carefully. Estimate how much time you will need for each question.
- ◆ For each question you choose, write down or underline key phrases and terms. These phrases will give you a clear indication of what you need to include in your answer.
- ◆ Begin the essay with a strong first sentence that states the main idea of your essay. Your first paragraph presents a plan for the rest of the answer by presenting all of your key points. Later on, develop each point in a complete paragraph.
- ◆ If you are describing a physiological process such as cell mitosis, begin at the beginning, and logically and in order, clearly proceed to the end of the process.
- ◆ Emphasize the key points in your answer at the beginning of each paragraph.
- ◆ End your essay with a strong conclusion. Restate your central idea and indicate why it is important.
- ◆ Proofread your paper for spelling and punctuation, and to be sure your ideas read smoothly. Points are usually taken off for these mistakes.
- ◆ If you don't have time to finish, outline your answer.

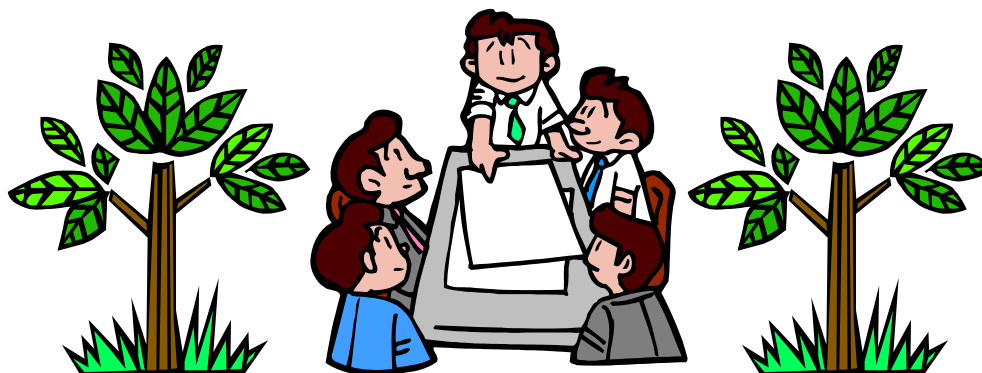


TAKING MATH AND SCIENCE TESTS

- ◆ Use note cards. Write formulas, definitions, rules, and theories on note cards and review them often. Write out examples for each theorem.
- ◆ Write notes. As soon as you are given the test, write down theorems and formulas in the margins.
- ◆ Make an estimate. A calculated guess will give you an approximate answer. This helps you when you double-check the answer.
- ◆ Illustrate the problem. Draw a picture, diagram, or chart that will help you understand the problem.



Chapter 11: Study Groups



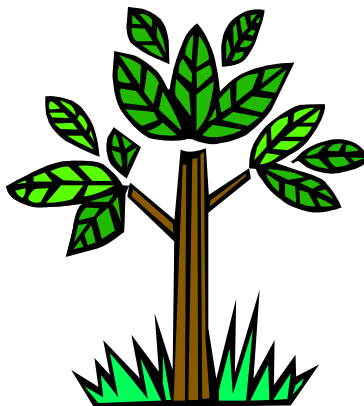
A study group can be an invaluable tool to support you in your academic endeavors. Follow these suggestions to get started.

FORMING A STUDY GROUP

- ◆ Find people you are comfortable with and who share some of your academic goals.
- ◆ Try to include people who face academic or personal challenges similar to your own. However, also include people who face challenges different from yours to get the benefit of other perspectives. You can learn a lot from how others study.
- ◆ Studying with friends is fine, but discipline yourselves to stick with study and not fun.
- ◆ The challenge of forming a study group is in making the first contacts and asking others to participate. You can recruit members by approaching people directly or by advertising.
- ◆ Look for people who stay alert, ask questions, and take notes during class.
- ◆ Choose people with similar educational goals but different backgrounds and methods of learning.
- ◆ You can gain by seeing the material from a new perspective. Suggest to two or three others that you meet for a snack and talk about group goals, meeting times, and other logistics. You don't have to make an immediate commitment.
- ◆ Limit groups to five or six people. Larger groups are unwieldy.
- ◆ Another way to get into a group is to post a note on a bulletin board asking interested students to contact you. Or pass around a sign-up sheet before class. The advantage of these methods is that you don't have to face rejection. The disadvantage is that this method takes more time and you don't get to choose who applies.

CONDUCTING A STUDY GROUP

- ◆ Test each other by asking questions. Each group member can agree to bring four or five test questions to each meeting. Then you can all take the test composed from these questions.
- ◆ Remember that you learn the most by teaching others. Practice teaching each other. Turn the material you are studying into a list of topics. Then assign specific topics for each person to teach the group.
- ◆ Compare notes. Make sure you all heard the same thing in class and that you all recorded the important information. Ask other students about material in your notes that is confusing to you.
- ◆ Brainstorm test questions. Set aside five or ten minutes each study session to generate as many solutions as possible. This process can lead to new ways to solve problems.
- ◆ Conduct open-ended discussions and debates designed to produce understanding.
- ◆ Set an agenda for each meeting. Set approximate time limits for each agenda item and determine a quitting time.
- ◆ End each meeting with assignments for each member.
- ◆ Take breaks—about 10 minutes every hour. Have fun (but no alcohol), and then get back to work.



Chapter 12: Health and Stress Management



Your diet and health practices directly affect your stress level, your ability to concentrate, your energy level, and even your self-esteem! Follow these guidelines to help reduce stress and improve your study habits.

DIET AND HEALTH

- ◆ Get enough sleep, especially the night before a test. Cramming until late at night won't help you remember if you haven't already learned the material. A clear mind is better than a cluttered one.
- ◆ Have faith in yourself. If you have prepared correctly, you WILL do well.
- ◆ Don't cram right before the hour of testing. This creates anxiety and a fight or flight response in the body. The body's blood supply will be routed to the large muscles and more primitive brain centers. **Higher thinking processes will be inhibited!**
- ◆ Eat balanced meals, especially before testing.
- ◆ Don't eat a lot of sugar right before a test. When sugar is released into the blood stream, the pancreas produces insulin to balance blood sugar levels. You may find that in the middle of the test when you need to concentrate the most, you can't because your blood sugar level has plunged.

- ◆ Don't overeat. This will make you sleepy or give you indigestion, which will distract you from concentrating.
- ◆ Exercise daily. This will relieve stress and help you avoid using food as a stress release.
- ◆ Even if you're nervous, make yourself eat something healthful. You don't want your blood sugar plunging during class or during a test. The brain needs the sugar. Otherwise, you won't be able to think clearly.
- ◆ A little caffeine is fine before a test, but don't overdo it. You won't think clearly if you are speedy.
- ◆ Avoid smoking cigarettes. Cigarettes and related substances actually cause all the blood vessels in your body to contract so that less blood flows to the brain, heart, and other organs. This inhibits learning and is generally very bad for your health. Studies have shown that even after 20 years of not smoking, those who smoked in their younger years are still at high risk for lung and other cancers.

For additional information on practicing a Healthy Life Style, visit Chalon Health Services in H-101.



STRESS MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Have faith in your growing abilities. You really **can** do it.
- ◆ When you are having difficulty, take a moment to reflect on your past accomplishments.
Think about all the goals you have achieved and imagine all the goals you will achieve in the future. You can even picture yourself standing on the stage at graduation.
- ◆ Appreciate your uniqueness. You are not like anyone else in the world. You can perform tasks differently and still accomplish all of your goals. You don't have to compare yourself to anyone else.
- ◆ Create your own goals. Strive for what you find valuable. Don't worry about what others may think.
- ◆ Be patient with yourself and others. Change takes time and practice.
- ◆ Reward yourself for jobs well done. Even if you don't get that "A," reward yourself for your efforts. Have you improved? Did you go beyond your usual level of effort?
- ◆ Never punish yourself if you don't reach your goal. Examine mistakes and change the plan. Do what you need to in order to renew your efforts. Be compassionate with yourself and change what isn't working. This includes balancing your life.
- ◆ Perfection is only found in—well, actually, it's not. Work hard, but allow for realism.
- ◆ Don't be a victim. Create your own change. Take control and create pride in your abilities and accomplishments.
- ◆ Learn the art of organization. It is the basis of a balanced life.
- ◆ Balance your life: mental, physical, social, and spiritual. You will learn much better if the mind, body, and spirit are fed and acknowledged.

- ◆ Look at the big picture at the beginning of each semester. Get organized. Create a wall calendar with all due dates for papers and tests.
- ◆ Mark on the calendar when you will begin to study for a test and write papers. You need to know when assignments are due but also when you should initiate projects.
- ◆ Once you are organized and see the whole picture, relax and take things a piece at a time.
- ◆ Always looking at the big picture can be overwhelming. Small steps are easier, and before you know it, a big piece will be completed.
- ◆ Explore relaxation exercise. Yoga and stretching, deep breathing, and Chi Gong can be good ways to prepare the brain for studying or to cool down after studying. Anxiety and worry interfere with learning.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to ask for help. Interdependence is vital to academic and life success. Everyone needs help. This is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of intelligence and maturity. It shows good problem-solving abilities.
- ◆ Write a list of your immediate stressors or those things you are afraid will cause you stress in the future. For each stressor, list at least one way you can manage or avoid the stressor. Be practical.



Chapter 13: Relaxation and Stress-Reduction Techniques



STRESS-REDUCTION EXERCISES

Listed below are four stress-management exercises that can be done in just a few minutes each day. Nearly every stress-reducing activity has immediate benefits. But you will have much greater benefits if you start an activity and stick with it.

Relaxation: Clearing Your Mind

This forms the basis for other relaxation procedures such as meditation. To accomplish this technique:

- ◆ Reduce distractions, noise, and interruptions as much as possible before you begin.
- ◆ Sit comfortably, loosen any tight clothing, kick off your shoes, relax, and begin to breathe deeply.
- ◆ Mentally focus on one peaceful word, thought, or image. If other thoughts enter your mind, don't be discouraged—relax, breathe deeply, and try again.
- ◆ Stretch and exhale as you complete the exercise. With practice, clearing your mind can help you feel refreshed, have more energy, and be ready to meet the next challenge.
- ◆ Practice 10-15 minutes each day.



Visualization

Unlike the exercise on clearing your mind, where you try to focus on one single image, visualization allows your imagination to run free.

