

HOMEWORK BASICS

Getting Organized

- Choose and work in a set study place with a limited amount of distractions. It should **not** have a TV, phones, dim lighting, or a place where others can barge in.
 - Just like you would have set times to go to class, set specific times during the day to go to this location to work on your classes.
- Plan to work or to study for 20-30 minutes with NO distractions. After that time is up, take a short break (5 or 10 minutes).

Using Paper Materials

If you prefer to use paper materials, follow these steps:

- Print off readings ahead of time so you can begin your work at the time you set aside.
- Keep printed materials in a separate folder for each class.
- Annotate text on your printed reading by highlighting or underlining key words or phrases.

Using Digital Materials

If you prefer to view readings digitally, follow these steps:

- Close all other items (browser tabs, email, etc.) so your attention is focused only on the reading.
- Have a notebook out to jot down key words, concepts, and ideas.
- Before starting your notes, write the title of the reading in your notebook and where the file is located so you can easily access it in the future. You could also choose to save the reading in a folder on your computer.
- If the reading contains hyperlinks, avoid clicking on them until you have finished the section because they might reroute you to another source that may not be directly connected to the topic you are studying.

Where to Start

- Work on ONE task at a time to prevent stress and being overwhelmed.
- Start with the more difficult, least interesting courses assignments FIRST. When you first sit down to work you have the energy and attention that is needed for these more difficult tasks.
- Once the difficult/least interesting tasks are completed, you only have the easy assignments left. This increases motivation to complete your remaining work.

Set Goals

- Goals should be clear and created for each day (i.e. complete all math problems by 9PM; read and take notes for CORE 130; type up draft of paper that is due next week).
- Write down your goals on post-it notes in addition to in your planner. Place these reminders in multiple locations (computer keyboard, bathroom, room mirror, refrigerator, etc.). These serve as frequent reminders and should increase motivation to be productive during the day.

Take Good Notes

Take notes that are well structured. Here are two effective strategies for taking notes in college (more examples can be found in the *Home & Notetaking Strategies* section of the website):

Question and Answer:

The Question System helps you pinpoint the most important parts of the text. Creating questions helps you focus on the text and allows you to structure your notes to ensure you're paying attention to the main points within the reading. This method is helpful in preparing for exams since you can quiz yourself later on with the questions you created. You may also have created questions that will be on the exam!

1. Before reading or taking notes, use major headings and/or topic sentences to create questions about what you will read

Example heading: Three Types of Goals

Example question: What are the three types of goals?

2. Write/type your list of questions for the entire reading before starting to read the material
3. Then, go back to the beginning and read the material
4. Read each section carefully to find the answer to your question
5. Recite the answer out loud before writing it down
6. Write the answer below or beside your question

Question	Answer
Why is it important to set goals?	Setting goals provides me with motivation and with direction (167).

Cornell System:

This is the best notetaking system to be better prepared for exams as it allows you to quiz yourself AND to pull out the most important ideas from each lecture or reading material.

1. Divide your page into three different sections: right side = key words/main ideas, left side = raw notes, bottom section = summary of text or lecture:

Key words/main ideas	Raw notes
Brief summary of text or lecture	

2. While reading or during lecture: Take notes on the right side (raw notes). Use abbreviations and take notes on the details of what you're reading.
3. After the reading is complete or the lecture is finished: Create key words or main ideas that relate to each set of raw notes on the left side under the "Key words/main ideas" section.
4. After your key words/ideas are created, review all of your notes and write a brief summary capturing the most important details from the text or lecture.

For more information and support, contact:

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