

CREATE A STUDY PLAN



What is a study plan?

A study plan is an organized schedule outlining study times and learning goals. Just like with work or school schedules, college students should develop a schedule that sets aside dedicated time each week for studying. This schedule should include dates of quizzes, tests, and exams, as well as deadlines for papers and projects.

Why do I need a study plan?



A study plan is an effective way to help you navigate through your college education, and hold you accountable for your own learning outcomes.

Time management can be challenging. Besides your classes, you likely have other commitments like extracurricular activities, work, and social engagements.

Creating a study plan allows you to see how you spend your time, and ensures that you are setting aside enough time outside of class to complete homework assignments, study for tests, and review and retain the information you are learning.

Study plans are particularly important for [online students](#), since you need to have self-discipline and determination to complete your studies without the constant reminders of an instructor.

6 tips for creating a study plan



It's important to understand that there is no “right” way to make a study plan. Your study plan will be personalized based on your specific needs, classes, and [learning style](#).

Follow the guidelines below to get started on creating your study plan:

#1: Analyze your current study habits and learning style – Think about what works and what doesn't work for you. Are you able to study for long blocks of time once or twice a week, or is it more effective if you study nightly for thirty minutes? Are you [more productive at a certain time of day](#)? Do you retain material better if you study a subject immediately after class, or do you need a break first?

#2: Evaluate your current schedule and time management – Use [a digital or paper calendar](#) to block out all of your standing commitments, including classes, work, and extracurricular activities. This will let you see how much of your time is already spoken for, and what time you have available for studying.

If your schedule leaves little room for studying, you may need to evaluate what you can cut back on, or how you can rearrange your schedule to have more open time for studying.

#3: Plan how much time you need to study for each class – For many years, the accepted rule has been that you need to study [two hours for every one hour of class time](#), meaning that if you're taking a typical 15-credit semester, you will spend 30 hours a week outside of class studying. There is some [question about the efficacy of this ratio](#), especially in light of new technology that makes research and writing faster.

At the beginning of each term, your instructors will give you syllabi for the classes you are taking. The syllabi will

usually include the dates of any major exams or projects. You can use these as guides for calculating how much time to set aside for each class, as some courses might be more intensive than others. It will also help you schedule your study sessions to make sure you have enough time to complete all your assignments and prepare for exams.

#4: Develop a schedule – Now that you understand how much time you need for studying, and how much time you have available, you can schedule your study sessions. Add your study sessions to your calendar like any other commitments. This ensures that you remember this is time set aside specifically for studying.

Plan out which subject you will study on which day, to ensure that you're devoting enough time to each subject. For example, Mondays and Thursdays can be set aside for math, while Tuesdays and Fridays can be devoted to English.

If your schedule is busy, you may have to be somewhat flexible and creative in finding time to study. For example, if you commute to school via public transportation, you can use that time for reading. Or perhaps your job allows you to study when it's not busy.

#5: Assess your weekly calendar –

[Identifying your learning goals](#) for each class will help you determine how much time you need to spend studying. At the start of the term, think about what you want to accomplish in each class. Maybe you want to master a specific skill, or improve your grade. These are overarching goals to help motivate you during the term.

Then, at the beginning of each week, determine why you need to study and what you plan to accomplish in each study session. Are you preparing for a big exam? Is there a paper due? Are you able to read a chapter ahead in preparation for the next few classes? Adjust your study plan as necessary to meet your weekly goals, and get the most out of each study session.

While it is tempting to skip your study session when there isn't a test looming, you will reduce your future test preparation time by reading ahead and preparing for lectures.

#6: Stick to your schedule – A study plan works best when it is followed consistently. You should try to develop a study plan that you can follow for the length of each term. You will have to adjust your plan as necessary when you switch your classes each term. Remember, the most important thing is sticking to your plan.