- ◆ Try to visualize yourself warm, calm, and relaxed.
- ◆ Picture a setting that has particular appeal to you. Try to imagine all of the details. Are you lying on a warm beach? How does the sun feel on your back? Do you hear waves lapping on the sand? Just use your imagination. You can give yourself a mental vacation whenever and wherever you feel the need to relax.

Autogenics

If you have heard of the expression “mind over matter,” then you have a basic idea of what autogenics training is all about.

- ◆ Begin by sitting comfortably. Loosen any tight clothing, close your eyes, and try to empty your mind of all thoughts. You may want to breathe deeply for a few minutes and repeat a peaceful suggestion such as “I feel quiet,” “My mind is at rest,” or something similar.
- ◆ Concentrate on a suggestion such as “My left arm feels heavy and warm.” As you think of this “command,” try to actually feel your arm getting heavier and warmer. Then repeat the same command, focusing on your right arm, left leg, right leg, etc.
- ◆ Breathe deeply and stretch as you finish the exercise and notice how you feel. As you become better, this will help your body relax—anywhere, and at any time. Try to practice this exercise for about 10 minutes each day, or whenever you feel stressed.



Progressive Muscular Relaxation

- ◆ Tighten your hand muscle and make a fist; then notice how it feels. Your muscles are taut and strained and your hand may even be trembling slightly. You may feel tension in your hand, wrist, and lower arm. Hold this tension for a few seconds before relaxing.
- ◆ Release your hand, relax your fist, and let the tension slip away. You may notice your hand feels lighter than it did while your muscle was tensed and that your wrist and forearm are also relieved of pressure.
- ◆ It is most helpful to try this exercise on each of the major muscle groups of the body. The basic technique remains the same for each group: tighten the muscle, release the tension, and notice the difference. You can start with your hands and then progress to the other muscles, or you can begin the exercise moving from head to toe, tightening and relaxing the muscles in your face, shoulders, arms, hands, chest, back, stomach, legs, and feet.



RELAXATION EXERCISES FOR IMPROVED SLEEP



Many relaxation techniques can be used to help you fall asleep and to get a more restful sleep. Try the following exercises and determine which one works best for you. If neither of the exercises seem to work well in the beginning, practice the one you like best on a daily basis for a couple of weeks before you give up!

Exercise 1: Body Search for Sensations

- ◆ Assume your desired sleeping position. Focus on the exhalation phase of each breath, and relax as you exhale.
- ◆ For two or three exhalations, focus on your supporting environment (usually your bed) and allow that environment to support your total body as you continue to exhale, and r-e-l-a-x.
- ◆ Following these exhalations, allow your attention to wander through your body. There is no set sequence, nor should you be in a hurry. As you "move" through the body, identify any sensations that you may feel (heaviness, warmth, coolness, heartbeat, twitching, pressure, gurgling in the stomach or intestines, tension, stillness, etc.).
- ◆ Upon identifying a sensation, mentally acknowledge the sensation in your mind and continue to wander through the body and passively search for others. You will notice that the number of sensations diminishes after a few minutes. As the mind continues to focus inward on the body, it will become quiet and sleep will result.

Exercise 2: Counting Teamed with Breathing Rhythm

- ◆ Assume your desired sleeping position. Focus on the exhalation phase of each breath, and relax as you exhale.
- ◆ For two or three exhalations, focus on your supporting environment (usually your bed) and allow that environment to support your total body as you continue to exhale, and r-e-l-a-x.
- ◆ As you continue to focus on the exhalation phase of every breath, count in sequence from one to ten and then back from ten to one. Count one number per exhalation and repeat this sequence until you fall asleep.
- ◆ Variation: Count backwards from ninety-nine, counting each number with an exhalation until you fall asleep.





MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Basically, meditation consists of controlling the incredible constant flux of ideas and stimuli that rush through your brain at any given moment. These techniques are all based on focusing on one stimuli (such as breathing) to the exclusion of all others. Although meditation can be used in a search for "oneness with the universe," the simple techniques described here are designed to produce physiological stress reduction in the human body.

Experienced mystics try to focus on nothing, something that most of us can do for about two seconds (at least before thinking about the fact that we are thinking of nothing—try it!). For beginners, probably the most effective techniques utilize controlled breathing as the center of focus.

- ◆ Find a quiet, comfortable place. Try the bed.
- ◆ Take long, slow breaths, listening to the sound of the air coming in and out. During the inhalation phase, first, pull your abdomen out; next, expand your chest.
- ◆ Try to think of nothing but the act of breathing. When your mind wanders—and it will—gently and without recrimination, return to focusing on the breath. You will be amazed by how much your mind resists being tamed from its usual habit of rapid wandering.
- ◆ As a useful adjunct, try progressive muscle relaxation. This is a good way to learn to recognize tight muscles.
 - ❖ Along with each inspiration, tighten one part of your body as much as you can.
 - ❖ Along with each expiration, relax that part of the body. Feel that part of the body as dead weight, sinking into the bed.
 - ❖ Start with your toes and feet, then your legs, then trunk, then hands, then arms, then neck, and finally, face.
 - ❖ If you wish, you can skip the muscle contraction phase and just imagine relaxation of each muscle group.
- ◆ After relaxing the entire body as above, do it again.
- ◆ Next, take five deep breaths, each time imagining yourself sinking further into the bed.

- ◆ Finally, try just laying there, thinking about nothing. Nearly impossible, but try your best.
- ◆ This should all take about 5-10 minutes. Ideally, practice once or twice a day. Set a routine time, and commit to it.
- ◆ Remember this feeling of relaxation. Later during the busy day, when you feel stressed or feel your muscles tightening, just take 10 deep breaths (count backwards from 10 to 1 with each exhalation). With practice, your body will return to the same state in 10 breaths as you achieved during a full meditation.

For additional information on Stress Management or to schedule an appointment to talk with a counselor, visit Counseling and Psychological Services located on the first floor of the Humanities Building at Chalon and in Building 7 at Doheny.



Chapter 14: How to Write a Research Paper



WHAT IS A RESEARCH PAPER?

A research paper is an extended, factual report on a specific topic that is based on information and opinions gathered from a variety of sources, including books, magazines, and computer databases. It differs from an essay, which consists almost entirely of the author's personal opinions or experiences. While the writer of a research or term paper does express an opinion about the topic, this point of view is supported by facts and judgments obtained through research. The writer's task is to compile this information and then organize it in a logical format. Research materials are either primary or secondary:

- ◆ **Primary research:** the study of a subject through firsthand observation and investigation, such as analyzing a literary or historical text, conducting a survey, or carrying out a lab experiment.
- ◆ **Secondary research:** the examination of studies that other researchers have made of a subject. Secondary sources include books and articles about political issues, historical events, scientific debates, or literary works.

Note: The main purpose of doing research is not to summarize the work of others, but to assimilate and build on it and to arrive at your own understanding of the subject.

Nearly all writers of research papers perform these activities:

- ◆ Selecting a suitable topic
- ◆ Using the library and compiling a working bibliography
- ◆ Taking notes
- ◆ Organizing the material
- ◆ Writing

SELECTING A SUITABLE TOPIC

Your instructor may let you select your own topic or may assign a topic. Even if the topic is assigned, you will have to decide how to begin the assignment. Beginning a research assignment with a question often assists you in narrowing a topic. Consider these factors when selecting a topic:

- ◆ The purpose of the paper: to narrate, describe, compare/contrast, analyze, prove, etc.
- ◆ The assigned length of the paper

MATCHING THE TOPIC WITH ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN

Once you have selected a topic, consider which organizational pattern would be most appropriate in developing the topic:

- ◆ **Chronological (narration):** This pattern treats a topic according to its time sequence.
Example: Using the topic, *an analysis of Puerto Rican migration to the mainland in the 1940's*, you might concentrate on the years 1940, 1943, 1946, and 1949. You could then point out and explain the trends in Puerto Rican migration that developed during the decade.
Example: What events led to the stock market crash in 1929?
- ◆ **Comparison-contrast:** This pattern takes two or more aspects of a topic and shows how they are similar and how they are different.
Example: Using the topic, *Hindu philosophy and Emerson*, you might discuss the characteristics of Hindu philosophy and then show the ways in which Emerson's work is similar and the ways in which it is different. Be sure there is parallel treatment.
- ◆ **Topical (explanation or description):** This pattern breaks a topic into smaller units, or subtopics, and analyzes each one.
Example: Describe the architectural styles in St. Augustine, Florida.
- ◆ **Problem-solution:** This pattern states a problem and then analyzes the solutions proposed by experts in the field. You may even develop your own solution if you can support it with data/research.
Example: Using the topic, *how the paraprofessionals working for the New York City Board of Education became part of the United Federation of Teachers*, you could discuss the problems the paraprofessionals faced as nonunion members, the problems involved in joining an established union, and the solutions found to these problems by the groups and experts involved.
- ◆ **Argumentation (opinion-reason):** This pattern allows you to state your opinion about the topic and show how the reasons for this opinion are based on evidence, data, and any other information that supports the opinion. You attempt to persuade the readers to take some action or to convince them of your position.
Example: Capital punishment does (not) serve a social need.
Example: Hemingway's suicide was (not) consistent with his personal philosophy as expressed through his novels.

IMPORTANT BASICS WHEN SELECTING A TOPIC

- ◆ **The topic should interest you.**
- ◆ **The topic should be manageable in terms of the resources available.**
For example, if there is little written about your topic, your research will be extremely difficult. For this reason, survey the literature on the topic to see if there is enough material to work with.
- ◆ **The topic should be limited and well defined.**
Avoid general topics, such as *the history of art*. Focus on something specific. Notice how each of the following topics gets more and more specific:
 - ❖ History of art from 1865-1900
 - ❖ History of French art from 1895-1900
 - ❖ Comparison of Impressionism and Symbolism in French art from 1895 to 1900

How can you limit or narrow the focus of the topic in each of the following?

- ◆ Should the use of lie detectors be banned? (by private employers)
- ◆ What are the hazards of fad diets? (liquid diets)
- ◆ Does investing in wind energy make economic sense? (windmills at the Altamont Pass)

Note: It is better to do a thorough treatment of a narrow topic than a superficial treatment of a complicated topic. Make sure your teacher approves the topic, and start early: do not procrastinate!

