

You are a Stud

The first four letters of 'Study' spell 'Stud'. And you're a crazy, irrepressible, (female or male) stud. And while we have your attention, here are some invaluable study tips for whether you're at school, TAFE, uni or wherever.

Tips on essay writing

- Look at questions, especially key words such as 'compare and contrast', 'discuss' or 'in the context of', and ask yourself, 'what am I being asked to explore?' What are the questions you need to explore? Start brainstorming before you read. The time you spend BEFORE you start writing is very, very important. Remember, the person marking your essay is going to love a well-structured essay where they can easily see the parts they need to GIVE A BIG TICK to. And that's what it's all about: getting big ticks. Make it easy on the person marking.
- When you're reading, keep the instructions and the focus of the question in mind ALL THE TIME, so you read only relevant stuff.
- Sketch out a brief plan of the essay covering the essential sections.
- Once you've done more reading, refine your plan. Then start your first draft.
- At each stage, keep checking that you're sticking to the question and not veering off track.
- The final touches: check your spelling and grammar, check the presentation complies with the department's standards, make sure you get your bibliography correct, number the pages, and put your name on each page.

Judgement Day



- **Results.** You are judged on your results – not on how many hours you have studied or pretended to study. Results, not how miserable you make yourself. So spending all night at your desk, jerking yourself back from sleep every five minutes is NOT YOUR BEST USE OF TIME. So the good oil on 'burning the midnight oil' is you don't have to do it.
- **Exercise.** Physical exercise is AMAZING for clearing your mind and refreshing yourself. It might be a game of sport or weights or a walk or a mountain-bike ride. Whatever.
- **Breaks and treats.** See friends and do things you like to do. It's study, not jail.
- **One person's example:** "I'm going to get up early, have breakfast, then study these two topics for an hour each, then go for a walk. Snack, then two more hour sessions then catch a movie (or DVD or playstation) and have lunch. Back home – a one-hour session, coffee, then knuckle down for two one-hour sessions with a shower in between. Then meet mates for dinner. After dinner, I'll quickly review what I've done and take a note of things I'm not confident about and look at tomorrow's schedule." All of a sudden, you've done SEVEN QUALITY HOURS PLUS in a day and are feeling darn good about yourself.
- **Go well.** Eat well and look after yourself.

Organisation

So do things well and do them in an organised fashion. For each subject/class/whatever, plan what shape the assessment is going to take. For instance:

1. You might have three assignments/tests during the year that will contribute X percentage to your final mark. Allocate your time and effort according to these things.
2. Your final exam might require you to address, let's say, four out of the seven subject areas you studied during the year. It might not be worth your while spending loads of time on all seven areas. Discuss and consider this with teachers, lecturers, tutors, classmates etc. Get the above sorted and plan it out. Then, follow the plan.

Tips on reading

When you're loaded down with textbooks it's a good idea to develop your reading skills.

- Preview a page first and figure out the main idea.
- Pay attention when you read, you'll take in more if you're in a quiet place. If you're not taking anything in, don't bother.
- Try not to talk to yourself when you read, either by moving your lips or vocalising it in your mind. Try to look at the words like a landscape and take it all in.
- Read in thought groups – poor readers make loads of stops with their eyes. Try to read a phrase in three or four words rather than each individual word. Then think about the whole thought/theory behind that passage and move on.
- It's easy to do, especially when you're tired, but try not to keep reading the same phrase over and over again. It's a waste of time.
- Vary your reading pace so you can speed up during easy parts and slow down during difficult material.

Take note

- Start each new lecture, class or tutorial on a page and date it, as it's important to stay on top of the sequence of material.
- It's not very green, but if you write on one side of the paper, you can lay them out side by side while you're studying. If this use of paper concerns you, there are ways of getting around it: make sure your notes are made from recycled paper, you recycle them, or find paper from an office or similar that has already been used on one side.
- Leave blank spaces so you've got space to add comments or notes later.
- Your style of note-taking will depend on you. If you're a fast writer, you find yourself scrawling as much as possible, but if you aren't, try to keep your notes as brief as possible. Use a phrase to sum up a sentence or idea. Most people prefer to use this method.
- Develop your own abbreviations or symbols for words you use a lot.
- If concepts or vocabulary come up that you don't understand, write them down and look them up later (but actually do look them up).