INDIS 313: FIRST YEAR SEMINAR TEXTBOOK FOR INSTRUCTORS



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INDIS 313: First Year Seminar Textbook for Instructors (DeMartini)

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1: COLLEGE CULTURE

1.1: The First Year of College Will Be an Experience
1.2: College Culture and Expectations
1.3: Speaking The Language of College

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1.1: The First Year of College Will Be an Experience

Questions to consider

- How will you adjust to college?
- What are the common college experiences you will have?

Adjustments to College Are Inevitable

College not only will expand your mind, but it may also make you a little uncomfortable, challenge your identity, and at times, make you doubt your abilities. It is hard to truly learn anything without getting messy. This is what education does: it transforms us. For that to happen, however, means that we will need to be open to the transformation and allow the changes to occur. *Flexibility*, *transition*, and *change* are all words that describe what you will experience. Laurie Hazard and Stephanie Carter (2018)[6] use the word *adjustment*. Hazard and Carter (2018) believe there are six adjustment areas that first-year college students experience: academic, cultural, emotional, financial, intellectual, and social. Of course, you won't go through these adjustments all at once or even in just the first year. Some will take time, while others may not even feel like much of a transition. Let's look at them in brief as a way of preparing for the road ahead:

- *Academic adjustment*. No surprises here. You will most likely—depending on your own academic background—be faced with the increased demands of learning in college. This could mean that you need to spend more time learning to learn and using those strategies to master the material.
- *Cultural adjustment*. You also will most likely experience a cultural adjustment just by being in college because most campuses have their own language (*syllabus*, *registrar*, and *office hours*, for example) and customs. You may also experience a cultural adjustment because of the diversity that you will encounter. Most likely, the people on your college campus will be different than the people at your high school—or at your workplace.
- *Emotional adjustment*. Remember the range of emotions presented at the beginning of the chapter? Those will likely be present in some form throughout your first weeks in college and at stressful times during the semester. Knowing that you may have good days and bad—and that you can bounce back from the more stressful days—will help you find healthy ways of adjusting emotionally.
- *Financial adjustment*. Most students understand the investment they are making in their future by going to college. Even if you have all your expenses covered, there is still an adjustment to a new way of thinking about what college costs and how to pay for it. You may find that you think twice about spending money on entertainment or that you have improved your skills in finding discounted textbooks.
- *Intellectual adjustment*. Experiencing an intellectual "a-ha!" moment is one of the most rewarding parts of college, right up there with moving across the graduation stage with a degree in hand. Prepare to be surprised when you stumble across a fascinating subject or find that a class discussion changes your life. At the very least, through your academic work, you will learn to think differently about the world around you and your place in it.
- *Social adjustment*. A new place often equals new people. But in college, those new relationships can have even more meaning. Getting to know professors not only can help you learn more in your classes, but it can also help you figure out what career pathway you want to take and how to get desired internships and jobs. Learning to reduce conflicts during group work or when living with others helps build essential workplace and life skills.

The table Six Areas of Adjustment for First-Year College Students provides a succinct definition for each of the areas as well as examples of how you can demonstrate that you have adjusted. Think about what you have done so far to navigate these transitions in addition to other things you can do to make your college experience a successful one.

	Academic	Cultural	Emotional	Financial	Intellectual	Social
What Is It?	Students will take a more active role in their learning than they had to in high and have the ability to meet the increasing demands of change.	Students will interact with others of various cultures, religious beliefs, sexual identities and orientations, ages, and abilities.	Students will need to be prepared for the stressors of college and develop habits and behaviors to cope with these changes.	Students will need to demonstrate basic financial literacy, an understanding of the cost of college, and methods of paying for those costs.	Students will have the opportunity to join an academic community that includes classmates, faculty, support personnel, and administrators.	Students will be faced with shifts in their relationships, finding a new peer group and handling the pressure of fitting in.
Students exhibit it when they:	• Take an active role in learning. • Attain college-level learning strategies. • Are open to feedback and change. • Make adjustments to learning strategies as needed.	• Accept and welcome differences in others. • Recognize the include of their own cultural identity. • Seek opportunities to explore other cultures.	• Readily handle the stressors of college life. • Develop emotional coping strategies. • Seek support from campus resources.	• Manage money independently. • Recognize the costs of college. • Explore job and aid opportunities.	• Engage in intellectual discussions. • Are open to new ideas, subject areas, and career choices. • Integrate new ideas into belief systems.	• Join a club or organization. • Form supportive, healthy relationships. • Understand the impact of peer pressure. • Manage conflict in relationships.

Figure 1.1.4: **Six Areas of Adjustment for First-Year College Students** Based on work by Laurie Hazard, Ed.D., and Stephanie Carter, M.A.

"Experiencing an intellectual 'a-ha!' moment is one of the most rewarding parts of college, right up there with moving across the graduation stage with a degree in hand."

analysis question

Which of the six areas of adjustment do you think will be the least challenging for you, and which do you think will be most challenging? What can you do now to prepare for the more challenging transitions?

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. How confident are you that your high school and/or work experience have prepared you academically for college?
   a. Extremely confident
   b. Confident
   c. Somewhat confident
   d. Not very confident
2. When you experience a college-related challenge and are not really sure how to solve it, what best describes the action you're likely to take?
   a. I will likely persist and persevere until I figure it out.
   b. I will likely try to solve the problem, but if it is really difficult, I will simply move on to something else.
   c. I will likely ask my parents or friends for advice.
   d. I will likely seek help from resources on campus.
3. Rank the following in terms of how much stress you feel in these situations (1 being the least amount of stress and 6 being the most amount of stress):
   a. The amount of work required in all of my courses
   b. The fact that I know hardly anyone
   c. My ability to handle all of my obligations
   d. Making good grades so I can continue to stay in college
   e. My concern that I may not belong in college
   f. All of the above are equally stressful

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

How confident are you that your high school and/or work experience have prepared you academically for college?

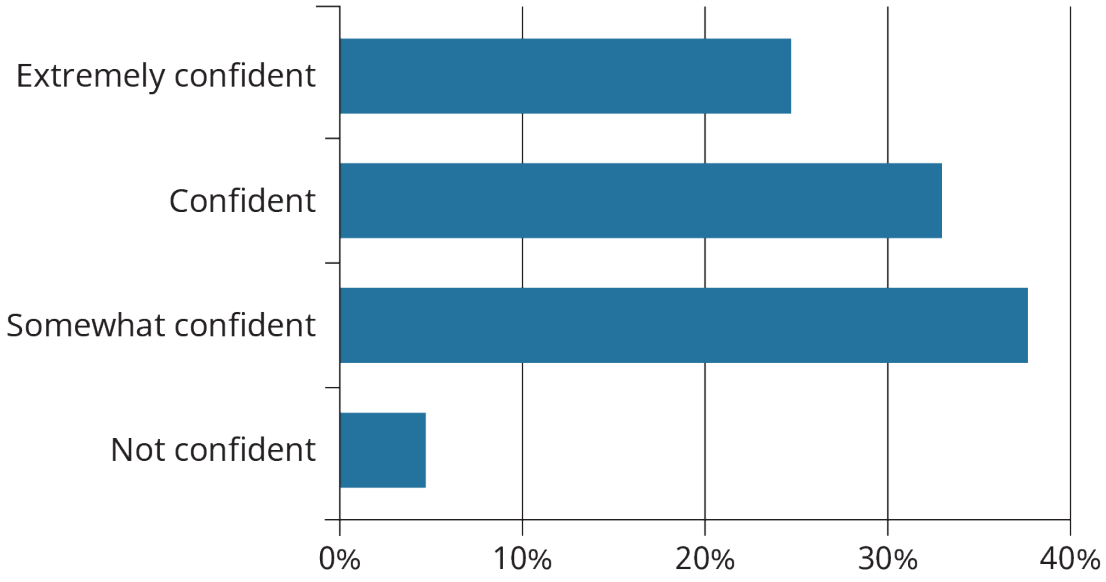


Figure 1.1.5

When you experience a college-related challenge and are not really sure how to solve it, what best describes the action you're likely to take?

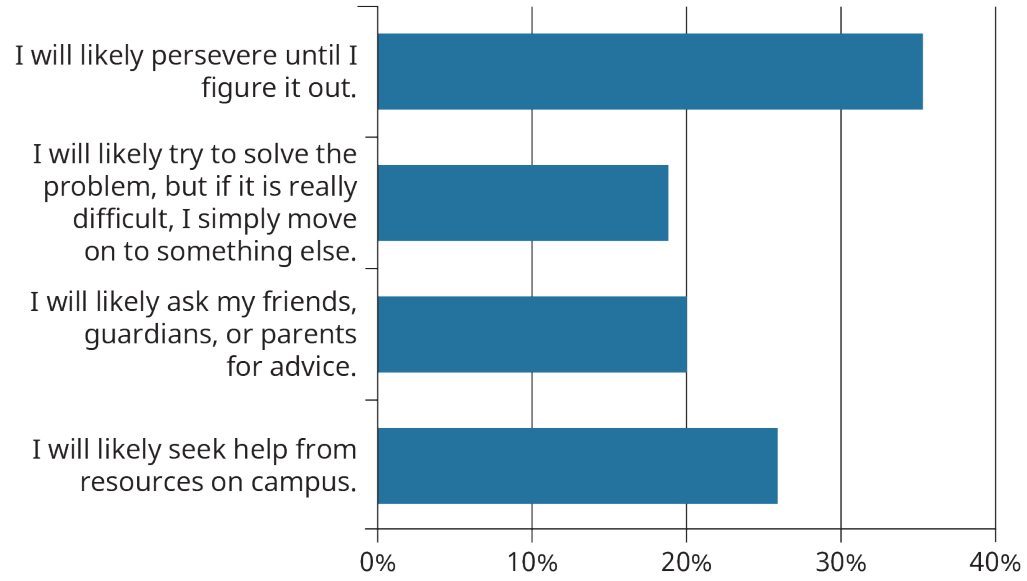


Figure 1.1.6

Rank the following in terms of how much stress you feel in these situations (1 being the least amount of stress and 6 being the most amount of stress). (Graph displays the percentage of students who ranked the choice highest, indicating the most amount of stress.)

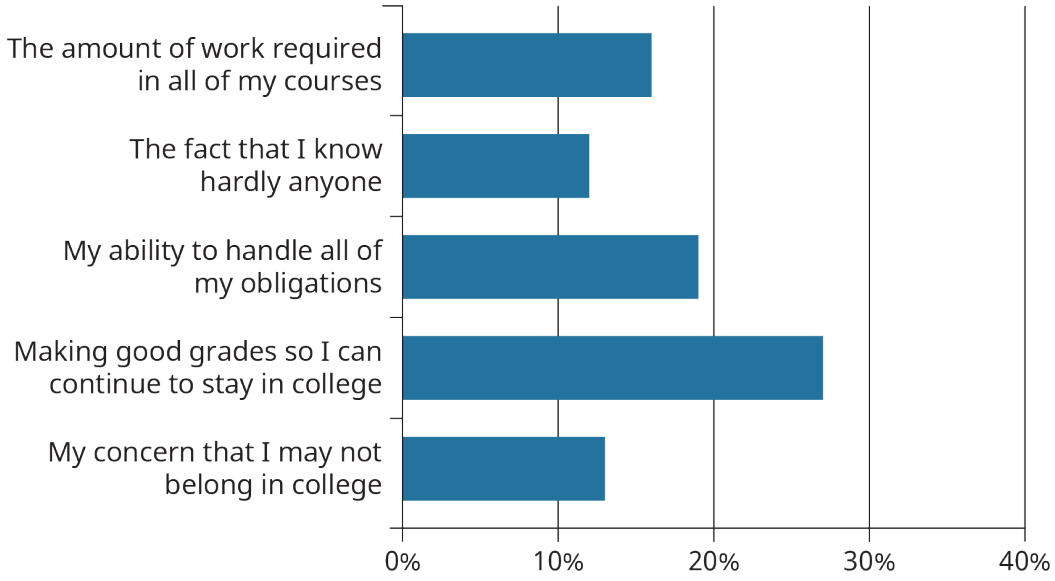


Figure 1.1.7

Footnotes

- Hazard, L., & Carter, S. (2018). A framework for helping families understand the college transition. *E-Source for College Transitions*, 16(1), 13-15.

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1.2: College Culture and Expectations

Questions to consider

- What language and customs do you need to know to succeed in college?
- What is your responsibility for learning in college?
- What resources will you use to meet these expectations?
- What are the common challenges in the first year?

College Has Its Own Language and Customs

Going to college—even if you are not far from home—is a cultural experience. It comes with its own language and customs, some of which can be confusing or confounding at first. Just like traveling to a foreign country, it is best if you prepare by learning what words mean and what you are expected to say and do in certain situations.

Let's first start with the language you may encounter. In most cases, there will be words that you have heard before, but they may have different meanings in a college setting. Take, for instance, "office hours." If you are not in college, you would think that it means the hours of a day that an office is open. If it is your dentist's office, it may mean Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In college, "office hours" can refer to the specific hours a professor is in her office to meet with students, and those hours may be only a few each day: for example, Mondays and Wednesdays from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.

"Syllabus" is another word that you may not have encountered, but it is one you will soon know very well. A syllabus is often called the "contract of the course" because it contains information about what to expect—from the professor and the student. It is meant to be a roadmap for succeeding in the class. Understanding that office hours are for you to ask your professor questions and the syllabus is the guide for what you will be doing in the class can make a big difference in your transition to college. The table on Common College Terms, has a brief list of other words that you will want to know when you hear them on campus.

Table 1.1: Common College Terms, What They Mean, and Why You Need to Know

Term	What It Means	Why You Need to Know
Attendance policy	A policy that describes the attendance and absence expectations for a class	Professors will have different attendance expectations. Read your syllabus to determine which ones penalize you if you miss too many classes.
Final exam	A comprehensive assessment that is given at the end of a term	If your class has a final exam, you will want to prepare for it well in advance by reading assigned material, taking good notes, reviewing previous tests and assignments, and studying.
Learning	The process of acquiring knowledge	In college, most learning happens *outside* the classroom. Your professor will only cover the main ideas or the most challenging material in class. The rest of the learning will happen on your own.
Office hours	Specific hours professor is in the office to meet with students	Visiting your professor during office hours is a good way to get questions answered and to build rapport.

Term	What It Means	Why You Need to Know
Plagiarism	Using someone's words, images, or ideas as your own, without proper attribution	Plagiarism carries much more serious consequences in college, so it is best to speak to your professor about how to avoid it and review your student handbook's policy.
Study	The process of using learning strategies to understand and recall information	Studying in college may look different than studying in high school in that it may take more effort and more time to learn more complex material.
Syllabus	The contract of a course that provides information about course expectations and policies	The syllabus will provide valuable information that your professor will assume you have read and understood. Refer to it first when you have a question about the course.

Activity

The language that colleges and universities use can feel familiar but mean something different, as you learned in the section above, and it can also seem alien, especially when institutions use acronyms or abbreviations for buildings, offices, and locations on campus. Terms such as "quad" or "union" can denote a location or space for students. Then there may be terms such as "TLC" (The Learning Center, in this example) that designate a specific building or office. Describe a few of the new terms you have encountered so far and what they mean. If you are not sure, ask your professor or a fellow student to define it for you.

In addition to its own language, higher education has its own way of doing things. For example, you may be familiar with what a teacher did when you were in high school, but do you know what a professor does? It certainly seems like they fulfill a very similar role as teachers in high school, but in college professors' roles are often much more diverse. In addition to teaching, they may also conduct research, mentor graduate students, write and review research articles, serve on and lead campus committees, serve in regional and national organizations in their disciplines, apply for and administer grants, advise students in their major, and serve as sponsors for student organizations. You can be assured that their days are far from routine. See the Table on Differences between High School Teachers and College Professors for just a few differences between high school teachers and college professors.

Table 1.2: Differences between High School and College Faculty

High School Faculty	College Faculty
Often have degrees or certifications in teaching in addition to degrees in subject matter	Most likely have not even taken a course in teaching as part of their graduate program
Responsibilities include maximizing student learning and progress in a wide array of areas	Responsibilities include providing students with content and an assessment of their mastery of the content
Are available before or after school or during class if a student has a question	Are available during office hours or by appointment if a student needs additional instruction or advice
Communicate regularly and welcome questions from parents and families about a student's progress	Cannot communicate with parents and families of students without permission because of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The relationships you build with your professors will be some of the most important ones you create during your college career. You will rely on them to help you find internships, write letters of recommendation, nominate you for honors or awards, and

serve as references for jobs. You can develop those relationships by participating in class, visiting during office hours, asking for assistance with coursework, requesting recommendations for courses and majors, and getting to know the professor's own academic interests. One way to think about the change in how your professors will relate to you is to think about the nature of relationships you have had growing up. In Figure 1.8: You and Your Relationships Before College you will see a representation of what your relationships probably looked like. Your family may have been the greatest influencer on you and your development.

"The relationships you build with your professors will be some of the most important ones during your college career."

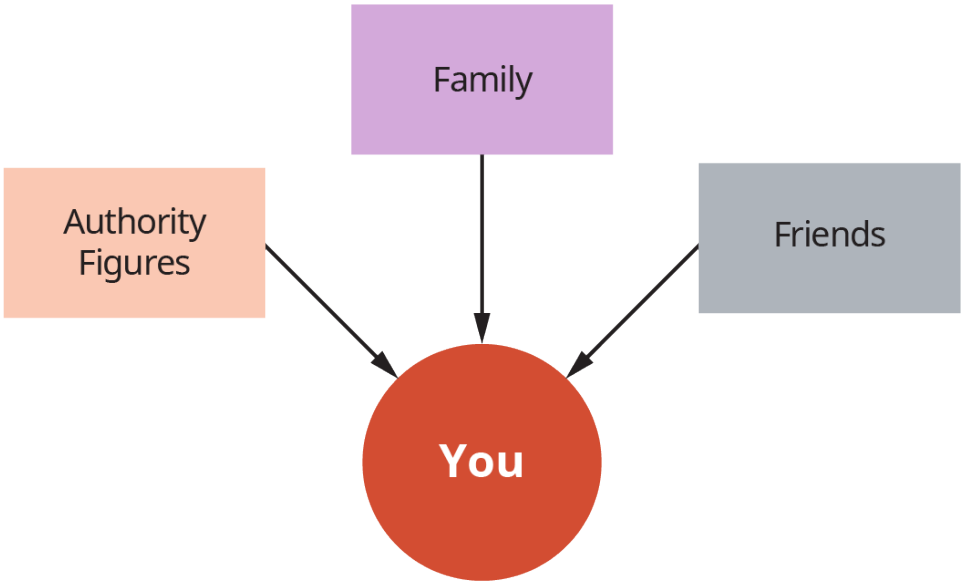


Figure 1.2.8: You and Your Relationships Before College.

In college, your networks are going to expand in ways that will help you develop other aspects of yourself. As described above, the relationships you will have with your professors will be some of the most important. But they won't be the only relationships you will be cultivating while in college. Consider the Figure on You and Your Relationships during College and think about how you will go about expanding your network while you are completing your degree.

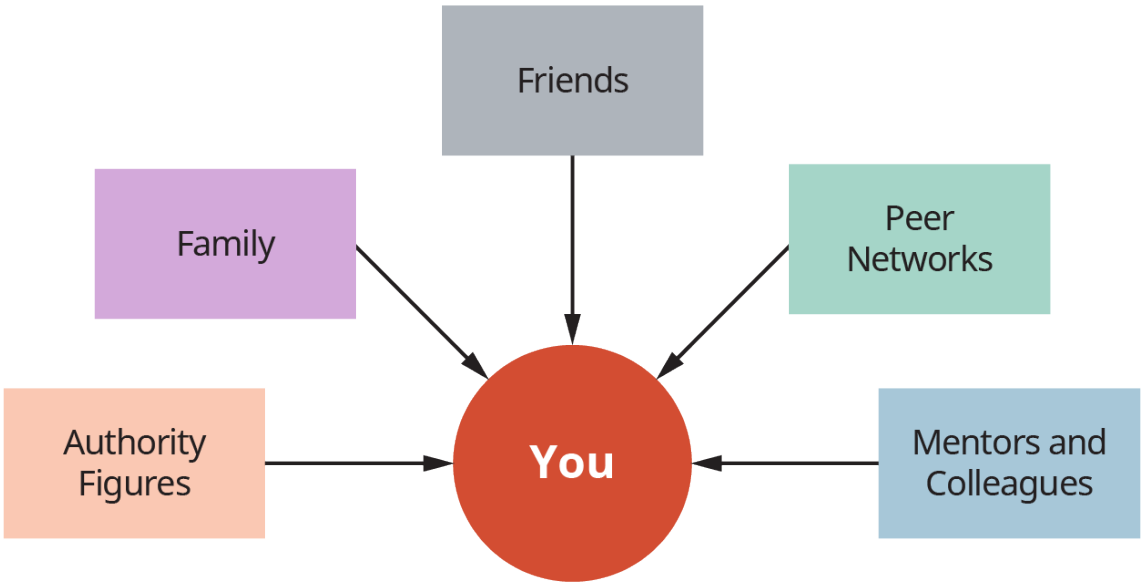


Figure 1.2.9: You and Your Relationships During College

Your relationships with authority figures, family, and friends may change while you are in college, and at the very least, your relationships will expand to peer networks—not friends, but near-age peers or situational peers (e.g., a first-year college student who is going back to school after being out for 20 years)—and to faculty and staff who may work alongside you, mentor you, or supervise your studies. These relationships are important because they will allow you to expand your network, especially

as it relates to your career. As stated earlier, developing relationships with faculty can provide you with more than just the benefits of a mentor. Faculty often review applications for on-campus jobs or university scholarships and awards; they also have connections with graduate programs, companies, and organizations. They may recommend you to colleagues or former classmates for internships and even jobs.

Other differences between high school and college are included in the table about Differences between High School and College. Because it is not an exhaustive list of the differences, be mindful of other differences you may notice. Also, if your most recent experience has been the world of work or the military, you may find that there are more noticeable differences between those experiences and college.

Table 1.3: Differences between High School and College

	High School	College	Why You Need to Know the Difference
Grades	Grades are made up of frequent tests and homework, and you may be able to bring up a low initial grade by completing smaller assignments and bonuses.	Grades are often made up of fewer assignments, and initial low grades may keep you from earning high course grades at the end of the semester.	You will need to be prepared to earn high grades on all assignments because you may not have the opportunity to make up for lost ground.
Learning	Learning is often done in class with the teacher guiding the process, offering multiple ways to learn material and frequent quizzes to ensure that learning is occurring.	Learning happens mostly outside of class and on your own. Faculty are responsible for assigning material and covering the most essential ideas; you are responsible for tracking and monitoring your learning progress.	You will need to practice effective learning strategies on your own to ensure that you are mastering material at the appropriate pace.
Getting Help	Your teachers, parents, and a counselor are responsible for identifying your need for help and for creating a plan for you to get help with coursework if you need it. Extra assistance is usually reserved for students who have an official diagnosis or need.	You will most likely need help to complete all your courses successfully even if you did not need extra help in high school. You will be responsible for identifying that you need it, accessing the resources, and using them.	Because the responsibility is on you, not parents or teachers, to get the help you need, you will want to be aware of when you may be struggling to learn material. You then will need to know *where* the support can be accessed on campus or where you can access support online.
Tests and Exams	Tests cover small amounts of material and study days or study guides are common to help you focus on what you need to study. If you paid attention in class, you should be able to answer all the questions.	Tests are fewer and cover more material than in high school. If you read all the assigned material, took good notes in class, and spent time practicing effective study techniques, you should be able to answer all the questions.	This change in how much material and the depth of which you need to know the material is a shock for some students. This may mean you need to change your strategies dramatically to get the same results.

Some of What You Will Learn Is "Hidden"

Many of the college expectations that have been outlined so far may not be considered common knowledge, which is one reason that so many colleges and universities have classes that help students learn what they need to know to succeed. The term, which was coined by sociologists,[7] describes unspoken, unwritten, or unacknowledged (hence, *hidden*) rules that students are expected to follow that can affect their learning. To illustrate the concept, consider the situation in the following activity.

Activity

Situation: Your history syllabus indicates that, on Tuesday, your professor is lecturing on the chapter that covers the stock market crash of 1929.

This information sounds pretty straightforward. Your professor lectures on a topic and you will be there to hear it. However, there are some unwritten rules, or hidden curriculum, that are not likely to be communicated. Can you guess what they may be? Take a moment to write at least one potential unwritten rule.

1. What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing before attending class?
   _____
2. What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing in class?
   _____
3. What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing after class?
   _____
4. What is an unwritten rule if you are not able to attend that class?
   _____

Some of your answers could have included the following:

Before class: *Read the assigned chapter, take notes, record any questions you have about the reading.*

During class: *Take detailed notes, ask critical thinking or clarifying questions, avoid distractions, bring your book and your reading notes.*

After class: *Reorganize your notes in relation to your other notes, start the studying process by testing yourself on the material, make an appointment with your professor if you are not clear on a concept.*

Absent: *Communicate with the professor, get notes from a classmate, make sure you did not miss anything important in your notes.*

The expectations before, during, and after class, as well as what you should do if you miss class, are often unspoken because many professors assume you already know and do these things or because they feel you should figure them out on your own. Nonetheless, some students struggle at first because they don't know about these habits, behaviors, and strategies. But once they learn them, they are able to meet them with ease.

Learning Is Your Responsibility

As you may now realize by reviewing the differences between high school and college, learning in college is your responsibility. Before you read about the how and why of being responsible for your own learning, complete the Activity below.

Activity

For each statement, circle the number that best represents you, with 1 indicating that the statement is least like you, and 5 indicating that the statement is most like you.

Table 1.4

Most of the time, I can motivate myself to complete tasks even if they are boring or challenging.				
1	2	3	4	5
I regularly work hard when I need to complete a task no matter how small or big the task may be.				
1	2	3	4	5
I use different strategies to manage my time effectively and minimize procrastination to complete tasks.				
1	2	3	4	5
I regularly track my progress completing work and the quality of work I do produce.				
1	2	3	4	5
I believe how much I learn and how well I learn is my responsibility.				

1	2	3	4	5

Were you able to mark mostly 4s and 5s? If you were even able to mark at least one 4 or 5, then you are well on your way to taking responsibility for your own learning. Let's break down each statement in the components of the ownership of learning:

- **Motivation.** Being able to stay motivated while studying and balancing all you have to do in your classes will be important for meeting the rest of the components.
- **Deliberate, focused effort.** Taking ownership of learning will hinge on the effort that you put into the work. Because most learning in college will take place outside of the classroom, you will need determination to get the work done. And there will be times that the work will be challenging and maybe even boring, but finding a way to get through it when it is not exciting will pay in the long run.
- **Time and task management.** You will learn more about strategies for managing your time and the tasks of college in a later chapter, but without the ability to control your calendar, it will be difficult to block out the time to study.
- **Progress tracking.** A commitment to learning must include monitoring your learning, knowing not only what you have completed (*this is where a good time management strategy can help you track your tasks*), but also the quality of the work you have done.

Taking responsibility for your learning will take some time if you are not used to being in the driver's seat. However, if you have any difficulty making this adjustment, you can and should reach out for help along the way.

What to Expect During the First Year

While you may not experience every transition within your first year, there are rhythms to each semester of the first year and each year you are in college. Knowing what to expect each month or week can better prepare you to take advantage of the times that you have more confidence and weather through the times that seem challenging. Review the table on First-Year College Student Milestones. There will be milestones each semester you are in college, but these will serve as an introduction to what you should expect in terms of the rhythms of the semester.

Table 1.5 While each student's first semester will differ, you will likely experience some of the following typical college milestones.

First-Year College Student Milestones for the First Semester				
August	**September**	**October**	**November**	**December**
Expanding social circles	Completing first test and projects	Feeling more confident about abilities	Balancing college with other obligations	Focusing on finishing strong
Experiencing homesickness or imposter syndrome	Earning "lower-than-usual" grades or not meeting personal expectations	Dealing with relationship issues	Staying healthy and reducing stress	Handling additional stress of the end of the semester
Adjusting to the pace of college	Learning to access resources for support	Planning for next semester and beyond	Thinking about majors and degrees	Thinking about the break and how to manage changes

The first few weeks will be pretty exhilarating. You will meet new people, including classmates, college staff, and professors. You may also be living in a different environment, which may mean that a roommate is another new person to get to know. Overall, you will most likely feel both excited and nervous. You can be assured that even if the beginning of the semester goes smoothly, your classes will get more challenging each week. You will be making friends, learning who in your classes seem to know what is going on, and figuring your way around campus. You may even walk into the wrong building, go to the wrong class, or have trouble finding what you need during this time. But those first-week jitters will end soon. Students who are living away from home for the first time can feel homesick in the first few weeks, and others can feel what is called "imposter syndrome," which is a fear some students have that they don't belong in college because they don't have the necessary skills for success. Those first few weeks sound pretty stressful, but the stress is temporary.

After the newness of college wears off, reality will set in. You may find that the courses and assignments do not seem much

different than they did in high school (more on that later), but you may be in for a shock when you get your graded tests and papers. Many new college students find that their first grades are lower than they expected. For some students, this may mean they have earned a B when they are used to earning As, but for many students, it means they may experience their first *failing or almost-failing grades* in college because they have not used active, effective study strategies; instead, they studied how they did in high school, which is often insufficient. This can be a shock if you are not prepared, but it doesn't have to devastate you if you are willing to use it as a wake-up call to do something different.

By the middle of the semester, you'll likely feel much more confident and a little more relaxed. Your grades are improving because you started going to tutoring and using better study strategies. You are looking ahead, even beyond the first semester, to start planning your courses for the next term. If you are working while in college, you may also find that you have a rhythm down for balancing it all; additionally, your time management skills have likely improved.

By the last few weeks of the semester, you will be focused on the increasing importance of your assignments and upcoming finals and trying to figure out how to juggle that with the family obligations of the impending holidays. You may feel a little more pressure to prepare for finals, as this time is often viewed as the most stressful period of the semester. All of this additional workload and need to plan for the next semester can seem overwhelming, but if you plan ahead and use what you learn from this chapter and the rest of the course, you will be able to get through it more easily.

Don't Do It Alone

Think about our earlier descriptions of two students, Reginald and Madison. What if they found that the first few weeks were a little harder than they had anticipated? Should they have given up and dropped out? Or should they have talked to someone about their struggles? Here is a secret about college success that not many people know: successful students seek help. They use resources. And they do that as often as necessary to get what they need. Your professors and advisors will expect the same from you, and your college will have all kinds of offices, staff, and programs that are designed to help. This bears calling out again: *you need to use those resources*. These are called "help-seeking behaviors," and along with self-advocacy, which is speaking up for your needs, they are essential to your success. As you get more comfortable adjusting to life in college, you will find that asking for help is easier. In fact, you may become really good at it by the time you graduate, just in time for you to ask for help finding a job! Review the table on Issues, Campus Resources, and Potential Outcomes for a few examples of times you may need to ask for help. See if you can identify where on campus you can find the same or a similar resource.

Table 1.6

Issues, Campus Resources, and Potential Outcomes			
Type	**Issue**	**Campus Resource**	**Potential Outcome**
Academic	You are struggling to master the homework in your math class.	The campus tutoring center	A peer or professional tutor can walk you through the steps until you can do them on your own.
Health	You have felt extremely tired over the past two days and now you have a cough.	The campus health center	A licensed professional can examine you and provide care.
Social	You haven't found a group to belong to. Your classmates seem to be going in different directions and your roommate has different interests.	Student organizations and interest groups	Becoming a member of a group on campus can help you make new friends.
Financial	Your scholarship and student loan no longer cover your college expenses. You are not sure how to afford next semester.	Financial aid office	A financial aid counselor can provide you with information about your options for meeting your college expenses.

Application

Using a blank sheet of paper, write your name in the center of the page and circle it. Then, draw six lines from the center (see example in the figure below) and label each for the six areas of adjustment that were discussed earlier. Identify a campus resource or strategy for making a smooth adjustment for each area.

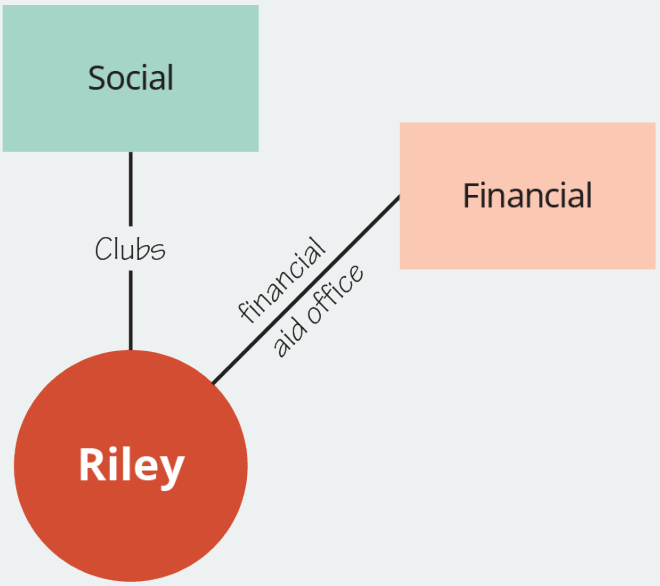


Figure 1.2.10: For each of the six adjustment areas mentioned above—Academic, Cultural, Emotional, Financial, Intellectual, and Social—identify a campus resource or strategy that will aid you in making a smooth adjustment.

Common Challenges in the First Year

It seems fitting to follow up the expectations for the first year with a list of common challenges that college students encounter along the way to a degree. If you experience any—or even all—of these, the important point here is that you are not alone and that you can overcome them by using your resources. Many college students have felt like this before, and they have survived—even thrived—despite them because they were able to identify a strategy or resource that they could use to help themselves. At some point in your academic career, you may do one or more of the following:

1. **Feel like an imposter.** There is actually a name for this condition: imposter syndrome. Students who feel like an imposter are worried that they don't belong, that someone will "expose them for being a fake." This feeling is pretty common for anyone who finds themselves in a new environment and is not sure if they have what it takes to succeed. Trust the professionals who work with first-year college students: you *do* have what it takes, and you *will* succeed. Just give yourself time to get adjusted to everything.
2. **Worry about making a mistake.** This concern often goes with imposter syndrome. Students who worry about making a mistake don't like to answer questions in class, volunteer for a challenging assignment, and even ask for help from others. Instead of avoiding situations where you may fail, embrace the process of learning, which includes—is even dependent on—making mistakes. The more you practice courage in these situations and focus on what you are going to learn from failing, the more confident you become about your abilities.
3. **Try to manage everything yourself.** Even superheroes need help from sidekicks and mere mortals. Trying to handle everything on your own every time an issue arises is a recipe for getting stressed out. There will be times when you are overwhelmed by all you have to do. This is when you will need to ask for and allow others to help you.
4. **Ignore your mental and physical health needs.** If you feel you are on an emotional rollercoaster and you cannot find time to take care of yourself, then you have most likely ignored some part of your mental and physical well-being. What you need to do to stay healthy should be non-negotiable. In other words, your sleep, eating habits, exercise, and stress-reducing activities should be your highest priorities.
5. **Forget to enjoy the experience.** Whether you are 18 years old and living on campus or 48 years old starting back to college after taking a break to work and raise a family, be sure to take the time to remind yourself of the joy that learning can bring.

Get Connected

Which apps help you meet the expectations of college? Will you be able to meet the expectations of being responsible for your schedule and assignments?

- My Study Life understands how college works and provides you with a calendar, to-do list, and reminders that will help you keep track of the work you have to do.

How can you set goals and work toward them while in college?

- The Strides app provides you with the opportunity to create SMART (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time bound) goals and track daily habits. These daily habits will add up over time toward your goals.

What can you do to develop your learning skills?

- Lumosity is a brain-training app that can help you build the thinking and learning skills you will need to meet learning challenges in college. If you want to test your memory and attention—and build your skills—take the fit test and then play different games to improve your fitness.

How can you develop networks with people in college?

- LinkedIn is a professional networking app that allows you to create a profile and network with others. Creating a LinkedIn account as a first-year college student will help you create a professional profile that you can use to find others with similar interests.
- Internships.com provides information, connections, and support to help your career planning and activities. Even if you are not planning an internship right away, you may find some useful and surprising ideas and strategies to motivate your approach.

Footnotes

- P.P. Bilbao, P. I. Lucido, T. C. Iringan and R. B. Javier. (2008). *Curriculum Development*.