USING THE LIBRARY: BUILDING A WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY

Now you will begin to build a working bibliography: a compilation of sources that relate to your topic in a general way and that *may* contain useful information. Titles can be misleading, and only by actually looking at the material will you be able to determine how valuable the source is to your topic. When you have assembled a list of your reference materials, skim each source to decide if it contains informative material about your topic. Prepare a bibliographical or source card for each reference on a 3 × 5 index card, with one source per card.

Information you will need to include for different types of sources:

Book:

- ◆ Call number in the upper left-hand corner
- ◆ Author or editor
- ◆ Title
- ◆ Place of publication
- ◆ Publisher
- ◆ Year of publication

Magazine article:

- ◆ Author (if there is one)
- ◆ Title of article
- ◆ Name of the magazine
- ◆ Volume and page number
- ◆ Date

Encyclopedia article:

- ◆ Author (if given)
- ◆ Title of the article or entry
- ◆ Title of the encyclopedia
- ◆ Volume number
- ◆ Place of publication
- ◆ Name of publisher
- ◆ Edition
- ◆ Page numbers of the article

Note: Style and format differ depending on whether you use MLA, APA, or Turabian, so be sure you ask your instructor which style of documentation he/she prefers. Normally, MLA is used for English and humanities; APA is used for social and physical sciences. Turabian may also be used for the humanities. Other fields may have their own style and format. For complete information about bibliographic format for different types of sources, consult the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, or the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, or *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian.

When working with note cards, number each card clearly in the upper right-hand corner. You can refer to these card numbers later when you take notes from each source. Instead of writing all the bibliographic information on the note card every time, you can just write the number of the card that refers to that source. This record will eventually become your real bibliography at the end of your paper: works cited in MLA and Turabian, or references in APA.

The 3 × 5 index cards, with just *one* source on each card, enable you to arrange and rearrange sources however you wish, e.g., in alphabetical order, in chronological order by date of publication, in order of relevance to your topic, in order of those most useful, or even into groups of sources already consulted versus those not yet consulted. The information you record on each 3 × 5 card should enable you to find that source again if you have to refer back to it.

As you collect information, you may become aware of the following: 1) there isn't much material written on your topic, in which case, you're asking for a big headache if you pursue it; 2) there's an angle you hadn't thought of before and now this new angle looks really interesting; 3) your topic is too big or too complicated and needs to be redefined and/or reduced in scope; 4) you've changed your mind and completely disagree with what you had originally proposed.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

To collect entries for your working bibliography, check through as many of the resources in the library as time and energy allow. What resources can you turn to?

- ◆ **General reference books:** General references give an overview and refer to books and journal articles, e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias, biographical sources, atlases, etc.
- ◆ **Specialized reference books:** Every area of knowledge has its own special reference works: specialized dictionaries, e.g., *A Dictionary of Philosophy*; specialized encyclopedias, e.g., *Encyclopedia of World Art*.
- ◆ **Card catalog:** You should check both card and online catalogs because each contains information the other does not. Entries are organized by title, author, and subject.
- ◆ **Online catalog:** You can locate a book by author, title, or subject. Even if you lack some of the information, such as the author's full name or the complete title of the book, you can still pull up a list from which to find that author or title. Or you can enter a subject to produce a list of books about that subject.
- ◆ **Indexes:** These sources guide you to material in newspapers, magazines, and journals as well as to writings in book collections.
 - ❖ *New York Times Index:*
Lists news stories and feature articles in the *New York Times*
 - ❖ National Newspaper Indexes:
 - The Christian Science Monitor*
 - Los Angeles Times*
 - New York Times*
 - Wall Street Journal*
 - Washington Post*
 - ❖ *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature Index:*
Contents of magazines
 - ❖ *Essay and General Literature Index:*
Essays and articles in books
 - ❖ Specialized Indexes:
 - Art Index*
 - Business Periodicals Index*
 - Education Index*
 - General Science Index*
 - Humanities Index*
 - Index to Legal Periodicals*
 - The Philosopher's Index*
 - Social Sciences Index*
- ◆ **Biographical Sources:**
 - ❖ Living persons
 - Current Biography*
 - The International Who's Who*
 - ❖ Persons no longer living
 - Dictionary of Canadian Biography*
 - Dictionary of National Biography* (for Great Britain)
 - Webster's New Biographical Dictionary*

◆ **Other Resources:**

- ❖ Personal interviews with experts
- ❖ Self-directed surveys
- ❖ Productions (plays, operas, theatre, etc.)

Note: With all of these possible resources before you, search out your topic as thoroughly as possible. Be open-minded.

You may find it difficult to evaluate sources. What do you look for when you're determining the value of a book or article? Not all sources are equally reliable or of equal value. Do not assume something is truthful or trustworthy just because it is published, and be even more suspicious of sources on the web. Weigh what you read against your own knowledge and intelligence and against other treatments of the subject. To help you evaluate your sources, check the author and date of publication. Do you know anything about the writer? Is the information in the book out of date? Some areas of knowledge are much more dependent on current information than others, e.g., the sciences.

SKIMMING THE MATERIAL

◆ **To skim books:**

- ❖ Look at the table of contents.
- ❖ Flip through the entire book, noting headings, charts, and/or illustrations.
- ❖ Read the preface of the book or just the first and last paragraphs and the first sentence of each middle paragraph.
- ❖ Read any section directly related to your topic.
- ❖ Look up key words in the index. How many pages are devoted to your subject?

◆ **To skim magazine articles:**

- ❖ Read the headline, the subhead, the first and last paragraphs, and the first sentence of each of the paragraphs in the body of the article.
- ❖ Eliminate those sources that don't appear to contain any relevant material.
- ❖ Accurately record the bibliographic information for any material you consider valuable. This step is important because you will want to be able to access this source without having to search for it again.
- ❖ In addition to recording the usual bibliographic information—author, title, publisher, date—also record the call number so you can easily locate it in the library if you want to use it later.

TAKING NOTES

The next step is to begin taking notes on material you consider relevant to your topic. Taking notes on 3 × 5 cards is recommended. Some people prefer 4 × 6 cards. If you use 8-½ × 11 paper, be sure to use only one side of the paper so that if you need to separate ideas later, you will be able to cut up the paper.

You should use a combination of the three methods of note taking:

- ◆ **Summary:** Summarize when you want to record only the general idea of large amounts of material.
- ◆ **Paraphrase:** Paraphrase when you require detailed notes on specific sentences and passages but do not need the exact wording. In other words, restate the material in your own words.
- ◆ **Quotation:** When you feel some sentence or passage in its original wording might make an effective addition to your paper, transcribe that material exactly as it appears, word for word, comma for comma. Whenever you quote verbatim from a work, be sure to use quotation marks scrupulously in your notes to distinguish the quotation from summary and paraphrase.

Sample Bibliography Card

Call #

Martin, Wendy. "Emily Dickinson."

Columbia Literary History of the United States, Emory Elliott, gen.ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988. 609-26

Sample Note Card

View of life/death

Dickinson's poems reveal that she strongly believed that "life cannot be fully comprehended without an understanding of death." p.625 (from *Columbia Literary History of the United States*, essay by Wendy Martin)

Note: When writing your note cards, keep an accurate record of the page. When a quotation continues to another page, carefully note where the page break occurs, since only a portion of what you can transcribe may find its way into your paper. Careful note taking will help you avoid the problem of plagiarism.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism (“kidnapper”) refers to a form of cheating that has been defined as “the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own” (Alexander Lindey, *Plagiarism and Originality*).

To use another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source is to plagiarize. Plagiarism, then, constitutes intellectual theft and often carries severe penalties, ranging from failure in a course to expulsion from school. You may certainly use others people’s words and thoughts in your research paper, but the borrowed material must not appear to be your creation.

Of course, common sense as well as ethics should determine what you document. For example, you rarely need to give sources for familiar proverbs (“You can’t judge a book by its cover”), well-known quotations (“We shall overcome”), or common knowledge (“George Washington was the first president of the United States”). But you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If you have any doubt about whether you are committing plagiarism, cite your source or sources.

ORGANIZING THE MATERIAL

When organizing your material, you must apply the principles of critical thinking: “the careful, deliberate determination of whether we should accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim, and the degree of confidence with which we accept or reject it” (From *Critical Thinking* by Moore and Parker). You should be prepared to consider all aspects of an issue before making up your mind, and you must avoid letting personal bias or prejudice interfere with your reasoning. The critical thinker is honest with self, resists manipulation, asks questions, bases judgments on evidence, looks for connections between subjects, and is intellectually independent.

Using critical thinking skills, you will:

- ◆ Develop a logical argument
- ◆ Identify the flaws or weaknesses in an argument
- ◆ Make relevant connections or links across disciplines, or from theory to practice
- ◆ Analyze the material in a range of sources and synthesize it
- ◆ Apply theory to particular cases

THE OUTLINE AND THE THESIS STATEMENT

An outline organizes material in a logical sequence and allows you to place subtopics and evidence in the most appropriate places. At a certain point in your research, you will decide you have enough material on your topic. The vague picture in your mind will be getting clearer. You will be starting to understand the relationship between the facts and opinions you have been reading. And you will be ready to come to some conclusion that is the result of all your research. How will you structure your argument?

Your thinking process looks something like this:

I have learned that this is so,

and this is so

and this is so (fact gathering)

and this is so

I have seen the relationship of these pieces of information.

I have synthesized the information and have reached a conclusion about it (critical thinking).

This conclusion is your thesis statement. The thesis statement is the culmination or end product of your research. An effective thesis statement presents a topic of discussion and an opinion about that topic.

Compare the following:

- ◆ Films about American high schools are interesting. (The topic is too broad, and the opinion lacks authority and strength.)
- ◆ Richard Linklater's *Dazed and Confused* and Amy Heckerling's *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* present conflicting images of the American high school student. (The topic uses precise details and concrete language designed to entice the reader.)

Thesis statements should not be confused with statements of fact or purpose:

- ◆ *Dazed and Confused* and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* are two films about American high school students. (The statement of fact does not require development or evidence to back it up.)
- ◆ I am going to prove that *Dazed and Confused* is a better film than *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. (The statement announces the topic ["I am going to. . ."], lacks style and substance, and is too broad.)

The following is an example of a good thesis statement:

- ◆ Set in different time periods, Linklater's *Dazed and Confused*, 1976, and Heckerling's *Fast times at Ridgemont High*, the early 1980s, present conflicting images of the social alternatives available to American high school students.

