

General Rules of Thumb for Effective Study

1. Figure out what you need to learn.

Use the course syllabus, the chapter headings and subheadings, the terms in **bold-face type** or *italics*, questions at the end of the chapter or section, the expected format of the exams, and questions posed by the instructor to decide what concepts, information, theories, and formulas you need to know.

2. Study actively.

Don't just stare at the pages with one eye on the clock. Ask yourself questions, find answers, solve problems, and make charts, graphs, or maps of the information you are trying to learn.

3. Use as many senses you can.

Don't rely just on your vision. Talk about ideas. Discuss questions with your classmates. If you want to memorize something, talk into a tape and play it again and again (especially just before going to sleep).

4. Test yourself frequently.

You can't know how well you're learning something if you don't monitor your progress. Ask yourself questions and see if you can answer them. Try to solve sample problems. Make up questions as if you were the teacher and see if you can answer correctly.

5. Reward your progress.

Rewards help build motivation, which helps you to keep on learning. This is especially important for courses in which the joy of learning itself is not enough to make you keep up your efforts.