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1.3: Speaking The Language of College

Alise Lamoreaux

"Language is the dress of thought"

– Samuel Johnson

Getting started in college can seem like an uphill battle. One of the first challenges a student can encounter is navigating the college's website. In the attempt to get as much information as possible into the hands of current and future students, college websites are crammed full of information and language that may be new to the first-time college student. Trying to figure out how to get started can be confusing, even when the website says, "Steps To Enroll." Registration, admission, enrollment... are they all the same thing? If you are registered, are you admitted and enrolled? Is enrollment in the college the same thing as enrollment in classes? And that's just the beginning of the potential for confusion! How can a student know the answers to these questions?

Learning to speak the "language of college" can seem even harder than learning a foreign language because as a new student, you have no idea what words you need to learn. If you travel to a foreign country, there are core vocabulary words you will find most helpful – resources that will allow you to order the food you like and services you need. Basic needs like bread and water can be correlated among different languages. A dog is a dog all over the world and not confused with a cat. The vocabulary of college is not so straightforward.

One of the first decisions a student may need to make is whether to attend college as a credit or non-credit seeking student. Even more confusing, non-credit students can also be referred to as "continuing education" students. For example, a student wants to take a drawing class. One of the first questions that may be asked is whether the student wants to take the class for credit or non-credit? Both types of students can take drawing classes. If a student doesn't know what a credit is or what one is worth, it's hard to answer the basic question in order to register for the drawing class, and the registration process is very different depending on the answer to the question of credit or non-credit. How can a student know whether he/she wants to be a "credit student" or not?

Learning to speak the language of the college is part of learning the school's culture. It is important to remember that not all colleges use the same words in the same way.

Commonly Used Academic Vocabulary

Below is a list of commonly used terminology. Without using the Internet or college catalog, see how many words you know the meaning of. Write the meaning in the space adjacent to the term.

Academic Year	
Registration	
Enrollment	
Admission	
Student Number	
Probation	
Credit Hour/Unit	
Term	
Tuition	
General Education/Gen Ed	
Elective	
Degree	

Certificate	
Career pathway	
Financial Aid	
FAFSA	
Stafford Loan	
Scholarship	
Grant	
Federal Work Study	
Transcript	
Non-Credit/Continuing Education	
Audit	
Grade Options	
Course Number	
College Level Course	
Pre-College Level Course	
Lower Division Course	
Upper Division Course	
Prerequisite	
Co-requisite	
Learning Community	
Major	

As a college student, you will need to come up with a strategy for learning lots of information, like the specific language of your school. Tim Ferris has a TED Talk about mastering skills by deconstructing them**.** When you deconstruct something, it means to take something large, and break it down into smaller parts. It also means to identify why you might fail before you start and make a plan to stop failure before it happens.

Video: *Smash Fear, Learn Anything*, Tim Ferriss at TED 2008



A TED element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://press.rebus.community/blueprint1/?p=43

Based on the ideas of simplifying and deconstructing a task in order to learn it, think of how those ideas could be applied to mastering the language of college.

- Can you see any ways to simplify the task of learning 30 words?
- Are there any connections between the words that you can see?
- Will you need all the words all the time?
- Will you need some words more frequently than others?
- When and where might you need each of the works?
- Can you think of any words not included in this list that would be helpful to know in relationship to your college vocabulary?

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Adaptions: Reformatted, some content removed to fit a broader audience.

Time Ferriss: Smash Fear, Learn Anything. Authored by TED.com

Located at: https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_ferriss_smash_fear_learn_anything#t-19570

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2: ACADEMIC SUCCESS STRATEGIES

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2.1.1: Prelude to Knowing Yourself as a Learner

2.1.2: The Power to Learn

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2.1.4: It's All in the Mindset

2.1.5: Learning Styles

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2.7.1: Memory
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2.8: Test-Taking Strategies

2.8.1: Pre- Mid- and Post-Test-Taking Strategies
2.8.2: Test-Taking Strategy Specifics

2.9: Time Management in College

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2.1: KNOWING YOURSELF AS A LEARNER

2.1.1: Prelude to Knowing Yourself as a Learner

2.1.2: The Power to Learn

2.1.3: The Motivated Learner

2.1.4: It's All in the Mindset

2.1.5: Learning Styles

2.1.6: Personality Types and Learning

2.1.7: Applying What You Know about Learning

2.1.8: The Hidden Curriculum

2.1.9: Summary

2.1.10: Career Connection

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2.1.12: Where do you go from here?

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2.1.1: Prelude to Knowing Yourself as a Learner



Figure 2.1.1.1: *The School of Athens* by Raphael, a fresco in the Vatican, is thought to depict many of the greatest figures in Greek philosophy, including Plato and Aristotle as well as Nicomachus and Averroes. (Credit: Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain)

Student Survey

How do you feel about your learning abilities? Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me." These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As you are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed.

1. Learning for me is easy. I don't even have to think about it.
2. I have a preferred learning style.
3. If I can't learn something right away, I have difficulty staying with it.
4. I think my teachers are the most significant aspect of my learning.

You can also take the Chapter 2 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"When I came to college, I was a great STEM student. I knew the best ways to study for understanding the complexity of cellular mechanisms, but I had no idea how to study for classes where I would need to draw upon political theory or even how to memorize vocabulary words for language classes. Since I am now a humanities student studying Russian, I learned the hard way that you cannot study for every class the same way.

"For my first Russian vocabulary quiz, I studied almost 14 hours because I could not remember the words no matter how hard I tried. I was studying the Russian textbook the same way that I would study for a Chemistry or Biology class: to simply read the chapter or vocabulary list over and over again. I knew that I could not afford to be this time-inefficient for the entire semester, so I asked my professor for some tips on how to study for her class. Now, I start studying three days before each quiz by making flash cards the first day, studying the words from Russian to English the second day, and then studying the words from English to Russian by writing them down the third day. This new method is not one that works well for every class, but that's the beauty of it! I am a better learner because I have found ways to use a more diverse range of studying tactics."

— Gabby Kennedy, Baylor University

About This Chapter

In this chapter you will learn about the art of learning itself, as well as how to employ strategies that enable you to learn more efficiently.

After reading this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Discover the different types of learning and your learning practices.
- Make informed and effective learning choices in regards to personal engagement and motivation.
- Identify and apply the learning benefits of a growth mindset.
- Evaluate and make informed decisions about learning styles and learning skills.
- Recognize how personality type models influence learning and utilize that knowledge to improve your own learning.
- Identify the impact of outside circumstances on personal learning experiences and develop strategies to compensate for them.
- Recognize the presence of the “hidden curriculum” and how to navigate it.

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2.1.2: The Power to Learn

Questions to consider

- What actually happens to me when I learn something?
- Am I aware of different types of learning?
- Do I approach studying or practicing differently depending on the desired outcome?

Welcome to one of the most empowering chapters in this book! While each chapter focuses on showing you clear paths to success as a student, this one deals specifically with what is at the core of being a student: the act of learning.

We humans have been obsessed with how we learn and understand things since ancient times. Because of this, some of our earliest recorded philosophies have tried to explain how we take in information about the world around us, how we acquire new knowledge, and even how we can be certain what we learn is correct. This obsession has produced a large number of theories, ideas, and research into how we learn. There is a great deal of information out there on the subject—some of it is very good, and some of it, while well intentioned, has been a bit misguided.

Because of this obsession with learning, over the centuries, people have continually come up with new ideas about how we acquire knowledge. The result has been that commonly held "facts" about education have been known to change frequently. Often, what was once thought to be the newest, greatest discovery about learning was debunked later on. One well-known example of this is that of corporal punishment. For most of the time formal education has existed in our society, educators truly believed that beating students when they made a mistake actually helped them learn faster. Thankfully, *birching* (striking someone with a rod made from a birch tree) has fallen out of favor in education circles, and our institutions of learning have adopted different approaches. In this chapter, not only will you learn about current learning theories that are backed by neuroscience (something we did not have back in the days of birching), but you will also learn other learning theories that did not turn out to be as effective or as thoroughly researched as once thought. That does not mean those ideas about learning are useless. Instead, in these cases you find ways to separate the valuable parts from the myths to make good learning choices.

> **"Research has shown that one of the most influential aids in learning is an understanding about learning itself."**

What Is the Nature of Learning?

To begin with, it is important to recognize that learning is work. Sometimes it is easy and sometimes it is difficult, but there is always work involved. For many years people made the error of assuming that learning was a passive activity that involved little more than just absorbing information. Learning was thought to be a lot like copying and pasting words in a document; the student's mind was blank and ready for an instructor to teach them facts that they could quickly take in. As it turns out, learning is much more than that. In fact, at its most rudimentary level, it is an actual process that physically changes our brains. Even something as simple as learning the meaning of a new word requires the physical alteration of neurons and the creation of new paths to receptors. These new electrochemical pathways are formed and strengthened as we utilize, practice, or remember what we have learned. If the new skill or knowledge is used in conjunction with other things we have already learned, completely different sections of the brain, our nerves, or our muscles may be tied in as a part of the process. A good example of this would be studying a painting or drawing that depicts a scene from a story or play you are already familiar with. Adding additional connections, memories, and mental associations to things you already know something about expands your knowledge and understanding in a way that cannot be reversed. In essence, it can be said that every time we learn something new we are no longer the same.

In addition to the physical transformation that takes place during learning, there are also a number of other factors that can influence how easy or how difficult learning something can be. While most people would assume that the ease or difficulty would really depend on what is being learned, there are actually several other factors that play a greater role.

In fact, research has shown that one of the most influential factors in learning is a clear understanding about learning itself. This is not to say that you need to become neuroscientists in order to do well in school, but instead, knowing a thing or two about learning and how we learn in general can have strong, positive results for your own learning. This is called *metacognition* (i.e.,

thinking about thinking).

Some of the benefits to how we learn can be broken down into different areas such as

- attitude and motivation toward learning,
- types of learning,
- methods of learning, and
- your own preferences for learning.

In this chapter you will explore these different areas to better understand how they may influence your own learning, as well as how to make conscious decisions about your own learning process to maximize positive outcomes.

All Learning Is Not the Same

The first, fundamental point to understand about learning is that there are several types of learning. Different kinds of knowledge are learned in different ways. Each of these different types of learning can require different processes that may take place in completely different parts of our brain.

For example, simple memorization is a form of learning that does not always require deeper understanding. Children often learn this way when they memorize poems or verses they recite. An interesting example of this can be found in the music industry, where there have been several hit songs sung in English by vocalists who do not speak English. In these cases, the singers did not truly understand what they were singing, but instead they were taught to memorize the sounds of the words in the proper order.

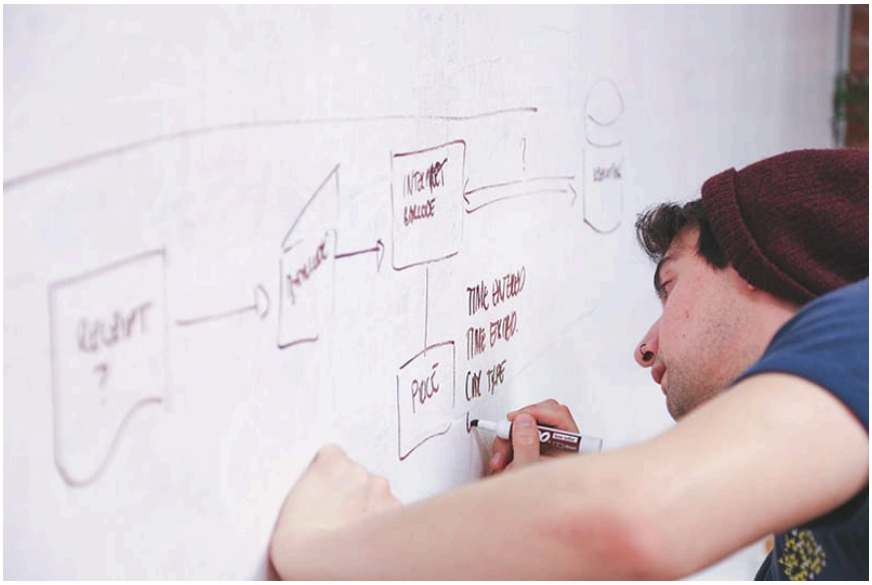


Figure 2.1.2.2: Learning has many levels and forms. For example, collaborative learning and showing your work require different skills and produce different results than reading or notetaking on your own. (Credit: StartUpStockPhotos / Pexels)

Memorizing sounds is a very different type of learning than, say, acquiring a deep understanding of Einstein's general theory of relativity.

Notice in the comparative examples of music and physics that the different levels of learning are being defined by what they allow you to know or do. When classifying learning in this way, people usually agree on six different levels of learning. In this next section we will take a detailed look at each of these.

In the table below, the cells in the left column each contain one of the main levels of learning, categorized by what the learning allows you to do. To the right of each category are the "skill acquired" and a set of real-world examples of what those skills might be as applied to a specific topic. This set of categories is called Bloom's Taxonomy, and it is often used as a guide for educators when they are determining what students should learn within a course.

Table 2.1

Category of Learning	Skill acquired	Example 1: Musical ability	Example 2: Historical information on Charles the Bald
Create	Produce new or original work	Compose a piece of music	Write a paper on Charles that draws a new conclusion about his reign
Evaluate	Justify or support an idea or decision	Make critical decisions about the notes that make up a melody—what works, what doesn't, and why	Make arguments that support the idea that Charles was a good ruler
Analyze	Draw connections	Play the specific notes that are found in the key of A	Compare and contrast the historical differences between the reign of Charles and his grandfather, Charlemagne
Apply	Use information in new ways	Use knowledge to play several notes that sound good together	Use the information to write a historical account on the reign of Charles
Understand/ Comprehend	Explain ideas or concepts	Understand the relationship between the musical notes and how to play each on a musical instrument	Explain the historical events that enabled Charles to become Emperor
Remember	Recall facts and basic concepts	Memorize notes on a musical scale	Recall that Charles the Bald was Holy Roman Emperor from 875–877 CE

A review of the above table shows that actions in the left column (or what you will be able to do with the new knowledge) has a direct influence over what needs to be learned and can even dictate the type of learning approach that is best. For example, *remembering* requires a type of learning that allows the person basic memorization. In the case of Charles the Bald and his reign, it is simply a matter of committing the dates to memory. When it comes to *understanding and comprehension*, being able to explain how Charles came to power requires not only the ability to recall several events, but also for the learner to be able to understand the cause and effect of those events and how they worked together to make Charles emperor. Another example would be the ability to *analyze*. In this particular instance the information learned would not only be about Charles, but also about other rulers, such as Charlemagne. The information would have to be of such a depth that the learner could compare the events and facts about each ruler.

When you engage in any learning activity, take the time to understand what you will do with the knowledge once you have attained it. This can help a great deal when it comes to making decisions on how to go about it. Using flashcards to help memorize angles does not really help you solve problems using geometry formulas. Instead, practicing problem-solving with the actual formulas is a much better approach. The key is to make certain the learning activity fits your needs.

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2.1.3: The Motivated Learner

Questions to consider

- How do different types of motivation affect my learning?
- What is resilience and grit?
- How can I apply the Uses and Gratification Theory to make decisions about my learning?
- How do I prevent negative bias from hindering learning?

In this section, you will continue to increase your ability as an informed learner. Here you will explore how much of an influence motivation has on learning, as well as how to use motivation to purposefully take an active role in any learning activity. Rather than passively attempting to absorb new information, you will learn how to make conscious decisions about the methods of learning you will use (based on what you intend to do with the information), how you will select and use learning materials that are appropriate for your needs, and how persistent you will be in the learning activity.

There are three main motivation concepts that have been found to directly relate to learning. Each of these has been proven to mean the difference between success and failure. You will find that each of these is a strong tool that will enable you to engage with learning material in a way that not only suits your needs, but also gives you ownership over your own learning processes.

Resilience and Grit

While much of this chapter will cover very specific aspects about the act of learning, in this section, we will present different information that may at first seem unrelated. Some people would consider it more of a personal outlook than a learning practice, and yet it has a significant influence on the ability to learn.

What we are talking about here is called grit or resilience. Grit can be defined as personal perseverance toward a task or goal. In learning, it can be thought of as a trait that drives a person to keep trying until they succeed. It is not tied to talent or ability, but is simply a tendency to not give up until something is finished or accomplished.



Figure 2.1.3.3: U.S. Army veteran and captain of the U.S. Invictus team, Will Reynolds, races to the finish line. (Credit: DoD News / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

The study showed that grit and perseverance were better predictors of academic success and achievement than talent or IQ.

This personality trait was defined as "grit" by the psychologist Angela Duckworth.[1] In a 2007 study Duckworth and colleagues found that individuals with high grit were able to maintain motivation in learning tasks despite failures. The study examined a cross section of learning environments, such as GPA scores in Ivy League universities, dropout rates at West Point, rankings in the National Spelling Bee, and general educational attainment for adults. What the results showed was that grit and perseverance were better predictors of academic success and achievement than talent or IQ.

Applying Grit

The concept of grit is an easy one to dismiss as something taken for granted. In our culture, we have a number of sayings and aphorisms that capture the essence of grit: "If at first you do not succeed, try, try again," or the famous quote by Thomas Edison: "Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration."

The problem is we all understand the concept, but actually applying it takes work. If the task we are trying to complete is a difficult one, it can take a lot of work.

The first step in applying grit is to adopt an attitude that looks directly to the end goal as the only acceptable outcome. With this attitude comes an acceptance that you may not succeed on the first attempt—or the nineteenth attempt. Failed attempts are viewed as merely part of the process and seen as a very useful way to gain knowledge that moves you toward success. An example of this would be studying for an exam. In your first attempt at studying you simply reread the chapters of your textbook covered in the exam. You find that while this reinforces some of the knowledge you have gained, it does not ensure you have all the information you will need to do well on the test. You know that if you simply read the chapters yet again, there is no guarantee you are going to be any more successful. You determine that you need to find a different approach. In other words, your first attempt was not a complete failure, but it did not achieve the end goal, so you try again with a different method.

On your second try, you copy down all of the main points onto a piece of paper using the section headlines from the chapters. After a short break you come back to your list and write down a summary of what you know about each item on your list. This accomplishes two things: first, you are able to immediately spot areas where you need to learn more, and second, you can check your summaries against the text to make certain what you know is correct and adequate. In this example, while you may not have yet achieved complete success, you will have learned what you need to do next.

In true grit fashion, for your next try, you study those items on your list where you found you needed a bit more information, and then you go through your list again. This time you are able to write down summaries of all the important points, and you are confident you have the knowledge you need to do well on the exam. After this, you still do not stop, but instead you change your approach to use other methods that keep what you have learned fresh in your mind.

Keeping Grit in Mind: Grit to GRIT

The concept of grit has been taken beyond the original studies of successful learning. While the concept of grit as a personality trait was originally recognized as something positive in all areas of activity, encouraging grit became very popular in education circles as a way to help students become more successful. In fact, many of those that were first introduced to grit through education have begun applying it to business, professional development, and their personal lives. Using a grit approach and working until the goal is achieved has been found to be very effective in not only academics, but in many other areas.[2]

The *New York Times* best-selling author Paul G. Stoltz has taken grit and turned it into an acronym (GRIT) to help people remember and use the attributes of a grit mindset.[3] His acronym is Growth, Resilience, Instinct, and Tenacity. Each of these elements is explained in the table below.

Table 2.2 The GRIT acronym as outlined by Paul G. Stoltz

Growth	Your propensity to seek and consider new ideas, additional alternatives, different approaches, and fresh perspectives
Resilience	Your capacity to respond constructively and ideally make use of all kinds of adversity
Instinct	Your gut-level capacity to pursue the right goals in the best and smartest ways
Tenacity	The degree to which you persist, commit to, stick with, and go after whatever you choose to achieve

There is one other thing to keep in mind when it comes to applying grit (or GRIT) to college success. The same sort of persevering

approach can not only be used for individual learning activities, but can be applied to your entire degree. An attitude of tenacity and “sticking with it” until you reach the desired results works just as well for graduation as it does for studying for an exam.

How Do You Get Grit?

A quick Internet search will reveal that there are a large number of articles out there on grit and how to get it. While these sources may vary in their lists, most cover about five basic ideas that all touch upon concepts emphasized by Duckworth. What follows is a brief introduction to each. Note that each thing listed here begins with a verb. In other words, it is an activity for you to do and keep doing in order to build grit.

1. Pursue what interests you.

Personal interest is a great motivator! People tend to have more grit when pursuing things that they have developed an interest in.

2. Practice until you can do it, and then keep practicing.

The idea of practicing has been applied to every skill in human experience. The reason everyone seems to be so fixated with practice is because it is effective and there is no “grittier” activity.

3. Find a purpose in what you do.

Purpose is truly the driver for anything we pursue. If you have a strong purpose in any activity, you have reason to persist at it. Think in terms of end goals and why doing something is worth it. Purpose answers the question of “Why should I accomplish this?”

4. Have hope in what you are doing.

Have hope in what you are doing and in how it will make things different for you or others. While this is somewhat related to purpose, it should be viewed as a separate and positive overall outlook in regard to what you are trying to achieve. Hope gives value to purpose. If purpose is the goal, hope is why the goal is worth attaining at all.

5. Surround yourself with gritty people.

Persistence and tenacity tend to rub off on others, and the opposite does as well. As social creatures we often adopt the behaviors we find in the groups we hang out with. If you are surrounded by people that quit early, before achieving their goals, you may find it acceptable to give up early as well. On the other hand, if your peers are all achievers with grit, you will tend to exhibit grit yourself.

Application

Get a Grit Partner

It is an unfortunate statistic that far too many students who begin college never complete their degree. Over the years a tremendous amount of research has gone into why some students succeed while others do not. After reading about grit, you will probably not be surprised to learn that the research has shown it to not only be a major contributor of learning but to be one of the strongest factors contributing to student graduation.

While that may seem obvious since, by definition, grit is a tendency to keep going until you reach your goal, there was something very significant that turned up in the details of a study conducted by American College Testing (also known as ACT). ACT is a nonprofit organization that administers the college admissions test by the same name, and they have been looking at over 50 years of student persistence data to figure out why some students complete college while others do not. What they have found is that the probability a student will stay in college is tied directly to social connections.[4] In other words, students that found someone they connected with and that provided a sense of accountability dramatically increased their grit. It did not matter if the person was another student, an instructor, or someone else. What did matter is that they felt a strong motivation to keep working, even when their college experience was at its most difficult. It has been surmised that

from a psychological perspective, the extra grit comes from not wanting to disappoint the person they have connected with. Regardless of the reason, the data show that having a grit partner is one of the most effective ways to statistically increase your chances of graduation.

A grit partner does not have to be a formal relationship. Your partner can simply be a classmate—someone that you can talk with. It can be an instructor you admire or someone else that you establish a connection with. It can even be a family member who will encourage you—someone you do not want to disappoint. What you are looking for is someone who will help motivate you, either by their example or by their willingness to give you a pep talk when you need it. The key is that it is someone you respect and who will encourage you to do well in school.

Right now, think about someone who could be your grit partner. Keep in mind that you may not have the same grit partner throughout your entire college experience. You may begin with another classmate but later find that a school staff member steps into the role. Later, as you near graduation, you may find that your favorite instructor motivates you more to do well in school than anyone else. Regardless, the importance of finding the social connection that helps your grit is important.

Uses and Gratification Theory and Learning

In the middle of the last century, experts held some odd beliefs that we might find exceptionally strange in our present age. For example, many scholars were convinced that not only was learning a passive activity, but that mass media such as movies, television, and newspapers held significant control over us as individuals. The thinking at that time was that we were helpless to think for ourselves or make choices about learning or the media we consumed. The idea was that we just simply ingested information fed to us and we were almost completely manipulated by it.

What changed this way of thinking was a significant study on audience motivations for watching different political television programs.[5] The study found that not only did people make decisions about what information they consumed, but they also had preferences in content and how it was delivered. In other words, people were active in their choices about information. What is more important is that the research began to show that our own needs, goals, and personal opinions are bigger drivers for our choices in information than anything else. This gave rise to what became known as the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT).



Figure 2.4 Concept maps, or idea clusters, are used to gather and connect ideas. The exercise of creating, recreating, and improving them can be an excellent way to build and internalize a deeper knowledge of subjects. (Credit: Johnny Goldstien / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

At first, personal choices about television programs might seem a strange topic for a chapter on learning, but if you think about it, learning at its simplest is the consumption of information to meet a specific need. You choose to learn something so you can attain certain goals. This makes education and UGT a natural fit.

Applying UGT to education is a *learner-centered* approach that focuses on helping you take control of how and what you learn. Not only that, but it gives you a framework as an informed learner and allows you to choose information and learning activities with the end results in mind. The next section examines UGT a little more closely and shows how it can be directly applied to learning.

The Uses and Gratification Model

The Uses and Gratification model is how people are thought to react according to UGT. It considers individual behavior and motivation as the primary driver for media consumption. In education this means that the needs of the learner are what determine the interaction with learning content such as textbooks, lectures, and other information sources. Since any educational program is essentially content and delivery (the same as with any media), the Uses and Gratification model can be applied to meet student needs, student satisfaction, and student academic success. This is something that is not recognized in many other learning theories since they begin with the premise that it is learning content and how it is delivered that influences the learner more than the learner's own wants and expectations.

The main assumption of the Uses and Gratification model is that media consumers will seek out and return to specific media sources based on a personal need. For learners this is exceptionally useful since it gives an insight and the ability to positively influence their own motivations, expectations, and the perceived value of their education.



Figure 2.5 The Uses and Gratification model indicates that people will actively seek out and integrate specific media into their lives. (Credit: Garry Knight / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

If you understand the key concepts of the Uses and Gratification model, you can make informed decisions about your own learning: how you learn, which materials you use to learn, and what motivates you to learn. An illustration of this was found in the example given in the previous section on grit. There, a series of exam study activities were presented—first reading the appropriate chapters, then making a list of chapter concepts and reviewing what was known, then returning to learn the information needed to fill the gaps. Each activity was chosen by the learner based on how well it fit their needs to help reach the goal of doing well on an exam.

Here we should offer a brief word of caution about being wary when choosing materials and media. There is a great deal of misleading and inaccurate information presented via the Internet and social media. Making informed decisions about your learning and the material you consume includes checking sources and avoiding information that is not credible.

> **"We are able to consciously make learning choices based on our own identified needs and what we hope to gain by that learning."**

In his book *Key Themes in Media Theory*,[6] Dan Laughey presents the UGT model according to its original authors as a single sentence that divides each area of influence into the following concerns:

1. Social and psychological origins of ...
2. needs, which generate ...
3. expectations of ...
4. the mass media or other sources, which lead to ...
5. differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in ...
6. needs gratification and ...
7. other unintended consequences.

Taken as a list or a single sentence, this can be a bit overwhelming to digest. There are many things being said at the same time, and they may not all be immediately clear. To better understand what each of the "areas of concern" are and how they can impact learning, each has been separated and explained in the table below.

Table 2.3

Area of Concern	What it means for you	How it applies to learning	Real-world example
1. Social and psychological origins of ...	Your motivations, not only as a student but as a person, and both the social and psychological factors that influence you	This can be everything from the original motivation behind enrolling in school in the first place, down to more specific goals like why you want to learn to write and communicate well.	A drive to be self-supporting and to take on a productive role in society.
2. needs, which generate ...	Better job, increased income, satisfying career, prestige	This can include the area of study you select and the school you choose to attend.	Pursuing a degree to seek a career in a field you enjoy.
3. expectations of ...	Expectation and perception (preconceived and continuing) of educational material	What you expect to learn to fulfill goals and meet needs.	Understanding what you need to accomplish the smaller goals. An example would be "study for an exam."
4. the mass media or other sources, which lead to...	The content and learning activities of the program	Selection of content aimed at fulfilling needs. Results are student satisfaction, perceived value, and continued enrollment.	Choosing which learning activities to use (e.g., texts, watch videos, research alternative content, etc.).
5. differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in ...	Frequency and level of participation	How you engage with learning activities and how often. Results are student satisfaction and perceived value, and continued enrollment.	When, how often, and how much time you spend in learning activities.
6. needs gratification and ...	Better job, increased income, satisfying career, prestige, more immediate goals like pass an exam, earn a good grade, etc.	Needs fulfillment and completion of goals.	Learning activities that meet your learning needs, including fulfillment of your original goals.
7. other unintended consequences.	Increased skills and knowledge, entertainment, social involvement and networking	Causes positive loop-back into 4, 5, and 6, reinforcing those positive outcomes.	Things you learn beyond your initial goals.

What to Do with UGT

On the surface, UGT may seem overly complex, but this is due to its attempt to capture everything that influences how and why we take in information. At this point in your understanding, the main thing to focus on is the bigger idea that our motivations, our end goals, and our expectations are what drive us to learn. If we are aware of these motivations, we can use them to make influential decisions about what we learn and how we learn.

One of the things that will become apparent as you continue reading this chapter and doing the included activities is that all of it fits within the UGT model. Everything about learning styles, your own attitude about learning, how you prefer to learn, and what you get out of it are covered in UGT. Being familiar with it gives you a way to identify and apply everything else you will learn about learning. As you continue in this chapter, rather than looking at each topic as a stand-alone idea, think about where each fits in the Uses and Gratification model. Does it influence your motivations, or does it help you make decisions about the way you learn? This way UGT can provide a way for you to see the value and how to apply everything you learn from this point forward and for every learning experience along the way.

If you were going to define how UGT applies to learning with a few quick statements, it would look something like this:

UGT asks:

- What is it that motivates you to learn something?
- What need does it fulfill?
- What do you expect to have happen with certain learning activities?
- How can you choose the right learning activities to better ensure you meet your needs and expectations?
- What other things might result from your choices?

Analysis Question

Take a moment to think about your own choices when it comes to consuming media. Are there certain sources you prefer? Why? What needs or gratifications do those particular sources fulfill in a way that others do not? Now, use the same process to analyze your current college experience. Are there certain classes or activities you like more than others? Why? Do any of your reasons have to do with the needs or gratifications the classes or learning activities fulfill?

After you have answered those questions, you can always step beyond mere analysis and determine what you could change to make the classes or activities you enjoy less better fulfill your needs.

Combating Negative Bias

In addition to being a motivated learner through the use of grit and UGT, there is a third natural psychological tendency you should be aware of. It is a tendency that you should guard against. Ignoring the fact that it exists can not only adversely affect learning, but it can set up roadblocks that may prevent you from achieving many goals. This tendency is called *negative bias*.

Negative bias is the psychological trait of focusing on the negative aspects of a situation rather than the positive. An example of this in a learning environment would be earning a 95 percent score on an assignment but obsessing over the 5 percent of the points that were missed. Another example would be worrying and thinking negative thoughts about yourself over a handful of courses where you did not do as well as in others—so much so that you begin to doubt your abilities altogether.



Figure 2.1.3.6: Some level of worry and concern is natural, but an overwhelming amount of negative thoughts about yourself, including doubt in your abilities and place in school, can impede your learning and stifle your success. You can develop strategies to recognize and overcome these feelings. (Credit: Inzmam Kahn / Pexels)

Unfortunately, this is a human tendency that can often overwhelm a student. As a pure survival mechanism it does have its usefulness in that it reminds us to be wary of behaviors that can result in undesirable outcomes. Imagine that as a child playing outside, you have seen dozens if not hundreds of bees over the years. But once, out of all those other times, you were stung by a single bee. Now, every time you see a bee you recall the sting, and you now have a negative bias toward bees in general. Whenever possible you avoid bees altogether.

It is easy to see how this psychological system could be beneficial in those types of situations, but it can be a hindrance in learning since a large part of the learning process often involves failure on early attempts. Recognizing this is a key to overcoming negative bias. Another way to combat negative bias is to purposefully focus on successes and to acknowledge earlier attempts that fail as just a part of the learning.

What follows are a few methods for overcoming negative bias and negative self-talk. Each focuses on being aware of any negative attitude or emphasizing the positive aspects in a situation.

- **Be aware of any negative bias.** Keep an eye out for any time you find yourself focusing on some negative aspect, whether toward your own abilities or on some specific situation. Whenever you recognize that you are exhibiting a negative bias toward something, stop and look for the positive parts of the experience. Think back to what you have learned about grit, how any lack of success is only temporary, and what you have learned that gets you closer to your goal.
- **Focus on the positive before you begin.** While reversing the impact of negative bias on your learning is helpful, it can be even more useful to prevent it in the first place. One way to do this is to look for the positives before you begin a task. An example of this would be receiving early feedback for an assignment you are working on. To accomplish this, you can often ask your instructor or one of your classmates to look over your work and provide some informal comments. If the feedback is positive then you know you are on the right track. That is useful information. If the feedback seems to indicate that you need to make a number of corrections and adjustments, then that is even more valuable information, and you can use it to greatly improve the assignment for a much better final grade. In either case, accurate feedback is what you really want most, and both outcomes are positive for you.
- **Keep a gratitude and accomplishment journal.** Again, the tendency to recall and overemphasize the negative instances while ignoring or forgetting about the positive outcomes is the nature of negative bias. Sometimes we need a little help remembering the positives, and we can prompt our memories by keeping a journal. Just as in a diary, the idea is to keep a flowing record of the positive things that happen, the lessons you learned from instances that were “less than successful,” and all accomplishments you make toward learning. In your journal you can write or paste anything that you appreciated or that has positive outcomes. Whenever you are not feeling up to a challenge or when negative bias is starting to wear on you, you can look over your journal to remind yourself of previous accomplishments in the face of adversity.

Analysis Question

Building the Foundation

In this section you read about three major factors that contribute to your motivation as a learner: grit and perseverance, your own motivations for learning (UGT), and the pitfalls of negative bias. Now it is time to do a little self-analysis and reflection.

Which of these three areas do you feel strongest in? Are you a person that naturally has grit, or do you better understand your own motivations for learning (using UGT)? Do you struggle with negativity bias, or is it something that you rarely have to deal with?

Determine in which of these areas you are strongest, and think about what things make you so strong. Is it a positive attitude (you always see the glass as half full as opposed to half empty), or do you know exactly why you are in college and exactly what you expect to learn?

After you have analyzed your strongest area, then do the same for the two weaker ones. What makes you susceptible to challenges in these areas? Do you have a difficult time sticking with things or possibly focus too much on the negative? Look back at the sections on your two weakest areas, and put together a plan for overcoming them. For each one, choose a behavior you intend to change and think of some way you will change it.

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2.1.4: It's All in the Mindset

Questions to consider

- What is a growth mindset, and how does it affect my learning?
- What are performance goals versus learning goals?

In the previous sections of this chapter you have focused on a number of concepts and models about learning. One of the things they all have in common is that they utilize different approaches to education by presenting new ways to think about learning. In each of these, the common element has been a better understanding of yourself as a learner and how to apply what you know about yourself to your own learning experience. If you were to distill all that you have learned in this chapter so far down to a single factor, it would be about using your mindset to your best advantage. In this next section, you will examine how all of this works in a broader sense by learning about the significance of certain mindsets and how they can hinder or promote your own learning efforts.



Figure 2.1.4.7: Many fields of study and work create intersections of growth and fixed mindset. People may feel great ability to grow and learn in some areas, like art and communication, but feel more limited in others, such as planning and financials. Recognizing these intersections will help you approach new topics and tasks. (Credit: mentatdgt / Pexels)

Performance vs. Learning Goals

As you have discovered in this chapter, much of our ability to learn is governed by our motivations and goals. What has not yet been covered in detail has been how sometimes hidden goals or mindsets can impact the learning process. In truth, we all have goals that we might not be fully aware of, or if we are aware of them, we might not understand how they help or restrict our ability to learn. An illustration of this can be seen in a comparison of a student that has *performance*-based goals with a student that has *learning*-based goals.

If you are a student with strict performance goals, your primary psychological concern might be to appear intelligent to others. At first, this might not seem to be a bad thing for college, but it can truly limit your ability to move forward in your own learning. Instead, you would tend to play it safe without even realizing it. For example, a student who is strictly performance-goal-oriented will often only says things in a classroom discussion when they think it will make them look knowledgeable to the instructor or their classmates. For example, a performance-oriented student might ask a question that she knows is beyond the topic being covered (e.g., asking about the economics of Japanese whaling while discussing the book *Moby Dick* in an American literature course). Rarely will they ask a question in class because they actually do not understand a concept. Instead they will ask questions that make them look intelligent to others or in an effort to “stump the teacher.” When they do finally ask an honest question, it

may be because they are more afraid that their lack of understanding will result in a poor performance on an exam rather than simply wanting to learn.

If you are a student who is driven by learning goals, your interactions in classroom discussions are usually quite different. You see the opportunity to share ideas and ask questions as a way to gain knowledge quickly. In a classroom discussion you can ask for clarification immediately if you don't quite understand what is being discussed. If you are a person guided by learning goals, you are less worried about what others think since you are there to learn and you see that as the most important goal.