Now your job is to convince another person (namely, your instructor) of the validity of your conclusion. And the way you do that is to reverse the process. Your outline begins with your thesis statement, which is then proven by organizing and developing the materials you have collected—those same materials that led you to that thesis statement in the first place. In other words, you turn your thinking process upside down. The thesis statement is your conclusion, and the subpoints are the supporting arguments.

FORMAT FOR THE OUTLINE

A topic (or informal) outline is one that uses only words or phrases. A sentence (or formal) outline is one in which each point is a complete sentence. You can take several approaches when you develop your outline, as the following examples illustrate.

Note: Keep in mind that if you have a *I*, you must have a *II*. If you have an *A*, you must have a *B*. If you have a *1*, you must have a *2*. If you have an *a*, you must have a *b*, etc.

Example 1

Thesis statement: Ernest Hemingway's suicide was (not) consistent with the personal philosophy he expressed in his novels.

- I. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the main character is an American expatriate who...
 - A. Jake does this...
 - B. Jake says that...
- II. In *A Farewell to Arms*, the main character...
 - A. He says...
 - B. He does...
- III. In *The Old Man and the Sea*
 - A. The old fisherman says...
 - B. The old fisherman does...

You would use the action and the characters' words from each novel to prove your thesis that the personal philosophy expressed in Hemingway's novels is or is not consistent with the act of suicide. I, II, and III must directly support the thesis statement.

Example 2

Thesis statement: Ernest Hemingway's suicide was (not) consistent with the personal philosophy he expressed in his novels.

- I. Hemingway expresses his strong belief in "grace under pressure."
 - A. In *The Sun Also Rises*, the main character...
 - B. In *A Farewell to Arms*,...
 - C. In *The Old Man and the Sea*...
- II. Hemingway shows how he feels about personal integrity.
 - A. In *The Sun Also Rises*...
 - B. In *A Farewell to Arms*...
 - C. In *The Old Man and the Sea*...

In this example, you would interpret what Hemingway means by "grace under pressure" and explain his concept of personal integrity in I and II, respectively. You would then use a selection of his works to argue for and illustrate that his suicide was consistent with (or inconsistent with) these concepts.

Example 3

Thesis statement: It is important that MSMC University be allowed to proceed with its Master Plan to prepare the campus for the 21st century.

- I. The construction of a recreation center, chapel, and science and technology building is vital to the health of the university.
 - A. The recreation center will help the college attract more students...
 - 1. Male students...
 - 2. Traditional-age students...
 - B. The science and technology building will...
 - 1. Science department...
 - 2. Technology....
 - C. The chapel will enable the school to better fulfill its mission by...
- II. The health and vitality of the university is essential to the health and vitality of the entire community.
 - A. MSMC's well-being allows it to offer many cultural opportunities to the neighboring community, in fact, to the entire county.
 - 1. Marin Shakespeare holds its summer festivals on campus.
 - 2. Many choral groups offer concerts open to the community.
 - 3. Our sports teams offer competitive events for sports enthusiasts.
 - 4. The university's tennis courts are used by the community.
 - B. MSMC's faculty, staff, and students contribute to the community through volunteerism.
 - 1. Haunted House
 - 2. Adopt-a-Family
 - 3. Habitat for Humanity

THE OUTLINE AND NOTE CARDS

To simplify organization, use the same headings on your note cards as you use on your outline. Then you will be able to categorize your research into manageable chunks. (Refer to the "Taking Notes" section for further information about note taking.) Follow these tips:

- ◆ Organize your note cards by arranging them in piles according to the main headings in your outline.
- ◆ Subdivide each stack into subtopics.
- ◆ Arrange each pile of note cards in the order in which you will present the information in your paper.

WRITING THE PAPER

The parts of a research paper are the same as for any essay: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The complexity of the topic may determine the shape each of these parts takes.

INTRODUCTION OR OPENING PARAGRAPH

The introduction presents the thesis or main idea and a preview of the paper's main points. State your purpose in writing the paper, or pose the problem you have researched. The thesis statement is usually the last sentence of the introduction. The introduction also sets the tone of your paper. Use this tone to attract your readers. Some devices you might use include a statistic that demonstrates a major point in your research, an anecdote that illustrates a situation you develop later on, or a direct quote that either confers with or contradicts your thesis statement.

BODY

Unify information from your notes into a cohesive, coherent narrative. The body is the main part of your paper and can be developed in a variety of ways: chronologically; thematically, by comparing and contrasting; through opinions and reasons; or by any combination of these. Develop each major subdivision thoroughly. Use as many different types of supporting arguments as you can. Always remember to show the links among the ideas as clearly as possible through some sort of relationship. Develop your argument using details, definition, and illustrations. Connect both sentences and paragraphs together using transitional words and phrases. Transitions indicate relations, whether from sentence to sentence, or from paragraph to paragraph. The following list shows relationships that supporting ideas may have, followed by transitional words and phrases that can connect those ideas.

- ◆ **Addition:** also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, again
- ◆ **Consequence:** accordingly, as a result, consequently, hence, otherwise, so then, therefore, thus, thereupon
- ◆ **Summarizing:** after all, all in all, all things considered, briefly, by and large, in any case, in any event, in brief, in conclusion, on the whole, in short, in summary, in the final analysis, on balance, on the whole, to sum up, to summarize, finally
- ◆ **Generalizing:** in general, as a rule, as usual, for the most part, generally, ordinarily, usually
- ◆ **Restatement:** in essence, in other words, namely, that is, that is to say, in short, in brief, to put it differently
- ◆ **Contrast and comparison:** in contrast, by the same token, conversely, instead, likewise, on one hand, on the contrary, on the other hand, similarly, yet, but, however, still, nevertheless
- ◆ **Sequence:** at first, first of all, to begin with, in the first place, at the same time, for now, the next step, in time, in turn, later on, meanwhile, next, then, soon, later, while, earlier, simultaneously, afterward, in conclusion
- ◆ **Diversion:** by the way, incidentally
- ◆ **Illustration:** for example, for instance, for one thing
- ◆ **Similarity:** likewise, similar, moreover
- ◆ **Direction:** here, there, over there, beyond, nearly, opposite, under, above, to the left, to the right, in the distance

CONCLUSION

The conclusion should leave the reader with a sense of understanding what you have written. It reiterates the thesis statement and reviews the major points you presented in your paper. In addition, the conclusion analyzes and evaluates the material and presents your own judgments and opinions.

Note: Always keep a backup copy of the paper in case something happens to the original.

REVISION PROCESS

Ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ Is the topic well focused?
- ◆ Is the thesis statement clearly stated in the introduction?
- ◆ Is a logical relationship between the paragraphs indicated by the use of appropriate transitional words and phrases?
- ◆ Do all the paragraphs include specific details?
- ◆ Does the conclusion refer to the thesis and include your own judgments and opinions about the subject?
- ◆ Do the sentences work well? Is there a balance of simple and complex sentences?
- ◆ Are there excess words or redundant ideas that can be removed?
- ◆ Did you correct all mistakes in sentence structure, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling?
- ◆ Did you use the proper format for footnotes and for the bibliography?



CHECKLIST FOR WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

TOPIC

- Does the subject meet the criteria of the assignment?
- Has the subject been approved by the instructor?

OUTLINE

- Has the thesis statement been written?
- Is the outline logically arranged?
- Does every item in the outline relate directly to the thesis statement?

TEXT

- Introduction:** Does the introductory paragraph contain the thesis statement? It usually comes at the end of the paragraph.
- Thesis:** A thesis is the main idea that drives the argument of the paper. Is the thesis associated with the key issues?
- Is the thesis appropriate for the length of the paper?
- Body:** Is the purpose of each paragraph clearly stated in the topic sentence? Does each topic sentence state an argument rather than a fact?
- Does each paragraph develop a single point or idea?
- Is each paragraph logically organized?
- Is each paragraph relevant to the larger thesis?
- Is there a smooth transition between paragraphs?
- Do any sections drift away from the thesis?

EVIDENCE

- Does the body contain specific details (evidence) to support the argument?
- Is each assertion supported with specific evidence?
- Do interpretations and inferences follow logically from the evidence?

QUOTATIONS

- Is each quote relevant to the point it supports?
- Is each quote integrated smoothly into the paragraph?
- Are quotations an appropriate length?
- Are quotations of more than four lines offset from the text of the essay?
- Is every quotation documented with a reference?
- Have quotations been checked (and double-checked) for accuracy?
- Is the relationship of each quote to the rest of the paragraph clear?

CONCLUSION

- Does the paper proceed to a logical conclusion?
- Is the thesis reasserted (if appropriate)—proven?
- Does the conclusion go beyond merely summarizing the essay? Are the significant implications of the argument mentioned?
- Is there a sense of closure?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Has the preferred citation format been followed consistently?
- Has Internet information been properly cited?
- Have enough sources of information been used?
- Have scholarly materials been used?
- Are both books and periodicals represented?

STYLE

- Are sentences clear and explicit?
- Are transitions between paragraphs and sentences smooth and logical?
- Has the writer used vivid, precise verbs?
- Is passive voice used with caution? Does the paper primarily use active voice?
- Is the verb tense consistent?
- Is there subject/verb agreement?
- Are the sentences complete?
- Is there pronoun/antecedent agreement?

PRESENTATION

- Is the paper's presentation attractive?
- Is the typeface easily readable?
- Are the pages numbered?
- Is the title page complete and does it follow required form?
- Has spell-check been used?
- Has the paper been given a final proofreading to guard against typographical errors?
- Does the paper adhere to proper formatting guidelines (APA, MLA, Turabian, etc.)?



Adapted from Sweet Briar College's Academic Resource Center, *A Writer's Checklist*,
<http://www.arc.sbc.edu/writing/writerschecklist.html>

MORE TIPS ON WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

◆ **Follow capitalization conventions for titles and subtitles.**

In both titles and subtitles, capitalize the first words, last words, and all principal words including those that follow hyphens in compound terms. Therefore, capitalize the following parts of speech:

- Nouns (e.g., *The Flowers of Europe*)
- Pronouns (e.g., *Save Our Children*)
- Verbs (e.g., *America Watches Television*)
- Adjectives (e.g., *The Ugly Duckling*)
- Adverbs (e.g., *Only Slightly Corrupt*)
- Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *One if by Land*)

Do not capitalize the following parts of speech when they fall in the middle of a title:

- Articles (a, an, the, e.g., *Under the Bamboo tree*)
- Prepositions (e.g., against, between, in, of, to—as in *The Merchant of Venice*)
- Coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet—as in *Romeo and Juliet*)
- The *to* in infinitives (e.g., *how to Play Chess*)

◆ **Integrate quotations.**

If you include too many quotations in a research paper, readers form the impression that you cannot think for yourself. Use quotations only when a source is particularly clear or expressive or when it is important to let the debaters of an issue explain their positions in their own words. When you choose to use quotations, make sure they are integrated smoothly into the text of your paper. Readers should be able to move from your own words to the words you quote without feeling a jolt.

