

## 1. Attend All Your Classes

- Absorb classroom material.
- Make presence known/participate.
- Earn attendance points.
- Don't forget to sit close to the front -- historically, those who do are usually the best students.

## 2. Master Your Professors

- Understand course expectations. Most professors give out a class syllabus during the first week of classes -- and it is your responsibility to know deadlines and all the requirements for the course.
- Understand professors on personal level. Rather than viewing the professor as some figurehead at the front of the class who decides your fate in some abstract way, get to know your professor as a person. Visit him or her during office hours, or stay after class.
- Communicate with professors when you are struggling.

## 3. Get/Stay Organized

- Use a planner or other organization system.
- Stay current with due dates/course calendars.
- Keep homework, tests, and class papers in central location. Don't just throw old homework assignments or tests in the back of your car or the floor of your dorm room. You'll need these for studying for future tests, for meeting with your professor to discuss them, and for figuring your grade in the class... so, keep all your class materials in a central location.

## 4. Use Time Wisely

- Tackle harder work first.
- Take breaks as reward for work.
- Break larger projects into smaller, easy-to-accomplish pieces.
- Do not overextend yourself; learn to say no. Besides all your academic work, you will also be asked to get involved in all sorts of clubs and organizations while in college -- and at some point, you will have to learn to say no to some requests of your time.
- Work hard to play hard.

## 5. Become "Noteworthy"

- Be an active listener in class. Don't read the newspaper, gossips with friends, or text your roommate during class. Instead, listen attentively and actively -- and ask for clarification when you need it.
- Take good notes in class.
- Rewrite or organize notes on your computer outside of class.

## 6. Use the Textbook

- Read all assigned material.
- Know what's critical.
- Use outlining system to help comprehend material.

## 7. Follow Good Rules of Writing

- Organize your thoughts before writing.
- Understand requirements for paper.
- Write a draft (and get feedback when possible).
- Rewrite, edit, rewrite, edit, rewrite.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread. Spellcheckers catch spelling errors, but not other problems, so learn the art of proofreading.

## 8. Study, Study, Study

- Study early and often. Breaking your studying into shorter periods of time will make less of a chore -- and give your mind time to absorb the material before moving on.
- Develop and practice good study habits. Make it a habit and studying will become second nature to you.
- Know how you best study, learn material. Some people need complete silence to concentrate while others like a little noise. Find what works for you and stick with it.
- Study with friends to gain support, but... don't turn it into a social event.
- Make sure work is done before socializing. Studying is critical to learning, which is critical to better grades -- so do the work before heading out to have fun.

## 9. Be a Good Test-Taker

- Know what to expect on exams. Every professor has a style of test development, so obtain old copies or ask the professor directly. Know the types of questions that will be asked -- as well as the content that will be covered.
- Read questions carefully and plan answers. Take your time at the beginning of the test to read through all the instructions and make a plan of attack.
- Pace yourself so you have plenty of time to complete all parts. And know the point values of questions, so you can be sure to complete the most important ones first in case time does run out.
- Ask questions. If you don't understand something, or need clarification of the question, ask the professor. Don't wait to get the exam back and find you answered a question the wrong way.

## 10. Polish Those Verbal Communications Skills

- Practice speeches, presentations.
- If using technology, always have a back-up.
- Know the presentation situation -- and plan accordingly. Every professor has a set of guidelines when grading presentations, and many classroom set-ups are different, so know the situation before going into the presentation.

### Final Thoughts

Following these guidelines should help your grades immensely, but here is one other tip. Remember to think of your professors as your allies, not your enemies. And if not your allies, at least your partners. The goal is for every student to learn and master the materials in the course. And if you master the materials, you should have a good grade in the class. And if you're struggling with some aspect of the course, just go see the professor. They are there to help you become the best you can be.

*Adapted from 10 Tips for Getting Good (or Better) Grades by Dr. Randall Hansen.*