Another example where the difference between the two mindsets is clear can be found in assignments and other coursework. If you are a student who is more concerned about performance, you may avoid work that is challenging. You will take the "easy A" route by relying on what you already know. You will not step out of your comfort zone because your psychological goals are based on approval of your performance instead of being motivated by learning.

This is very different from a student with a learning-based psychology. If you are a student who is motivated by learning goals, you may actively seek challenging assignments, and you will put a great deal of effort into using the assignment to expand on what you already know. While getting a good grade is important to you, what is even more important is the learning itself.

If you find that you sometimes lean toward performance-based goals, do not feel discouraged. Many of the best students tend to initially focus on performance until they begin to see the ways it can restrict their learning. The key to switching to learning-based goals is often simply a matter of first recognizing the difference and seeing how making a change can positively impact your own learning.

What follows in this section is a more in-depth look at the difference between performance- and learning-based goals. This is followed by an exercise that will give you the opportunity to identify, analyze, and determine a positive course of action in a situation where you believe you could improve in this area.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. In the past, did you feel like you had control over your own learning?
   a. No. Someone has always dictated how and what I learned.
   b. Yes. I always look for ways to take control of what and how I learned.
   c. I am uncertain. I never thought about it before.
2. Have you ever heard of learning styles or do you know your own learning style?
   a. No. I have never heard of learning styles.
   b. Yes. I have heard of learning styles and know my own.
   c. Yes. I have heard of learning styles, but I don't think they're accurate or relate to me.
3. Which factors other than intelligence do you think have the greatest influence on learning?
   a. Motivation
   b. Perseverance
   c. Understanding how I learn
   d. Good teachers and support

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

In the past, did you feel like you had control over your own learning?

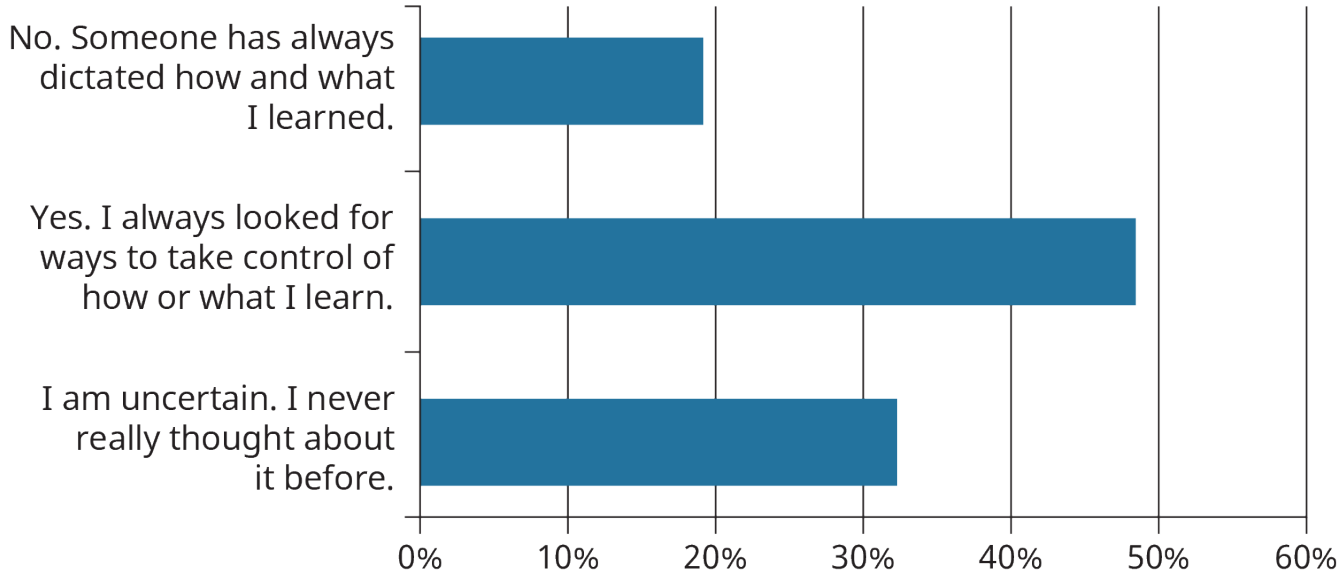


Figure 2.1.4.8

Have you ever heard of learning styles or do you know your own learning style?

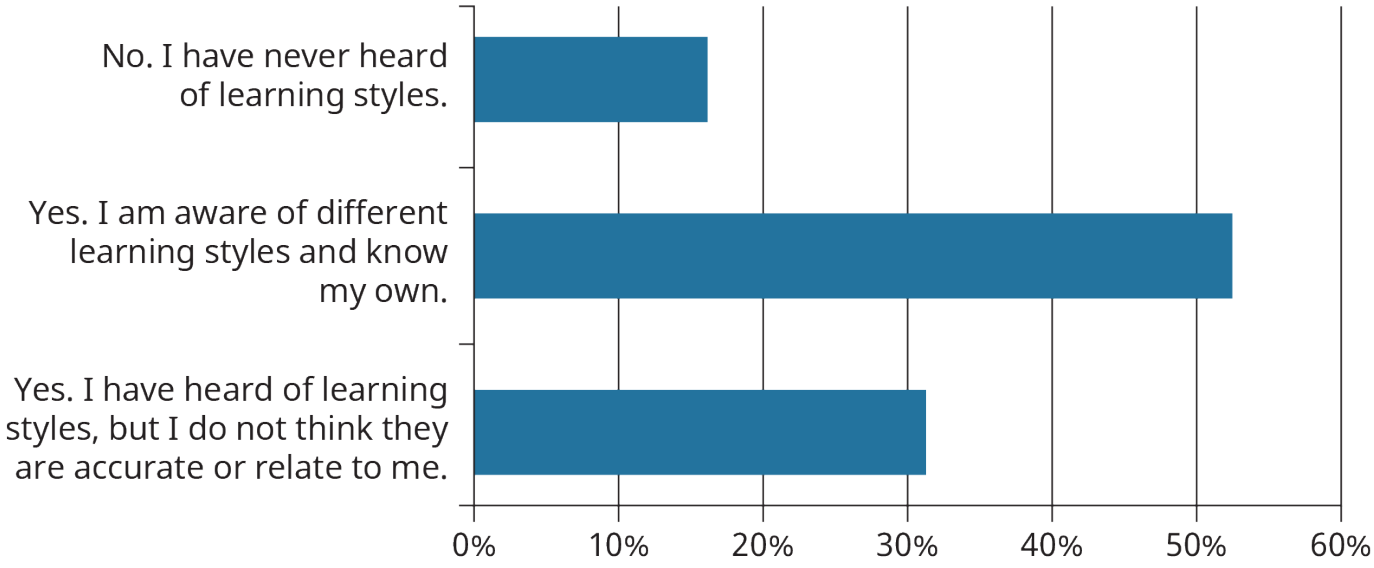


Figure 2.1.4.9

Which factors other than intelligence do you think have the greatest influence on learning?

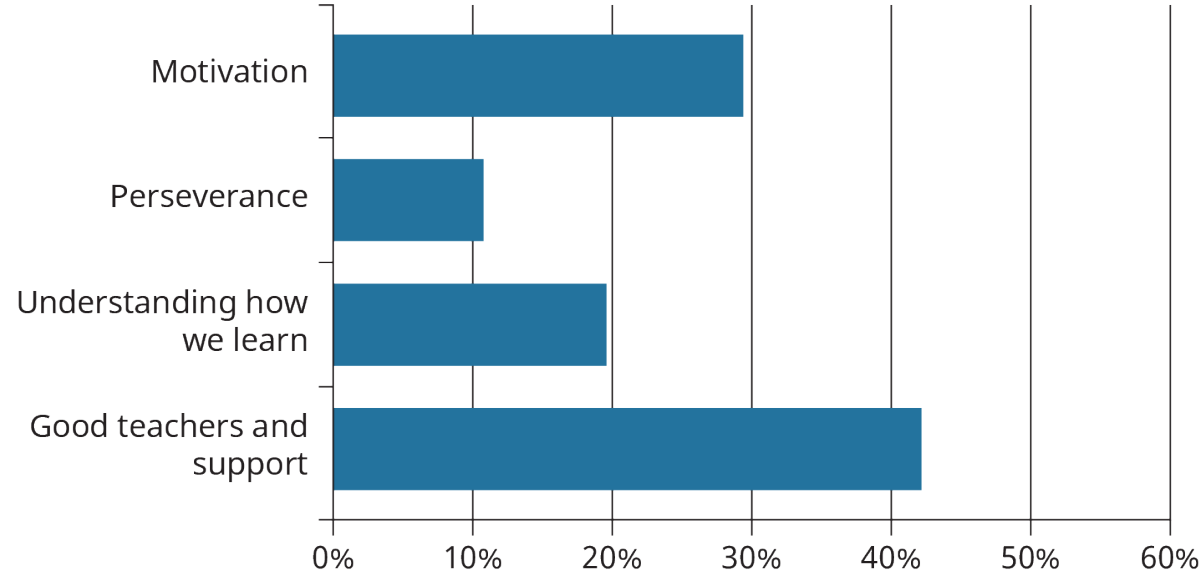


Figure 2.1.4.10

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

The research-based model of these two mindsets and their influence on learning was presented in 1988 by Carol Dweck.[7] In Dr. Dweck's work, she determined that a student's perception about their own learning accompanied by a broader goal of learning had a significant influence on their ability to overcome challenges and grow in knowledge and ability. This has become known as the Fixed vs. Growth Mindset model. In this model, the *performance*-goal-oriented student is represented by the *fixed* mindset, while the *learning*-goal-oriented student is represented by the *growth* mindset.

In the following graphic, based on Dr. Dweck's research, you can see how many of the components associated with learning are impacted by these two mindsets.

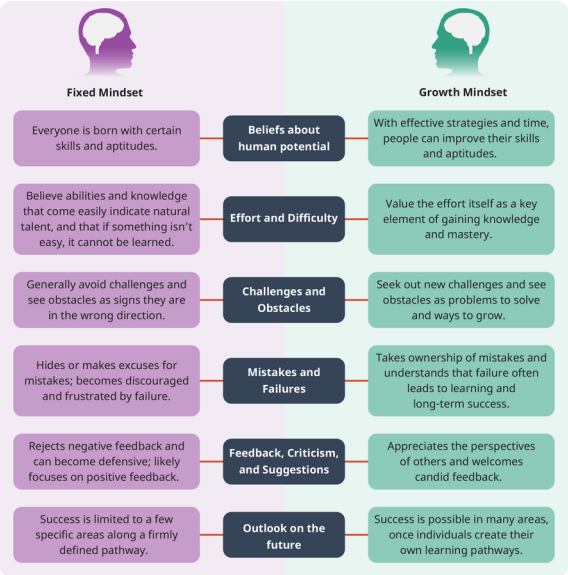


Figure 2.1.4.11: The differences between fixed and growth mindset are clear when aligned to key elements of learning and personality. (Credit: Based on work by Dr. Carol Dweck)

The Growth Mindset and Lessons About Failing

Something you may have noticed is that a growth mindset would tend to give a learner grit and persistence. If you had learning as your major goal, you would normally keep trying to attain that goal even if it took you multiple attempts. Not only that, but if you learned a little bit more with each try you would see each attempt as a success, even if you had not achieved complete mastery of whatever it was you were working to learn.

With that in mind, it should come as no surprise that Dr. Dweck found that those people who believed their abilities could change through learning (growth vs. a fixed mindset) readily accepted learning challenges and persisted despite early failures.

Improving Your Ability to Learn

As strange as it may seem, research into fixed vs. growth mindsets has shown that if you believe you can learn something new, you greatly improve your ability to learn. At first, this may seem like the sort of feel-good advice we often encounter in social media posts or quotes that are intended to inspire or motivate us (e.g., *believe in yourself!*), but in looking at the differences outlined between a fixed and a growth mindset, you can see how each part of the growth mindset path would increase your probability of success when it came to learning.

ACTIVITY

Very few people have a strict fixed or growth mindset all of the time. Often we tend to lean one way or another in certain situations. For example, a person trying to improve their ability in a sport they enjoy may exhibit all of the growth mindset traits and characteristics, but they find themselves blocked in a fixed mindset when they try to learn something in another area like computer programming or arithmetic.

In this exercise, do a little self-analysis and think of some areas where you may find yourself hindered by a fixed mindset. Using the outline presented below, in the far right column, write down how you can change your own behavior for each of the parts of the learning process. What will you do to move from a fixed to a growth mindset? For example, say you were trying to learn to play a musical instrument. In the *Challenges* row, you might pursue a growth path by trying to play increasingly more difficult songs rather than sticking to the easy ones you have already mastered. In the *Criticism* row, you might take someone's comment about a weakness in timing as a motivation for you to practice with a metronome. For *Success of others* you could take inspiration from a famous musician that is considered a master and study their techniques.

Whatever it is that you decide you want to use for your analysis, apply each of the Growth characteristics to determine a course of action to improve.

Table 2.4

Parts of the learning process	Growth characteristic	What will you do to adopt a growth mindset?
Challenges	Embraces challenges	
Obstacles	Persists despite setbacks	
Effort	Sees effort as a path to success	
Criticism	Learns from criticism	
Success of Others	Finds learning and inspiration in the success of others	

Footnotes

- Dweck, C.S. & Leggett, E.L. (1988). A Social-Cognitive Approach to Motivation and Personality

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2.1.5: Learning Styles

Questions to consider

- What are learning styles, and do they really work?
- How do I take advantage of learning styles in a way that works for me?
- How can I combine learning styles for better outcomes?
- What opportunities and resources are available for students with disabilities?

Several decades ago, a new way of thinking about learning became very prominent in education. It was based on the concept that each person has a preferred way to learn. It was thought that these preferences had to do with each person's natural tendencies toward one of their senses. The idea was that learning might be easier if a student sought out content that was specifically oriented to their favored sense. For example, it was thought that a student who preferred to learn visually would respond better to pictures and diagrams.

Over the years there were many variations on the basic idea, but one of the most popular theories was known as the VAK model. VAK was an acronym for the three types of learning, each linked to one of the basic senses thought to be used by students: visual, aural, and kinesthetic. What follows is an outline of each of these and the preferred method.

- **Visual:** The student prefers pictures, images, and the graphic display of information to learn. An example would be looking at an illustration that showed how to do something.
- **Aural:** The student prefers sound as a way to learn. Examples would be listening to a lecture or a podcast.
- **Kinesthetic:** The student prefers using their body, hands, and sense of touch. An example would be doing something physical, such as examining an object rather than reading about it or looking at an illustration.

The Truth about Learning Styles

In many ways these ideas about learning styles made some sense. Because of this, educators encouraged students to find out about their own learning styles. They developed tests and other techniques to help students determine which particular sense they preferred to use for learning, and in some cases learning materials were produced in multiple ways that focused on each of the different senses. That way, each individual learner could participate in learning activities that were tailored to their specific preferences.

While it initially seemed that dividing everyone by learning styles provided a leap forward in education, continued research began to show that the fixation on this new model might not have been as effective as it was once thought. In fact, in some cases, the way learning styles were actually being used created roadblocks to learning. This was because the popularization of this new idea brought on a rush to use learning styles in ways that failed to take into account several important aspects that are listed below:

- A person does not always prefer the same learning style all the time or for each situation. For example, some learners might enjoy lectures during the day but prefer reading in the evenings. Or they may prefer looking at diagrams when learning about mechanics but prefer reading for history topics.
- There are more preferences involved in learning than just the three that became popular. These other preferences can become nearly impossible to make use of within certain styles. For example, some prefer to learn in a more social environment that includes interaction with other learners. Reading can be difficult or restrictive as a group effort. Recognized learning styles beyond the original three include: **social** (preferring to learn as a part of group activity), **solitary** (preferring to learn alone or using self-study), or **logical** (preferring to use logic, reasoning, etc.).
- Students that thought they were limited to a single preferred learning style found themselves convinced that they could not do as well with content that was presented in a way that differed from their style.[8] For example, a student that had identified as a visual learner might feel they were at a significant disadvantage when listening to a lecture. Sometimes they even believed they had an even greater impairment that prevented them from learning that way at all.
- Some forms of learning are extremely difficult in activities delivered in one style or another. Subjects like computer programming would be almost impossible to learn using an aural learning style. And, while it is possible to read about a subject such as how to swing a bat or how to do a medical procedure, actually applying that knowledge in a learning

environment is difficult if the subject is something that requires a physical skill.

Knowing and Taking Advantage of Learning Styles in a Way That Works for You

The problem with relying on learning styles comes from thinking that just one defines your needs. Coupling what you know about learning styles with what you know about UGT can make a difference in your own learning. Rather than being constrained by a single learning style, or limiting your activities to a certain kind of media, you may choose media that best fit your needs for what you are trying to learn at a particular time.

Following are a couple of ways you might combine your learning style preference with a given learning situation:

- You are trying to learn how to build something but find the written instructions confusing so you watch a video online that shows someone building the same thing.
- You have a long commute on the bus but reading while riding makes you dizzy. You choose an aural solution by listening to pre-recorded podcasts or a mobile device that reads your texts out loud.

These examples show that by recognizing and understanding what different learning styles have to offer, you can use the techniques that are best suited for you and that work best under the circumstances of the moment. You may also find yourself using two learning styles at the same time - as when you watch a live demonstration or video in which a person shows you how to do something while verbally explaining what you are being shown. This helps to reinforce the learning as it utilizes different aspects of your thinking. Using learning styles in an informed way can improve both the speed and the quality of your learning.

Get Connected

Finding content related to a subject or topic can be relatively easy, but you must use caution and rely on reputable sources. Relatively little of the material on the Web provides a way to ensure accuracy or balance.

Below are descriptions of common informational sites with varying degrees of reliability:

- Khan Academy: This site is full of useful tutorials and videos on a wide range of subjects.
- Wikipedia: Wikipedia is often frowned upon in some academic circles, because review of its content takes place *after* publication, potentially resulting in inaccurate or misleading information being available. But Wikipedia can provide a brief overview of a topic, and its lists of references is often quite extensive. You probably shouldn't rely Wikipedia as your only source, but it can be useful.
- Government website:. Most items that governments administer are referenced on informational websites. In the United States, these include educational statistics, economic data, health information, and many other topics.

When choosing alternate content, it is imperative to compare it to the content that is being provided to you as a part of your course. If the alternate content does not line up, you should view it with a healthy skepticism. In those cases, it is always a good idea to share the content with your instructor and ask their opinion.

Activity

In this activity you will try an experiment by combining learning styles to see if it is something that works for you. The experiment will test the example of combining reading/writing and aural learning styles for better memorization.

To begin, you will start with a short segment of numbers. You will read the numbers only one time without saying them aloud. When you are finished, wait 10 seconds and try to remember the numbers in sequence by writing them down.

67914528

> After you have finished you will repeat the experiment with a new set of numbers, but this time you will read them aloud, wait 10 seconds, and then see how easy they are to remember. During this part of the experiment you are free to say the numbers in any way you like. For example, the number 8734 could be read as eight-seven-three-four, eighty-seven thirty-four, or any combination you would like.
>
> 10387264
>
> Did you find that there was a difference in your ability to memorize a short sequence of numbers for 10 seconds? Even if you were able to remember both, was the example that combined learning styles easier? What about if you had to wait for a full minute before attempting to rewrite the numbers? Would that make a difference?

What about Students with Disabilities?

Students with disabilities are sometimes the most informed when it comes to making decisions about their own learning. They should understand that it is in their best interest to take ownership of their own approach to education, especially when it comes to leveraging resources and opportunities. In this section, you will learn about the laws that regulate education for students with disabilities as well as look at some resources that are available to them.

Just like anyone else, under the law, qualified students with disabilities are entitled to the same education colleges and universities provide to students without disabilities. Even though a particular disability may make attending college more difficult, awareness on the part of the government, learning institutions, and the students themselves has brought about a great deal of change over the years. Now, students with disabilities find that they have available appropriate student services, campus accessibility, and academic resources that can make school attendance and academic success possible.

Due to this increased support and advocacy, colleges have seen an increase of students with disabilities. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2012, 11.1 percent of the total undergraduate population in the United States was made up of people with disabilities.[9]

The Legal Rights of Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects students "with a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities."[10] Learning definitely falls within the definition of major life activities.

In addition to Section 504, another set of laws that greatly help learners with disabilities is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (also known as ADA). Both of these acts have been driving forces in making certain that students with disabilities have equal access to higher education, and they have been instrumental in helping educators looking for new ways and resources to provide services that do just that.

What follows is a list of services that schools commonly provide to help students with disabilities. These are often referred to as *ADA accommodations* and are named after the American with Disabilities Act:

- Recordings of class lectures or lecture transcription by in-class note takers
- Text readers or other technologies that can deliver content in another format
- Test or assessment accommodations
- Interpreter services and Braille transcriptions
- Physical access accommodations
- Accommodations of time and due dates

Most colleges will have policies and staff that are designated to help arrange for these types of accommodations. They are often found within the Department of Student Services or in related departments within your college campus. If you are a student with disabilities protected under these acts, it is in your best interest to contact the person responsible for ADA accommodations at your school. Even if you decide that you do not need accommodations, it is a good idea to find out about any services and policies the school has in place.

Organizations

In addition to the accommodations that schools commonly provide, there are also a number of national and local organizations that can provide assistance and advice when it comes to being a student with a disability. If you fit into this category, it is recommended that you make contact with one or more of these organizations in order to find out how they can help. These can be tremendously beneficial resources that offer everything from information and support to simple social connections that can make pursuing a formal education easier.

Footnotes

- Harold Pashler, Mark McDaniel, Doug Rohrer and Robert Bjork. *Learning Styles: Concepts and Evidence*. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 2008).
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2017* (2018-070), Chapter 3.
- U.S. Department of Education. Protecting Students with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/li...cr/504faq.html

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2.1.6: Personality Types and Learning

Questions to consider

- Is there any connection between personality types and learning?
- Can the Myers-Briggs test be used to identify personality traits and learning styles?
- Is there a real correlation between personality styles and learning?
- What is the impact on learning with work that you enjoy?

Much like learning styles, there have been a number of theories surrounding the idea that different personality types may prefer different kinds of learning. Again, this builds on the original learning style concept that people may have a single preference toward how they learn, and then adds to it that certain personality traits may determine which learning style a person prefers.

Since it has already been determined that learning styles are more effective when selected for the subject being learned rather than the sensory preference of the learner, it might seem foolish to revisit another learning style theory. But, in this case, understanding how personality traits and learning styles are categorized can be useful in making decisions and choices for your own learning activities. In other words, we won't dismiss the theory out of hand without first seeing if there is anything useful in it.

One part of this theory that can be useful is the identification of personality traits that affect your motivation, emotions, and interests toward learning. You have already read a great deal about how these internal characteristics can influence your learning. What knowing about personality traits and learning can do for you is to help you be aware and informed about how these affect you so you can deal with them directly.

Myers-Briggs: Identifying Personality Traits and Styles

The Myers-Briggs system is one of the most popular personality tests, and it is relatively well known. It has seen a great deal of use in the business world with testing seminars and presentations on group dynamics. In fact, it is so popular that you may already be familiar with it and may have taken a test yourself to find out which of the 16 personality types you most favor.

The basic concept of Myers-Briggs is that there are four main traits. These traits are represented by two opposites, seen in the table below.

Table 2.5

Extroverted (E)	vs.	Introverted (I)
Intuition (N)	vs.	Sensing (S)
Feeling (F)	vs.	Thinking (T)
Judging (J)	vs.	Perceiving (P)

It is thought that people generally exhibit one trait or the other in each of these categories, or that they fall along a spectrum between the two opposites. For example, an individual might exhibit both Feeling and Thinking personality traits, but they will favor one more than the other.

Also note that with each of these traits there is a letter in parentheses. The letter is used to represent the specific traits when they are combined to define a personality type (e.g., Extrovert is E and Introvert is I, Intuition is N, etc.). To better understand these, each is briefly explained.

Extroverted (E) vs. Introverted (I): In the Myers-Briggs system, the traits of Extroverted and Introverted are somewhat different from the more common interpretations of the two words. The definition is more about an individual's attitude, interests, and motivation. The extrovert is primarily motivated by the outside world and social interaction, while the introvert is often more motivated by things that are internal to them—things like their own interests.

Intuition (N) vs. Sensing (S): This personality trait is classified as a preference toward one way of perceiving or another. It is concerned with how people tend to arrive at conclusions. A person on the intuitive end of the spectrum often perceives things in broader categories. A part of their process for "knowing things" is internal and is often described as *having a hunch* or *a gut feeling*. This is opposed to the preferred method of a sensing person, who often looks to direct observation as a means of perception. They prefer to arrive at a conclusion by details and facts, or by testing something with their senses.

Feeling (F) vs. Thinking (T): This trait is considered a decision-making process over the information gathered through the perception (N versus S). People that find themselves more on the Feeling end of the spectrum tend to respond based on their feelings and empathy. Examples of this would be conclusions about what is good versus bad or right versus wrong based on how they feel things should be. The Thinking person, on the other hand, arrives at opinions based on reason and logic. For them, feeling has little to do with it.

Judging (J) vs. Perceiving (P): This category can be thought of as a personal preference for using either the Feeling versus Thinking (decision-making) or the Intuition versus Sensing (perceiving) when forming opinions about the outside world. A person that leans toward the Judging side of the spectrum approaches things in a structured way—usually using Sensing and Thinking traits. The Perceiving person often thinks of structure as somewhat inhibiting. They tend to make more use of Intuition and Feeling in their approach to life.

The Impact of Personality Styles on Learning

To find out their own personality traits and learning styles, a person takes an approved Myers-Briggs test, which consists of a series of questions that help pinpoint their preferences. These preferences are then arranged in order to build a profile using each of the four categories.

For example, a person that answered questions in a way that favored Extroverted tendencies along with a preference toward Sensing, Thinking, and Judging would be designated as ESTJ personality type. Another person that tended more toward answers that aligned with Intuitive traits than Sensing traits would fall into the ENTJ category.

Table 2.6 Personality Types

ESTJ	ISTJ	ENTJ	INTJ
ESTP	ISTP	ENTP	INTP
ESFJ	ISFJ	ENFJ	INFJ
ESFP	ISFP	ENFP	INFP

As with other learning style models, Myers-Briggs has received a good deal of criticism based on the artificial restrictions and impairments it tends to suggest. Additionally, the claim that each person has a permanent and unwavering preference towards personality traits and learning styles has not turned out to be as concrete as it was once thought. This has been demonstrated by people taking tests like the Myers-Briggs a few weeks apart and getting different results based on their personal preferences at that time.

What this means is that, just as with the VAK and other learning style models, you should not constrain your own learning activities based on a predetermined model. Neither should you think of yourself as being limited to one set of preferences. Instead, different types of learning and different preferences can better fit your needs at different times. This and how to best apply the idea of personality types influencing learning styles is explained in the next section.

How to Use Personality Type Learning Styles

To recap, personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs can provide a great deal of insight into personal choices toward learning. Unfortunately, many people interpret them as being something that defines them as both a person and a learner. They tell themselves things like "I am an ESTJ, so I am only at my best when I learn a certain way" or "I rely on intuition, so a science course is not for me!" They limit themselves instead of understanding that while they may have particular preferences under a given situation, all of the different categories are open to them and can be put to good use.

What is important to know is that these sorts of models can serve you better as a way to think about learning. They can help you make decisions about how you will go about learning in a way that best suits your needs and goals for that particular task. As

an example of how to do this, what follows are several different approaches to learning about the play *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare. In each case, Myers-Briggs categories are used to define what sort of activities would help you meet your desired learning goals.

- Your assignment is to read *Julius Caesar* as a work of English literature. Your learning goal is not just to read the play, but to be able to compare it to other, more modern works of literature. To do that, it would be beneficial to use a more *introverted* approach so that you can think about the influences that may have affected each author. You might also want to focus on a *thinking* learning style when examining and comparing the use of words and language in the 17th-century piece to more modern writing styles.
- Your use of learning style approaches would be very different if you were assigned to actually perform a scene from *Julius Caesar* as a part of a class. In this case, it would be better for you to rely on an *extroverted* attitude since you will be more concerned with audience reaction than your own inner thoughts about the work. And since one of your goals would be to create a believable character for the audience, you would want to base decisions on the gestures you might make during the performance through *feeling* so that you have empathy with the character and are convincing in your portrayal.
- A third, completely different assignment, such as examining the play *Julius Caesar* as a political commentary on English society during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, would have very different goals and therefore should be approached using different learning styles. In this example, you might want to begin by using a *sensing* approach to gather facts about what was happening politically in that time period and then switch to *intuition* for insight into the motivations of Shakespeare and the attitudes of his audience in England at that time.

As you can see in the examples above, the choices about each of the different approaches can be entirely dictated by what you will be doing with the learning. Because of this, being aware of the personality type learning styles you have available to you can make a tremendous difference in both how you go about it and your success.

Analysis Question

To find out more about personality types and learning styles, you can take an online personality test to experience it yourself. Several companies charge for this service, but there are a few that offer tests online for free. Click here for one such free online personality test.

Again, keep in mind that your results can change under different circumstances, but doing it for the first time will give you a place to start.

Afterwards you can click here to read more about the connections between personality and learning styles. There you can look up the results from your personality test and see how much you think it aligns with your learning style preferences. Again, this exercise is not to determine your ultimate learning style, but it is to give you a deeper understanding of what is behind the concept of connecting personality types to learning.

The Impact of Work You Enjoy

For a final word on personality types and learning styles, there is no denying that there are going to be different approaches you enjoy more than others. While you do have the ability to use each of the different approaches to meet the goals of your learning activities, some will come more easily for you in certain situations and some will be more pleasurable. As most people do, you will probably find that your work is actually better when you are doing things you like to do. Because of this, it is to your advantage to recognize your preferred methods of learning and to make use of them whenever possible. As discussed elsewhere in this book, in college you will often have opportunities to make decisions about the assignments you complete. In many instances, your instructor may allow for some creativity in what you do and in the finished product. When those opportunities arise, you have everything to gain by taking a path that will allow you to employ preferences you enjoy most. An example of this might be an assignment that requires you to give a presentation on a novel you read for class. In such a case, you might have the freedom to focus your presentation on something that interests you more and better aligns with how you like to learn. It might be more enjoyable for you to present a study on each of the characters in the book and how they relate to each other, or you might be more interested in doing a presentation on the historical accuracy of the book and the background research the author put into writing it.

Whatever the case, discuss your ideas with your instructor to make certain they will both meet the criteria of the assignment and fulfill the learning goals of the activity. There is a great potential for benefit in talking with your instructors when you have ideas

about how you can personalize assignments or explore areas of the subject that interest you. In fact, it is a great practice to ask your instructors for guidance and recommendations and, above all, to demonstrate to them that you are taking a direct interest in your own learning. There is never any downside to talking with your instructors about your learning.

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2.1.7: Applying What You Know about Learning

Questions to consider

- How can I apply what I now know to learning?
- How can I make decisions about my own learning?
- Will doing so be different from what I have experienced before?

Another useful part of being an informed learner is recognizing that as a college student you will have many choices when it comes to learning. Looking back at the Uses and Gratification model, you'll discover that your motivations as well as your choices in how you interact with learning activities can make a significant difference in not only what you learn, but how you learn. By being aware of a few learning theories, students can take initiative and tailor their own learning so that it best benefits them and meets their main needs.

Student Profile

"My seating choice significantly affects my learning. Sitting at a desk where the professor's voice can be heard clearly helps me better understand the subject; and ensuring I have a clear view helps me take notes. Therefore, sitting in the front of the classroom should be a "go to" strategy while attending college. It will keep you focused and attentive throughout the lecture. Also, sitting towards the front of the classroom limits the tendency to be on check my phone."

—Luis Angel Ochoa, Westchester Community College

Making Decisions about Your Own Learning

As a learner, the kinds of materials, study activities, and assignments that work best for you will derive from your own experiences and needs (needs that are both short-term as well as those that fulfill long-term goals). In order to make your learning better suited to meet these needs, you can use the knowledge you have gained about UGT and other learning theories to make decisions concerning your own learning. These decisions can include personal choices in learning materials, how and when you study, and most importantly, taking ownership of your learning activities as an active participant and decision maker. In fact, one of the main principles emphasized in this chapter is that students not only benefit from being involved in planning their instruction, but learners also gain by continually evaluating the actual success of that instruction. In other words: *Does this work for me? Am I learning what I need to by doing it this way?*

While it may not always be possible to control every component of your learning over an entire degree program, you can take every opportunity to influence learning activities so they work to your best advantage. What follows are several examples of how this can be done by making decisions about your learning activities based on what you have already learned in this chapter.

Make Mistakes Safe

Create an environment for yourself where mistakes are safe and mistakes are expected as just another part of learning. This practice ties back to the principles you learned in the section on grit and persistence. The key is to allow yourself the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them *before* they become a part of your grades. You can do this by creating your own learning activities that you design to do just that. An example of this might be taking practice quizzes on your own, outside of the more formal course activities. The quizzes could be something you find in your textbook, something you find online, or something that you develop with a partner. In the latter case you would arrange with a classmate for each of you to produce a quiz and then exchange them. That particular exercise would serve double learning duty, since to create a good quiz you would need to learn the main concepts of the subject, and answering the questions on your partner's quiz might help you identify areas where you need more knowledge.

The main idea with this sort of practice is that you are creating a safe environment where you can make mistakes and learn from them before those mistakes can negatively impact your success in the course. Better to make mistakes on a practice run than on

any kind of assignment or exam that can heavily influence your final grade in a course.

Make Everything Problem Centered

When working through a learning activity, the practical act of problem-solving is a good strategy. Problem-solving, as an approach, can give a learning activity more meaning and motivation for you, as a learner. Whenever possible it is to your advantage to turn an assignment or learning task into a problem you are trying to solve or something you are trying to accomplish.

In essence, you do this by deciding on some purpose for the assignment (other than just completing the assignment itself). An example of this would be taking the classic college term paper and writing it in a way that solves a problem you are already interested in.

Typically, many students treat a term paper as a collection of requirements that must be fulfilled—the paper must be on a certain topic; it should include an introduction section, a body, a closing, and a bibliography; it should be so many pages long, etc. With this approach, the student is simply completing a checklist of attributes and components dictated by the instructor, but other than that, there is no reason for the paper to exist.

Instead, writing it to solve a problem gives the paper purpose and meaning. For example, if you were to write a paper with the purpose of informing the reader about a topic they knew little about, that purpose would influence not only how you wrote the paper but would also help you make decisions on what information to include. It would also influence how you would structure information in the paper so that the reader might best learn what you were teaching them. Another example would be to write a paper to persuade the reader about a certain opinion or way of looking at things. In other words, your paper now has a purpose rather than just reporting facts on the subject. Obviously, you would still meet the format requirements of the paper, such as number of pages and inclusion of a bibliography, but now you do that in a way that helps to solve your problem.

Make It Occupation Related

Much like making assignments problem centered, you will also do well when your learning activities have meaning for your profession or major area of study. This can take the form of simply understanding how the things you are learning are important to your occupation, or it can include the decision to do assignments in a way that can be directly applied to your career. If an exercise seems pointless and possibly unrelated to your long-term goals, you will be much less motivated by the learning activity.

An example of understanding how a specific school topic impacts your occupation future would be that of a nursing student in an algebra course. At first, algebra might seem unrelated to the field of nursing, but if the nursing student recognizes that drug dosage calculations are critical to patient safety and that algebra can help them in that area, there is a much stronger motivation to learn the subject.

In the case of making a decision to apply assignments directly to your field, you can look for ways to use learning activities to build upon other areas or emulate tasks that would be required in your profession. Examples of this might be a communication student giving a presentation in a speech course on how the Internet has changed corporate advertising strategies, or an accounting student doing statistics research for an environmental studies course. Whenever possible, it is even better to use assignments to produce things that are much like what you will be doing in your chosen career. An example of this would be a graphic design student taking the opportunity to create an infographic or other supporting visual elements as a part of an assignment for another course. In cases where this is possible, it is always best to discuss your ideas with your instructor to make certain what you intend will still meet the requirements of the assignment.

Managing Your Time

One of the most common traits of college students is the constraint on their time. As adults, we do not always have the luxury of attending school without other demands on our time. Because of this, we must become efficient with our use of time, and it is important that we maximize our learning activities to be most effective. In fact, time management is so important that there is an entire chapter in this text dedicated to it. When you can, refer to that chapter to learn more about time management concepts and techniques that can be very useful.