Example: Flora Davis reports that a chimp at the Yerkes Primate Research Center

“has combined words into new sentences that she was never taught” (67).

◆ **Use signal phrases.**

Avoid dropping quotations into the text without warning; instead, provide clear signal phrases, usually including the author’s name, to prepare readers for the quotations.

Example: Although the bald eagle is still listed as an endangered species, its ever-increasing population is very encouraging. **According to ornithologist Jay**

Sheppard, “The bald eagle seems to have stabilized its population, at the very least, almost everywhere” (96).

Vary your signal phrases:

Example: In the words of researcher Herbert Terrace, “...”

Example: As Flora Davis has noted, “...”

Example: The Gardners, Washoe’s trainers, point out that “...”

Example: “...,” claims linguist Noam Chomsky.

When your signal phrase includes a verb, choose one that is appropriate in the context. Is your source arguing a point, making an observation, reporting a fact, drawing a conclusion, refuting an argument, or stating a belief? By choosing an appropriate verb, such as one in the following list, you can make your source’s stance clear.

acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
adds	compares	grants	refutes
admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
agrees	contends	implies	reports
argues	declares	insists	responds
asserts	denies	notes	suggests
believes	disputes	observes	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

◆ **Set off long quotations.**

When you quote more than four typed lines of prose or more than three lines of poetry, set off the quotations by indenting it ten spaces from the left margin. Use the normal right margin and do not single space. (Exception: Turabian requires that you single space and indent four spaces from the left margin.) Long quotations, called block quotations, should be introduced by an informative sentence, usually followed by a colon. Quotations marks are unnecessary because the indented format tells readers that the words are taken directly from the source.

Example: Desmond describes how Washoe tried signing to the other apes when the Gardners returned her to an ape colony in Oklahoma:

One particularly memorable day, a snake spread terror through the castaways on the ape island, and all but one fled in panic. This male sat absorbed, staring intently at the serpent. Then Washoe was seen running over signing to him “come, hurry up.”

(42)

- ◆ **Use ellipsis marks and brackets to indicate changes you make in a quotation.** Both the ellipsis mark and brackets allow you to keep quoted material to a minimum and to integrate it smoothly into your text. To condense a quote, use the ellipsis mark (use three periods with a space before each and a space after the last) to indicate that you have omitted words. The sentence that remains must be grammatically complete.

Example: In a recent *New York Times* article, Erik Eckholm reports that “a 4-year-old pygmy chimpanzee... has demonstrated what scientists say are the most human-like linguistic skills ever documented in another animal” (A1).

The author omitted the words “at a research center near Atlanta,” which appeared in the original. If the ellipsis coincides with the end of your sentences, use three periods with a space before each following a sentence period, that is, four periods, with no space before the first or after the last.

Example: In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, “Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stresses air as the communicator of disease....”

If a parenthetical reference follows the ellipsis at the end of your sentences, use three periods with a space before each, and place the sentence period after the final parenthesis.

Example: In surveying various responses to plagues in the Middle Ages, Barbara W. Tuchman writes, “Medical thinking, trapped in the theory of astral influences, stresses air as the communicator of disease...” (101-02).

Four periods can also indicate the omission of a whole sentence or more, and even of a paragraph or more. When you want to omit a full sentence or more, use a period before the three ellipsis dots. Obviously, you should not use an ellipsis mark to distort the meaning of your source.

- ◆ **Proofread.**

Check for spelling errors and grammatical errors. Have a friend proofread the paper.

Note: For more proofreading tips, see “Editing/Proofreading Techniques” later in this chapter.

DOCUMENTATION STYLES

Because different styles of documentations are used in different disciplines, you would be wise to purchase the book that specifically details the style you are required to use for a particular course. These books are also available in the reference section of the Mount St. Mary's College Library.

For an excellent explanation and comparison of the MLA, APA, and Turabian styles for online documentation, consult the Mount St. Mary's College Library web page at <http://www.MSMC.edu/library/wref.cfm>. (Scroll to the "Documenting and Citing Sources" section.)

Documentation means acknowledging and giving credit for the use of all ideas taken from original sources, even though these ideas are written in your own words. Your bibliography cards have all the information necessary to identify and locate the words you are using. You should have also numbered each card as a method of quick reference.

Your note cards should be carefully marked with the number that refers to the source, so that you know exactly where the material came from. Now you need to refer to those sources in the text of your writing in order to give proper credit for the material used—whether that be a summary, a paraphrase, or a direct quote.

For more information on various styles of writing (APA, MLA, etc.) go to:
<http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

NOTE: Remember, the purpose of documentation is retrieval!



EDITING/PROOFREADING TECHNIQUES

Editing and proofreading a paper before turning it over to your instructor enables you to catch careless and common mistakes so your paper is professional and accurate. The following strategies will help you to be a more effective proofreader by personalizing proofreading and by offering strategies for finding and correcting specific errors.

General tactics

- ❖ Put distance between writing and editing/proofreading.
- ❖ Use spell-check with caution.
- ❖ Read your paper slowly and out loud.
- ❖ Know your typical patterns of error.
- ❖ Base decisions on fact rather than intuition.

Watching for and correcting specific errors

- ❖ Paragraph unity
 - Locate the central idea of each paragraph and in your mind, reduce it to a word or phrase.
 - Ask yourself whether you offer details in the paragraph to support that word or phrase.
 - Look at each paragraph randomly. Consider only the information in that paragraph.
 - Decide whether all of your details are relevant.
 - Is all information related enough to be in the same paragraph, or should you create another paragraph or move some of the details to a different paragraph?
- ❖ Transitions
 - Underline the transitions between paragraphs. If you can't find one, put one in (Hacker, p. 54).
 - Make sure transitions are clear. Add new ones or rearrange your paragraphs to clarify transitions.
- ❖ Subject/verb agreement
 - Find the main verb in each sentence.
 - Match the verb to its subject.
 - Make sure the subject and verb agree in number.
 - Be aware that the subject and verb in a sentence are often separated by main words or phrases. (See Hacker, p. 172.)

- ❖ Pronouns
 - Skim your paper for the word *you*; unless you are addressing the reader directly, change *you* to *I* or *me*.
 - Skim your paper for pronouns (he, she, they) and be sure the antecedent (a word later in the sentence that refers back to the pronoun) agrees in number (singular/plural consistency). (See Hacker, p. 184.)

- ❖ Parallel structure
 - Skim your paper, stopping at key words that signal parallel structures: *and, or, not only...or, neither...nor, both...and*. Also watch for sentences that make lists or inventory an event.
 - Make sure all the items connected by these words are in the same grammatical form (i.e., nouns, gerund phrases, prepositional phrases, adjectives, etc.). (See Hacker, p. 88.)

- ❖ Commas
 - Skim for the conjunctions *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*.
 - See if there is an independent clause (contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone) on each side of the conjunction. If so, add a comma before the conjunction. If not, delete the comma before the conjunction if there is one.
 - Look for a word or phrase at the beginning of each sentence that signals an introductory phrase (Hacker, p. 158). Add a comma at the end of the introductory phrase.

- ❖ Fragments
 - Make sure each sentence contains an independent clause. (It must have a subject and a verb, and it must be able to stand alone.)
 - Pay special attention to sentences that begin with dependent marker words such as *for example, because, or such as, before, although*, etc. (See Hacker, p. 158.)

- ❖ Run-on sentences
 - Review each sentence to see whether it contains more than one independent clause.
 - Start with the last sentence of your paper and work your way back to the beginning, sentence by sentence.
 - If necessary, break the sentence into two sentences or add appropriate punctuation.
 - Remember that long sentences aren't the problem, but that punctuation is the problem, so it is okay to have long sentences as long as they are punctuated properly.

For assistance writing an essay or research paper for your class, visit the Writing Coordinator located in the Chalon Learning Center in H-207. For additional information on researching your paper, visit the campus library or visit the Library Home Page <http://www.msmc.la.edu/pages/277.asp>.

University of Toronto
Health Sciences Writing Center
A Guide to Evaluating Your Own Writing

You can use this checklist—or ask a fellow student to mark your paper using it—to help you evaluate your own work. The four areas—topic, ideas, organization and structure, and expression—are the ones most teachers concentrate on when assigning grades.

You don't have to assign yourself grades, although they're included if you wish to. If you do use them, use 'C' as your starting point (that is, have the expectation that you've written an adequate paper), and move up or down from there.