Instructors as Learning Partners

In K-12 education, the instructor often has the dual role of both teacher and authority figure for students. Children come to expect their teachers to tell them what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. College learners, on the other hand, seem to work better when they begin to think of their instructors as respected experts that are partners in their education. The change in the relationship for you as a learner accomplishes several things: it gives you ownership and decision-making ability in your own learning, and it enables you to personalize your learning experience to best fit your own needs. For the instructor, it gives them the opportunity to help you meet your own needs and expectations in a rich experience, rather than focusing all of their time on trying to get information to you.

The way to develop learning partnerships is through direct communication with your instructors. If there is something you do not understand or need to know more about, go directly to them. When you have ideas about how you can personalize assignments or explore areas of the subject that interest you or better fit your needs, ask them about it. Ask your instructors for guidance and recommendations, and above all, demonstrate to them that you are taking a direct interest in your own learning. Most instructors are thrilled when they encounter students that want to take ownership of their own learning, and they will gladly become a resourceful guide for you.

Application

Applying What You Know about Learning to What You Are Doing: In this activity, you will work with an upcoming assignment from one of your courses—preferably something you might be dreading or are at least less than enthusiastic about working on. You will see if there is anything you can apply to the assignment from what you know about learning that might make it more interesting.

In the table below are several attributes that college students generally prefer in their learning activities, listed in the far left column. As you think about your assignment, consider whether or not it already possesses the attribute. If it does, go on to the next row. If it does not, see if there is some way you can approach the assignment so that it does follow preferred learning attributes; write that down in the last column, to the far right.

Table 2.7

Does it ...?	Yes	No	What you can do to turn the assignment into something that is better suited to you as a learner?
Does it allow you to make decisions about your own learning?			In essence, you are doing this right now. You are making decisions on how you can make your assignment more effective for you.
Does it allow you to make mistakes without adversely affecting your grade?			Hints: *Are there ways for you to practice? Can you create a series of drafts for the assignment and get feedback?*
Is it centered on solving a problem?			Hint: *Can you turn the assignment into something that solves a problem? An example would be making a presentation that actually educated others rather than just covered what you may have learned.*
Is it related to your chosen occupation in any way?			Hint: *Can you turn the assignment into something you might actually do as a part of your profession or make it about your profession? Examples might be creating an informative poster for the workplace or writing a paper on new trends in your profession.*
Does it allow you to manage the time you work on it?			*More than likely the answer here will be "yes," but you can plan how you will do it. For more information on this, see the chapter on time management.*
Does it allow interaction with your instructor as a learning partner?			Hint: *Talking to your instructor about the ideas you have for making this assignment more personalized accomplishes this exact thing.*

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2.1.8: The Hidden Curriculum

Questions to consider

- What is the hidden or invisible curriculum?
- How can I work within the hidden curriculum to prevent negative results?

The *hidden curriculum* is a phrase used to cover a wide variety of circumstances at school that can influence learning and affect your experience. Sometimes called the invisible curriculum, it varies by institution and can be thought of as a set of unwritten rules or expectations.

Situation: According to your syllabus, your history professor is lecturing on the chapter that covers the stock market crash of 1929 on Tuesday of next week.

Sounds pretty straightforward and common. Your professor lectures on a topic and you will be there to hear it. However, there are some unwritten rules, or hidden curriculum, that are not likely to be communicated. Can you guess what they may be?

- What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing before attending class?
- What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing in class?
- What is an unwritten rule about what you should be doing after class?
- What is an unwritten rule if you are not able to attend that class?

Some of your answers could have included the following:

Table 2.8

Before class:	*read the assigned chapter, take notes, record any questions you have about the reading*
During class:	*take detailed notes, ask critical thinking or clarifying questions, avoid distractions, bring your book and your reading notes*
After class:	*reorganize your notes in relation to your other notes, start the studying process by testing yourself on the material, make an appointment with your professor if you are not clear on a concept*
Absent:	*communicate with the professor, get notes from a classmate, make sure you did not miss anything important in your notes*

The expectations before, during, and after class, as well as what you should do if you miss class, are often unspoken because many professors assume you already know and do these things or because they feel you should figure them out on your own. Nonetheless, some students struggle at first because they don't know about these habits, behaviors, and strategies. But once they learn them, they are able to meet them with ease.

While the previous example may seem obvious once they've been pointed out, most instances of the invisible curriculum are complex and require a bit of critical thinking to uncover. What follows are some common but often overlooked examples of this invisible curriculum.

One example of a hidden curriculum could be found in the beliefs of your professor. Some professors may refuse to reveal their personal beliefs to avoid your writing toward their bias rather than presenting a cogent argument of your own. Other professors may be outspoken about their beliefs to force you to consider and possibly defend your own position. As a result, you may be influenced by those opinions which can then influence your learning, but not as an official part of your study.

Other examples of how this hidden curriculum might not always be so easily identified can be found in classroom arrangements or even scheduling. To better understand this, imagine two different classes on the exact same subject and taught by the same instructor. One class is held in a large lecture hall and has over 100 students in it, while the other meets in a small classroom and has fewer than 20 students. In the smaller class, there is time for all of the students to participate in discussions as a learning activity, and they receive the benefit of being able to talk about their ideas and the lessons through direct interaction with each

other and the professor. In the larger class, there is simply not enough time for all 100 students to each discuss their thoughts. On the flip side, most professors who teach lecture classes use technology to give them constant feedback on how well students understand a given subject. If the data suggests more time should be spent, these professors discover this in real time and can adapt the class accordingly.

Another instance where class circumstances might heavily influence student learning could be found in the class schedule. If the class was scheduled to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays and the due date for assignments was always on Monday, those students would benefit from having the weekend to finalize their work before handing it in. If the class met on a different day, students might not have as much free time just before handing in the assignment. The obvious solution would be better planning and time management to complete assignments in advance of due dates, but nonetheless, conditions caused by scheduling may still impact student learning.

Working Within the Hidden Curriculum

The first step in dealing with the hidden curriculum is to recognize it and understand how it can influence your learning. After any specific situation has been identified, the next step is to figure out how to work around the circumstances to either take advantage of any benefits or to remove any roadblocks.

To illustrate this, here are some possible solutions to the situations given as examples earlier in this section:

Prevailing Opinions—Simply put, you are going to encounter instructors and learning activities that you sometimes agree with and sometimes do not. The key is to learn from them regardless. In either case, take ownership of your learning and even make an effort to learn about other perspectives, even if it is only for your own education on the matter. There is no better time to expose yourself to other opinions and philosophies than in college. In fact, many would say that this is a significant part of the college experience. With a growth mindset, it is easy to view everything as a learning opportunity.

Classroom Circumstances—These kinds of circumstances often require a more structured approach to turn the situation to your advantage, but they also usually have the most obvious solutions. In the example of the large class, you might find yourself limited in the ability to participate in classroom discussions because of so many other students. The way around that would be to speak to several classmates and create your own discussion group. You could set up a time to meet, or you could take a different route by using technology such as an online discussion board, a Skype session, or even a group text. Several of the technologically based solutions might even be better than an in-class discussion since you do not all have to be present at the same time. The discussion can be something that occurs all week long, giving everyone the time to think through their ideas and responses.

Again, the main point is to first spot those things in the hidden curriculum that might put your learning at a disadvantage and devise a solution that either reduces the negative impact or even becomes a learning advantage.

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2.1.9: Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to help make you a motivated learner and empower you to make informed choices about your own learning. Throughout the chapter, you were introduced to ideas, research, and popular models on learning and given examples of how to use each of these as an effective part of your own learning experience.

Most importantly, you were able to explore how things like motivation, grit, and mindset are the most influential aspects of successful learning.

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2.1.10: Career Connection

Watch this TEDx video on learning styles and the importance of critical thinking. After you have watched the video, consider some of the reflective points below.

The concept of personalized learning styles has been popular for almost half a century. Given the information presented in this video, why do you think people are attracted to the idea of personal learning styles even though evidence shows they do not actually exist?

If you were going to devise an experiment to prove or disprove the idea of personalized learning styles, what would you do?

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2.1.11: Rethinking

Recall the four statements that you evaluated at the beginning of this chapter (see below). Have you changed your mind about any of them, or do you intend to work on changing any of them? If you answered no to either or both, why do you feel no change is needed?

1. Learning for me is easy. I don't even have to think about it.
2. I have a preferred learning style.
3. If I can't learn something right away, I have difficulty staying with it.
4. I think my teachers are the most significant aspect of my learning.

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2.1.12: Where do you go from here?

Learning about how we learn allows us to make informed decisions about our own learning activities. This chapter covered a number of concepts, and more than likely a few may have sparked a deeper interest in you. Hopefully these will be things you will choose to explore further. If you would like to learn more, choose from any of the topics covered in this chapter or from those in the list below.

1. More details about the growth mindset
2. Additional strategies for overcoming negative bias
3. The influence of grit as a personal trait
4. Uses and Gratification model as a structure for understanding our daily decisions

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2.2: READING AND NOTETAKING

2.2.1: Prelude to Reading and Notetaking

2.2.2: The Nature and Types of Reading

2.2.3: Effective Reading Strategies

2.2.4: Taking Notes

2.2.5: Summary

2.2.6: Career Connection

2.2.7: Rethinking

2.2.8: Where do you go from here?

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2.2.1: Prelude to Reading and Notetaking



Figure 2.2.1.1: Each of us reads and records information in our own way.

Student Survey

These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As we are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed.

On a scale of 1 (I need significant improvement) to 4 (I'm doing great), reflect on how you're doing right now on these statements:

1. I am reading on a college level.
2. I take good notes that help me study for exams.
3. I understand how to manage all the reading I need to do for college.
4. I recognize the need for different notetaking strategies for different college subjects.

You can also take the Chapter 5 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"Before I came to college, I always loathed reading from the textbook, taking notes during class, and even listening to lectures. I've since learned that in most cases I should do what my teacher suggests. I have a course that requires me to read two textbook chapters each week. Taking notes on the chapters is optional, making it easy to brush off these assignments. But there are reasons that professors tell students to read and do other classwork. They believe it is valuable information for a student to learn. Note taking in class may become tedious and, in some cases, feel redundant. But you can't recall a whole class from memory. There is not much time to learn the contents of a class in one semester, and it can feel overwhelming. It's important to take notes because writing them helps you remember."

—Christopher Naldini, Westchester Community College

About this Chapter

In this chapter we will explore two skills you probably think you already understand—reading and notetaking. But the goal is to make sure you've honed these skills well enough to lead you to success in college. By the time you finish this chapter, you should

be able to do the following:

- Discuss the way reading differs in college and how to successfully adapt to that change.
- Demonstrate the usefulness of strong notetaking for college students.

Reading and consuming information are increasingly important today because of the amount of information we encounter. Not only do we need to read critically and carefully, but we also need to read with an eye to distinguishing fact from opinion and identifying solid sources. Reading helps us make sense of the world—from simple reminders to pick up milk to complex treatises on global concerns, we read to comprehend, and in so doing, our brains expand. An interesting study from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, used MRI scans to track the brain conductivity while participants were reading. The researchers assert that a biological change to your brain actually happens when you read, and it lingers. If you want to read the study, published in the journal *Brain Connectivity,* you can find it online at https://openstax.org/l/brainconnectivity.

In academic settings, as we deliberately work to become stronger readers and better notetakers, we are both helping our current situation and enhancing our abilities to be successful in the future. Seems like a win-win. Take advantage of all the study aids you have at hand, including human, electronic, and physical resources, to increase your performance in these crucial skill sets.

Why? You need to read. It improves your thinking, your vocabulary, and your ability to make connections between disparate parts, which are all parts of critical thinking. Educational researchers Anne Cunningham and Keith Stanovich discovered after extensive study with college students that "reading volume [how much you read] made a significant contribution to multiple measures of vocabulary, general knowledge, spelling, and verbal fluency."

Research continues to assess and support the fact that one of the most significant learning skills necessary for success in any field is reading. You may have performed this skill for decades already, but learning to do it more effectively and practicing the skill consistently is critical to how well you do in all subjects. If reading *isn't your thing,* strive to make that your challenge. Your academic journey, your personal well-being, and your professional endeavors will all benefit from your reading. Put forth the effort and make it your thing. The long-term benefits will far outweigh the sacrifices you make now.

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2.2.2: The Nature and Types of Reading

Questions to consider

- What are the pros and cons of online reading?
- How can distinguishing between reading types help you academically and personally?
- How can you best prepare to read for college?

Research supports the idea that reading is good for you. Students who read at or above reading level throughout elementary and secondary school have a higher chance of starting—and more importantly, finishing—college. Educational researchers convincingly claim that reading improves everything from grades to vocabulary (Cunningham 2).

If you don't particularly enjoy reading, don't despair. We read for a variety of reasons, and you may just have to step back and take a bigger picture of your reading habits to understand why you avoid engaging in this important skill. The myriad distractions we now face as well as the intense information overload we can suffer on a daily basis in all aspects of our lives can combine to make it difficult to slow down to read, an activity that demands at least a modicum of attention in a way that most television and music do not. You may need to adjust your schedule for more reading time, especially in college, because every class you take will expect you to read more pages than you probably have in the past.

Types of Reading

We may read small items purely for immediate information, such as notes, e-mails, or directions to an unfamiliar location. You can find all sorts of information online about how to fix a faucet or tie a secure knot. You won't have to spend too much time reading these sorts of texts because you have a specific goal in mind for them, and once you have accomplished that goal, you do not need to prolong the reading experience. These encounters with texts may not be memorable or stunning, but they don't need to be. When we consider why we read longer pieces—outside of reading for pleasure—we can usually categorize the reasons into about two categories: 1) reading to introduce ourselves to new content, and 2) reading to more fully comprehend familiar content.

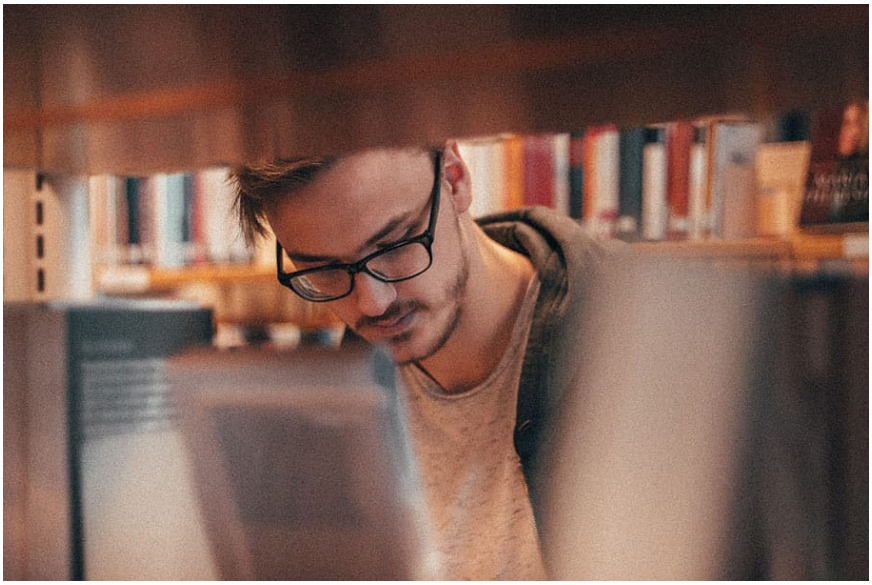


Figure 2.2.2.2: A bookstore or library can be a great place to explore. Aside from books and resources you need, you may find something that interests you or helps with your course work.

Reading to Introduce New Content

Glenn felt uncomfortable talking with his new roommates because he realized very quickly that he didn't know anything about

their major—architecture. Of course he knew that it had something to do with buildings and construction sites, but the field was so different from his discipline of biology that he decided he needed to find out more so he could at least engage in friendly conversation with his roommates. Since he would likely not go into their field, he didn't need to go into full research mode. When we read to introduce new content, we can start off small and increase to better and more sophisticated sources. Much of our further study and reading depends on the sources we originally read, our purpose for finding out about this new topic, and our interest level.

Chances are, you have done this sort of exploratory reading before. You may read reviews of a new restaurant or look at what people say about a movie you aren't sure you want to spend the money to see at the theater. This reading helps you decide. In academic settings, much of what you read in your courses may be relatively new content to you. You may have heard the word *volcano* and have a general notion of what it means, but until you study geology and other sciences in depth, you may not have a full understanding of the environmental origins, ecological impacts, and societal and historic responses to volcanoes. These perspectives will come from reading and digesting various material. When you are working with new content, you may need to schedule more time for reading and comprehending the information because you may need to look up unfamiliar terminology and you may have to stop more frequently to make sure you are truly grasping what the material means. When you have few ways to connect new material to your own prior knowledge, you have to work more diligently to comprehend it.

Application

Try an experiment with a group of classmates. Without looking on the Internet, try to brainstorm a list of 10 topics about which all of you may be interested but for which you know very little or nothing at all. Try to make the topics somewhat obscure rather than ordinary—for example, the possibility of the non-planet Pluto being reclassified again as opposed to something like why we need to drink water.

After you have this random list, think of ways you could find information to read about these weird topics. Our short answer is always: Google. But think of other ways as well. How else could you read about these topics if you don't know anything about them? You may well be in a similar circumstance in some of your college classes, so you should listen carefully to your classmates on this one. Think beyond pat answers such as "I'd go to the library," and press for what that researcher would do once at the library. What types of articles or books would you try to find? One reason that you should not always ignore the idea of doing research at the physical library is because once you are there and looking for information, you have a vast number of other sources readily available to you in a highly organized location. You also can tap into the human resources represented by the research librarians who likely can redirect you if you cannot find appropriate sources.

Reading to Comprehend Familiar Content

Reading about unfamiliar content is one thing, but what if you do know something about a topic already? Do you really still need to keep reading about it? Probably. For example, what if during the brainstorming activity in the previous section, you secretly felt rather smug because you know about the demotion of the one-time planet Pluto and that there is currently quite the scientific debate going on about that whole de-planet-ation thing. Of course, you didn't say anything during the study session, mostly to spare your classmates any embarrassment, but you are pretty familiar with Pluto-gate. So now what? Can you learn anything new?

Again—probably. When did Pluto's qualifications to be considered a planet come into question? What are the qualifications for being considered a planet? Why? Who even gets to decide these things? Why was it called *Pluto* in the first place? On Amazon alone, you can find hundreds of books about the once-planet Pluto (not to be confused with the Disney dog also named Pluto). A Google search brings up over 34 million options for your reading pleasure. You'll have plenty to read, even if you do know something or quite a bit about a topic, but you'll approach reading about a familiar topic and an unfamiliar one differently.

With familiar content, you can do some initial skimming to determine what you already know in the book or article, and mark what may be new information or a different perspective. You may not have to give your full attention to the information you know, but you will spend more time on the new viewpoints so you can determine how this new data meshes with what you already know. Is this writer claiming a radical new definition for the topic or an entirely opposite way to consider the subject matter, connecting it to other topics or disciplines in ways you have never considered?

When college students encounter material in a discipline-specific context and have some familiarity with the topic, they sometimes can allow themselves to become a bit overconfident about their knowledge level. Just because a student may have read an article or two or may have seen a TV documentary on a subject such as the criminal mind, that does not make them an expert. What makes an expert is a person who thoroughly studies a subject, usually for years, and understands all the possible

perspectives of a subject as well as the potential for misunderstanding due to personal biases and the availability of false information about the topic.

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2.2.3: Effective Reading Strategies

Questions to consider

- What methods can you incorporate into your routine to allow adequate time for reading?
- What are the benefits and approaches to active reading?
- Do your courses or major have specific reading requirements?

Allowing Adequate Time for Reading

You should determine the reading requirements and expectations for every class very early in the semester. You also need to understand why you are reading the particular text you are assigned. Do you need to read closely for minute details that determine cause and effect? Or is your instructor asking you to skim several sources so you become more familiar with the topic? Knowing this reasoning will help you decide your timing, what notes to take, and how best to undertake the reading assignment.

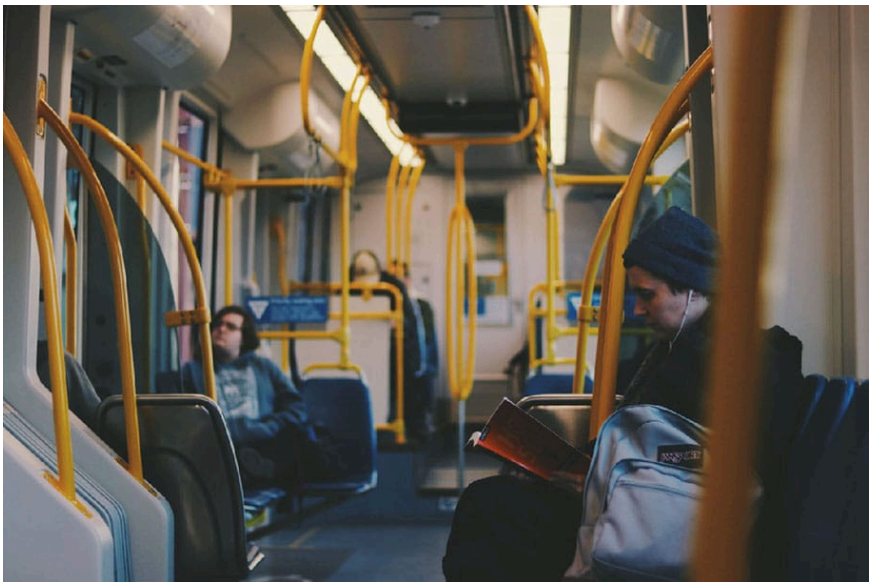


Figure 2.2.3.3: If you plan to make time for reading while you commute, remember that unexpected events like delays and cancellations could impact your concentration.

Depending on the makeup of your schedule, you may end up reading both primary sources—such as legal documents, historic letters, or diaries—as well as textbooks, articles, and secondary sources, such as summaries or argumentative essays that use primary sources to stake a claim. You may also need to read current journalistic texts to stay current in local or global affairs. A realistic approach to scheduling your time to allow you to read and review all the reading you have for the semester will help you accomplish what can sometimes seem like an overwhelming task.

When you allow adequate time in your hectic schedule for reading, you are investing in your own success. Reading isn't a magic pill, but it may seem like it when you consider all the benefits people reap from this ordinary practice. Famous successful people throughout history have been voracious readers. In fact, former U.S. president Harry Truman once said, "Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers." Writer of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, inventor, and also former U.S. president Thomas Jefferson claimed "I cannot live without books" at a time when keeping and reading books was an expensive pastime. Knowing what it meant to be kept from the joys of reading, 19th-century abolitionist Frederick Douglass said, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." And finally, George R. R. Martin, the prolific author of the wildly successful *Game of Thrones* empire, declared, "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one."

You can make time for reading in a number of ways that include determining your usual reading pace and speed, scheduling active reading sessions, and practicing recursive reading strategies.

Determining Reading Speed and Pacing

To determine your reading speed, select a section of text—passages in a textbook or pages in a novel. Time yourself reading that material for exactly 5 minutes, and note how much reading you accomplished in those 5 minutes. Multiply the amount of reading you accomplished in 5 minutes by 12 to determine your average reading pace (5 times 12 equals the 60 minutes of an hour). Of course, your reading pace will be different and take longer if you are taking notes while you read, but this calculation of reading pace gives you a good way to estimate your reading speed that you can adapt to other forms of reading.

Example Reading Times

Reader	Pages Read in 5 Minutes	Pages per Hour	Approximate Hours to Read 500 Pages
Marta	4	48	10 hours, 30 minutes
Jordi	3	36	13 hours
Estevan	5	60	8 hours, 20 minutes

So, for instance, if Marta was able to read 4 pages of a dense novel for her English class in 5 minutes, she should be able to read about 48 pages in one hour. Knowing this, Marta can accurately determine how much time she needs to devote to finishing the novel within a set amount of time, instead of just guessing. If the novel Marta is reading is 497 pages, then Marta would take the total page count (497) and divide that by her hourly reading rate (48 pages/hour) to determine that she needs about 10 to 11 hours overall. To finish the novel spread out over two weeks, Marta needs to read a little under an hour a day to accomplish this goal.

Calculating your reading rate in this manner does not take into account days where you're too distracted and you have to reread passages or days when you just aren't in the mood to read. And your reading rate will likely vary depending on how dense the content you're reading is (e.g., a complex textbook vs. a comic book). Your pace may slow down somewhat if you are not very interested in what the text is about. What this method *will* help you do is be realistic about your reading time as opposed to waging a guess based on nothing and then becoming worried when you have far more reading to finish than the time available.

Chapter 3, "Time Management and Prioritization," offers more detail on how best to determine your speed from one type of reading to the next so you are better able to schedule your reading.

Scheduling Set Times for Active Reading

Active reading takes longer than reading through passages without stopping. You may not need to read your latest sci-fi series actively while you're lounging on the beach, but many other reading situations demand more attention from you. Active reading is particularly important for college courses. You are a scholar actively engaging with the text by posing questions, seeking answers, and clarifying any confusing elements. Plan to spend at least twice as long to read actively than to read passages without taking notes or otherwise marking select elements of the text.

To determine the time you need for active reading, use the same calculations you use to determine your traditional reading speed and double it. Remember that you need to determine your reading pace for all the classes you have in a particular semester and multiply your speed by the number of classes you have that require different types of reading.

Example Active Reading Times

Reader	Pages Read in 5 Minutes	Pages per Hour	Approximate Hours to Read 500 Pages	Approximate Hours to Actively Read 500 Pages
Marta	4	48	10 hours, 30 minutes	21 hours
Jordi	3	36	13 hours	26 hours
Estevan	5	60	8 hours, 20 minutes	16 hours, 40 minutes

Practicing Recursive Reading Strategies

One fact about reading for college courses that may become frustrating is that, in a way, it never ends. For all the reading you do,

you end up doing even more rereading. It may be the same content, but you may be reading the passage more than once to detect the emphasis the writer places on one aspect of the topic or how frequently the writer dismisses a significant counterargument. This rereading is called recursive reading.

For most of what you read at the college level, you are trying to make sense of the text for a specific purpose—not just because the topic interests or entertains you. You need your full attention to decipher everything that's going on in complex reading material—and you even need to be considering what the writer of the piece may *not* be including and why. This is why reading for comprehension is recursive.

Specifically, this boils down to seeing reading not as a formula but as a process that is far more circular than linear. You may read a selection from beginning to end, which is an excellent starting point, but for comprehension, you'll need to go back and reread passages to determine meaning and make connections between the reading and the bigger learning environment that led you to the selection—that may be a single course or a program in your college, or it may be the larger discipline, such as all biologists or the community of scholars studying beach erosion.

People often say writing is rewriting. For college courses, reading is rereading.

Strong readers engage in numerous steps, sometimes combining more than one step simultaneously, but knowing the steps nonetheless. They include, not always in this order:

- bringing any prior knowledge about the topic to the reading session,
- asking yourself pertinent questions, both orally and in writing, about the content you are reading,
- inferring and/or implying information from what you read,
- learning unfamiliar discipline-specific terms,
- evaluating what you are reading, and eventually,
- applying what you're reading to other learning and life situations you encounter.

Let's break these steps into manageable chunks, because you are actually doing quite a lot when you read.



Figure 2.2.3.4: The six elements of recursive reading should be considered as a circular, not linear, process.

Asking Questions

Humans are naturally curious beings. As you read actively, you should be asking questions about the topic you are reading. Don't just say the questions in your mind; write them down. You may ask: Why is this topic important? What is the relevance of this topic currently? Was this topic important a long time ago but irrelevant now? Why did my professor assign this reading?

You need a place where you can actually write down these questions; a separate page in your notes is a good place to begin. If you are taking notes on your computer, start a new document and write down the questions. Leave some room to answer the

questions when you begin and again after you read.

Inferring and Implying

When you read, you can take the information on the page and *infer*, or conclude responses to related challenges from evidence or from your own reasoning. A student will likely be able to infer what material the professor will include on an exam by taking good notes throughout the classes leading up to the test.

Writers may *imply* information without directly stating a fact for a variety of reasons. Sometimes a writer may not want to come out explicitly and state a bias, but may imply or hint at his or her preference for one political party or another. You have to read carefully to find implications because they are indirect, but watching for them will help you comprehend the whole meaning of a passage.

Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary specific to certain disciplines helps practitioners in that field engage and communicate with each other. Few people beyond undertakers and archeologists likely use the term *sarcophagus* in everyday communications, but for those disciplines, it is a meaningful distinction. Looking at the example, you can use context clues to figure out the meaning of the term *sarcophagus* because it is something undertakers and/or archeologists would recognize. At the very least, you can guess that it has something to do with death. As a potential professional in the field you're studying, you need to know the lingo. You may already have a system in place to learn discipline-specific vocabulary, so use what you know works for you. Two strong strategies are to look up words in a dictionary (online or hard copy) to ensure you have the exact meaning for your discipline and to keep a dedicated list of words you see often in your reading. You can list the words with a short definition so you have a quick reference guide to help you learn the vocabulary.

Evaluating

Intelligent people always question and evaluate. This doesn't mean they don't trust others; they just need verification of facts to understand a topic well. It doesn't make sense to learn incomplete or incorrect information about a subject just because you didn't take the time to evaluate all the sources at your disposal. When early explorers were afraid to sail the world for fear of falling off the edge, they weren't stupid; they just didn't have all the necessary data to evaluate the situation.

When you evaluate a text, you are seeking to understand the presented topic. Depending on how long the text is, you will perform a number of steps and repeat many of these steps to evaluate all the elements the author presents. When you evaluate a text, you need to do the following:

- Scan the title and all headings.
- Read through the entire passage fully.
- Question what main point the author is making.
- Decide who the audience is.
- Identify what evidence/support the author uses.
- Consider if the author presents a balanced perspective on the main point.
- Recognize if the author introduced any biases in the text.

When you go through a text looking for each of these elements, you need to go beyond just answering the surface question; for instance, the audience may be a specific field of scientists, but could anyone else understand the text with some explanation? Why would that be important?

Analysis Question

Think of an article you need to read for a class. Take the steps above on how to evaluate a text, and apply the steps to the article. When you accomplish the task in each step, ask yourself and take notes to answer the question: Why is this important? For example, when you read the title, does that give you any additional information that will help you comprehend the text? If

the text were written for a different audience, what might the author need to change to accommodate that group? How does an author's bias distort an argument? This deep evaluation allows you to fully understand the main ideas and place the text in context with other material on the same subject, with current events, and within the discipline.

Applying

When you learn something new, it always connects to other knowledge you already have. One challenge we have is applying new information. It may be interesting to know the distance to the moon, but how do we apply it to something we need to do? If your biology instructor asked you to list several challenges of colonizing Mars and you do not know much about that planet's exploration, you may be able to use your knowledge of how far Earth is from the moon to apply it to the new task. You may have to read several other texts in addition to reading graphs and charts to find this information.

That was the challenge the early space explorers faced along with myriad unknowns before space travel was a more regular occurrence. They had to take what they already knew and could study and read about and apply it to an unknown situation. These explorers wrote down their challenges, failures, and successes, and now scientists read those texts as a part of the ever-growing body of text about space travel. Application is a sophisticated level of thinking that helps turn theory into practice and challenges into successes.

Preparing to Read for Specific Disciplines in College

Different disciplines in college may have specific expectations, but you can depend on all subjects asking you to read to some degree. In this college reading requirement, you can succeed by learning to read actively, researching the topic and author, and recognizing how your own preconceived notions affect your reading. Reading for college isn't the same as reading for pleasure or even just reading to learn something on your own because you are casually interested.

In college courses, your instructor may ask you to read articles, chapters, books, or *primary source*s (those original documents about which we write and study, such as letters between historic figures or the Declaration of Independence). Your instructor may want you to have a general background on a topic before you dive into that subject in class, so that you know the history of a topic, can start thinking about it, and can engage in a class discussion with more than a passing knowledge of the issue.

If you are about to participate in an in-depth six-week consideration of the U.S. Constitution but have never read it or anything written about it, you will have a hard time looking at anything in detail or understanding how and why it is significant. As you can imagine, a great deal has been written about the Constitution by scholars and citizens since the late 1700s when it was first put to paper (that's how they did it then). While the actual document isn't that long (about 12–15 pages depending on how it is presented), learning the details on how it came about, who was involved, and why it was and still is a significant document would take a considerable amount of time to read and digest. So, how do you do it all? Especially when you may have an instructor who drops hints that you may also *love* to read a historic novel covering the same time period . . . in your *spare time*, not required, of course! It can be daunting, especially if you are taking more than one course that has time-consuming reading lists. With a few strategic techniques, you can manage it all, but know that you must have a plan and schedule your required reading so you *are* also able to pick up that recommended historic novel—it may give you an entirely new perspective on the issue.

Strategies for Reading in College Disciplines

No universal law exists for how much reading instructors and institutions expect college students to undertake for various disciplines. Suffice it to say, it's a LOT.

For most students, it is the volume of reading that catches them most off guard when they begin their college careers. A full course load might require 10–15 hours of reading per week, some of that covering content that will be more difficult than the reading for other courses.

You cannot possibly read word-for-word every single document you need to read for all your classes. That doesn't mean you give up or decide to only read for your favorite classes or concoct a scheme to read 17 percent for each class and see how that works for you. You need to learn to skim, annotate, and take notes. All of these techniques will help you comprehend more of what you read, which is why we read in the first place. We'll talk more later about annotating and notetaking, but for now consider what you know about skimming as opposed to active reading.

Skimming

Skimming is not just glancing over the words on a page (or screen) to see if any of it sticks. Effective skimming allows you to take in the major points of a passage without the need for a time-consuming reading session that involves your active use of notations and annotations. Often you will need to engage in that painstaking level of active reading, but skimming is the first step—not an alternative to deep reading. The fact remains that neither do you need to read everything nor could you possibly accomplish that given your limited time. So learn this valuable skill of skimming as an accompaniment to your overall study tool kit, and with practice and experience, you will fully understand how valuable it is.

When you skim, look for guides to your understanding: headings, definitions, pull quotes, tables, and context clues. Textbooks are often helpful for skimming—they may already have made some of these skimming guides in bold or a different color, and chapters often follow a predictable outline. Some even provide an overview and summary for sections or chapters. Use whatever you can get, but don't stop there. In textbooks that have some reading guides, or especially in text that does not, look for introductory words such as *First* or *The purpose of this article* . . . or summary words such as *In conclusion* . . . or *Finally*. These guides will help you read only those sentences or paragraphs that will give you the overall meaning or gist of a passage or book.

Now move to the meat of the passage. You want to take in the reading as a whole. For a book, look at the titles of each chapter if available. Read each chapter's introductory paragraph and determine why the writer chose this particular order. Depending on what you're reading, the chapters may be only informational, but often you're looking for a specific argument. What position is the writer claiming? What support, counterarguments, and conclusions is the writer presenting?

Don't think of skimming as a way to buzz through a boring reading assignment. It is a skill you should master so you can engage, at various levels, with all the reading you need to accomplish in college. End your skimming session with a few notes—terms to look up, questions you still have, and an overall summary. And recognize that you likely will return to that book or article for a more thorough reading if the material is useful.

Active Reading Strategies

Active reading differs significantly from skimming or reading for pleasure. You can think of active reading as a sort of conversation between you and the text (maybe between you and the author, but you don't want to get the author's personality too involved in this metaphor because that may skew your engagement with the text).

When you sit down to determine what your different classes expect you to read and you create a reading schedule to ensure you complete all the reading, think about when you should read the material strategically, not just how to *get it all done*. You should read textbook chapters and other reading assignments *before* you go into a lecture about that information. Don't wait to see how the lecture goes before you read the material, or you may not understand the information in the lecture. Reading before class helps you put ideas together between your reading and the information you hear and discuss in class.

Different disciplines naturally have different types of texts, and you need to take this into account when you schedule your time for reading class material. For example, you may look at a poem for your world literature class and assume that it will not take you long to read because it is relatively short compared to the dense textbook you have for your economics class. But reading and understanding a poem can take a considerable amount of time when you realize you may need to stop numerous times to review the separate word meanings and how the words form images and connections throughout the poem.

The SQ3R Reading Strategy

You may have heard of the **SQ3R** method for active reading in your early education. This valuable technique is perfect for college reading. The title stands for **S**urvey, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**ecite, **R**eview, and you can use the steps on virtually any assigned passage. Designed by Francis Pleasant Robinson in his 1961 book *Effective Study,* the active reading strategy gives readers a systematic way to work through any reading material.

Survey is similar to skimming. You look for clues to meaning by reading the titles, headings, introductions, summary, captions for graphics, and keywords. You can survey almost anything connected to the reading selection, including the copyright information, the date of the journal article, or the names and qualifications of the author(s). In this step, you decide what the general meaning is for the reading selection.

Question is your creation of questions to seek the main ideas, support, examples, and conclusions of the reading selection. Ask yourself these questions separately. Try to create valid questions about what you are about to read that have come into your mind

as you engaged in the Survey step. Try turning the headings of the sections in the chapter into questions. Next, how does what you're reading relate to you, your school, your community, and the world?

Read is when you actually read the passage. Try to find the answers to questions you developed in the previous step. Decide how much you are reading in chunks, either by paragraph for more complex readings or by section or even by an entire chapter. When you finish reading the selection, stop to make notes. Answer the questions by writing a note in the margin or other white space of the text.

You may also carefully underline or highlight text in addition to your notes. Use caution here that you don't try to rush this step by haphazardly circling terms or the other extreme of underlining huge chunks of text. Don't over-mark. You aren't likely to remember what these cryptic marks mean later when you come back to use this active reading session to study. The text is the source of information—your marks and notes are just a way to organize and make sense of that information.

Recite means to speak out loud. By reciting, you are engaging other senses to remember the material—you read it (visual) and you said it (auditory). Stop reading momentarily in the step to answer your questions or clarify confusing sentences or paragraphs. You can recite a summary of what the text means to you. If you are not in a place where you can verbalize, such as a library or classroom, you can accomplish this step adequately by *saying* it in your head; however, to get the biggest bang for your buck, try to find a place where you can speak aloud. You may even want to try explaining the content to a friend.

Review is a recap. Go back over what you read and add more notes, ensuring you have captured the main points of the passage, identified the supporting evidence and examples, and understood the overall meaning. You may need to repeat some or all of the SQR3 steps during your review depending on the length and complexity of the material. Before you end your active reading session, write a short (no more than one page is optimal) summary of the text you read.

Reading Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources are original documents we study and from which we glean information; primary sources include letters, first editions of books, legal documents, and a variety of other texts. When scholars look at these documents to understand a period in history or a scientific challenge and then write about their findings, the scholar's article is considered a secondary source. Readers have to keep several factors in mind when reading both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources may contain dated material we now know is inaccurate. It may contain personal beliefs and biases the original writer didn't intent to be openly published, and it may even present fanciful or creative ideas that do not support current knowledge. Readers can still gain great insight from primary sources, but readers need to understand the context from which the writer of the primary source wrote the text.

Likewise, secondary sources are inevitably another person's perspective on the primary source, so a reader of secondary sources must also be aware of potential biases or preferences the secondary source writer inserts in the writing that may persuade an incautious reader to interpret the primary source in a particular manner.

For example, if you were to read a secondary source that is examining the U.S. Declaration of Independence (the primary source), you would have a much clearer idea of how the secondary source scholar presented the information from the primary source if you also read the Declaration for yourself instead of trusting the other writer's interpretation. Most scholars are honest in writing secondary sources, but you as a reader of the source are trusting the writer to present a balanced perspective of the primary source. When possible, you should attempt to read a primary source in conjunction with the secondary source. The Internet helps immensely with this practice.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. What is the most influential factor in how thoroughly you read the material for a given course?
   a. How engaging the material is or how much I enjoy reading it.
   b. Whether or not the course is part of my major.
   c. Whether or not the instructor assesses knowledge from the reading (through quizzes, for example), or requires assignments based on the reading.
   d. Whether or not knowledge or information from the reading is required to participate in lecture.
2. What best describes your reading approach for required texts/materials for your classes?
   a. I read all of the assigned material.

b. I read most of the assigned material.
c. I skim the text and read the captions, examples, or summaries.

3. What best describes your notetaking style?
   a. I use a systematic method such as the Cornell method or something similar.
   b. I highlight or underline all the important information.
   c. I create outlines and/or note-cards.
   d. I use an app or program.
   e. I write notes in my text (print or digital).
   f. I don't have a style. I just write down what seems important.
   g. I don't take many notes.

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

What is the most influential factor in how thoroughly you read the material for a given course?

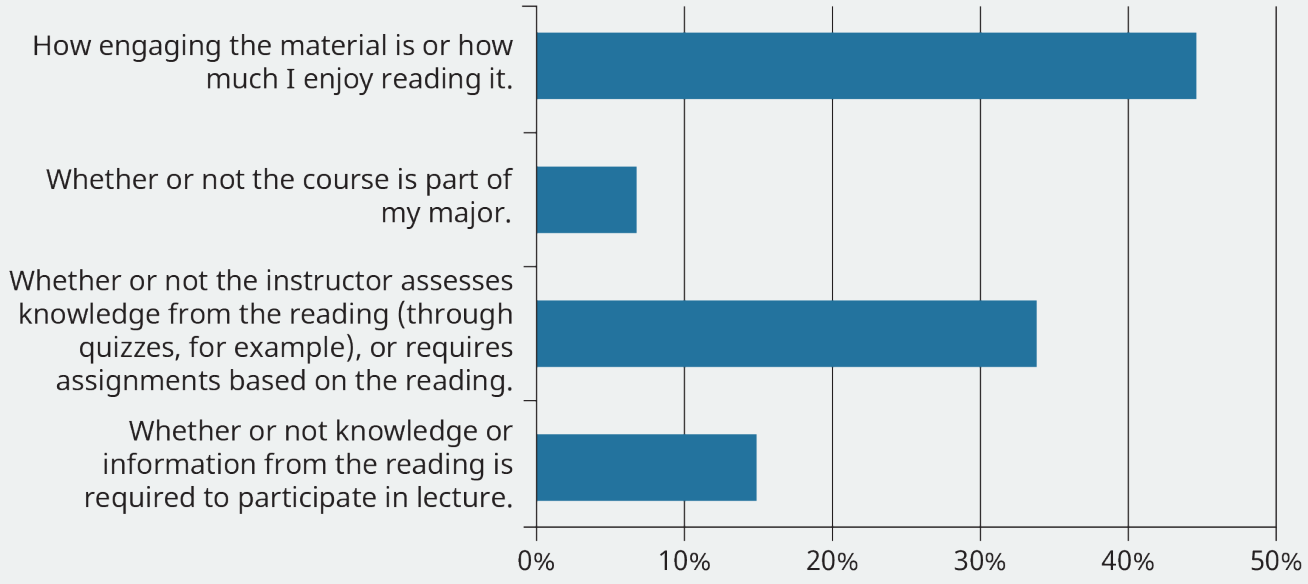


Figure 2.2.3.5

What best describes your reading approach for required texts/materials for your classes?

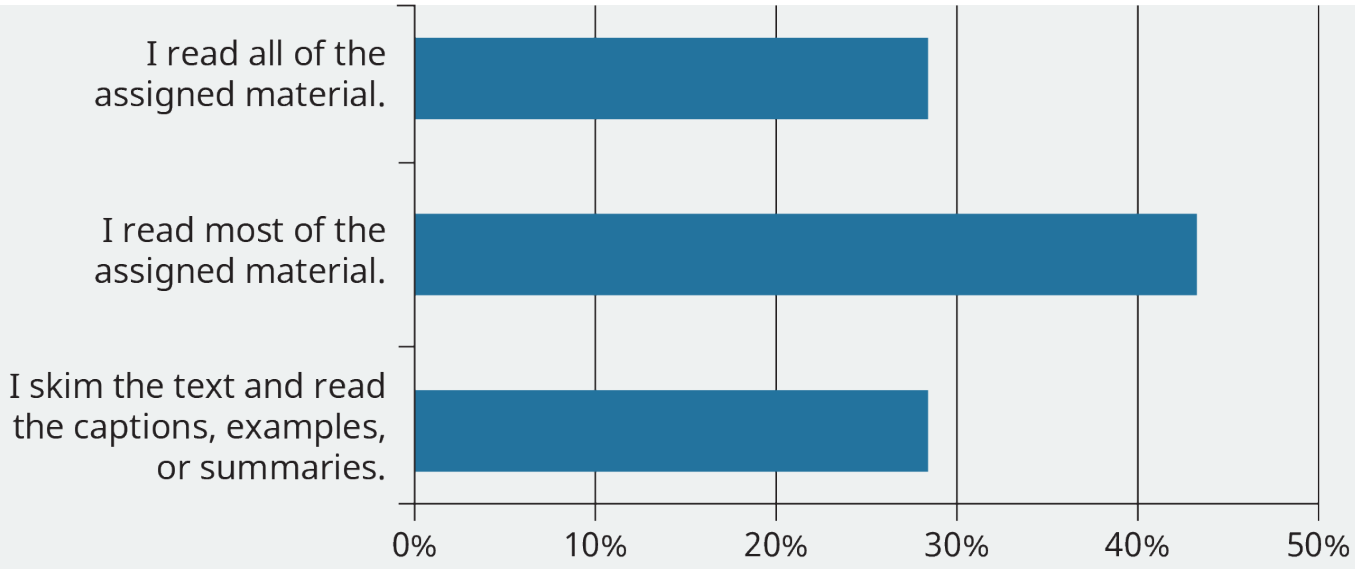


Figure 2.2.3.6

What best describes your notetaking style?

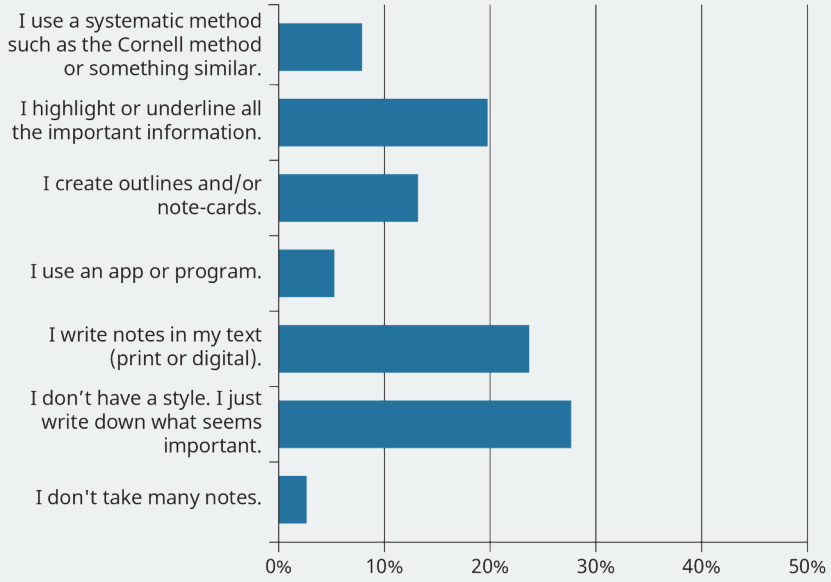


Figure 2.2.3.7

Researching Topic and Author

During your preview stage, sometimes called pre-reading, you can easily pick up on information from various sources that may help you understand the material you're reading more fully or place it in context with other important works in the discipline. If your selection is a book, flip it over or turn to the back pages and look for an author's biography or note from the author. See if the book itself contains any other information about the author or the subject matter.

The main things you need to recall from your reading in college are the topics covered and how the information fits into the discipline. You can find these parts throughout the textbook chapter in the form of headings in larger and bold font, summary lists, and important quotations pulled out of the narrative. Use these features as you read to help you determine what the most important ideas are.

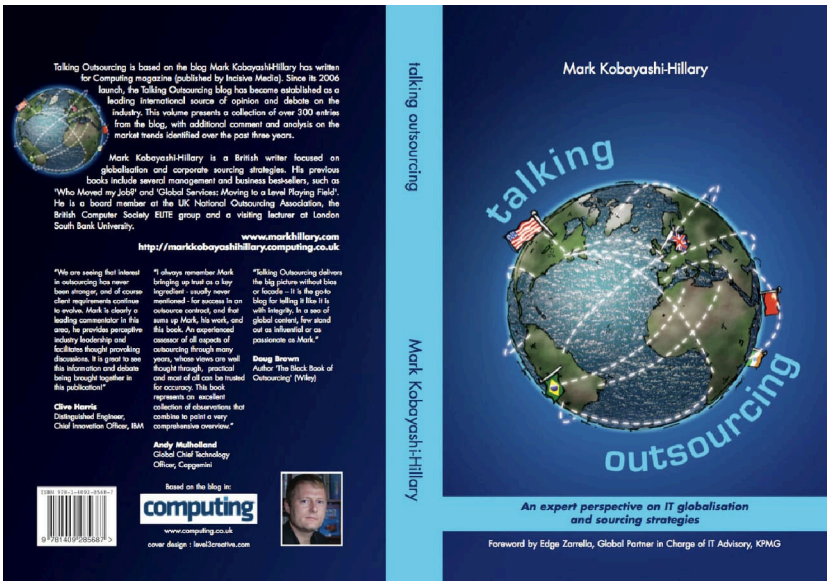


Figure 2.2.3.8: Learning about the book you're reading can provide good context and information. Look for an author's biography and forward on the back cover or in the first few pages. (Credit: Mark Hillary / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Remember, many books use quotations about the book or author as testimonials in a marketing approach to sell more books, so these may not be the most reliable sources of unbiased opinions, but it's a start. Sometimes you can find a list of other books the author has written near the front of a book. Do you recognize any of the other titles? Can you do an Internet search for the name of the book or author? Go beyond the search results that want you to buy the book and see if you can glean any other relevant information about the author or the reading selection. Beyond a standard Internet search, try the library article database. These are more relevant to academic disciplines and contain resources you typically will not find in a standard search engine. If you are unfamiliar with how to use the library database, ask a reference librarian on campus. They are often underused resources that can point you in the right direction.

Understanding Your Own Preset Ideas on a Topic

Laura really enjoys learning about environmental issues. She has read many books and watched numerous televised documentaries on this topic and actively seeks out additional information on the environment. While Laura's interest can help her understand a new reading encounter about the environment, Laura also has to be aware that with this interest, she also brings forward her preset ideas and biases about the topic. Sometimes these prejudices against other ideas relate to religion or nationality or even just tradition. Without evidence, thinking the way we always have is not a good enough reason; evidence can change, and at the very least it needs honest review and assessment to determine its validity. Ironically, we may not want to learn new ideas because that may mean we would have to give up old ideas we have already mastered, which can be a daunting prospect.

With every reading situation about the environment, Laura needs to remain open-minded about what she is about to read and pay careful attention if she begins to ignore certain parts of the text because of her preconceived notions. Learning new information can be very difficult if you balk at ideas that are different from what you've always thought. You may have to force yourself to listen to a different viewpoint multiple times to make sure you are not closing your mind to a viable solution your mindset does not currently allow.

Analysis Question

Can you think of times you have struggled reading college content for a course? Which of these strategies might have helped you understand the content? Why do you think those strategies would work?

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2.2.4: Taking Notes

Questions to consider

- How can you prepare to take notes to maximize the effectiveness of the experience?
- What are some specific strategies you can employ for better notetaking?
- Why is annotating your notes after the notetaking session a critical step to follow?

Beyond providing a record of the information you are reading or hearing, notes help you organize the ideas and help you make meaning out of something about which you may not be familiar, so notetaking and reading are two compatible skill sets. Taking notes also helps you stay focused on the question at hand. Nanami often takes notes during presentations or class lectures so she can follow the speaker's main points and condense the material into a more readily usable format. Strong notes build on your prior knowledge of a subject, help you discuss trends or patterns present in the information, and direct you toward areas needing further research or reading.

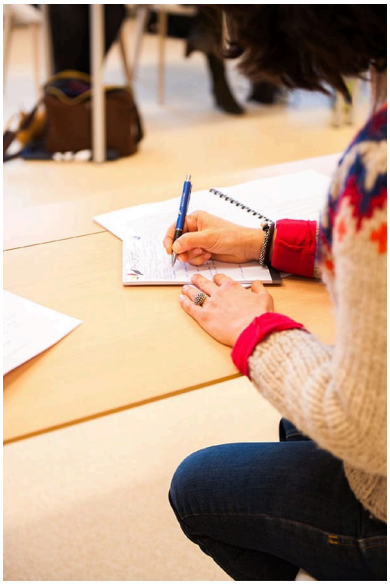


Figure 2.2.4.9: Strong notes build on your prior knowledge of a subject, help you discuss trends or patterns present in the information, and direct you toward areas needing further research or reading.

It is not a good habit to transcribe every single word a speaker utters—even if you have an amazing ability to do that. Most of us don't have that court-reporter-esque skill level anyway, and if we try, we would end up missing valuable information. Learn to listen for main ideas and distinguish between these main ideas and details that typically support the ideas. Include examples that explain the main ideas, but do so using understandable abbreviations.

Think of all notes as potential study guides. In fact, if you only take notes without actively working on them after the initial notetaking session, the likelihood of the notes helping you is slim. Research on this topic concludes that without active engagement after taking notes, most students forget 60–75 percent of material over which they took the notes—within two days! That sort of defeats the purpose, don't you think? This information about memory loss was first brought to light by 19th-century German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus. Fortunately, you do have the power to thwart what is sometimes called the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve by reinforcing what you learned through review at intervals shortly after you take in the material and frequently thereafter.

If you are a musician, you'll understand this phenomenon well. When you first attempt a difficult piece of music, you may not remember the chords and notes well at all, but after frequent practice and review, you generate a certain muscle memory and cognitive recall that allows you to play the music more easily.

Notetaking may not be the most glamorous aspect of your higher-education journey, but it is a study practice you will carry

throughout college and into your professional life. Setting yourself up for successful notetaking is almost as important as the actual taking of notes, and what you do after your notetaking session is equally significant. Well-written notes help you organize your thoughts, enhance your memory, and participate in class discussion, and they prepare you to respond successfully on exams. With all that riding on your notes, it would behoove you to learn how to take notes properly and continue to improve your notetaking skills.

Analysis Question

Do you currently have a preferred way to take notes? When did you start using it? Has it been effective? What other strategy might work for you?

Preparing to Take Notes

Preparing to take notes means more than just getting out your laptop or making sure you bring pen and paper to class. You'll do a much better job with your notes if you understand why we take notes, have a strong grasp on your preferred notetaking system, determine your specific priorities depending on your situation, and engage in some version of efficient shorthand.

Like handwriting and fingerprints, we all have unique and fiercely independent notetaking habits. These understandably and reasonably vary from one situation to the next, but you can only improve your skills by learning more about ways to take effective notes and trying different methods to find a good fit.

The very best notes are the ones you take in an organized manner that encourages frequent review and use as you progress through a topic or course of study. For this reason, you need to develop a way to organize all your notes for each class so they remain together and organized. As old-fashioned as it sounds, a clunky three-ring binder is an excellent organizational container for class notes. You can easily add to previous notes, insert handouts you may receive in class, and maintain a running collection of materials for each separate course. If the idea of carrying around a heavy binder has you rolling your eyes, then transfer that same structure into your computer files. If you don't organize your many documents into some semblance of order on your computer, you will waste significant time searching for improperly named or saved files.

You may be interested in relatively new research on what is the more effective notetaking strategy: handwriting versus typing directly into a computer. While individuals have strong personal opinions on this subject, most researchers agree that the format of student notes is less important than what students do with the notes they take afterwards. Both handwriting notes and using a computer for notetaking have pros and cons.

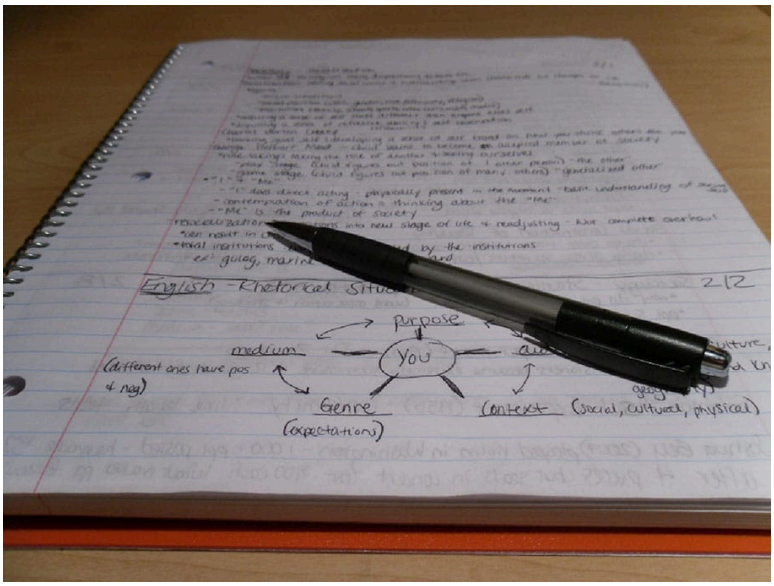


Figure 2.2.4.10: The best notes are the ones you take in an organized manner. Frequent review and further annotation are important to build a deep and useful understanding of the material. (Credit: English106 / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Managing Notetaking Systems (Computer, Paper/Pen, Note Cards, Textbook)

Whichever of the many notetaking systems you choose (and new ones seem to come out almost daily), the very best one is the one that you will use consistently. The skill and art of notetaking is not automatic for anyone; it takes a great deal of practice, patience, and continuous attention to detail. Add to that the fact that you may need to master multiple notetaking techniques for different classes, and you have some work to do. Unless you are specifically directed by your instructor, you are free to combine the best parts of different systems if you are most comfortable with that hybrid system.

Just to keep yourself organized, all your notes should start off with an identifier, including at the very least the date, the course name, the topic of the lecture/presentation, and any other information you think will help you when you return to use the notes for further study, test preparation, or assignment completion. Additional, optional information may be the number of notetaking sessions about this topic or reminders to cross-reference class handouts, textbook pages, or other course materials. It's also always a good idea to leave some blank space in your notes so you can insert additions and questions you may have as you review the material later.

Notetaking Strategies

You may have a standard way you take all your notes for all your classes. When you were in high school, this one-size-fits-all approach may have worked. Now that you're in college, reading and studying more advanced topics, your general method may still work some of the time, but you should have some different strategies in place if you find that your method isn't working as well with college content. You probably will need to adopt different notetaking strategies for different subjects. The strategies in this section represent various ways to take notes in such a way that you are able to study after the initial notetaking session.

Cornell Method

One of the most recognizable notetaking systems is called the *Cornell Method*, a relatively simple way to take effective notes devised by Cornell University education professor Dr. Walter Pauk in the 1940s. In this system, you take a standard piece of note paper and divide it into three sections by drawing a horizontal line across your paper about one to two inches from the bottom of the page (the summary area) and then drawing a vertical line to separate the rest of the page above this bottom area, making the left side about two inches (the recall column) and leaving the biggest area to the right of your vertical line (the notes column). You may want to make one page and then copy as many pages as you think you'll need for any particular class, but one advantage of this system is that you can generate the sections quickly. Because you have divided up your page, you may end up using more paper than you would if you were writing on the entire page, but the point is not to keep your notes to as few pages as possible. The Cornell Method provides you with a well-organized set of notes that will help you study and review your notes as you move through the course. If you are taking notes on your computer, you can still use the Cornell Method in Word or Excel on your own or by using a template someone else created.

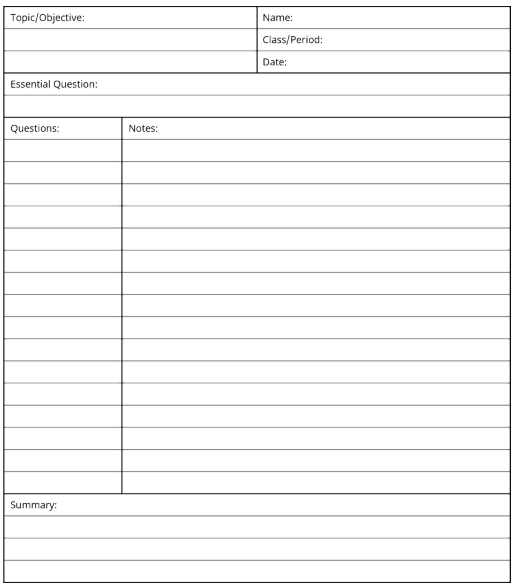


Figure 2.2.4.11: The Cornell Method provides a straightforward, organized, and flexible approach

Now that you have the notetaking format generated, the beauty of the Cornell Method is its organized simplicity. Just write on one side of the page (the right-hand notes column)—this will help later when you are reviewing and revising your notes. During your notetaking session, use the notes column to record information over the main points and concepts of the lecture; try to put the ideas into your own words, which will help you not transcribe the speaker's words verbatim. Skip lines between each idea in this column. Practice the shortcut abbreviations covered in the next section and avoid writing in complete sentences. Don't make your notes too cryptic, but you can use bullet points or phrases equally well to convey meaning—we do it all the time in conversation. If you know you will need to expand the notes you are taking in class but don't have time, you can put reminders directly in the notes by adding and underlining the word *expand* by the ideas you need to develop more fully.

As soon as possible after your notetaking session, preferably within eight hours but no more than twenty-four hours, read over your notes column and fill in any details you missed in class, including the places where you indicated you wanted to expand your notes. Then in the recall column, write any key ideas from the corresponding notes column—you can't stuff this smaller recall column as if you're explaining or defining key ideas. Just add the one- or two-word main ideas; these words in the recall column serve as cues to help you remember the detailed information you recorded in the notes column.

Once you are satisfied with your notes and recall columns, summarize this page of notes in two or three sentences using the summary area at the bottom of the sheet. This is an excellent time to get with another classmate or a group of students who all heard the same lecture to make sure you all understood the key points. Now, before you move onto something else, cover the large notes column, and quiz yourself over the key ideas you recorded in the recall column. Repeat this step often as you go along, not just immediately before an exam, and you will help your memory make the connections between your notes, your textbook reading, your in-class work, and assignments that you need to succeed on any quizzes and exams.

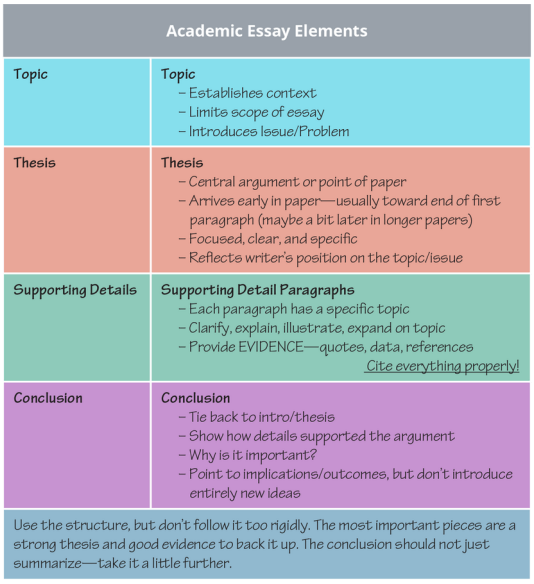


Figure 2.2.4.12: This sample set of notes in the Cornell Method is designed to make sense of a large amount of information. The process of organizing the notes can help you retain the information more effectively than less consistent methods.

The main advantage of the Cornell Method is that you are setting yourself up to have organized, workable notes. The neat format helps you move into study-mode without needing to re-copy less organized notes or making sense of a large mass of information you aren't sure how to process because you can't remember key ideas or what you meant. If you write notes in your classes without any sort of system and later come across something like "Napoleon—short" in the middle of a glob of notes, what can you do at this point? Is that important? Did it connect with something relevant from the lecture? How would you possibly know? You are your best advocate for setting yourself up for success in college.

Outlining

Other note organizing systems may help you in different disciplines. You can take notes in a formal outline if you prefer, using Roman numerals for each new topic, moving down a line to capital letters indented a few spaces to the right for concepts related to the previous topic, then adding details to support the concepts indented a few more spaces over and denoted by an Arabic numeral. You can continue to add to a formal outline by following these rules.

You don't absolutely have to use the formal numerals and letter, but you have to then be careful to indent so you can tell when you move from a higher level topic to the related concepts and then to the supporting information. The main benefit of an outline is how organized it is. You have to be on your toes when you are taking notes in class to ensure you keep up the organizational format of the outline, which can be tricky if the lecture or presentation is moving quickly or covering many diverse topics.

The following formal outline example shows the basic pattern:

I. Dogs *(main topic–usually general)*
   A. German Shepherd *(concept related to main topic)*
      1. Protection *(supporting info about the concept)*
      2. Assertive
      3. Loyal
   B. Weimaraner *(concept related to main topic)*
      1. Family-friendly *(supporting info about the concept)*
      2. Active
      3. Healthy
II. Siamese

You would just continue on with this sort of numbering and indenting format to show the connections between main ideas, concepts, and supporting details. Whatever details you do not capture in your notetaking session, you can add after the lecture as you review your outline.

Chart or table

Similar to creating an outline, you can develop a chart to compare and contrast main ideas in a notetaking session. Divide your paper into four or five columns with headings that include either the main topics covered in the lecture or categories such as How?, What?, When used?, Advantages/Pros, Disadvantages/Cons, or other divisions of the information. You write your notes into the appropriate columns as that information comes to light in the presentation.

Example of a Chart to Organize Ideas and Categories				
	Structure	**Types**	**Functions in Body**	**Additional Notes**
Carbohydrates				
Lipids				
Proteins				
Nucleic Acid				

This format helps you pull out the salient ideas and establishes an organized set of notes to study later. (If you haven't noticed that this *reviewing later* idea is a constant across all notetaking systems, you should...take note of that.) Notes by themselves that you never reference again are little more than scribblings. That would be a bit like compiling an extensive grocery list so you stay on budget when you shop, work all week on it, and then just throw it away before you get to the store. You may be able to recall a few items, but likely won't be as efficient as you could be if you had the notes to reference. Just as you cannot read all the many books, articles, and documents you need to peruse for your college classes, you cannot remember the most important ideas of all the notes you will take as part of your courses, so you must review.

Concept Mapping and Visual Notetaking

One final notetaking method that appeals to learners who prefer a visual representation of notes is called *mapping* or sometimes *mind mapping* or *concept mapping,* although each of these names can have slightly different uses. Variations of this method abound, so you may want to look for more versions online, but the basic principles are that you are making connections between main ideas through a graphic depiction; some can get rather elaborate with colors and shapes, but a simple version may be more useful at least to begin. Main ideas can be circled or placed in a box with supporting concepts radiating off these ideas shown with a connecting line and possibly details of the support further radiating off the concepts. You can present your main ideas vertically or horizontally, but turning your paper long-ways, or in landscape mode, may prove helpful as you add more main ideas.

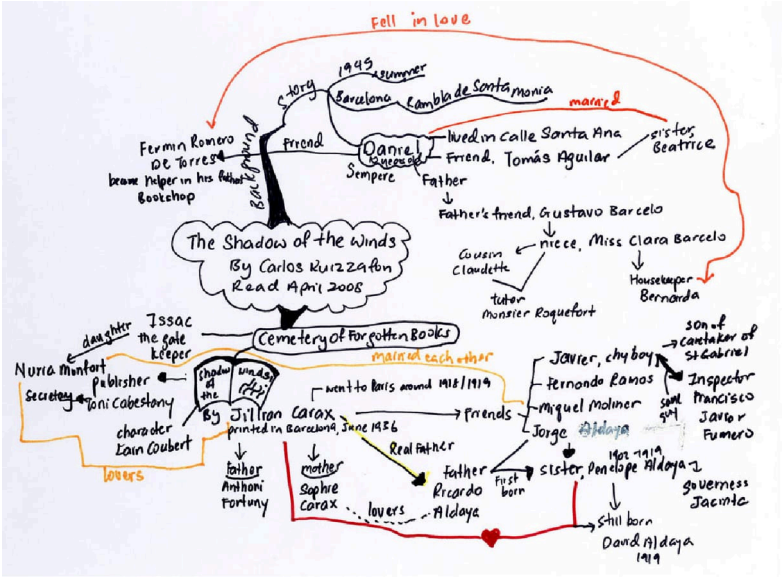


Figure 2.2.4.13: Concept mapping, sometimes referred to as mind mapping, can be an effective and very personalized approach to capturing information. (Credit: ArtistIvanChew / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

You may be interested in trying visual notetaking or adding pictures to your notes for clarity. Sometimes when you can't come up with the exact wording to explain something or you're trying to add information for complex ideas in your notes, sketching a rough image of the idea can help you remember. According to educator Sherrill Knezel in an article entitled "The Power of Visual Notetaking," this strategy is effective because "When students use images and text in notetaking, it gives them two different ways to pull up the information, doubling their chances of recall." Don't shy away from this creative approach to notetaking just because you believe you aren't an artist; the images don't need to be perfect. You may want to watch Rachel Smith's TEDx Talk called "Drawing in Class" to learn more about visual notetaking.

You can play with different types of notetaking suggestions and find the method(s) you like best, but once you find what works for you, stick with it. You will become more efficient with the method the more you use it, and your notetaking, review, and test prep will become, if not easier, certainly more organized, which can delete decrease your anxiety.

Practicing Decipherable Shorthand

Most college students don't take a class in shorthand, once the domain of secretaries and executive assistants, but maybe they should. That almost-lost art in the age of computers could come in very handy during intense notetaking sessions. Elaborate shorthand systems do exist, but you would be better served in your college notetaking adventures to hone a more familiar, personalized form of shorthand to help you write more in a shorter amount of time. Seemingly insignificant shortcuts can add up to ease the stress notetaking can induce—especially if you ever encounter an "I'm not going to repeat this" kind of presenter! Become familiar with these useful abbreviations:

Shortcut symbol	Meaning
w/, w/o, w/in	with, without, within
&	and
#	number
b/c	because
X, √	incorrect, correct
Diff	different, difference
etc.	and so on
ASAP	as soon as possible
US, UK	United States, United Kingdom

info	information
Measurements: ft, in, k, m	foot, inch, thousand, million
¶	paragraph or new paragraph
Math symbols: =, +, >, <, ÷	equal, plus, greater, less, divided by
WWI, WWII	World Wars I and II
impt	important
?, !, **	denote something is very significant; don't over use

Do you have any other shortcuts or symbols that you use in your notes? Ask your parents if they remember any that you may be able to learn.

Annotating Notes After Initial Notetaking Session

Annotating notes after the initial notetaking session may be one of the most valuable study skills you can master. Whether you are highlighting, underlining, or adding additional notes, you are reinforcing the material in your mind and memory.

Admit it—who can resist highlighting markers? Gone are the days when yellow was the star of the show, and you had to be very careful not to press too firmly for fear of obliterating the words you were attempting to emphasize. Students now have a veritable rainbow of highlighting options and can color-code notes and text passages to their hearts' content. Technological advances may be important, but highlighter color choice is monumental! Maybe.

The only reason to highlight anything is to draw attention to it, so you can easily pick out that ever-so-important information later for further study or reflection. One problem many students have is not knowing when to stop. If what you need to recall from the passage is a particularly apt and succinct definition of the term important to your discipline, highlighting the entire paragraph is less effective than highlighting just the actual term. And if you don't rein in this tendency to color long passages (possibly in multiple colors) you can end up with a whole page of highlighted text. Ironically, that is no different from a page that is not highlighted at all, so you have wasted your time. Your mantra for highlighting text should be *less is more*. Always read your text selection first before you start highlighting anything. You need to know what the overall message is before you start placing emphasis in the text with highlighting.

Another way to annotate notes after initial notetaking is underlying significant words or passages. Albeit not quite as much fun as its colorful cousin highlighting, underlining provides precision to your emphasis.

Some people think of annotations as only using a colored highlighter to mark certain words or phrases for emphasis. Actually, annotations can refer to anything you do with a text to enhance it for your particular use (either a printed text, handwritten notes, or other sort of document you are using to learn concepts). The annotations may include highlighting passages or vocabulary, defining those unfamiliar terms once you look them up, writing questions in the margin of a book, underlining or circling key terms, or otherwise marking a text for future reference. You can also annotate some electronic texts.

Realistically, you may end up doing all of these types of annotations at different times. We know that repetition in studying and reviewing is critical to learning, so you may come back to the same passage and annotate it separately. These various markings can be invaluable to you as a study guide and as a way to see the evolution of your learning about a topic. If you regularly begin a reading session writing down any questions you may have about the topic of that chapter or section and also write out answers to those questions at the end of the reading selection, you will have a good start to what that chapter covered when you eventually need to study for an exam. At that point, you likely will not have time to reread the entire selection especially if it is a long reading selection, but with strong annotations in conjunction with your class notes, you won't need to do that. With experience in reading discipline-specific texts and writing essays or taking exams in that field, you will know better what sort of questions to ask in your annotations

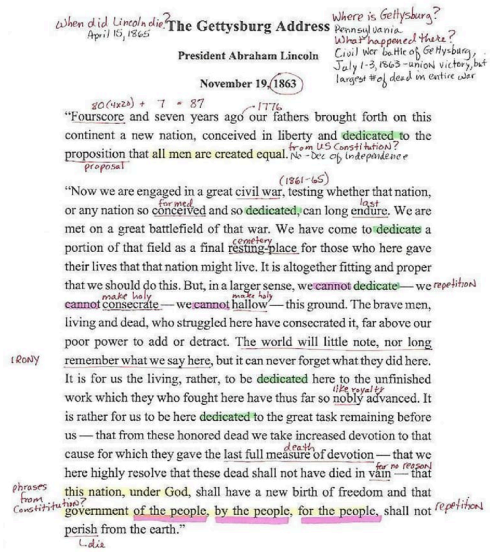


Figure 2.2.4.14: Annotations may include highlighting important topics, defining unfamiliar terms, writing questions in, underlining or circling key terms, or otherwise marking a text for future reference. Whichever approach you choose, try not to overdo it; neat, organized, and efficient notes are more effective than crowded or overdone notes.