1. Topic:

Does the paper stick to the topic?	A B C D F
Is there a clear definition of what the central topic or issue is?	A B C D F
Is the topic sufficiently narrowed or broadened such that it can be dealt with fully in the assigned length?	A B C D F
Is there a clear rationale for analyzing or discussing this topic?	A B C D F
Is there a clear thesis or perspective on the topic: not just “what,” but “what about it”?	A B C D F
Overall	A B C D F

2. Ideas:

Is there a good balance between ideas and evidence?	A B C D F
Have you understood and applied the literature and the theories, or have you merely read and regurgitated them?	A B C D F
Are you too general, too descriptive, or too full of generalizations that can't be supported? Are your ideas clichéd or repetitious?	A B C D F
Do you show awareness of problematic or controversial elements; awareness of potential objections or alternate approaches?	A B C D F
Does the argument made in the body lead logically and inevitably to your conclusion(s)?	A B C D F
Overall	A B C D F

3. Organization and Structure:

Are there clearly defined sections in the paper that correspond to the particular requirements of the assignment, and are headings used correctly?	A B C D F
Does the introduction define the issue, state a rationale, and indicate a focus for your discussion/analysis?	A B C D F
Does each paragraph in the body address a distinct idea or contribute to the development of the distinct idea of its section?	A B C D F
Does the conclusion merely restate the topic or thesis, or does it offer a genuine conclusion?	A B C D F
The three principles of effective organization: does the paper as a whole, each section, each paragraph, and each sentence, have unity (deals with one idea), coherence (moves smoothly and logically), and emphasis (important points strategically placed)?	A B C D F
Is the abstract accurate, concise, self-contained, and readable?	A B C D F
Overall	A B C D F

4. Expression

Is the writing style concise, direct, and interesting?	A B C D F
Is the tone appropriate: never emotional, grandstanding, or creative?	A B C D F
Is there a good variety of sentence lengths and types?	A B C D F
Is the diction appropriate: good, varied vocabulary; precision in word choice; clear and simple rather than long and Latinate (e.g., “walk” vs. “achieve an ambulatory state”)?	A B C D F
Are there errors in mechanics: grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling?	A B C D F
Are the citations, referencing, and formatting complete and accurate?	A B C D F
Overall	A B C D F

Final Grade

Topic	A B C D F
Ideas	A B C D F
Organization	A B C D F
Expression	A B C D F
Average	A B C D F

Chapter 15: Academic Advisement

READING THE CATALOG

To choose your courses you will need to learn more about the different classes the College offers. The best way to do this is to read through the *Catalog*. Departments begin their course listings with **lower division** entry-level courses, which are numbered 1-99 (English 1A, Psychology 1), followed by **upper division** courses, which are numbered 100 - 199 (Art 171, Chemistry 107). First-year students take lower division courses, but occasionally there are exceptions. Students are required to complete English 1A and 1B or 1C before taking upper division courses.

The **course descriptions** give you the content of the course and also list any *prerequisites* needed. **Prerequisites** tell you what classes you must complete in order to take a course. Beginning with Art, read through all the course descriptions.

Step #1

List all the courses that sound interesting, regardless of the prerequisites or the course level. It may take you a while to complete this course list, but you will be able to use the list all 4 years at the Mount. List courses by department and number, such as Art 3 or Math 28.

Hint

Be sure to look over all the departments, even those you are not interested in right now.

MEETING WITH YOUR ADVISOR

Academic Advising

There are several individuals who can help you choose your courses. The first and most important is your **Faculty Advisor**. Your faculty advisor is available to discuss your interests and concerns. They will help you design a program of study that best suits your individual needs and meets your educational goals.

At your initial Summer Advising session, you will meet with a faculty member to discuss the courses you would like to take. Once you have reached a final decision, the faculty advisor will formally approve your academic program and remove your Advisor Hold, which is necessary before you can register.

Step #2

Keep copies of your registration materials and other paperwork; start a personal file for your education; talk with others about classes, instructors, and campus procedures.

Take charge!

You will be assigned a permanent advisor during the first weeks of school. Your advisor assignment will be available on WebAdvisor, in the Student Profile section, after the first two weeks of classes. You should meet with your assigned advisor after the first weeks of class or mid-semester and again during the pre-registration period. Your faculty advisor can discuss course options, suggest academic references and resources, and answer questions about College policies and procedures.

Step #3

Meet with your advisor several times throughout the semester. Your advisor can be an important reference for you in the future, so it is important to establish a good relationship. You will find it helpful to check in with your advisor several times over the semester to talk about your plans and goals, and to keep her/him informed of your academic progress. Whatever you do, keep in contact with your faculty advisor.

Hint

*Advisors are there for you, but it is **your responsibility** to use them.*

While your faculty advisor is the first person you should talk to, there are many other offices and individuals to assist you. The **Advisement Center** is open to all students to answer questions and give advice. The **Learning Center**, **Career Planning**, the **Office of Student Affairs**, and the **Dean's Office** are also available to discuss any concerns you may have, personal, social or academic. Also, your professors, department chairs, student majors and other student mentors are excellent sources of advice. But remember: **You** must ask the questions - it is your right and privilege to do so.

Step #4

You are in a bigger and more independent system now than in high school. However, there are many resources available to you if you seek them out—it is important to learn what they are. **Ask for help. Ask for information.**

Hint**Success as an Attitude**

Some researchers see success or achievement not as a list of characteristics, but as process and attitude. They believe the way people approach life and problems determine success. These researchers tell us that small bits of success add up to larger success, greater self-esteem and a willingness to take charge of your life.

Glossary

Academic Advisement Center: Visit the Academic Advisement Center (H401) regarding courses required for your major, general education, and electives. The advisors can help you plan your education and are available during posted drop in hours and by appointment to answer questions.

Academic Petition: A student requesting an exception to an academic policy or requirement must file an academic petition. The petition must be approved by the student's advisor and the Dean.

Academic Year: The academic year is divided into two semesters, both approximately 15 weeks long. Fall semester begins in late August and ends in early December. Spring semester begins around mid-January and ends in early May. There is a 4-week break between the two semesters.

Add/Drop Period: At the beginning of each semester there is a ten day add/drop period. Students may change their course schedule by adding or dropping courses. This allows the student to adjust their schedule. To make changes during the add/drop period the student must obtain the instructor's signature and get approval from their faculty advisor. There is no record of the course changes on the student's transcript. After the ten day period and before the end of the tenth week, a student may still drop a course. There will be a grade of "W" on the student's transcript. There is a \$10 fee, and the same signatures are needed.

Catalog: Published every 2 years, the MSMC Catalog is your #1 source of information on academic policies, major and minor requirements. Keep the catalog you receive at Orientation throughout your time at MSMC. Please reference your Catalog regularly for answers to academic policy questions.

Course Load: A student's course load is the number of classes or units she/he is carrying during a semester. Full-time students must take between 12 and 18 units. It is suggested that first-year students take between 12 and 15 units their first semester.

Credit/No Credit: A total of 6 units of elective courses, taken credit/no credit, may be applied toward the degree. Some courses are only available as credit (CR) or no credit (NC). These courses are not counted as part of the 6 elective units. A student may not take a General Studies, major or minor requirement for credit/no credit.

Dean's List: At the end of each semester students who have completed a minimum of 12 units with a grade point average of 3.5 or better are put on the Dean's List.

Degree Audit: Through *WebAdvisor*, students can access Degree Audit reports listing their outstanding graduation requirements for general studies and major requirements. Students are able to print reports for their current major, or enter a 'proposed program' of study, and print a report for a possible double major. This is an excellent tool for students contemplating changing their major.

Elective Courses: Electives are courses that are not used to fulfill General Studies or major requirements. These courses allow you to explore areas outside your major. Most students will need to take some electives to earn enough units to graduate.

Faculty Advisors: Each student is assigned a faculty advisor for their major. This advisor is the student's primary source of academic advisement and the student should meet with her/him on a regular basis to discuss their academic progress and goals.

FERPA: The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This law states that only the student has access to his/her academic records, unless otherwise indicated by the student. You can grant a third party access to your academic records by submitting a letter to the Registrar's Office, stating the person's name, your social security number (used to verify your identity), and your signature. For more information, visit the Registrar's Office.

Final Exams: At the end of each semester there is a one week period for final exams. Some faculty members may require a final paper, but most require students to take a three-hour final. The finals week schedule is posted by the Registrar's Office.

General Studies/General Education: As described on page 2, of this booklet, general studies requirements are necessary for graduation from MSMC. Students must achieve a C- or better in courses taken for general studies credit, and courses must be taken for a letter grade—no exceptions will be made. *Please note, the Written Communication requirement requires a grade of C or better, in order for the student to fulfill the GE requirement.*

Grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA): A student receives a letter grade for every class that they take during a semester. The letter grades used and their corresponding grade points are:

A	4.0	C+	2.3	Grade not counted in the GPA:
A-	3.7	C	2.0	CR
B+	3.3	C-	1.7	NC
B	3.0	D	1.0	U
B-	2.7	F	0.0	W

A student's grade point average is obtained by multiplying the number of units by the grade for each course (grade points). The grade points earned are then added together and divided by the

total number of units where a grade was given. This gives the grade point average for the semester. The cumulative grade point average follows the same formula and includes all courses taken at the Mount which earned a letter grade.

Majors: Mount St. Mary's College offers 27 different Baccalaureate degrees. The total number of units required for each major is listed in the *Catalog*, and range from 36 - 42. It is expected that a student will complete the courses in their major at the Mount. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Department Chair.

Minors: There are 25 minors offered at Mount St. Mary's. The requirements for each can be found in the *Catalog*. Generally, to complete a minor a student must complete between 18 and 23 units. A student may also be assigned an additional faculty advisor for their minor.

Office Hours: All faculty are required to post their office hours. Many faculty include this information on their course syllabus. You may use this time to ask questions regarding class or to get to know your instructor better. If you cannot meet with your instructor during posted office hours you can ask to arrange a special meeting time that is convenient for both of you.

Registrar's Office: The Registrar's Office is located in the Administration Building. The Registrar is in charge of keeping your college records and transcripts. This is the office where you will officially register for classes each semester. Also, you will complete your graduation check here when it's time for you to graduate. Questions regarding your transcripts or records should be directed to this office.

Study Away: Mount St. Mary's offers 4 different study away programs. These programs are: Study Abroad (with AIFS—www.aifsabroad.com), the Sisters of St. Joseph Consortium Exchange, the Washington Semester Program (an internship semester in Washington D.C., with American University—www.washingtonsemester.com), and BorderLinks(a semester on the border program—www.borderlinks.org). All programs are open to students with junior standing and a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Information regarding these programs is available in the Advisement Center. Students who are interested in participating in any of these programs are encouraged to discuss this with their advisor and to inquire about information during their sophomore year.

Transcript: A transcript, which is issued by the Registrar's Office, is the official record of the courses you complete and the grades you receive. You may view your transcript and request official and unofficial copies in the Registrar's Office. Transcripts are only issued after you have given written consent.

Web Advisor: Web Advisor allows you limited access to your academic records. Students are currently able to see their placement exam scores, academic advisor assignment, and previous semester grades through Web Advisor. Students can also access the Schedule of Classes and register for classes through the Web Advisor system. To access Web Advisor, go to MSMC's home page (www.msmc.la.edu).

Minors: There are 25 minors offered at Mount St. Mary's. The requirements for each can be found in the *Catalog*. Generally, to complete a minor a student must complete between 18 and 23 units. A student may also be assigned an additional faculty advisor for their minor.