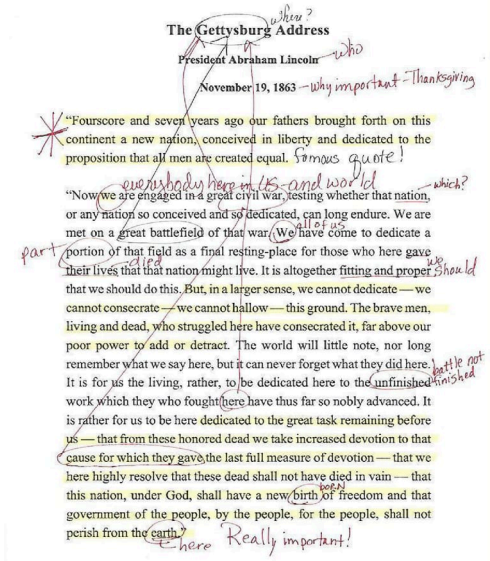


Figure 2.2.4.15: While these notes may be meaningful to the person who took them, they are neither organized nor consistent. For example, note that some of the more commonly used terms, like “we” and “unfinished,” are defined, but less common ones -- “consecrate” and “hallow” -- are not.

What you have to keep in the front of your mind while you are annotating, especially if you are going to conduct multiple annotation sessions, is to not overdo whatever method you use. Be judicious about what you annotate and how you do it on the page, which means you must be neat about it. Otherwise, you end up with a mess of either color or symbols combined with some cryptic notes that probably took you quite a long time to create, but won’t be worth as much to you as a study aid as they could be. This is simply a waste of time and effort.

You cannot eat up every smidgen of white space on the page writing out questions or summaries and still have a way to read the original text. If you are lucky enough to have a blank page next to the beginning of the chapter or section you are annotating, use this, but keep in mind that when you start writing notes, you aren’t exactly sure how much space you’ll need. Use a decipherable shorthand and write only what you need to convey the meaning in very small print. If you are annotating your own notes, you can make a habit of using only one side of the paper in class, so that if you need to add more notes later, you could use the other side. You can also add a blank page to your notes before beginning the next class date in your notebook so you’ll end up with extra paper for annotations when you study.

Professional resources may come with annotations that can be helpful to you as you work through the various documentation requirements you'll encounter in college as well. Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides an annotated sample for how to format a college paper according to guidelines in the Modern Language Association (MLA) manual that you can see, along with other annotations.

Adding Needed Additional Explanations to Notes

Marlon was totally organized and ready to take notes in a designated course notebook at the beginning of every philosophy class session. He always dated his page and indicated what the topic of discussion was. He had various colored highlighters ready to denote the different note purposes he had defined: vocabulary in pink, confusing concepts in green, and note sections that would need additional explanations later in yellow. He also used his own shorthand and an impressive array of symbols to indicate questions (red question mark), highly probable test material (he used a tiny bomb exploding here), additional reading suggestions, and specific topics he would ask his instructor before the next class. Doing everything so precisely, Marlon's methods seemed like a perfect example of how to take notes for success. Inevitably though, by the end of the hour-and-a-half class session, Marlon was frantically switching between writing tools, near to tears, and scouring his notes as waves of yellow teased him with uncertainty. What went wrong?

As with many of us who try diligently to do everything we know how to do for success or what we think we know because we read books and articles on success in between our course work, Marlon is suffering from trying to do too much simultaneously. It's an honest mistake we can make when we are trying to save a little time or think we can multitask and kill two birds with one stone.

Unfortunately, this particular error in judgement can add to your stress level exponentially if you don't step back and see it for what it is. Marlon attempted to take notes in class as well as annotate his notes to get them ready for his test preparation. It was too much to do at one time, but even if he could have done all those things during class, he's missing one critical point about notetaking.

As much as we may want to hurry and get it over with, notetaking in class is just the beginning. Your instructor likely gave you a pre-class assignment to read or complete before coming to that session. The intention of that preparatory lesson is for you to come in with some level of familiarity for the topic under consideration and questions of your own. Once you're in class, you may also need to participate in a group discussion, work with your classmates, or perform some other sort of lesson-directed activity that would necessarily take you away from taking notes. Does that mean you should ignore taking notes for that day? Most likely not. You may just need to indicate in your notes that you worked on a project or whatever other in-class event you experienced that date.

Very rarely in a college classroom will you engage in an activity that is not directly related to what you are studying in that course. Even if you enjoyed every minute of the class session and it was an unusual format for that course, you still need to take some notes. Maybe your first note could be to ask yourself why you think the instructor used that unique teaching strategy for the class that day. Was it effective? Was it worth using the whole class time? How will that experience enhance what you are learning in that course?

If you use an ereader or ebooks to read texts for class or read articles from the Internet on your laptop or tablet, you can still take effective notes. Depending on the features of your device, you have many choices. Almost all electronic reading platforms allow readers to highlight and underline text. Some devices allow you to add a written text in addition to marking a word or passage that you can collect at the end of your notetaking session. Look into the specific tools for your device and learn how to use the features that allow you to take notes electronically. You can also find apps on devices to help with taking notes, some of which you may automatically have installed when you buy the product. Microsoft's OneNote, Google Keep, and the Notes feature on phones are relatively easy to use, and you may already have free access to those.

Taking Notes on Non-Text Items (i.e., Tables, Maps, Figures, etc.)

You may also encounter situations as you study and read textbooks, primary sources, and other resources for your classes that are not actually texts. You can still take notes on maps, charts, graphs, images, and tables, and your approach to these non-text features is similar to when you prepare to take notes over a passage of text. For example, if you are looking at the following map, you may immediately come up with several questions. Or it may initially appear overwhelming. Start by asking yourself these questions:

What is the main point of this map?

- Who is the intended audience?
- Where is it?
- What time period does it depict?
- What does the map's legend (the explanation of symbols) include?
- What other information do I need to make sense of this map?

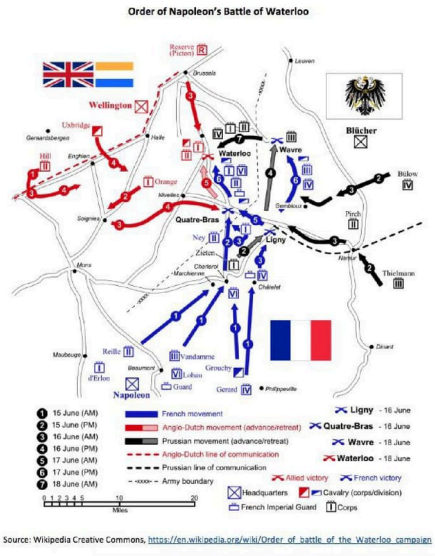


Figure 2.2.4.16: Graphics, charts, graphs, and other visual items are also important to annotate. Not only do they often convey important information, but they may appear on exams or in other situations where you'll need to use or demonstrate knowledge. Credit: "Lpankonin" / Wikipedia Commons / Attribution 3.0 Generic (CC BY 3.0)

You may want to make an extra copy of a graphic or table before you add annotations if you are dealing with a lot of information. Making sense of all the elements will take time, and you don't want to add to the confusion.

Returning to Your Notes

Later, as soon as possible after the class, you can go back to your notes and add in missing parts. Just as you may generate questions as you're reading new material, you may leave a class session or lecture or activities with many questions. Write those down in a place where they won't get lost in all your other notes.

The exact timing of when you get back to the notes you take in class or while you are reading an assignment will vary depending on how many other classes you have or what other obligations you have in your daily schedule. A good starting place that is also easy to remember is to make every effort to review your notes within 24 hours of first taking them. Longer than that and you are likely to have forgotten some key features you need to include; must less time than that, and you may not think you need to review the information you so recently wrote down, and you may postpone the task too long.

Use your phone or computer to set reminders for all your note review sessions so that it becomes a habit and you keep on top of the schedule.

Your personal notes play a significant role in your test preparation. They should enhance how you understand the lessons, textbooks, lab sessions, and assignments. All the time and effort you put into first taking the notes and then annotating and organizing the notes will be for naught if you do not formulate an effective and efficient way to use them before sectional exams or comprehensive tests.

The whole cycle of reading, notetaking in class, reviewing and enhancing your notes, and preparing for exams is part of a continuum you ideally will carry into your professional life. Don't try to take short cuts; recognize each step in the cycle as a building block. Learning doesn't end, which shouldn't fill you with dread; it should help you recognize that all this work you're doing in the classroom and during your own study and review sessions is ongoing and cumulative. Practicing effective strategies

now will help you be a stronger professional.

Activity

What resources can you find about reading and notetaking that will actually help you with these crucial skills? How do you go about deciding what resources are valuable for improving your reading and notetaking skills?

The selection and relative value of study guides and books about notetaking vary dramatically. Ask your instructors for recommendations and see what the library has available on this topic. The following list is not comprehensive, but will give you a starting point for books and articles on notetaking in college.

- *College Rules!: How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College,* by Sherri Nist-Olejnik and Jodi Patrick Holschuh. More than just notetaking, this book covers many aspects of transitioning into the rigors of college life and studying.
- *Effective Notetaking,* by Fiona McPherson. This small volume has suggestions for using your limited time wisely before, during, and after notetaking sessions.
- *How to Study in College,* by Walter Pauk. This is the book that introduced Pauk's notetaking suggestions we now call the Cornell Method. It is a bit dated (from the 1940s), but still contains some valuable information.
- *Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn 2: Academic Listening and Note-taking,* by Roni S. Lebauer. The main point of this book is to help students get the most from college lectures by watching for clues to lecture organization and adapting this information into strong notes.
- *Study Skills: Do I Really Need this Stuff?,* by Steve Piscitelli. Written in a consistently down-to-earth manner, this book will help you with the foundations of strong study skills, including time management, effective notetaking, and seeing the big picture.
- "What Reading Does for the Mind," by Anne Cunningham and Keith Stanovich, 1998, https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/cunningham.pdf
- Adler, Mortimer J. and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading. NY: Simon & Schuster, 1940*.
- Berns, Gregory S., Kristina Blaine, Michael J. Prietula, and Brandon E. Pye. *Brain Connectivity*. Dec 2013.ahead of print http://doi.org/10.1089/brain.2013.0166

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2.2.5: Summary

Reading and notetaking are major elements of college studying and learning. The expectations in college is that you read considerable amounts of text for each subject. You may encounter reading situations, such as professional journal articles and long textbook chapters, that are more difficult to understand than texts you have read previously. As you progress through your college courses, you can employ reading strategies to help you complete your college reading assignments. Likewise, you will take notes in college that need to be complete so you can study and recall the information you learn in lectures and lab sessions. With so much significant information that you need to collect, study, and recall for your college courses, you need to be deliberate in your reading and notetaking.

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2.2.6: Career Connection

Sanvi is a pre-nursing student who is having trouble between all the reading she is expected to complete, her general dislike of reading, and her need to comprehend both her reading assignments and her own notes to be successful in nursing school. She has spoken with several of her instructors and a tutor at the Student Success Center on campus, and their advice centers around Sanvi's reluctance to read in general. She is working on how to manage her time so she has more dedicated time to read her assignments in between her classes and her work schedule.

That is helping some, but Sanvi is still worried because she knows one problem is that she doesn't exactly know what types of reading or notetaking she would need to know how to do as a professional nurse. This confusion makes her doubt that the extra reading she is doing now is really beneficial. After some reflection on what was holding her back, Sanvi mentioned this aspect of her studying to one of her instructors who had been a hospital RN for years before coming to the college to teach. She recalled that the first time she read a patient chart in the hospital, she had to think quickly about how to get all the meaning out of the chart in the same way she would have read a complex textbook chapter.

Sanvi's nursing instructor reminded her that all professions need their personnel to read. They may not all need to read books or articles, but all jobs involve reading to some extent. For example, consider this list of disciplines and the typical types of reading they do. You may be surprised that not all reading is in text form.

Nurses/doctors	Patient charts, prescription side effects, medical articles
Teachers	Student work, lesson plans, educational best practices
Architects	Blueprints, construction contracts, permit manuals
Accountants	Financial spreadsheets, tax guidelines, invoices, trend diagrams
Beauticians	Client hair and facial features, best practices articles, product information
Civil engineers	Work site maps, government regulations, financial spreadsheets
Auto mechanics	Car engines, auto manuals, government regulations

As this incomplete list shows, not every job you pursue will require you to read text-based documents, but all jobs require some reading.

- How could Sanvi and her instructor use this list to make more sense of how college reading will prepare Sanvi to be a stronger nurse?
- How would understanding the types of professional reading help you complete your reading assignments?
- If your chosen field of study is not listed above, can you think of what sort of reading those professionals would need to do?

Think about the questions that opened this chapter and what you have read. How do you feel about your reading and notetaking skills now that you have some more strategies?

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2.2.7: Rethinking

Revisit the questions you answered at the beginning of the chapter, and consider one option you learned in this chapter that might change your answer to one of them.

1. I am reading on a college level
2. I take good notes that help me study for exams
3. I understand how to manage all the reading I need to do for college
4. I recognize the need for different notetaking strategies for different college subjects

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2.2.8: Where do you go from here?

Reading is such a part of our everyday lives that we sometimes take it for granted. And even we don't formally write down our thoughts, we take notes in our heads far more often than we use our notetaking skills to make sense of a textbook passage or a graphic. Honing these fundamental skills can only help you succeed in college and beyond. What else about reading and note taking would you like to learn more about? Choose topics form the list below to research more.

- How to maximize e-readers to comprehend texts.
- How professional use reading and note taking in their careers.
- Is speed-reading a myth or a viable strategy?
- Compare reading and notetaking strategies from different countries to those you use

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2.3: STUDYING, MEMORY, AND TEST TAKING

2.3.1: Prelude to Studying, Memory, and Test Taking

2.3.2: Memory

2.3.3: Studying

2.3.4: Test Taking

2.3.5: Summary

2.3.6: Career Connection

2.3.7: Rethinking

2.3.8: Where do you go from here?

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2.3.1: Prelude to Studying, Memory, and Test Taking



Figure 2.3.1.1: How we study is as important as what we study. The environment is a critical element of success.

Student Survey

How confident are you in preparing for and taking tests? Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning “least like me” and 4 meaning “most like me.” These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As you are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We’ll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed.

1. I set aside enough time to prepare for tests.
2. If I don’t set aside enough time, or if life gets in the way, I can usually cram and get positive results.
3. I prefer to pull all-nighters. The adrenaline and urgency help me remember what I need come test time.
4. I study my notes, highlight book passages, and use flash cards, but I still don’t feel like I’m as successful as I should be on tests.

You can also take the Chapter 6 Survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

“I didn’t have to study much for tests in high school, but I learned really quick that you have to for college. One of the best strategies is to test yourself over the material. This will help you improve your retrieval strength and help you remember more when it comes to the test. I also learned about reviewing your graded tests. This will help you see where you went wrong and why. Being able to see your mistakes and correct them helps the storage and retrieval strength as well as building those dendrites. Getting a question wrong will only improve those things helping you remember the next time it comes up.”

—Lilli Branstetter, University of Central Arkansas

About this Chapter

By the time you finish this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Outline the importance of memory when studying, and note some opportunities to strengthen memory.
- Discuss specific ways to increase the effectiveness of studying.

- Articulate test-taking strategies that minimize anxiety and maximize results.

Kerri didn't need to study in high school. She made good grades, and her friends considered her lucky because she never seemed to sweat exams or cram. In reality, Kerri did her studying during school hours, took excellent notes in class, asked great questions, and read the material before class meetings—all of these are excellent strategies. Kerri just seemed to do them without much fuss.

Then when she got to college, those same skills weren't always working as well. Sound familiar? She discovered that, for many classes, she needed to read paragraphs and textbook passages more than once for comprehension. Her notes from class sessions were longer and more involved—the subject material was more complicated and the problems more complex than she had ever encountered. College isn't high school, as most students realize shortly after enrolling in a higher ed program. Some old study habits and test-taking strategies may serve as a good foundation, but others may need major modification.

It makes sense that, the better you are at studying and test taking, the better results you'll see in the form of high grades and long-term learning and knowledge acquisition. And the more experience you have using your study and memorization skills and employing success strategies during exams, the better you'll get at it. But you have to keep it up—maintaining these skills and learning better strategies as the content you study becomes increasingly complex is crucial to your success. Once you transition into a work environment, you will be able to use these same skills that helped you be successful in college as you face the problem-solving demands and expectations of your job. Earning high grades is one goal, and certainly a good one when you're in college, but true learning means committing content to long-term memory.

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2.3.2: Memory

Questions to consider

- How does working memory work, exactly?
- What's the difference between working and short-term memory?
- How does long-term memory function?
- What obstacles exist to remembering?
- When and how should you memorize things?

In what situations is it best to memorize, and what do you memorize?

What can you do consistently to improve both your short- and long-term memory?

Memory is one of those cherished but mysterious elements in life. Everyone has memories, and some people are very good at rapid recall, which is an enviable skill for test takers. We know that we seem to lose the capacity to remember things as we age, and scientists continue to study how we remember some things but not others and what memory means, but we don't know that much about memory, really.

Nelson Cowan is one researcher who is working to explain what we do know about memory. His article "What Are the Differences between Long-Term, Short-Term, and Working Memory?" breaks down the different types of memory and what happens when we recall thoughts and ideas. When we remember something, we actually do quite a lot of thinking.[1]

We go through three basic steps when we remember ideas or images: we encode, store, and retrieve that information. Encoding is how we first perceive information through our senses, such as when we smell a lovely flower or a putrid trash bin. Both make an impression on our minds through our sense of smell and probably our vision. Our brains encode, or label, this content in short-term memory in case we want to think about it again.

If the information is important and we have frequent exposure to it, the brain will store it for us in case we need to use it in the future in our aptly named long-term memory. Later, the brain will allow us to recall or retrieve that image, feeling, or information so we can do something with it. This is what we call remembering.



Figure 2.3.2.2

Analysis Question

Take a few minutes to list ways you create memories on a daily basis. Do you think about how you make memories? Do you do anything that helps you keep track of your memories?

Foundations of Memory

William Sumrall et al. in the *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* explain the foundation of memory by noting: "Memory is a term applied to numerous biological devices by which living organisms acquire, retain, and make use of skills and knowledge. It is present in all forms of higher order animals. The most evolutionary forms of memory have taken place in human beings. Despite much research and exploration, a complete understanding of human memory does not exist."[2]

Working Memory

Working memory is a type of short-term memory, but we use it when we are actively performing a task. For example, nursing student Marilyn needs to use her knowledge of chemical reactions to suggest appropriate prescriptions in various medical case studies. She does not have to recall every single fact she learned in years of chemistry classes, but she does need to have a working memory of certain chemicals and how they work with others. To ensure she can make these connections, Marilyn will have to review and study the relevant chemical details for the types of drug interactions she will recommend in the case studies.

In working memory, you have access to whatever information you have stored in your memory that helps you complete the task you are performing. For instance, when you begin to study an assignment, you certainly need to read the directions, but you must also remember that in class your professor reduced the number of problem sets the written instructions indicated you needed to finish. This was an oral addition to the written assignment. The change to the instructions is what you bring up in working memory when you complete the assignment.

Short-Term Memory

Short-term memory is a very handy thing. It helps us remember where we set our keys or where we left off on a project the day before. Think about all the aids we employ to help us with short-term memory: you may hang your keys in a particular place each evening so you know exactly where they are supposed to be. When you go grocery shopping, do you ever choose a product because you recall an advertising jingle? You see the box of cereal and you remember the song on the TV commercial. If that memory causes you to buy that product, the advertising worked. We help our memory along all the time, which is perfectly fine. In fact, we can modify these everyday examples of memory assistance for purposes of studying and test taking. The key is deliberate use of strategies that are not so elaborate that they are too difficult to remember in our short-term memory.

Activity

Consider this list of items. Look at the list for no more than 30 seconds. Then, cover up the list and use the spaces below to complete an activity.

Baseball	Picture frame	Tissue	Paper clip
Bread	Pair of dice	Fingernail polish	Spoon
Marble	Leaf	Doll	Scissors
Cup	Jar of sand	Deck of cards	Ring
Blanket	Ice	Marker	String

Without looking at the list, write down as many items as you can remember.

Now, look back at your list and make sure that you give yourself credit for any that you got right. Any items that you misremembered, meaning they were not in the original list, you won't count in your total. TOTAL ITEMS REMEMBERED _____.

There were 20 total items. Did you remember between 5 and 9 items? If you did, then you have a typical short-term memory and you just participated in an experiment, of sorts, to prove it.

Harvard psychology professor George A. Miller in 1956 claimed humans can recall about five to nine bits of information in our short-term memory at any given time. Other research has come after this claim, but this concept is a popular one. Miller's article is entitled "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two" and is easily accessible online if you're interested in learning more about this seminar report.[3]

Considering the vast amount of knowledge available to us, five to nine bits isn't very much to work with. To combat this limitation, we clump information together, making connections to help us stretch our capacity to remember. Many factors play into how much we can remember and how we do it, including the subject matter, how familiar we are with the ideas, and how interested we are in the topic, but we certainly cannot remember absolutely everything, for a test or any other task we face. As such, we have to

use effective strategies, like those we cover later in this chapter, to get the most out of our memories.

Activity

Now, let's revisit the items above. Go back to them and see if you can organize them in a way that you would have about five groups of items. See below for an example of how to group them.

Row 1: Items found in a kitchen

Row 2: Items that a child would play with

Row 3: Items of nature

Row 4: Items in a desk drawer/school supplies

Row 5: Items found in a bedroom

Cup	Spoon	Ice	Bread	
Baseball	Marble	Pair of dice	Doll	Deck of cards
Jar of sand	Leaf			
Marker	String	Scissors	Paper clip	
Ring	Picture frame	Fingernail polish	Tissue	Blanket

Now that you have grouped items into categories, also known as chunking, you can work on remembering the categories and the items that fit into those categories, which will result in remembering more items. Check it out below by covering up the list of items again and writing down what you can remember.

Now, look back at your list and make sure that you give yourself credit for any that you got right. Any items that you misremembered, meaning they were not in the original list, you won't count in your total. TOTAL ITEMS REMEMBERED _____. Did you increase how many items you could remember?

Long-Term Memory

Long-term memory is exactly what it sounds like. These are things you recall from the past, such as the smell of your elementary school cafeteria or how to pop a wheelie on a bicycle. Our brain keeps a vast array of information, images, and sensory experiences in long-term memory. Whatever it is we are trying to keep in our memories, whether a beautiful song or a list of chemistry vocabulary terms, must first come into our brains in short-term memory. If we want these fleeting ideas to transfer into long-term memory, we have to do some work, such as causing frequent exposure to the information over time (such as studying the terms every day for a period of time or the repetition you performed to memorize multiplication tables or spelling rules) and some relevant manipulation for the information.

According to Alison Preston of the University of Texas at Austin's Center for Learning and Memory, "A short-term memory's conversion to a long-term memory requires changes within the brain . . . and result[s] in changes to neurons (nerve cells) or sets of neurons. . . . For example, new synapses—the connections between neurons through which they exchange information—can form to allow for communication between new networks of neurons. Alternatively, existing synapses can be strengthened to allow for increased sensitivity in the communication between two neurons."[4]

When you work to convert your thoughts into memories, you are literally *changing your mind*. Much of this brain work begins in the part of the brain called the *hippocampus*. Preston continues, "Initially, the hippocampus works in concert with sensory-processing regions distributed in the neocortex (the outermost layer of the brain) to form the new memories. Within the neocortex, representations of the elements that constitute an event in our life are distributed across multiple brain regions according to their content. . . . When a memory is first formed, the hippocampus rapidly combines this distributed information into a single memory, thus acting as an index of representations in the sensory-processing regions. As time passes, cellular and molecular changes allow for the strengthening of direct connections among the neocortical regions, enabling access to the memory independent of

the hippocampus."

We learn the lyrics of a favorite song by singing and/or playing the song over and over. That alone may not be enough to get that song into the coveted long-term memory area of our brain, but if we have an emotional connection to the song, such as a painful breakup or a life-changing proposal that occurred while we were listening to the song, this may help. Think of ways to make your study session memorable and create connections with the information you need to study. That way, you have a better chance of keeping your study material in your memory so you can access it whenever you need it.

Analysis Question

What are some ways you convert short-term memories into long-term memories?

Do your memorization strategies differ for specific courses (e.g., how you remember for math or history)?

Obstacles to Remembering

If remembering things we need to know for exams or for learning new disciplines were easy, no one would have problems with it, but students face several significant obstacles to remembering, including a persistent lack of sleep and an unrealistic reliance on cramming. Life is busy and stressful for all students, so you have to keep practicing strategies to help you study and remember successfully, but you also must be mindful of obstacles to remembering.

Lack of Sleep

Let's face it, sleep and college don't always go well together. You have so much to do! All that reading, all those papers, all those extra hours in the science lab or tutoring center or library! And then we have the social and emotional aspects of going to school, which may not be the most critical aspect of your life as you pursue more education but are a significant part of who you are. When you consider everything you need to attend to in college, you probably won't be surprised that sleep is often the first thing we give up as we search for more time to accomplish everything we're trying to do. That seems reasonable—just wake up an hour earlier or stay up a little later. But you may want to reconsider picking away at your precious sleep time.

Sleep benefits all of your bodily functions, and your brain needs sleep time to dream and rest through the night. You probably can recall times when you had to do something without adequate sleep. We say things like "I just can't wake up" and "I'm walking around half asleep."

In fact, you may actually be doing just that. Lack of sleep impairs judgment, focus, and our overall mood. Do you know anyone who is always grumpy in the morning? A fascinating medical study from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) claims that sleep deprivation is as dangerous as being drunk, both in what it does to our bodies and in the harm we may cause to ourselves and others in driving and performing various daily tasks.[56]

If you can't focus well because you didn't get enough sleep, then you likely won't be able to remember whatever it is you need to recall for any sort of studying or test-taking situation. Most exams in a college setting go beyond simple memorization, but you still have a lot to remember for exams. For example, when Saanvi sits down to take an exam on introductory biology, she needs to recall all the subject-specific vocabulary she read in the textbook's opening chapters, the general connections she made between biological studies and other scientific fields, and any biology details introduced in the unit for which she is taking the exam.

Trying to make these mental connections on too little sleep will take a large mental toll because Saanvi has to concentrate even harder than she would with adequate sleep. She isn't merely tired; her brain is not refreshed and primed to conduct difficult tasks. Although not an exact comparison, think about when you overtax a computer by opening too many programs simultaneously. Sometimes the programs are sluggish or slow to respond, making it difficult to work efficiently; sometimes the computer shuts down completely and you have to reboot the entire system. Your body is a bit like that on too little sleep.

On the flip side, though, your brain on adequate sleep is amazing, and sleep can actually assist you in making connections, remembering difficult concepts, and studying for exams. The exact reasons for this is still a serious research project for scientists, but the results all point to a solid connection between sleep and cognitive performance.

If you're interested in learning more about this research, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) is a good place to

start. One article is entitled “College Students: Getting Enough Sleep Is Vital to Academic Success.”

Analysis Question

How long do you sleep every night on average? Do you see a change in your ability to function when you haven’t had enough sleep? What could you do to limit the number of nights with too little sleep?

Downside of Cramming

At least once in their college careers, most students will experience the well-known pastime called *cramming*. See if any of this is familiar: Shelley has lots of classes, works part-time at a popular restaurant, and is just amazingly busy, so she puts off serious study sessions day after day. She isn’t worried because she has set aside time she would have spent sleeping to cram just before the exam. That’s the idea anyway. Originally, she planned to stay up a little late and study for four hours from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. and still get several hours of refreshing sleep. But it’s Dolphin Week or Beat State Day or whatever else comes up, and her study session doesn’t start until midnight—she’ll pull an *all-nighter* (to be more precise, this is actually an *all-really-early-morning-er,* but it doesn’t quite have the same ring to it). So, two hours after her original start time, she tries to *cram* all the lessons, problems, and information from the last two weeks of lessons into this one session. Shelley falls asleep around 3 a.m. with her notes and books still on her bed. After her late night, she doesn’t sleep well and goes into the morning exam tired.

Shelley does OK but not great on the exam, and she is not pleased with her results. More and more research is showing that the stress Shelley has put on her body doing this, combined with the way our brains work, makes cramming a seriously poor choice for learning.

One sleep researcher, Dr. Susan Redline from Boston, says, "Sleep deficiency can affect mood and the ability to make memories and learn, but it also affects metabolism, appetite, blood pressure, levels of inflammation in the body and perhaps even the immune response."[7]

Your brain simply refuses to cooperate with cramming—it sounds like a good idea, but it doesn’t work. Cramming causes stress, which can lead to paralyzing test anxiety; it erroneously supposes you can remember and understand something fully after only minimal exposure; and it overloads your brain, which, however amazing it is, can only focus on one concept at a time and a limited number of concepts all together for learning and retention.

Leading neuroscientist John Medina claims that the brain begins to wander at about 10 minutes, at which point you need a new stimulus to spark interest.[8] That doesn’t mean you can’t focus for longer than 10 minutes; you just have to switch gears a lot to keep your brain engaged. Have you ever heard a speaker drone on about one concept for, say, 30 minutes without somehow changing pace to engage the listeners? It doesn’t take much to re-engage—pausing to ask the listeners questions or moving to a different location in the room will do it—but without these subtle attention markers, listeners start thinking of something else. The same thing happens to you if you try to cram all reading, problem-solving, and note reviewing into one long session; your brain will wander.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. Which of the following is your most common method of studying?
   a. Reading or rereading the text or my class notes.
   b. Watching videos of my instructor's lecture or other people discussing the topics.
   c. Taking practice quizzes/tests.
   d. Creating/using study tools (flashcards, mnemonic devices, etc.)
   e. Working with a study group, tutor, or academic support.
2. Which of the following do you have the most difficulty remembering?
   a. Vocabulary and facts (such as Biology vocab, Historical facts.)
   b. Problem-solving methods (such as in Math)
   c. Details from text and literature
   d. Skills and processes (such as a lab technique or a building process)
   e. Computer functions/locations/processes

f. Which formulas, processes, or categories to apply in situations (such as in Physics or Accounting)

3. How much anxiety do you feel when an exam or other major course evaluation is approaching?
   a. A great deal
   b. A lot
   c. A moderate amount
   d. A little
   e. None at all

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

Which of the following is your most common method of studying?

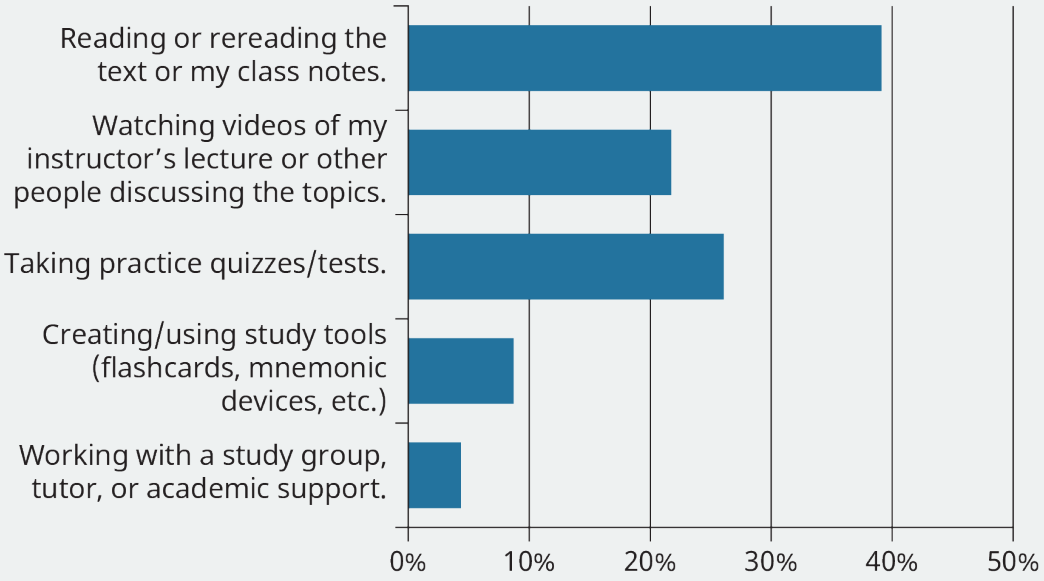


Figure 2.3.2.3

Which of the following do you have the most difficulty remembering?

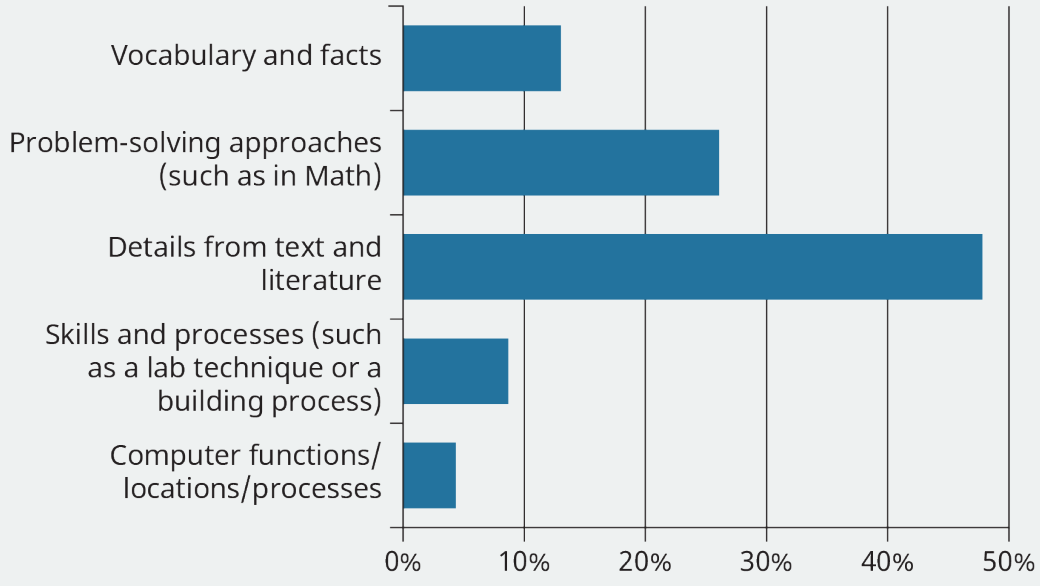


Figure 2.3.2.4

How much anxiety do you feel when an exam or other major course evaluation is approaching?

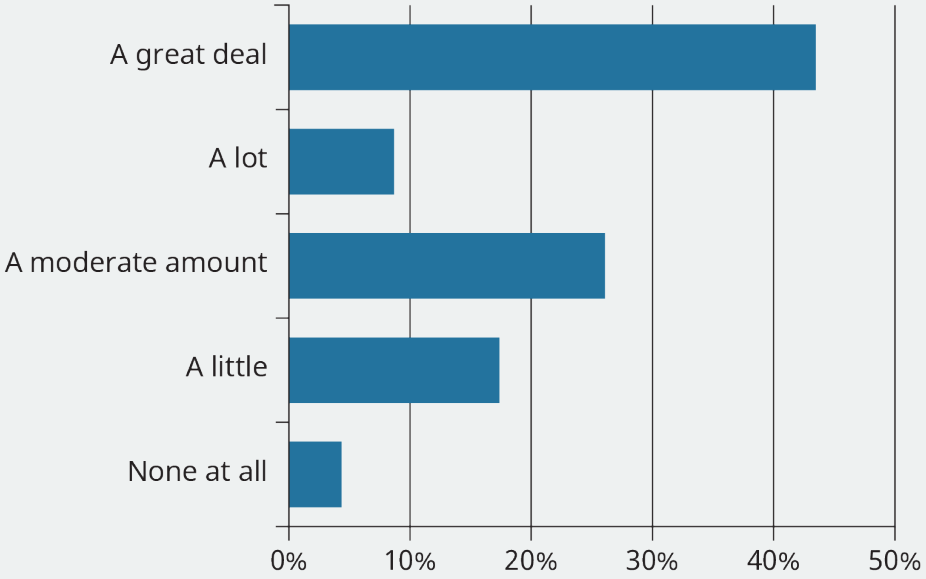


Figure 2.3.2.5

Determining When/What to Memorize

In the realm of learning and studying, some conditions warrant memorization as the most effective way to work with information. For instance, if you are expected to have a working knowledge of conversational French or Spanish, you will have to memorize some words. Simply knowing a long list of terms isn't going to help you order food in a café or ask for directions in a foreign country because you also need to understand the other language's grammar and have some sort of context for what needs to be said from your vocabulary list. But you cannot say the words in a different language if you cannot remember your vocabulary. From this scenario, you can assume that memorization is a good fit for some parts of language acquisition.

A worthwhile book on memory, thinking, and learning is a short study called *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter Brown, Henry Roediger, and Mark McDaniel. The authors conclude, after extensive research, that our attempts to speed up learning and make studying easier are not good ideas. Studying is hard work, and it should be. For learning to *stick*, we need to work hard to pull the information out of our memory and use it by continually pushing ourselves to accomplish increasingly difficult tasks.[9]

Footnotes

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2.3.3: Studying

Questions to consider

- How do you prepare yourself and your environment for successful studying?
- What study strategies will be most beneficial to you?
- What are learning preferences and strategies, and how can you leverage those to your advantage?

Preparing to Study

Studying is hard work, but you can still learn some techniques to help you be a more effective learner. Two major and interrelated techniques involve avoiding distractions to the best of your ability and creating a study environment that works to help you concentrate.

Avoiding Distractions

We have always had distractions—video games, television shows, movies, music, friends—even housecleaning can distract us from doing something else we need to do, like study for an exam. That may seem extreme, but sometimes vacuuming is the preferred activity to buckling down and working through calculus problems! Cell phones, tablets, and portable computers that literally bring a world of possibilities to us anywhere have brought *distraction* to an entirely new level. When was the last time you were with a large group of people when you didn't see at least a few people on devices?



Figure 2.3.3.6: Video games are a common distraction, but we need to be aware that even tedious activities like cleaning can be a distraction from studying.

When you study, your biggest challenge may be to block out all the competing noise. And letting go of that connection to our friends and the larger world, even for a short amount of time, can be difficult. Perhaps the least stressful way to allow yourself a distraction-free environment is to make the study session a definite amount of time: long enough to get a significant amount of studying accomplished but short enough to hold your attention.

You can increase that attention time with practice and focus. Pretend it is a professional appointment or meeting during which you cannot check e-mail or texts or otherwise engage with your portable devices. We have all become very attached to the ability to check in—anonymously on social media or with family and friends via text, chat, and calls. If you set a specific amount of time to study without interruptions, you can convince your wandering mind that you will soon be able to return to your link to the

outside world. Start small and set an alarm—a 30-minute period to review notes, then a brief break, then another 45-minute study session to quiz yourself on the material, and so on.

When you prepare for your optimal study session, remember to do these things:

- Put your phone out of sight—in another room or at least some place where you will not see or hear it vibrate or ring. Just flipping it over is not enough.
- Turn off the television or music (more on that in the next section).
- Unless you are deliberately working with a study group, study somewhere alone if possible or at least away from others enough to not hear them talking.

If you live with lots of other people or don't have access to much privacy, see if you can negotiate some space alone to study. Ask others to leave one part of the house or an area in one room as a quiet zone during certain hours. Ask politely for a specific block of time; most people will respect your educational goals and be willing to accommodate you. If you're trying to work out quiet zones with small children in the house, the bathtub with a pillow can make a fine study oasis.

Study Environment

You may not always be in the mood or inspired to study. And if you have a long deadline, maybe you can blow off a study session on occasion, but you shouldn't get into the habit of ignoring a strong study routine. Jane Austen once wrote in a letter, "I am not at all in a humor for writing; I must write on till I am." Sometimes just starting is the hard part; go ahead and begin. Don't wait around for your study muse; start working, and she'll show up.

Sometimes you just need to plop down and study whenever and wherever you can manage—in the car waiting for someone, on the bus, at the Little League field as you cheer on your shortstop. And that's OK if this is the exception. For long-term success in studying, though, you need a better study setting that will help you get the most out of your limited study time. Whatever your space limitations, carve out a place that you can dedicate to reading, writing, note taking, and reviewing. This doesn't need to be elaborate and expensive—all you truly need is a flat surface large enough to hold either your computer or writing paper, book or notes, pens/pencils/markers, and subject-specific materials you may need (e.g., stand-alone calculators, drawing tools, and notepads). Your space should be cool or warm enough for you to be comfortable as you study. What do you have now that you consider your study space? Is it set up for your optimal success?



Figure 2.3.3.7: Which is before, and which is after? (Credit: Ali West / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

If it is at all possible, try to make this area exclusive to your study sessions and something you can leave set up all the time and a place out of the way of family or roommate traffic. For example, Martina thought setting up her study station on the dining room table was a good idea at first. The view was calming, and the table was big enough to spread out and could even hold all her materials to study architectural drawings, her favorite subject. But then she needed the table for a small family dinner party, so she had to find a cubbyhole to hide away her supplies with some needing to go into a closet in the next room. Now she was spread out over multiple study spaces. And the family TV was in an adjacent room, not visible from the table but certainly an auditory distraction. Martina ultimately decided to forgo her view and create a smaller station in an unused bedroom so she could leave

her supplies out and have a quieter area. You may have to try out numerous places to determine what works best for you.

Wherever you study, try to make it a welcoming place you want to be in—not an uncomfortable environment that makes you want to just do the minimum you must complete and leave. You should include the basics: a good chair, a work surface, and whatever materials, books, notes, and other supplies you need for the subject you are studying. If you want to make it even more of a productive place, you can look in magazines for ideas or search the web to see how others have set up simple areas or more elaborate arrangements. Don't let decorating your workspace be an excuse to get out of studying!

You don't need an elaborate setting, but you may want to consider including a few effective additions if you have the space:

- small bulletin board for often-used formulas
- encouraging quotes or pictures of your goal
- whiteboard for brainstorming
- sticky notes for reminders in texts and notes
- file holder for most-used documents
- bookshelf for reference books

Activity

Describe every element in your ideal study environment and explain why it's there as well as how it will make more efficient use of your time, limit distractions, or in some other way strengthen your ability to study.

After you have described your ideal study environment, think about how you can adapt that environment if you cannot be in your favorite place to study. How do you *make your own space* in the library, a student lounge, or a dedicated space on campus for student studying?

Debunking Study Myths

MYTH #1: You can multitask while studying.

How many times do you eat in the car? Watch TV while you write out a grocery list? Listen to music while you cook dinner? What about type an e-mail while you're on the phone with someone else and jot down notes about the call? The common term for this attempt to do more than one thing at a time is multitasking, and almost everyone does it at some point. On some days, you simply cannot accomplish all that you want to get done, so you double up. The problem is, multitasking doesn't really work. Of course, it exists, and we do it. For instance, we walk and chew gum or drive and talk, but we are not really thinking about two or more distinct things or doing multiple processes simultaneously.

MYTH #2: Highlighting main points of a text is useful.

Another myth of studying that seems to have a firm hold is that the idea of highlighting text—in and of itself—is the best way to review study material. It is one way, and you can get some benefit from it, but don't trick yourself into spending too much time on this surface activity and consider your study session complete. Annotating texts or notes is a first-step type of study practice. If you allow it to take up all your time, you may want to think you are fully prepared for an exam because you put in the time. Actually, you need much more time reviewing and retrieving your lessons and ideas from the text or class lecture as well as quizzing yourself to accomplish your goal of learning so you can perform well on the exam. Highlighting is a task you can do rather easily, and it makes you feel good because you are actively engaging with your text, but true learning needs more steps.

MYTH #3: Studying effectively is effortless.

There is nothing effortless, or even pleasant at times, about studying. This is why so many students don't put in the time necessary to learn complex material: it takes time, effort, and, in some cases, a little drudgery. This is not to say that the outcome, learning—and maybe making an A—is not pleasant and rewarding. It is just that when done right, learning takes focus, deliberate strategies, and time. Think about a superstar athlete who puts in countless hours of drills and conditioning so that she makes her work on the field look easy. If you can also *enjoy* the studying, the skill development, and the knowledge building, then you will most likely be more motivated to do the work.

Analysis Question

When are you most liable to multitask? How could you be more aware of this practice and try to eliminate it, especially when it comes to studying? How can you make your initial text highlighting more time efficient so you can include other study practices?

Study Strategies

Everyone wishes they had a better memory or a stronger way to use memorization. You can make the most of the memory you have by making some conscious decisions about how you study and prepare for exams. Incorporate these ideas into your study sessions:

Practicing effective memorization is when you use a trick, technique, or strategy to recall something—for another class, an exam, or even to bring up an acquaintance's name in a social situation. Really whatever works for you to recall information is a good tool to have. You can create your own quizzes and tests to go over material from class. You can use mnemonics to jog your memory. You can work in groups to develop unique ways to remember complex information. Whatever methods you choose to enhance your memory, keep in mind that repetition is one of the most effective tools in any memory strategy. Do whatever you do over and over for the best results.

Using Mnemonics

Mnemonics (pronounced new-monics) are a way to remember things using reminders. Did you learn the points of the compass by remembering NEWS (north, east, west, and south)? Or the notes on the music staff as FACE or EGBDF (every good boy does fine)? These are mnemonics. When you're first learning something and you aren't familiar with the foundational concepts, these help you bring up the information quickly, especially for multistep processes or lists. After you've worked in that discipline for a while, you likely don't need the mnemonics, but you probably won't forget them either.

Here are some familiar mnemonics you may find useful:

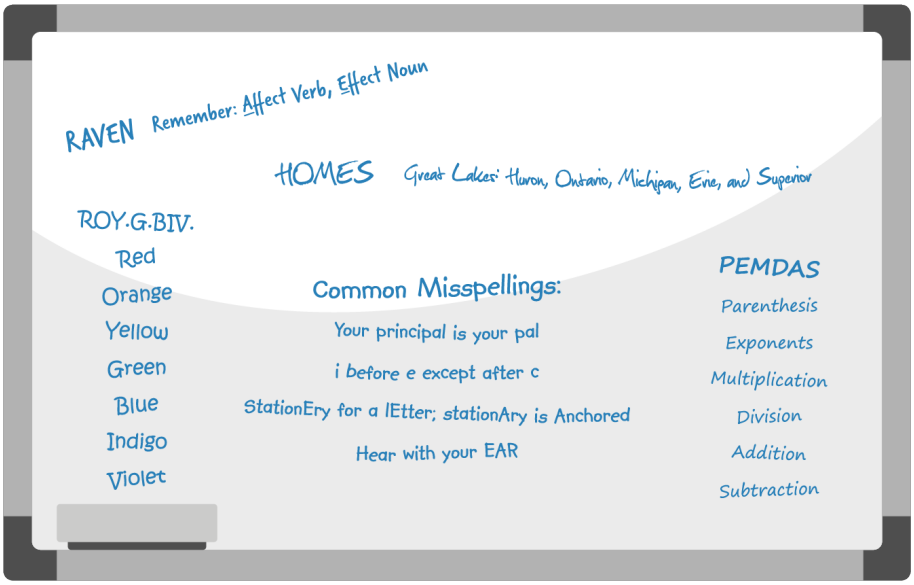


Figure 2.3.3.8

You can certainly make up your own mnemonics, but be careful that your reminder isn't so complex and convoluted that it is more difficult to remember than the information you were relating it to!

Analysis Question

Do you have other mnemonics that help you remember difficult material? What are they? How have they helped you with remembering important things?

Practicing Concept Association

When you study, you're going to make connections to other things—that's a good thing. It shows a highly intelligent ability to make sense of the world when you can associate like and even somewhat unlike components. If, for instance, you were reading Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," and you read the line that he had been in Birmingham, you may remember a trip you took with your family last summer through Alabama and that you passed by and visited the civil rights museum in Birmingham. This may remind you of the different displays you saw and the discussions you had with your family about what had happened concerning civil rights in the 1950s,'60s, and '70s in the United States.

This is a good connection to make, but if your assignment is to critique the literary aspects of King's long epistle, you need to be able to come back to the actual words of the letter and see what trends you can see in his writing and why he may have used his actual words to convey the powerful message. The connection is fine, but you can't get lost in going down rabbit holes that may or may not be what you're supposed to be doing at the time. Make a folder for this assignment where you can put things such as a short summary of your trip to Alabama. You may eventually include notes from this summary in your analysis. You may include something from a website that shows you information about that time period. Additionally, you could include items about Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and death and his work for civil rights. All of these elements may help you understand the significance of this one letter, but you need to be cognizant of what you're doing at the time and remember it is not usually a good idea to just try to keep it all in your head. The best idea is to have a way to access this information easily, either electronically or in hard copy, so that if you are able to use it, you can find it easily and quickly.

Generating Idea Clusters

Like mnemonics, idea clusters are nothing more than ways to help your brain come up with ways to recall specific information by connecting it to other knowledge you already have. For example, Andrea is an avid knitter and remembers how to create complicated stitches by associating them with nursery rhymes she read as a child. A delicate stitch that requires concentration because it makes the yarn look like part of it is hiding brings to mind Red Riding Hood, and connecting it to that character helps Andrea recall the exact order of steps necessary to execute the design. You can do the same thing with song lyrics, lines from movies, or favorite stories where you draw a connection to the well-known phrase or song and the task you need to complete.

Application

Choose one of the following, and create an idea cluster to group and organize:

- Example A: aviation jobs in North America
- Example B: the use of analytics in sports to determine team rosters
- Example C: how social media affects political campaigns

Start the idea cluster with the topic circled in the middle of the page. For Example A, you might make one cluster off the main circle for specific positions; you could add another cluster for salary ranges and another for geographic regions.

Three Effective Study Strategies

There are more than three study strategies, but focusing on the most effective strategies will make an enormous difference in how well you will be able to demonstrate learning (also known as "acing your tests"). Here is a brief overview of each of the three strategies:

- Spacing—This has to do with *when* you study. Hint: Don't cram; study over a period of days, preferably with "breaks" in between.
- Interleaving—This has to do with *what* you study. Hint: Don't study just one type of content, topic, chapter, or unit at a time;

instead, mix up the content when you study.
- Practice testing—This has to do with *how* you study. Hint: Don't just reread content. You must quiz or test your ability to retrieve the information from your brain.

Spacing

We all know that cramming is not an effective study strategy, but do we know why? Research on memory suggests that giving yourself time in between study sessions actually helps you forget the information. And forgetting, which sounds like it would be something you *don't* want to do, is actually good for your ability to remember information long-term. That's because every time you forget something, you need to relearn it, leading to gains in your overall understanding and "storage" of the material. The table below demonstrates how spacing works. Assume you are going to spend about four hours studying for a Sociology exam. Cramming would have you spending most of those four hours the night before the exam. With spacing, on the other hand, you would study a little bit each day.

Table 6.1

Spacing							
	Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**
Cramming				Study for 1 hour	Study for 3		
Spacing	Study for 1 hour		Study for 30 minutes	Study for 1 hour	Study for 90 minutes		

Interleaving

One particular studying technique is called interleaving, which calls for students to mix up the content that is being studied. This means not just spending the entire study session on one sort of problem and then moving on to a different sort of problem at a later time.

If you take the schedule we used for the spacing example above, we can add the interleaving concepts to it. Notice that interleaving includes revisiting material from a previous chapter or unit or revisiting different types of problems or question sets. The benefit is that your brain is "mixing up" the information, which can sometimes lead to short-term forgetting but can lead to long-term memory and learning.

Table 6.2

Interleaving					
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
Reread Sociology, Chapter 1. Reorganize notes		Reread Sociology, Chapter 1 and 2 Take Ch 1 online quiz. Create Chapter 2 concept map	Reread Sociology, Chapters 1-3. Take online quizzes for chapters 2 and 3. Reorganize notes. Create practice test	Reread notes. Review items missed on online quizzes. Take practice test and review challenge areas.	**TEST in sociology, Chapters 1-3**

Practice Testing

You can do a practice "test" in two ways. One is to test yourself as you are reading or taking in information. This is a great way to add a little variety to your studying. You can ask yourself what a paragraph or text section means as you read. To do this, read a passage in a text, cover up the material, and ask yourself, "What was the main idea of this section?" Recite aloud or write down your answer, and then check it against the original information.

Another, more involved, way to practice test is to create flashcards or an actual test by writing a test. This takes more time, but there are online programs such as Quizlet that make it a little easier. Practice testing is an effective study strategy because it helps you practice *retrieving* information, which is what you want to be able to do when you are taking the real test.

One of the best ways to learn something is to teach it to someone else, so ask a friend or family member if you can explain something to them, and *teach* them the lesson. You may find you know more about the subject than you thought . . . or you may realize quickly that you need to do more studying. Why does teaching someone else rank as one of the most effective ways to learn something? It is a form of practice testing that requires you to demonstrate you know something in front of someone else! No one wants to look like they don't know what they are talking about, even if it your audience is another classmate.

Recognizing Strengths/Weaknesses of Preferred Study Approaches

Most children don't learn to ride a bicycle by reading a manual; they learn by watching other kids, listening to instructions, and getting up on the seat and learning to balance—sometimes with training wheels or a proud parent holding on, but ultimately without any other support. They may fall over and feel insecure, but usually, they learn to make the machine go. Most of us employ multiple methods of study all the time. You usually only run into trouble if you stubbornly rely on just one way to learn or study and the material you're studying or the task you want to accomplish doesn't lend itself to that preference. You can practice specific strategies to help you learn in your preferred learning approach. Can you think of a time when the way you usually study a situation didn't work?

When deciding on a study approach, consider what you know about the material and the type of knowledge it involves. Is it a group of concepts related to problem-solving methods, such as those you'd find in a physics class? Or is it a literary analysis of a novel? Consider as many elements as possible about the material -- and the way the material will be assessed -- to help choose a study approach.

You should also consider your instructor's preferred method of teaching and learning. Watching the way they teach lessons or convey necessary course information to the class. Do they almost always augment lessons with video clips to provide examples or create a memorable narrative? Do they like to show you how something works by demonstrating and working with their hands—for instance, assembling a piece of equipment by taking it apart and putting it back together again? Echoing their teaching approach may help your study. That doesn't mean you have to change your entire learning approach to match your instructors' methods. Many instructors understand that their students will have different ways of learning and try to present information in multiple ways.

Practicing Active Continuous Improvement for All Preferences

You can certainly learn through specific approaches or according to specific preferences, but you will also need to adapt to different situations, skills, and subject areas. Don't limit yourself to thinking you can *only* learn one way or another. That mindset induces anxiety when you encounter a learning situation that doesn't match your preference. What if your instructor *only* uses a spoken lecture to teach concepts in your chemistry class, and you consider yourself a visual learner? Or what if the only method presented to you for learning mathematical computations is to see videos of others working problems, and you're more hands-on? You may have to concentrate in a different way or devise other strategies to learn, but you can do it. In fact, you should sometimes work on the styles/preferences that you feel are your least favorite; it will actually strengthen your overall ability to learn and retain information.[10]

Dr. Stephen Covey, famous leadership coach and businessman, called this attention to knowing and honing all your skill sets, not just your favorites, *sharpening the saw*. He advised that people should be aware of their strengths but should always hone their weaknesses by saying, "We must never become too busy sawing to take time to sharpen the saw."[11] For instance, in the chemistry lecture example, you may need to take good notes from the spoken lecture and then review those notes as you sketch out any complex ideas or formulas. If the math videos are not enough for you to grasp difficult problems, you may ask for or find your own problems for additional practice covering that particular mathematical concept to solve on your own.

Footnotes

- Newton, Phillip M., & Miah, Mahallad. "Evidence-Based Higher Education—Is the Learning Style 'Myth' Important?" *Frontiers in Psychology* 8:444 (2017) DOI: 10. 3389/FPSYG. 2017.00444.
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2.3.4: Test Taking

Questions to consider

- What are the differences between test prep and taking the actual test?
- How can you take a *whole person* approach to test taking?
- What can you do on test day to increase your confidence and success?
- What should you know about test anxiety?

Once you are practicing good study habits, you'll be better prepared for actual test taking. Since studying and test taking are both part of learning, honing your skills in one will help you in the other.

Probably the most obvious differences between your preparation for an exam and the actual test itself is your level of urgency and the time constraints. A slight elevation in your stress level can actually be OK for testing—it keeps you focused and *on your game* when you need to bring up all the information, thinking, and studying to show what you've learned. Properly executed, test preparation mixed in with a bit of stress can significantly improve your actual test-taking experience.

Preparation vs. Actual Test

You can replicate the effective sense of urgency an actual test produces by including timed writing into your study sessions. You don't need all of your study time to exactly replicate the test, but you would be well served to find out the format of the exam in advance and practice the skills you'll need to use for the various test components. On one early exam in history, Stuart learned the prof was going to include several short-answer essay questions—one for each year of the time period covered. Stuart set up practice times to write for about 15 to 20 minutes on significant events from his notes because he estimated that would be about how much time he could devote out of the hour-long testing session to write one or two required short-answer questions. He would write a prompt from his notes, set a timer, and start writing. If you're ready and you have practiced and know the material, 20 minutes is adequate to prepare, draft, and revise a short response, but you don't have a lot of extra time.

Likewise, in a math exam, you will need to know what kinds of problems you will have to solve and to what extent you'll need to show your computational work on the exam. If you are able to incorporate this sort of timed problem-solving into your study time, you'll be more prepared and confident when you actually come to the exam. Making yourself adhere to a timed session during your study can only help. It puts a sense of urgency on you, and it will help you to find out what types of problems you need to practice more than ones that perhaps you're more comfortable solving.

Leveraging Study Habits for Test Prep

In your mind, you probably know what you need to do to be prepared for tests. Occasionally, something may surprise you—emphasis on a concept you considered unimportant or a different presentation of a familiar problem. But those should be exceptions. You can take all your well-honed study habits to get ready for exams. Here's a checklist for study and test success for your consideration:



Figure 2.3.4.9:

Read this list with each separate class in mind, and check off the items you already do. Give yourself one point for every item you checked. If you always take the success steps—congratulations! They are not a guarantee, but doing the steps mindfully will give you a nice head start. If you do fewer than five of the steps—you have some work to do. But recognition is a good place to start, and you can incorporate these steps starting now.

As strange as this may sound, you can find some interesting research articles online about using the taste or smell of peppermint to increase memory, recall, and focus. Read more at: http://naturalsociety.com/mint-scent...gnition-memory. While sucking on a peppermint disk won't replace studying, why not experiment with this relatively easy idea that seems to be gaining some scientific traction?

Whole Person Approach to Testing

Just because you are facing a major exam in your engineering class (or math or science or English class) doesn't mean everything else in your life comes to a stop. Perhaps that's somewhat annoying, but that's reality. Allergies still flare up, children still need to eat, and you still need to sleep. You must see your academic life as one segment of who you are—it's an important segment, but just one aspect of who you are as a whole person. Neela tries to turn off everything else when she has exams coming up in her nursing program, which is pretty often. She ignores her health, puts off her family, tries to reschedule competing work tasks, and focuses all her energy on the pending exam. On the surface, that sounds like a reasonable approach, but if she becomes really sick by ignoring a minor head cold, or if she misses an important school deadline for one of her children, Neela risks making matters worse by attempting to compartmentalize so strictly. Taking care of her own health by eating and sleeping properly; asking for help in other aspects of her busy life, such as attending to the needs of her children; and seeing the big picture of how it all fits together would be a better approach. Pretending otherwise may work sporadically, but it is not sustainable for the long run.

A whole person approach to testing takes a lot of organization, scheduling, and attention to detail, but the life-long benefits make the effort worthwhile.

Establishing Realistic Expectations for Test Situations

Would you expect to make a perfect pastry if you've never learned how to bake? Or paint a masterpiece if you've never tried to work with paints and brushes? Probably not. But often we expect ourselves to perform at much higher levels of achievement than that for which we've actually prepared. If you become very upset and stressed if you make any score lower than the highest, you probably need to reevaluate your own expectations for test situations. Striving to always do your best is an admirable goal. Realistically knowing that your current *best* may not achieve the highest academic ratings can help you plot your progress.

Realistic continuous improvement is a better plan, because people who repeatedly attempt challenges for which they have not adequately prepared and understandably fail (or at least do not achieve the desired highest ranking) often start moving toward

the goal in frustration. They simply quit. This doesn't mean you settle for mediocre grades or refrain from your challenges. It means you become increasingly aware of yourself and your current state and potential future. Know yourself, know your strengths and weaknesses, and be honest with yourself about your expectations.

Understanding Accommodations and Responsibilities

As with so many parts of life, some people take exams in stride and do just fine. Others may need more time or change of location or format to succeed in test-taking situations. With adequate notice, most faculty will provide students with reasonable accommodations to assist students in succeeding in test situations. If you feel that you would benefit from receiving these sorts of accommodations, first speak with your instructor. You may also need to talk to a student services advisor for specific requirements for accommodations at your institution.

If you need accommodations, you are responsible for understanding what your specific needs are and communicating your needs with your instructors. Before exams in class, you may be allowed to have someone else take notes for you, receive your books in audio form, engage an interpreter, or have adaptive devices in the classroom to help you participate. Testing accommodations may allow for additional time on the test, the use of a scribe to record exam answers, the use of a computer instead of handwriting answers, as well as other means to make the test situation successful. Talk to your instructors if you have questions about testing accommodations.

Prioritizing Time Surrounding Test Situations

Keep in mind that you don't have any more or less time than anyone else, so you can't *make time* for an activity. You can only use the time everyone gets wisely and realistically. Exams in college classes are important, but they are not the only significant events you have in your classes. In fact, everything leading up to the exam, the exam itself, and the post-exam activities are all one large continuum. Think of the exam as an event with multiple phases, more like a long-distance run instead of a 50-yard dash. Step back and look at the big picture of this timeline. Draw it out on paper. What needs to happen between now and the exam so you feel comfortable, confident, and ready?

If your instructor conducts some sort of pre-exam summary or prep session, make sure to attend. These can be invaluable. If this instructor does not provide that sort of formal exam prep, create your own with a group of classmates or on your own. Consider everything you know about the exam, from written instructions to notes you took in class, including any experiential notes you may have from previous exams, such as the possibility of bonus points for answering an extra question that requires some time management on your part. You can read more about time management in Chapter 3.

Get Connected

Which apps can help you study for a test, increase your memory, and even help you overcome test anxiety?

Personal Zen is a free online gaming app clinically proven to reduce stress and anxiety. The games retrain your brain to think more positively, reducing stress to help you focus on the experiences around you.

Games like solitaire, hangman, and Simon Says all build on your memory, keeping it sharp and active. There are loads of fun, free online memory games you can use to make time wasting a little less wasteful. For more than 250 options, visit the Memory Improvement Tips website.

iTunes University might be able to help you dig into a research topic or find additional content to help you if you're struggling with a course. Their library of free lectures and content comes from some of the most highly respected universities around the world.

Chegg Prep is a flashcard-based self-quizzing resource. It provides millions of pre-made flashcards and decks organized by course and topic, which you can search, sort, bookmark, and use in a variety of ways. The service is free and does not require a login unless you'd like to save or create your own cards.

Test Day

Once you get to the exam session, try your best to focus on nothing but the exam. This can be very difficult with all the distractions in our lives. But if you have done all the groundwork to attend the classes, completed the assignments, and scheduled your exam prep time, you are ready to focus intently for the comparatively short time most exams last.

Arriving to class:

Don't let yourself be sidetracked right at the end. Beyond the preparation we've discussed, give yourself some more advantages on the actual test day:

- Get to the testing location a few minutes early so you can settle into your place and take a few relaxing breaths.
- Don't let other classmates interrupt your calmness at this point.
- Just get to your designated place, take out whatever supplies and materials you are allowed to have, and calm your mind.

Taking the test:

Once the instructor begins the test:

- Listen carefully for any last-minute oral directions that may have changed some detail on the exam, such as the timing or the content of the questions.
- As soon as you receive the exam sheet or packet, make a quick scan over the entire test.
- Don't spend a lot of time on this initial glance, but make sure you are familiar with the layout and what you need to do.
- Using this first review, decide how you will allocate your available time for each section.
- You can even jot down how many minutes you can allow for the different sections or questions.

Then for each section, if the exam is divided this way, be sure you **read the section directions** very carefully so you don't miss an important detail. For example, instructors often offer options—so you may have four short-answer questions from which to choose, but you only need to answer two of them. If you had not read the directions for that section, you may have thought you needed to provide answers to all four prompts. Working on extra questions for which you likely will receive no credit would be a waste of your limited exam time. The extra time you spend at the beginning is like an investment in your overall results.

Answer every required question on the exam. Even if you don't complete each one, you may receive some credit for partial answers. Whether or not you can receive partial credit would be an excellent question to ask before the exam during the preparation time. If you are taking an exam that contains multiple-choice questions, go through and answer the questions about which you are the most confident first.

Read the entire question carefully even if you think you know what the stem (the introduction of the choices) says, and read all the choices. Skip really difficult questions or ones where your brain goes blank. Then you can go back and concentrate on those skipped ones later after you have answered the majority of the questions confidently. Sometimes a later question will trigger an idea in your mind that will help you answer the skipped questions.

And, in a similar fashion to spending a few minutes right at the beginning of the test time to read the directions carefully and identify the test elements, **allow yourself a few minutes at the end of the exam session to review your answers.** Depending on what sort of exam it is, you can use this time to check your math computations, review an essay for grammatical and content errors, or answer the difficult multiple-choice questions you skipped earlier. Finally, **make sure you have completed the entire test:** check the backs of pages, and verify that you have a corresponding answer section for every question section on the exam. It can be easy to skip a section with the idea you will come back to it but then forget to return there, which can have a significant impact on your test results.

After the Test

As you leave the exam room, the last thing you may want to think about is that particular test. You probably have numerous other assignments, projects, and life obligations to attend to, especially if you pushed some of those off to study for this completed exam. Give yourself some space from this exam, but only for the duration of the time when your instructor is grading your exam. Once you have your results, study them—whether you did really well (Go, you!) or not as well as you had hoped (Keep your spirits up!). Both scenarios hold valuable information if you will use it.

Thandie had a habit of going all-out for exams before she took them, and she did pretty well usually, but once the instructor passed back the graded tests, she would look at the letter grade, glance half-heartedly at the instructor's comments, and toss the exam away, ready to move on to the next chapter, section, or concept. A better plan would be to learn from her exam results and analyze both what she did well and where she struggled. After a particularly unimpressive exam outing in her statistics class, Thandie took her crumpled-up exam to the campus tutoring center, where the tutor reviewed the test with her section by section. Together they discovered that Thandie did particularly well on the computational sections, which she admitted were her favorites, and not well at all on the short-answer essay questions that she did not expect to find in a stats class, which in her experience had been more geared toward the mathematical side of solving statistical problems.

Going forward in this class, Thandie should practice writing out her explanations of how to compute the problems and talk to her instructor about ways to hone this skill. This tutoring session also proved to Thandie the benefit of holding on to important class papers—either electronically or in hard copy, depending on the class setup—for future reference. For some classes, you probably don't need to keep every scrap of paper (or file) associated with your notes, exams, assignments, and projects, but for others, especially for those in your major, those early class materials may come in very handy in your more difficult later undergraduate courses or even in grad school when you need a quick refresher on the basic concepts.

Test Anxiety



Figure 2.3.4.10: Text anxiety can be a common occurrence, but you can use strategies to manage it.

Test anxiety is very real. You may know this firsthand. Almost everyone gets a little nervous before a major exam, in the same way most people get slightly anxious meeting a new potential date or undertaking an unfamiliar activity. We second-guess whether we're ready for this leap, if we prepared adequately, or if we should postpone this potentially awkward situation. And in most situations, testing included, that reasonable level of nervous anticipation can be a good thing—enhancing your focus and providing you with a bit of bravado to get you through a difficult time.

Test anxiety, however, can cause us to doubt ourselves so severely that we underperform or overcompensate to the point that we do not do well on the exam. Don't despair; you can still succeed if you suffer from test anxiety. The first step is to understand what it is and what it is not, and then to practice some simple strategies to cope with your anxious feelings relative to test taking. Whatever you do, don't use the label *test anxiety* to keep you from your dreams of completing your education and pursuing whatever career you have your eyes on. You are bigger than any anxiety.

Understanding Test Anxiety

If someone tries to tell you that test anxiety is *all in your head*, they're sort of right. Our thinking is a key element of anxiety of any sort. On the other hand, test anxiety can manifest itself in other parts of our bodies as well. You may feel queasy or light-headed if you are experiencing test anxiety. Your palms may sweat, or you may become suddenly very hot or very cold for no apparent reason. At its worst, test anxiety can cause its sufferers to experience several unpleasant conditions including nausea, diarrhea, and shortness of breath. Some people may feel as though they may throw up, faint, or have a heart attack, none of which would

make going into a testing situation a pleasant idea. You can learn more about symptoms of test anxiety from the Anxiety and Depression Association of America that conducts research on this topic.[12]

Back to our minds for a minute. We think constantly, and if we have important events coming up, such as exams, but other significant events as well, we tend to think about them seemingly all the time. Almost as if we have a movie reel looping in our heads, we can anticipate everything that may happen during these events—both sensational results and catastrophic endings. What if you oversleep on the test day? What if you're hit by a bus on the way to campus? What if you get stung by a mysterious insect and have to save the world on the very day of your exam?

How about the other way? You win the lottery! Your screenplay is accepted by a major publisher! You get a multimillion-dollar record deal! It could happen. Typically, though, life falls somewhere in between those two extremes, unless you live in an action movie. Our minds, however, (perhaps influenced by some of those action movies or spy novels we've seen and read) often gravitate to those black-and-white, all-or-nothing results. Hence, we can become very nervous when we think about taking an exam because if we do really poorly, we think, we may have to face consequences as dire as dropping out of school or never graduating. Usually, this isn't going to happen, but we can literally make ourselves sick with anxiety if we dwell on those slight possibilities. You actually may encounter a few tests in your academic careers that are so important that you have to alter your other life plans temporarily, but truly, this is the exception, not the rule. Don't let the most extreme and severe result take over your thoughts. Prepare well and do your best, see where you land, and then go from there.

Using Strategies to Manage Test Anxiety

You have to work hard to control test anxiety so it does not take an unhealthy hold on you every time you face a test situation, which for many of you will last well into your careers. One of the best ways to control test anxiety is to be prepared for the exam. You can control that part. You can also learn effective relaxation techniques including controlled breathing, visualization, and meditation. Some of these practices work well even in the moment: at your test site, take a deep breath, close your eyes, and smile—just bringing positive thoughts into your mind can help you meet the challenges of taking an exam without anxiety taking over.

The tests in the corporate world or in other career fields may not look exactly like the ones you encounter in college, but professionals of all sorts take tests routinely. Again, being prepared helps reduce or eliminate this anxiety in all these situations. Think of a presentation or an explanation you have provided well numerous times—you likely are not going to feel anxious about this same presentation if asked to provide it again. That's because you are prepared and know what to expect. Try to replicate this feeling of preparation and confidence in your test-taking situations.

Many professions require participants to take frequent licensing exams to prove they are staying current in their rapidly changing work environments, including nursing, engineering, education, and architecture, as well as many other occupations. You have tools to take control of your thinking about tests. Better to face it head-on and let test anxiety know who's in charge!

Footnotes

- Reteguiz, Jo-Ann. "Relationship between anxiety and standardized patient test performance in the medicine clerkship." Journal of general internal medicine vol. 21,5 (2006): 415-8. doi:10.1111/j.1525-1497.2006.00419.

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2.3.5: Summary

Studying and taking tests will always be a large part of college, so learning now to do these well can only help you be more successful. Experts provide us with many tools, techniques, and ideas to use when we determine how best to study, use our memories effectively, and prepare to take exams. You can help yourself by taking these guidelines seriously and tracking your progress. If one strategy works better for you in some classes and another is more suited to a different course, keep that in mind when you begin to study. Use all the resources available to you, and you'll be well on your way to success in college.

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2.3.6: Career Connection

Studies have shown that parents contribute to test anxiety in children by drawing students' attention to the test day and increasing pressure to perform well. Do you think that worrying about an upcoming test is as harmful as anxiety while taking the test? What do you think can be done to minimize worry?

This article discusses how to help with test anxiety.

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2.3.7: Rethinking

Revisit the questions you answered at the beginning of the chapter, and consider one option you learned in this chapter that might change your answer to one of them.