Office Hours: All faculty are required to post their office hours. Many faculty include this information on their course syllabus. You may use this time to ask questions regarding class or to get to know your instructor better. If you cannot meet with your instructor during posted office hours you can ask to arrange a special meeting time that is convenient for both of you.

Registrar's Office: The Registrar's Office is located in the Administration Building. The Registrar is in charge of keeping your college records and transcripts. This is the office where you will officially register for classes each semester. Also, you will complete your graduation check here when it's time for you to graduate. Questions regarding your transcripts or records should be directed to this office.

Study Away: Mount St. Mary's offers 4 different study away programs. These programs are: Study Abroad (with AIFS—www.aifsabroad.com), the Sisters of St. Joseph Consortium Exchange, the Washington Semester Program (an internship semester in Washington D.C., with American University—www.washingtonsemester.com), and BorderLinks(a semester on the border program—www.borderlinks.org). All programs are open to students with junior standing and a 3.0 cumulative GPA. Information regarding these programs is available in the Advisement Center. Students who are interested in participating in any of these programs are encouraged to discuss this with their advisor and to inquire about information during their sophomore year.

Transcript: A transcript, which is issued by the Registrar's Office, is the official record of the courses you complete and the grades you receive. You may view your transcript and request official and unofficial copies in the Registrar's Office. Transcripts are only issued after you have given written consent.

Web Advisor: Web Advisor allows you limited access to your academic records. Students are currently able to see their placement exam scores, academic advisor assignment, and previous semester grades through Web Advisor. Students can also access the Schedule of Classes and register for classes through the Web Advisor system. To access Web Advisor, go to MSMC's home page (www.msmc.la.edu).

Chapter 16: Internet Resources



You can make use of a wealth of internet resources to help you with your academic studies.

Accounting

Tax and Accounting Sites Directory
www.taxsites.com

Art

A Lifetime of Color
www.sanford-artedventures.com
Study of art elements and principles; art concepts; media; styles; artists.

Art History

The College Art Association
www.collegeart.org
The professional organization for artists and art historians. Provides additional links.

Career Alternatives for Art Historians
www.nd.edu/~crosenbe/jobs.html

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

ADDitude
www.additudemag.com
Very complete site sponsored by *ADDitude* magazine, a national monthly magazine for the ADHD community.

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)
www.add.org
Provides information, resources, and networking opportunities to help adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) lead better lives.

Children and Adults with ADD (CHADD)
www.chadd.org
Works to improve the lives of people affected by AD/HD through: Collaborative Leadership, Advocacy, Research, Education and Support.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

ADD Resources

www.addresources.org

Excellent resource site specifically for adults with ADHD.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

www.nimh.nih.gov/healthinformation/adhdmenu.cfm

In-depth look at attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, which affects children and adults. Describes symptoms, co-existing conditions, and possible causes of ADHD as well as treatment and education options.

Biology

Biology Online — Information in the Life Sciences

www.biology-online.org

Provides dictionary of biology terms, biology tutorials, and many links to other life science web sites.

INFOMINE: Biological, Agricultural and Medical Sciences

<http://infomine.ucr.edu/>

Provides hundreds of links on related topics.

Access Excellence (Genentech-sponsored bioscience education)

www.accessexcellence.org

The Visible Human Project

www.nlm.nih.gov/research/visible/visible_human.html

Cadaver, male-female, MRI, CT, and anatomical images.

Chemistry

The Periodic Table

www.webelements.com/index.html

Chemistry

www.chemtutor.com

Designed for high school and college students. Good review of basics.

Chemistry (Dartmouth College)

www.dartmouth.edu/~genchem/0405/spring/6belbruno/guides.html

Has useful study guides and sample tests.

Chemistry and math tutorials

http://www.dmacc.org/academicachievement/dicksmenu/tutorials_menu.htm

Provides interactive tutorials on subjects such as the metric system, the unit cancellation method, polyatomic ions, balancing chemical equations, converting medical units, and more.

Computer Software

Excel

www.usd.edu/trio/tut/excel

www.baycongroup.com/el0.htm

Tutorials on using the Excel spreadsheet. Covers basics such as types of data and specific formulas.

Computer Software

PowerPoint

homepage.cs.uri.edu/tutorials/csc101/powerpoint/ppt.html
www.baycongroup.com/powerpoint/00_powerpoint_tutorial.htm

Tutorials on using the PowerPoint presentation graphics package.

Word

getit.rutgers.edu/tutorials/word/
www.baycongroup.com/wlesson0.htm

Tutorials on using the Microsoft Word word processing program.

Mac to PC training

getit.rutgers.edu/tutorials/mac_pc/index.html

Helps Mac users adapt to the PC platform.

Critical Thinking

Socratic Questioning and Problem-based Learning

www-ed.fnal.gov/trc/tutorial/pbl.html#anchor490247

Taxonomy of Socratic Questioning; links to mind-mapping; brainstorming.

How to Critically Analyze Information Sources (Cornell University)

www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/skill26.htm

Teaches how to make an initial appraisal of a resource and then more thoroughly analyze its content.

Evaluating Resources (Duke University)

www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/evaluating.htm

Offers a list of points to consider when deciding on the resources to be used for a research paper.

Walden Virtual Library (Walden University)

www.lib.waldenu.edu/judge_3.html

Provides tips and guidelines for critical thinking, critical reading, and evaluating internet resources.

Diversity

The African American Mosaic

www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html

A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the study of Black History and Culture.

We Shall Overcome

www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights

Historic places of the Civil Rights movement.

National Multicultural Institute

www.nmci.org

Provides links to multicultural sites: Bi/inter-racial issues; education; health/mental health/resources.

Center for Multilingual Multicultural Research (University of Southern California)

www-bcf.usc.edu/~cmmr/

University of Iowa Communication Studies

www.uiowa.edu/%7Ecommstud/resources/GenderMedia

Gender, ethnicity, and race in the media.

Economics

Site developed by Dr. Arnon Hadar, MSMC faculty
faculty.MSMC.edu/gradbus/hadar/database/default.htm
East Asia.

English

Purdue Online Writing Lab
owl.english.purdue.edu

Covers a variety of topics: research, general writing, professional writing, ESL writing, parts of speech, sentence construction, punctuation, spelling, writing in the job search, etc. Includes extensive collection of handouts on various writing skills and grammar problems.

Guide to Grammar and Writing
webster.comnet.edu/grammar/index.htm

Covers basic grammar and usage rules, with good examples for each point; sample letters, resumes, and memos; guidance on the writing process; quizzes; and related web sites. Also has a form for submitting your grammar questions.

Grammar and Style Notes
andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit
Basic discussions of the parts of grammar.

The Elements of Style
www.bartleby.com/141/index.html
An online version of the classic reference book by William Strunk, Jr.

Writing
www.aci-plus.com/tips
Tips, tools, and ideas to improve your writing.

Research Paper Help.Net
www.researchpaperhelp.net
Assists you with choosing a topic, writing the first draft, editing and rewriting, library research, internet research, crediting sources, formatting, and more.

Miss Grammar
www.protrainco.com/info/grammar.htm
One of the experts in the links at “Ask an Expert” is Miss Grammar. Her archives are outstanding.

Plagiarism
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
What it is, how to recognize it, and how to avoid it.

Poetry
eserver.org/poetry
Need some inspiration? Need a quote for a paper? Just want to relax? Enjoy great art? This site provides hundreds of poems. There’s a keyword search feature.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL Café

www.eslcafe.com

Dave's ESL Café: idioms, slang, self-study quizzes, English grammar, vocabulary, Virtual English Language Center, how to prepare for TOEFL exam.

The Idiom Connection

www.geocities.com/Athens/Aegean/6720

English idioms, definitions, and examples.

Environmental Science

American Forests

www.amfor.org

A national organization protecting community trees and national forests for over a century.

American Hydrogen Association

www.clean-air.org

An alternative energy organization promoting hydrogen as a renewable, nonpolluting energy source.

The Internet Consumer Recycling Guide

www.obviously.com/recycle

United States Catholic Conference Environmental Justice Program

www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/ejp

Environmental Scorecard (Environmental Defense Fund)

www.scorecard.org

Compiled from governmental records.

The Alliance for Sustainability

www.mtn.org/iasa

From a nonprofit organization supporting a wide range of sustainability projects. Especially strong background in sustainable agriculture.

American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy

www.aceee.org

Nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing energy-efficient technologies and policies.

General

Merlot (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning & Online Teaching)

www.merlot.org

Offers multiple links to learning materials in various disciplines: art; business; education; humanities; math; social sciences; science & technology

Homework Central

www.bigchalk.com/

Has dozens of links to topics ranging from grammar reviews to organic chemistry to computer science to sociology.

GPA Calculator

www.sis.umd.edu/gpacalc

Calculates how many units of what grade you need to achieve a desired GPA. Click on link to University of Maryland.

Academic Resource Core Links

staff.southwest.tn.edu/kfoster/links_4.htm

Contains a comprehensive list of links to sites covering variety of academic subjects.

Geography

National Geographic's "Xpeditions"

www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/

Can print maps of the world; can focus in on specific parts of a map.

History

Web site by Professor/Sister Patricia Dougherty, O.P.

faculty.MSMC.edu/dougherty

Provides many interesting links.

Horus' History Links

www.history.ucr.edu/

From University of California Riverside History Department.

The History Net

www.thehistorynet.com

History Central

www.historycentral.com

Humanities

The Classics Pages

www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~loxias

The Encyclopedia Mythica

pantheon.org/areas

An encyclopedia on mythology, folklore, and legend.

Greek Mythology

www.mythweb.com/gods/index.html

The Olympians, the twelve Greek gods.

International Business

East Asian Database, developed by Professor Arnon Hadar

faculty.MSMC.edu/gradbus/hadar/database/default.htm

Languages

CCSF Language French Links

www.ccsf.cc.ca.us/Departments/Language_Lab

Includes links to nine other languages: Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Pilipino, German, and Modern Greek, and American Sign Language

Tennessee Bob's Famous French Links
www.utm.edu/departments/french/french.html

French/German/Spanish
www.vokabel.com
Provides vocabulary tests and keeps track of your score. You can also make up practice exams.

German
www.germanfortravellers.com

Spanish web sites:
www.spaleon.com/
www.colby.edu/~bknelson/exercises/index.html

Teaching with the Web
polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/lss/lang/teach.html
Provides links to online exercises/activities in many different languages.

Learning Disabilities

LD Online
www.ldonline.org/
Leading web site on learning disabilities.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD)
www.ld.org
Gateway to LD information and resources across the nation. There are three main sections: resource locator, fact sheet, and research news.

Learning Disabilities Association of America
www.ldanatl.org
Since 1963, LDA has provided support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers and other professionals. At the national, state and local levels, LDA provides cutting edge information on learning disabilities, practical solutions, and a comprehensive network of resources.

LD Resources
www.ldresources.org
Noncommercial site designed, built, and run by Richard Wanderman who is an educational technology consultant, well-known presenter, and a successful adult with a learning disability.

Library Reference

MSMC University web site
<http://www.msmc.la.edu/pages/277.asp>
“Subject Guides” — provides print, database, and Web resources for some of MSMC's most popular majors.
AND
“Web Reference” — a virtual reference desk for students, including sites on writing citations for research papers.

Merriam-Webster Online
www.m-w.com/home.htm
Provides a searchable dictionary and thesaurus as well as a daily vocabulary builder and word games.

Roget's Thesaurus

humanities.uchicago.edu/forms_unrest/ROGET.html

A hypertext version of Roget's Thesaurus.

Dictionary.com

dictionary.reference.com

Provides quick and easy search for spelling and vocabulary building.

Visual Thesaurus

www.visualthesaurus.com

Shows word relationships in a random swirl that just keeps going. Fun to play with!

MLA (Modern Language Association)

www.mla.org

Provides MLA style guidelines, including documenting sources from the World Wide Web.

Electronic Reference Formats Recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA)

www.apastyle.org

Gives APA format for citing e-mail, web sites, articles, and abstracts from databases. Examples included.

Rio Salado College MLA Style Sheet

www.rio.maricopa.edu/services/student/support/library/tutorials/mla.shtml

Brief examples of the basic MLA citation formats.

Rio Salado College APA Style Sheet

www.rio.maricopa.edu/services/student/support/library/tutorials/apa.shtml

Brief examples of the basic APA citation formats.

Turabian Documentation Guide

library.concordia.ca/help/howto/turabian.pdf

Provides a basic introduction to citation style for social sciences term papers.

Research and Documentation Online

www.dianahacker.com/resdoc

Includes sample essays in APA, MLA, Chicago (Turabian), and CBE styles.

General References

www.bartleby.com/reference

Links to Roget's Thesaurus, Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, The King James Bible, Gray's Anatomy, Robert's Rules of Order, Strunk's Elements of Style, and many others.

Literature Review

University of Toronto

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html>

Provides a very detailed guide on how to write a literature review. Includes a nice set of questions about how well you've conducted your literature review. Also includes a very detailed set of questions to ask yourself about each article. This second part is more intended for thesis writers than for an in-class type of literature review. In other words, it's more than you really need.

University of Washington: Writing a Psychology Literature Review
depts.washington.edu/psywc/handouts/pdf/litrev.pdf

Presents a step-by-step guide for how to begin and conduct a literature review. Although it's written for psychology, most of the content is relevant for applied linguistics as well. Includes a section on how to cite and create a bibliography using APA style.

University of Wisconsin-Madison

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html>

Provides a handy overview of the parts of a literature review and what each part should contain.

Math

WebMath

www.webmath.com

Explains how to work problems in Prealgebra, Algebra I and II, Geometry and Trigonometry, Calculus, Data Analysis and Statistics, and Real World Math.

Math

www.eduhound.com

Although designed for K-12, this site has some useful sections.

How to Study Math and Science

www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/lrnres/handouts/862.html

Covers previewing, note taking, text reading, problem solving, problem analysis, test preparation, test taking, and test analysis.

Graphics for the Calculus Classroom

www.math.psu.edu/dna/graphics.html

Penn State University Park professor has animated demos of calculus graphs.

Calculus net

www.calculus.net/ci2/?tag=

Dozens of links to explanations of calculus, references, applications, and technology.

Math

archives.math.utk.edu/topics

Has 40 links to topics ranging from algebra to calculus to industrial mathematics to the history of mathematics. Also has a statistics link, fractals, and IFSs. Icons are used to indicate the minimum level of training expected for a reader of the links.

Math

forum.swarthmore.edu/math.topics.html

Helpful information for math students and teachers.

College Algebra Tutorial

www.math.armstrong.edu/MathTutorial/

Provides a wide variety of college-level algebra problems to solve. Covers concepts of algebra (exponents and radicals, factoring, fractional expressions, etc.), equations and inequalities, functions and graphs, and exponential and logarithmic functions.

Math and Chemistry Tutorials

http://www.dmacc.org/academicachievement/dicksmenu/tutorials_menu.htm

Provides interactive tutorials on subjects such as the metric system, the unit cancellation method, polyatomic ions, balancing chemical equations, converting medical units, and more.

Music

Naxos Classics — Musical Glossary
www.naxos.com/mgloss.htm

Nursing

Study Tips from Former Nursing Students
medi-smart.com/study-tips.htm

Describes how to get the most out of your classes, how to get the most out of your books, how to thrive in clinicals, how to ace tests, how to form study groups, and so on.

Online Training Manual (University of Michigan School of Nursing)
http://www.nursing.umich.edu/oma/Study_Groups/training_manual.html

Provides nursing study group facilitators and participants with practical resources to help strengthen students' study skills. Includes links to various internet resources.

Online Classes

Summary of book, 100 Things Every Online Student Ought to Know
www.cambridgestratford.com/online_learning/guidebook.html
New book students can order to improve success with online learning.

Physics

From the University of Colorado at Boulder
www.colorado.edu/physics/2000/index.pl
An interactive journey through modern physics.

Eric Weisstein's World of Physics
scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics

Political Science

Policy.com
www.speakout.com

CNN AllPolitics
www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS

Psychology

Web site for Dr. LeeAnn Bartolini
faculty.MSMC.edu/bartolini
Many links of interest.

PsychWeb
www.psychwww.com

Has information on a wide range of psychology topics, including online practice exams for psych. Also includes APA format; careers in psychology; self-quiz for introductory psychology; sport psychology; tip sheets for psych majors; and links to psychological journals.

School Psychology Resources Online
www.schoolpsychology.net/p_01.html#fas
Directed to school psychologists but contains many good links.

Religion/Philosophy

Resources from web site developed by Fr. Robert Haberman, faculty
faculty.MSMC.edu/haberman/relamer/Front%20Page/titlepg.htm
Religion in America from 17th to 20th centuries

Religion and Ethics Newsweekly (PBS)
www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics

Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance
www.religioustolerance.org.
Multiple links to religious essays, news, hot topics, science and religion, religious wars, etc.

Study Skills

College Success Strategies
www.mtsu.edu/~studskl#anchor344276
Covers note taking, test taking, time management, etc. Also provides links to other learning assistance sites.

Handouts from University of Texas at Austin
www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/lrnres/handouts.html
Includes downloadable handouts on study strategies, writing, reading, math/science, graduate exam/placement test preparation, ESL, etc.

Student Success Guides (Bristol Community College)
www.bristol.mass.edu/Department_Pages/Quest_Writing_Lab/SDS/SDS_index.htm
Includes links to tests for learning style, personality type, as well as links to sites on reading, writing, studying, testing, time management, etc. Developed by Karl Schnapp.

Study Skills (Chemeketa Community College, created by Lucy MacDonald)
www.howtostudy.org
Lists study skills resources by category, from procrastination to time management. Also includes how to study physics, math, etc. Can read what other students have said and write your own comments as well.

Learning Styles
tls.utsc.utoronto.ca/LearningFair/styles/styles.htm
Enables you to assess your own thinking and learning styles.

Study Skills

Study Guides and Strategies (University of St. Thomas)
www.studygs.net/
Has sections on preparing to learn; studying; classroom participation; reading skills; preparing for tests; taking tests; test anxiety; writing skills; writing “types”; math and science; webtruth. Also has a study habits checklist.

Academic Skills Center (Dartmouth College)
www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/
General: includes SQ3R; Cornell method of note taking; time management; memory; anxiety.

Academic Success Center: Handouts (Purdue University)

www.cla.purdue.edu/asc/studentsupport/handouts/

Handouts on multiple topics including time management; memory and stress; lecture note taking; problem solving; reading speed; textbook usage; test taking.

Downloadable Handouts (University of Texas-Austin)

www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/lrnres/handouts.html

Handouts on a variety of topics ranging from study skills, writing skills, testing, procrastination, reading skills, note taking, etc. Some are excellent.

Center for Advancement and Learning (Muskingum College)

www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database

Provides excellent college study strategies and is organized by general purpose strategies (i.e., writing note cards) and content-specific strategies (i.e., specific to a course).

Test Preparation

Test Prep Review

<http://testprepreview.com/>

Free site provides practice for the CLEP, ACCUPLACER online testing, CBEST, Nursing exams, and so forth.

CLEP (College-Level Examination Program)

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/prep.html>

Provides tips and tools to prepare for CLEP exams. Also provides links to study guides that can be purchased.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary University

www.vocabulary.com

Free interactive vocabulary puzzles, activity sessions, and exercises designed to enhance vocabulary. Separated into three levels of difficulty

VoyCabulary

www.voycabulary.com

Provides many dictionary choices and language choices with a medical slant.

Vocabulary: A Year's Worth of Words

webster.com

A pop-up dictionary featuring 365 SAT- and GRE-level vocabulary words, definitions, and sample sentences (large file -takes a moment to download – 93kb)

References

- Clemmons, J. (1995). Building the study skills your students need most. *Instructor*, 105(1).
- Ferrett, S. (2000). *Peak performance, success in college and beyond*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hopper, C. (2001). *Practicing college study skills*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Landsberger, J. (1998). *Essay exams*. www.studygs.net/tsstak4.htm
- Pauk, W. (1998). Multiple choice & true/false tests. Adapted from *How To Study in College*.
- Salls, J.; Bucey, J. (2003). Self-regulation strategies for middle school students. *OT Practice*.
- Sweet Briar College Academic Resource Center. (1998). *How to be prepared for tests: 15 steps to success*. www.arc.sbc.edu/testpreparation.html.
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (1999). How to read a difficult book.
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (1999). How to read essays you must analyze.
- Western Carolina University. (1996). The learning pyramid. *The Learning Pyramid*.
- Wong, L. (2000). *Essential study skills*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.