How confident are you in your skills at preparing for and taking tests? Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning “least like me” and 4 meaning “most like me.”

1. I believe I set aside enough time to prepare for tests.
2. If I don’t set aside enough time, or if life gets in the way, I can usually cram and get similar results.
3. I prefer to pull all-nighters. The adrenaline and urgency help me remember what I need come test time.
4. I study my notes, highlight book passages, and use flash cards, but I still don’t feel like I’m as successful as I should be on tests.

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2.3.8: Where do you go from here?

Studying and test taking skills often need to evolve to meet the needs of college responsibilities. What would you like to learn more about? Choose a topic from the list below and create an annotated bibliography that would direct further research.

- the importance of memory in learning new material
- strategies to increase memory
- strategies to increase the effectiveness of studying
- test anxiety

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2.4: STUDY SKILLS AND CLASSROOM SUCCESS

2.4.1: Reading Strategies

2.4.2: Writing Strategies

2.4.3: Testing Strategies

2.4.4: Presentation Strategies

2.4.5: Working with Instructors

2.4.6: Deep Learning

2.4.7: Academic Honesty

2.4.8: Evaluating Results

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2.4.1: Reading Strategies



To read without reflecting is like eating without digesting. —Edmund Burke, author and philosopher

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify common types of reading tasks assigned in a college class
- Describe the purpose and instructor expectations of academic reading
- Identify effective reading strategies for academic texts: previewing, reading, summarizing, reviewing
- Explore strategies for approaching specialized texts, such as math, and specialized platforms, such as online text
- Identify vocabulary-building techniques to strengthen your reading comprehension

Types of College Reading Materials

As a college student, you will eventually choose a major or focus of study. In your first year or so, though, you'll probably have to complete "core" or required classes in different subjects. For example, even if you plan to major in English, you may still have to take at least one science, history, and math class. These different academic disciplines (and the instructors who teach them) can vary greatly in terms of the materials that students are assigned to read. Not all college reading is the same. So, what types can you expect to encounter?

Textbooks

Probably the most familiar reading material in college is the **textbook**. These are academic books, usually focused on one discipline, and their primary purpose is to educate readers on a particular subject—"Principles of Algebra," for example, or "Introduction to Business." It's not uncommon for instructors to use one textbook as the primary text for an entire course. Instructors typically assign chapters as readings and may include any word problems or questions in the textbook, too.

Articles

Instructors may also assign **academic articles** or **news articles**. Academic articles are written by people who specialize in a particular field or subject, while news articles may be from recent newspapers and magazines. For example, in a science class,

you may be asked to read an academic article on the benefits of rainforest preservation, whereas in a government class, you may be asked to read an article summarizing a recent presidential debate. Instructors may have you read the articles online or they may distribute copies in class or electronically.

The chief difference between news and academic articles is the intended audience of the publication. News articles are mass media: They are written for a broad audience, and they are published in magazines and newspapers that are generally available for purchase at grocery stores or bookstores. They may also be available online. Academic articles, on the other hand, are usually published in scholarly journals with fairly small circulations. While you won't be able to purchase individual journal issues from Barnes and Noble, public and school libraries do make these journal issues and individual articles available. It's common to access academic articles through online databases hosted by libraries.

Literature and Nonfiction Books

Instructors use **literature** and **nonfiction books** in their classes to teach students about different genres, events, time periods, and perspectives. For example, a history instructor might ask you to read the diary of a girl who lived during the Great Depression so you can learn what life was like back then. In an English class, your instructor might assign a series of short stories written during the 1960s by different American authors, so you can compare styles and thematic concerns.

Literature includes short stories, novels or novellas, graphic novels, drama, and poetry. Nonfiction works include creative nonfiction—narrative stories told from real life—as well as history, biography, and reference materials. Textbooks and scholarly articles are specific types of nonfiction; often their purpose is to instruct, whereas other forms of nonfiction be written to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.



Purpose of Academic Reading

Casual reading across genres, from books and magazines to newspapers and blogs, is something students should be encouraged to do in their free time because it can be both educational and fun. In college, however, instructors generally expect students to read resources that have particular value in the context of a course. Why is academic reading beneficial?

- **Information comes from reputable sources**: Web sites and blogs can be a source of insight and information, but not all are useful as academic resources. They may be written by people or companies whose main purpose is to share an opinion or sell you something. Academic sources such as textbooks and scholarly journal articles, on the other hand, are usually written by experts in the field and have to pass stringent peer review requirements in order to get published.
- **Learn how to form arguments**: In most college classes except for creating writing, when instructors ask you to write a paper, they expect it to be argumentative in style. This means that the goal of the paper is to research a topic and develop an argument about it using evidence and facts to support your position. Since many college reading assignments (especially journal articles) are written in a similar style, you'll gain experience studying their strategies and learning to emulate them.

- **Exposure to different viewpoints**: One purpose of assigned academic readings is to give students exposure to different viewpoints and ideas. For example, in an ethics class, you might be asked to read a series of articles written by medical professionals and religious leaders who are pro-life or pro-choice and consider the validity of their arguments. Such experience can help you wrestle with ideas and beliefs in new ways and develop a better understanding of how others' views differ from your own.

Activity: Describing the Purpose of Academic Reading

Objective

- Describe the purpose of academic reading and what an instructor might expect of you after reading

Directions

- Review the main types of academic reading and the purpose of academic reading.
- Imagine you are an instructor for a class. This could be a class you are currently taking or one you would like to see offered.
- Identify three academic readings that you would assign to your students.
- Explain why you would assign these works and what you would expect your students to learn or do after reading them.
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

Reading Strategies for Academic Texts

Recall from the Active Learning section that effective reading requires more engagement than just reading the words on the page. In order to learn and retain what you read, it's a good idea to do things like circling key words, writing notes, and reflecting. Actively reading academic texts can be challenging for students who are used to reading for entertainment alone, but practicing the following steps will get you up to speed:

- **Preview**: You can gain insight from an academic text before you even begin the reading assignment. For example, if you are assigned a nonfiction book, read the title, the back of the book, and table of contents. Scanning this information can give you an initial idea of what you'll be reading and some useful context for thinking about it. You can also start to make connections between the new reading and knowledge you already have, which is another strategy for retaining information.
- **Read**: While you read an academic text, you should have a pen or pencil in hand. Circle or highlight key concepts. Write questions or comments in the margins or in a notebook. This will help you remember what you are reading and also build a personal connection with the subject matter.
- **Summarize**: After you an read academic text, it's worth taking the time to write a short summary—even if your instructor doesn't require it. The exercise of jotting down a few sentences or a short paragraph capturing the main ideas of the reading is enormously beneficial: it not only helps you understand and absorb what you read but gives you ready study and review materials for exams and other writing assignments.
- **Review**: It always helps to revisit what you've read for a quick refresher. It may not be practical to thoroughly reread assignments from start to finish, but before class discussions or tests, it's a good idea to skim through them to identify the main points, reread any notes at the ends of chapters, and review any summaries you've written.

The following video covers additional active reading strategies readers can use before, during, and after the reading process.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Reading Strategies for Specialized Texts and Online Resources

In college it's not uncommon to experience frustration with reading assignments from time to time. Because you're doing more reading on your own outside the classroom, and with less frequent contact with instructors than you had in high school, it's possible you'll encounter readings that contain unfamiliar vocabulary or don't readily make sense. Different disciplines and subjects have different writing conventions and styles, and it can take some practice to get to know them. For example, scientific articles follow a very particular format and typically contain the following sections: an abstract, introduction, methods, results, and discussions. If you are used to reading literary works, such as graphic novels or poetry, it can be disorienting to encounter these new forms of writing.

Below are some strategies for making different kinds of texts more approachable.

Get to Know the Conventions

Academic texts, like scientific studies and journal articles, may have sections that are new to you. If you're not sure what an "abstract" is, research it online or ask your instructor. Understanding the meaning and purpose of such conventions is not only helpful for reading comprehension but for writing, too.

Look up and Keep Track of Unfamiliar Terms and Phrases

Have a good college dictionary such as Merriam-Webster handy (or find it online) when you read complex academic texts, so you can look up the meaning of unfamiliar words and terms. Many textbooks also contain glossaries or "key terms" sections at the ends of chapters or the end of the book. If you can't find the words you're looking for in a standard dictionary, you may need one specially written for a particular discipline. For example, a medical dictionary would be a good resource for a course in anatomy and physiology.

If you circle or underline terms and phrases that appear repeatedly, you'll have a visual reminder to review and learn them. Repetition helps to lock in these new words and their meaning get them into long-term memory, so the more you review them the more you'll understand and feel comfortable using them.

Look for Main Ideas and Themes

As a college student, you are not expected to understand every single word or idea presented in a reading, especially if you haven't discussed it in class yet. However, you will get more out of discussions and feel more confident about asking questions if you can identify the main idea or thesis in a reading. The thesis statement can often (but not always) be found in the introductory paragraph, and it may be introduced with a phrase like "In this essay I argue that . . ." Getting a handle on the overall reason an author wrote something ("to prove X" or "to explore Y," for instance) gives you a framework for understanding more of the details. It's also useful to keep track of any themes you notice in the writing. A theme may be a recurring idea, word, or image that strikes you as interesting or important: "This story is about men working in a gloomy factory, but the author keeps mentioning birds and bats and windows. Why is that??"

Get the Most of Online Reading

Reading online texts presents unique challenges for some students. For one thing, you can't readily circle or underline key terms or passages on the screen with a pencil. For another, there can be many tempting distractions—just a quick visit to amazon.com or Facebook.

While there's no substitute for old-fashioned self-discipline, you can take advantage of the following tips to make online reading more efficient and effective:

- Where possible, download the reading as a PDF, Word document, etc., so you can read it offline.
- Get one of the apps that allow you to disable your social media sites for specified periods of time.
- Adjust your screen to avoid glare and eye strain, and change the text font to be less distracting (for those essays written in Comic Sans).
- Install an annotation tool in your Web browser so you can highlight and make notes on online text. One to try is hypothes.is. A low-tech option is to have a notebook handy to write in as you read.

Look for Reputable Online Sources

Professors tend to assign reading from reputable print and online sources, so you can feel comfortable referencing such sources in class and for writing assignments. If you are looking for online sources independently, however, devote some time and energy to critically evaluating the quality of the source before spending time reading any resources you find there. Find out what you can about the author (if one is listed), the Web site, and any affiliated sponsors it may have. Check that the information is current and accurate against similar information on other pages. Depending on what you are researching, sites that end in ".edu" (indicating an "education" site such as a college, university, or other academic institution) tend to be more reliable than ".com" sites.

Pay Attention to Visual Information

Images in textbooks or journals usually contain valuable information to help you more deeply grasp a topic. Graphs and charts, for instance, help show the relationship between different kinds of information or data—how a population changes over time, how a virus spreads through a population, etc.

Data-rich graphics can take longer to "read" than the text around them because they present a lot of information in a condensed form. Give yourself plenty of time to study these items, as they often provide new and lasting insights that are easy to recall later (like in the middle of an exam on that topic!).



Vocabulary-Building Techniques

Gaining confidence with unique terminology used in different disciplines can help you be more successful in your courses and in college generally. In addition to the suggestions described earlier, such as looking up unfamiliar words in dictionaries, the following are additional vocabulary-building techniques for you to try:

Read Everything and Read Often

Reading frequently both in and out of the classroom will help strengthen your vocabulary. Whenever you read a book, magazine, newspaper, blog, or any other resource, keep a running list of words you don't know. Look up the words as you encounter them and try to incorporate them into your own speaking and writing.

Make Connections to Words You Already Know

You may be familiar with the "looks like . . . sounds like" saying that applies to words. It means that you can sometimes look at a new word and guess the definition based on similar words whose meaning you know. For example, if you are reading a biology

book on the human body and come across the word *malignant*, you might guess that this word means something negative or broken if you already know the word *malfunction,* which share the “mal-” prefix.

Make Index Cards

If you are studying certain words for a test, or you know that certain phrases will be used frequently in a course or field, try making flashcards for review. For each key term, write the word on one side of an index card and the definition on the other. Drill yourself, and then ask your friends to help quiz you.

Developing a strong vocabulary is similar to most hobbies and activities. Even experts in a field continue to encounter and adopt new words. The following video discusses more strategies for improving vocabulary.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Words are sneaky, charming, and intriguing. The more complex our vocabularies, the more complex our thoughts are, too.

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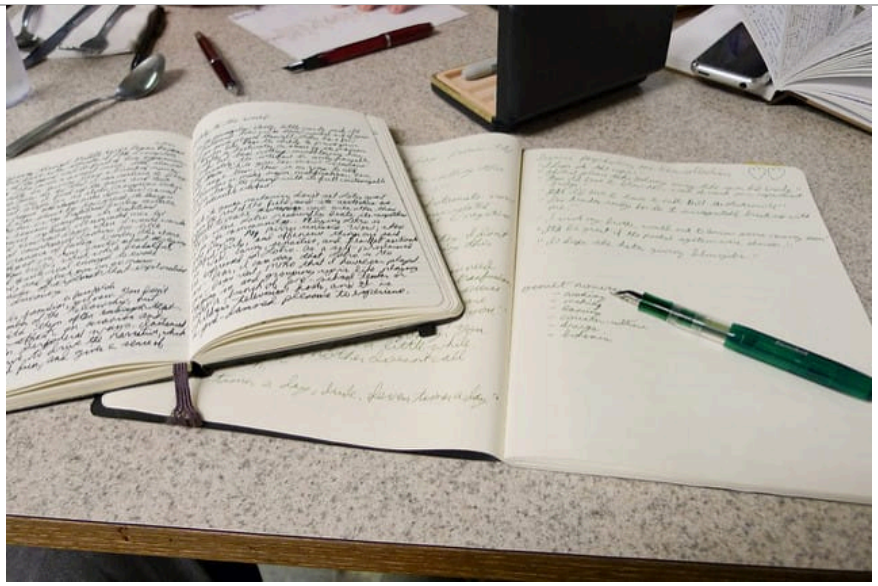
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2.4.2: Writing Strategies



It ain't whatcha write, it's the way atcha write it. —Jack Kerouac, author

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of writing assignments and what an instructor might expect to see from your writing
- Identify common types of writing tasks in a college class
- Understand and utilize writing-process steps for the development of academic writing
- Differentiate between revision and proofreading, and explain the value of each
- Identify strategies for ethical use of sources in writing

Why Do Writing Skills Matter?

Obviously you can write. And in the age of Facebook and smartphones, you may be writing all the time—perhaps more often than speaking. Many students today are awash in text like no other generation before.

So why spend yet more time and attention on writing skills? Research shows that **deliberate practice**—that is, close focus on improving one's skills—makes all the difference in how one performs. Revisiting the craft of writing—especially early in college—will improve your writing much more than simply producing page after page in the same old way. Becoming an excellent communicator will save you a lot of time and hassle in your studies, advance your career, and promote better relationships and a higher quality of life off the job. Honing your writing is a good use of your scarce time.

Also, consider this: a recent survey of employers conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 89 percent of employers say that colleges and universities should place more emphasis on "the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing."[1] It was the single-most favored skill in this survey. In addition, several of the other valued skills are grounded in written communication: "Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills" (81 percent); "The ability to analyze and solve complex problems" (75 percent); and "The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources" (68 percent). This emphasis on communication probably reflects the changing reality of work in the professions. Employers also reported that employees will have to "take on more responsibilities," "use a broader set of skills," "work harder to coordinate with other departments," face "more complex" challenges, and mobilize "higher levels of learning and knowledge."[2]

If you want to be a professional who interacts frequently with others, you have to be someone who can anticipate and solve

complex problems and coordinate your work with others,[3] all of which depend on effective communication.

The pay-off from improving your writing comes much sooner than graduation. Suppose you complete about 40 classes for a 120-credit bachelors' degree, and—averaging across writing-intensive and non-writing-intensive courses—you produce about 2,500 words of formal writing per class. Even with that low estimate, you'll write 100,000 words during your college career. That's roughly equivalent to a 330-page book.

Spending a few hours sharpening your writing skills will make those 100,000 words much easier and more rewarding to write. All of your professors care about good writing.

It's Different from High School

Because most professors have different expectations, it can be tricky knowing what exactly they're looking for. Pay attention to the comments they leave on your paper, and make sure to use these as a reference for your next assignment. I try to pay attention and adapt to the professor's style and preferences. —Aly Button, SUNY student

By the end of high school you probably mastered many of the key conventions of standard academic English, such as paragraphing, sentence-level mechanics, and the use of thesis statements. The essay portion of the SAT measures important skills such as organizing evidence within paragraphs that relate to a clear, consistent thesis, and choosing words and sentence structures to effectively convey your meaning. These practices are foundational, and your teachers have given you a wonderful gift in helping you master them. However, college writing assignments require you to apply those skills to new intellectual challenges. Professors assign papers because they want you to think rigorously and deeply about important questions in their fields.

To your instructors, writing is for working out complex ideas, not just explaining them. A paper that would earn a top score on the SAT might only get a C or D in a college class if it doesn't show original and ambitious thinking.

Professors look at you as independent junior scholars and expect you to write as someone who has a genuine, driving interest in tackling a complex question. They envision you approaching an assignment without a preexisting thesis. They expect you to look deep into the evidence, consider several alternative explanations, and work out an original, insightful argument that you actually care about.

Activity: Examining Your Writing Assignments

Objective

- Describe the purpose of writing assignments and what an instructor might expect to see from your writing
- Identify common types of writing tasks in a college class

Directions

- Review the syllabi for courses you're taking this term. Make note of the writing-based assignments you'll be asked to complete for each course you're taking. For each one, identify the following:
  - what kind of writing task it is (essay, journal, memo, annotated bibliography, online discussion, scientific report, etc.)
  - how much of your course grade it represents
  - how much time you estimate it will take you to complete
  - what the purpose of the assignment seems to be – why it is a graded requirement of the class
- Compare the list you've generated with a small group of your classmates. How do their lists of writing assignments compare to your own? What are some common factors across writing assignments? What are some notable differences?

What to Do With Essay Assignments

Writing assignments can be as varied as the instructors who assign them. Some assignments are explicit about what exactly you'll need to do, in what order, and how it will be graded. Some assignments are very open-ended, leaving you to determine the best path toward answering the project. Most fall somewhere in the middle, containing details about some aspects but leaving other assumptions unstated. It's important to remember that your first resource for getting clarification about an assignment is your

instructor—she or he will be very willing to talk out ideas with you, to be sure you're prepared at each step to do well with the writing.

Most writing in college will be a direct response to class materials—an assigned reading, a discussion in class, an experiment in a lab. Generally speaking, these writing tasks can be divided into three broad categories.

Summary Assignments

Being asked to summarize a source is a common task in many types of writing. It can also seem like a straightforward task: simply restate, in shorter form, what the source says. A lot of advanced skills are hidden in this seemingly simple assignment, however.

An effective summary does the following:

- reflects your accurate understanding of a source's thesis or purpose
- differentiates between major and minor ideas in a source
- demonstrates your ability to identify key phrases to quote
- demonstrates your ability to effectively paraphrase most of the source's ideas
- captures the tone, style, and distinguishing features of a source
- does not reflect your personal opinion about the source

That last point is often the most challenging: we are opinionated creatures, by nature, and it can be very difficult to keep our opinions from creeping into a summary, which is meant to be completely neutral.

In college-level writing, assignments that are *only* summary are rare. That said, many types of writing tasks contain at least some element of summary, from a biology report that explains what happened during a chemical process, to an analysis essay that requires you to explain what several prominent positions about gun control are, as a component of comparing them against one another.

Defined-Topic Assignments

Many writing tasks will ask you to address a particular topic or a narrow set of topic options. Even with the topic identified, however, it can sometimes be difficult to determine what aspects of the writing will be most important when it comes to grading.

Often, the handout or other written text explaining the assignment—what professors call the **assignment prompt**—will explain the purpose of the assignment, the required parameters (length, number and type of sources, referencing style, etc.), and the criteria for evaluation. Sometimes, though—especially when you are new to a field—you will encounter the baffling situation in which you comprehend every single sentence in the prompt but still have absolutely no idea how to approach the assignment. No one is doing anything wrong in a situation like that. It just means that further discussion of the assignment is in order. Below are some tips:

1. **Focus on the verbs**. Look for verbs like *compare, explain, justify, reflect*, or the all-purpose *analyze*. You're not just producing a paper as an artifact; you're conveying, in written communication, some intellectual work you have done. So the question is, what kind of thinking are you supposed to do to deepen your learning?
2. **Put the assignment in context**. Many professors think in terms of assignment sequences. For example, a social science professor may ask you to write about a controversial issue three times: first, arguing for one side of the debate; second, arguing for another; and finally, from a more comprehensive and nuanced perspective, incorporating text produced in the first two assignments. A sequence like that is designed to help you think through a complex issue. If the assignment isn't part of a sequence, think about where it falls in the span of the course (early, midterm, or toward the end), and how it relates to readings and other assignments. For example, if you see that a paper comes at the end of a three-week unit on the role of the Internet in organizational behavior, then your professor likely wants you to synthesize that material in your own way.
3. **Try a free-write**. A free-write is when you just write, without stopping, for a set period of time. That doesn't sound very "free"; it actually sounds kind of coerced, right? The "free" part is *what* you write—it can be whatever comes to mind. Professional writers use free-writing to get started on a challenging (or distasteful) writing task or to overcome writer's block or a powerful urge to procrastinate. The idea is that if you just make yourself write, you can't help but produce some kind of useful nugget. Thus, even if the first eight sentences of your free write are all variations on "I don't understand this" or "I'd really rather be doing something else," eventually you'll write something like "I guess the main point of this is . . . ," and—booyah!—you're off and running.
4. **Ask for clarification**. Even the most carefully crafted assignments may need some verbal clarification, especially if you're

new to a course or field. Try to convey to your instructor that you want to learn and you're ready to work, and not just looking for advice on how to get an A.

Although the topic may be defined, you can't just grind out four or five pages of discussion, explanation, or analysis. It may seem strange, but even when you're asked to "show how" or "illustrate," you're still being asked to make an argument. You must shape and focus that discussion or analysis so that it supports a **claim** that you discovered and formulated and that all of your discussion and explanation develops and supports.

Defined-topic writing assignments are used primarily to identify your familiarity with the subject matter.

Undefined-Topic Assignments

Another writing assignment you'll potentially encounter is one in which the topic may be only broadly identified ("water conservation" in an ecology course, for instance, or "the Dust Bowl" in a U.S. History course), or even completely open ("compose an argumentative research essay on a subject of your choice").

Where defined-topic essays demonstrate your knowledge of the *content*, undefined-topic assignments are used to demonstrate your s*kills*—your ability to perform academic research, to synthesize ideas, and to apply the various stages of the writing process.

The first hurdle with this type of task is to find a focus that interests you. Don't just pick something you feel will be "easy to write about"—that almost always turns out to be a false assumption. Instead, you'll get the most value out of, and find it easier to work on, a topic that intrigues you personally in some way.

The same getting-started ideas described for defined-topic assignments will help with these kinds of projects, too. You can also try talking with your instructor or a writing tutor (at your college's writing center) to help brainstorm ideas and make sure you're on track. You want to feel confident that you've got a clear idea of what it means to be successful in the writing and not waste time working in a direction that won't be fruitful.

The Writing Process

The following video provides an excellent overview of research essays, one of the most common kinds of writing assignments you're likely to encounter in college.

YouTube Video

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No writer, not even a professional, composes a perfect draft in her first attempt. Every writer fumbles and has to work through a series of steps to arrive at a high-quality finished project.

You may have encountered these steps as assignments in classes—draft a thesis statement; complete an outline; turn in a rough draft; participate in a peer review. The further you get into higher education, the less often these steps will be completed as part of class.

That's not to say that you won't still need to follow these steps on your own time. It helps to recognize that these steps, commonly referred to as the **writing process**, aren't rigid and prescribed. Instead, it can be liberating to see them as flexible, allowing you to adapt them to your own personal habits, preferences, and the topic at hand. You will probably find that your process changes, depending on the type of writing you're doing and your comfort level with the subject matter.

Consider the following flowchart of the writing process:



The flowchart is a helpful visualization of the steps involved, outside of the classroom, toward completing an essay. Keep in mind that it isn't always a linear process, though. It's okay to loop back to earlier steps again if needed. For instance, after completing a draft, you may realize that a significant aspect of the topic is missing, which sends you back to researching. Or the process of research may lead you to an unexpected subtopic, which shifts your focus and leads you to revise your thesis. Embrace the circular path that writing often takes!

Revision and Proofreading

These last two stages of the writing process are often confused with each other, but they mean very different things, and serve very different purposes.

Revision is literally "reseeing." It asks a writer to step away from a piece of work for a significant amount of time and return later to see it with new eyes. This is why the process of producing multiple drafts of an essay is so important. It allows some space in between, to let thoughts mature, connections to arise, and gaps in content or an argument to appear. It's also difficult to do, especially given that most college students face tight time lines to get big writing projects done. Still, there are some tricks to help you "resee" a piece of writing when you're short on time, such as reading a paper backward, sentence by sentence, and reading your work aloud. Both are ways of reconceptualizing your own writing so you approach it from a fresh perspective. Whenever possible, though, build in at least a day or two to set a draft aside before returning to work on the final version.

Proofreading, on the other hand, is the very last step taken before turning in a project. This is the point where spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting all take center stage.

Learn these rules, and if you hate them, learn to love them. In college, writing stops being about "how well did you understand fill-in-the-blank" and becomes "how professionally and strongly do you argue your point." Professionalism, I have found, is the key to the real world, and college is, in part, preparing you for it. If you do not learn how to write in a way that projects professionalism (i.e., these rules), then expect to get, at best, Cs on your papers. —Kaethe Leonard, SUNY student

A person can be the best writer in the world and still be a terrible proofreader. It's okay not to memorize every rule out there, but know where to turn for help. Utilizing the grammar-check feature of your word processor is a good start, but it won't solve every issue (and may even cause a few itself).

Your campus tutoring or writing center is a good place to turn for support and help. They will NOT proofread your paper for you, but they will offer you strategies for how to spot issues that are a pattern in your writing.

Finding a trusted person to help you edit is perfectly ethical, as long as that person offers you advice and doesn't actually do any of the writing for you. Professional writers rely on outside readers for both the revision and editing process, and it's a good practice for you to do so, too.

Using Sources

College courses offer a few opportunities for writing that won't require using outside resources. Creative writing classes, applied lab classes, or field research classes will value what you create entirely from your own mind or from the work completed for the class. For most college writing, however, you will need to consult at least one outside source, and possibly more.

The following video provides a helpful overview of the ways in which sources are used most effectively and responsibly in academic writing.

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Note that this video models MLA-style citations. This is one of several different styles you might be asked to practice within your classes. Your instructors should make it clear which of the major styles they expect you to use in their courses: MLA (Modern Language Association), APA (American Psychological Association), Chicago, or another.

Regardless of the style, the same principles are true any time a source is used: give credit to the source when it is used in the writing itself, as well as in a bibliography (or Works Cited page, or References page) at the end.

Resources for Academic Writing

- Writing Commons
- Style for Students
- Handouts from the Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill

https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/899

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2.4.3: Testing Strategies



Do every day or two something for no other reason than you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test." —William James, American philosopher and psychologist

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define test anxiety
- Identify sources of test anxiety and techniques for preventing and controlling it
- Identify common types of tests given in a college class
- Describe the purpose of tests and what an instructor might expect to see from your work
- Identify strategies for answering typical kinds of test questions (multiple choice, listing, true/false, short answer, essay, and others)
- Identify test-taking strategies to improve your performance

Tests and Exams[1]

There are few words more familiar in academia than the word *test*. From early childhood until perhaps our advanced years, we engage with tests in countless ways—formally and informally, with anticipation and nerves. In this section we take a look at tests and exams more closely and try to demystify them.

Tests or "examinations" are assessments designed to gauge your knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, and aptitudes. Below is a short list of some of the many tests you have likely taken:

- Spelling tests
- Reading tests
- Math tests
- Language tests
- Laboratory tests
- Typing tests
- Physical fitness tests
- Driving tests

- Intelligence tests
- Personality tests
- “Self” tests
- Standardized tests
- Placement tests
- Achievement tests
- College entrance tests!

Just imagine how many tests have you taken in your lifetime:

- In total, you may have taken an average of 113 standardized tests between pre-K and twelfth grade, according to the Council of the Great City Schools, which studied students in large urban districts.
- In the 2014–15 school year, 401 unique tests were administered across subjects in the 66 large urban school systems that the council studied.

You may feel as though you’ve already taken enough tests for a lifetime! But, for better or for worse, testing seems to be a fact of life, and it’s certainly a recurring feature of the college experience. So you’ll be in the best position for success if you can learn to take tests in stride and develop good test-taking skills.

As you’ll discover, a big part of doing well on tests is knowing what to expect and gearing up psychologically—that is, learning how to deal with test anxiety.

What Is Test Anxiety?

My fears are like thundering elephants. Then when I get them out and really look at them, I see that they are actually mice with megaphones. —Bruce Rahtje, author and Biblical scholar

For many test takers, preparing for a test and taking a test can easily cause worry and anxiety. In fact, most students report that they are more stressed by tests and schoolwork than by anything else in their lives, according to the American Test Anxiety Association.[2]

- Roughly 16–20 percent of students have high test anxiety.
- Another 18 percent have moderately high test anxiety.
- Test anxiety is the most common academic impairment in grade school, high school, and college.

Test anxiety is “the set of phenomenological, physiological, and behavioral responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure on an exam or similar evaluative situation.” (Zeidner, 1998) Put another way, test anxiety is a combination of overarousal, tension, worry, dread, fear of failure, and “catastrophizing” before or during test situations.

Below are some effects of moderate anxiety:[3]

- Being distracted during a test
- Having difficulty comprehending relatively simple instructions
- Having trouble organizing or recalling relevant information
- Crying
- Illness
- Eating disturbance
- High blood pressure
- Acting out
- Toileting accidents
- Sleep disturbance
- Cheating
- Negative attitudes towards self, school, subjects

Below are some effects of extreme test anxiety:[4]

- Overanxious disorder
- Social phobia

- Suicide

Poor test performance is also a significant outcome of test anxiety. Test-anxious students tend to have lower study skills and lower test-taking skills, but research also suggests that high levels of emotional distress correlate with reduced academic performance overall. Highly test-anxious students score about 12 percentile points below their low-anxiety peers. Students with test anxiety also have higher overall dropout rates. And test anxiety can negatively affect a student's social, emotional, and behavioral development, as well feelings about themselves and school.

Why does test anxiety occur? Inferior performance arises not because of intellectual problems or poor academic preparation. It occurs because testing situations create a sense of threat for those who experience test anxiety. The sense of threat then disrupts the learner's attention and memory.[5]

Other factors can influence test anxiety, too. Students with disabilities and students in gifted education classes tend to experience high rates of test anxiety.

If you experience test anxiety, have hope! Experiencing test anxiety doesn't mean that there's something wrong with you or that you aren't capable of performing well in college. In fact, some stress—a manageable amount of stress—can actually be motivating. The trick is to keep stress and anxiety at a level where it can help you do your best rather than get in your way.

Strategies for Preventing and Controlling Test Anxiety

The following video, from the University of British Columbia, provides strategies for coping with any stress and anxiety you may have about an upcoming test or exam. It also provides strategies, such as the following, for acing an exam:

1. Ask about the exam (materials covered, format, points, level of detail, etc.)
2. Take inventory of your notes
3. Set a study schedule
4. Keep your diet consistent
5. Don't stop exercising
6. Get regular sleep
7. Make a five-day study plan for each exam

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Health and wellness cannot be overstated as factors in test anxiety. Studying and preparing for exams can be easier when you take care of your mental and physical health. The following are a few tips for better health, better focus, and better grades:

1. Try a minimeditation to reduce stress and improve focus. Breathe in deeply, count to five, and exhale slowly. Watch your lower abdomen expand and deflate. Repeat five times. Learn more about how to proactively manage stress.
2. Know when to stop. Although some students may stay up until 4 a.m. studying, it's not a healthy habit. Your mind is more efficient when you get enough quality sleep, so make sure to schedule enough time for rest.
3. Don't try to be perfect. You'll alleviate a lot of anxiety by learning that just "doing your best" is something to be proud of—it doesn't have to be perfect.
4. Reach out for help. If you feel you need assistance with your mental or physical health, talk to a counselor or visit a doctor.

Activity: Test Yourself for Test Anxiety

Everyone feels some anxiety about tests. However, too much anxiety can interfere with your test preparation and test taking. Take this 5-minute assessment to determine how much test anxiety you may have and what you can do about it.

Objective

- Gain insight to your level of test anxiety
- Determine your best strategies for lessening test anxiety

Directions

- Visit the Test Anxiety Assessment at HowToStudy.com.
- Click on the "Continue to Assessment" button. You have the option to take the test in Spanish.
- Click on the best answer to each of the 35 questions.
- When you're finished, you'll receive a brief assessment of your level of text anxiety. You can also click on a link to learn 20 ways to reduce your test anxiety.

Common Types of Tests in College

There are many ways to understand how tests and exams fit into academia and college culture. One way is to ask what purpose the tests (also called assessments) serve. For example, what is your professor trying to achieve if she gives you a survey-type test on the first day of class? How might the purpose of that test differ from that of, say, a practice quiz given before a midterm? And what is the purpose of a midterm?

Obviously, each survey, quiz, practice test, midterm, and final exam can serve different purposes. Depending upon the purpose, the assessment will fall into one of the following three categories:

1. Preassessment
2. Formative assessment
3. Summative assessment

Preassessments: Tests in this category are used to measure the beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, and skills that you have when you begin a class or before you begin working on a new topic. With preassessments, your professor gathers baseline data to use at a later time to evaluate change—that is, by comparing former knowledge or skills against what you learn in class.

One approach to preassessment is for a professor to ask students at the start of the term to describe a term or concept that's foundational to the course. Then, later in the course, the professor revisits that data to determine how the instruction changed your understanding of the same concept. Comparing what you know or believe before and after a course or lesson is a productive way to gauge how successful your learning was and how successful the teaching was.

Formative assessments: Tests in this category are typically quizzes, pop quizzes, review questions, and practice tests. With formative assessments, your professor's goal is to monitor what you are learning and get feedback from you about what is needed next in teaching. Did students do well on the quiz? If so, it's probably time to move to the next topic. If they didn't do well, it suggests that more teaching time should be devoted to the concept. Formative assessments help the instructor to better meet your needs as a learner.

Summative assessments: Tests in this category are the assessments that students are most familiar with: midterm and final exams. In a summative assessment, a professor is evaluating how much you actually learned at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it with a benchmark of what you should have learned. Summative assessments can be stressful, but they can be an effective measurement tool. Most summative assessments are graded.

In college courses, tests are usually verbal—you might be asked to give an oral presentation, for example—or written—you might be asked to mark or write out your answers on paper or on a computer. For special courses you might also encounter physical tests, in which you're asked to perform a set of skills (like demonstrating the procedure for giving someone CPR, for instance).

Test Formats

Tests vary in style, rigor, and requirements. For example, in a closed book test, a test taker is typically required to rely upon memory to respond to specific items. In an open-book test, though, a test taker may use one or more supplementary resources such as a reference book or notes. Open-book testing may be used for subjects in which many technical terms or formulas are required to effectively answer questions, like in chemistry or physics.

In addition, test may be administered formally or informally. In an informal test, you might simply respond in a class to discussion questions posed by the instructor. In a formal test, you are usually expected to work alone, and the stakes are higher.

Below is a sampling of common test formats you may encounter. If you know what kind of test you'll be taking, you can tailor your study approach to the format.

TEST TYPE	QUESTION TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Written Test (can be open-book, closed book or any approach in between)	Multiple choice (objective)	You are presented with a question and a set of answers for each question, and you must choose which answer or group of answers is correct. Multiple-choice questions usually require less time for test takers to answer than other question types, and they are easy to score and grade. They also allow for a wide range of difficulty.
	True False (objective)	You are presented with a statement, and you must determine whether it is true or false. True/false questions are generally not predominant on tests because instructors know that, statistically, random guesswork can yield a good score. But when used sparingly, true/false questions can be effective.
	Matching (objective)	You are presented with a set of specific terms or ideas and a set of definitions or identifying characteristics. You must match each term with its correct definition or characteristics.
	Fill-in-the-blank (objective)	You are presented with identifying characteristics, and you must recall and supply the correct associated term or idea. There are two types of fill-in-the-blank tests: 1) The easier version provides a word bank of possible words that will fill in the blanks. 2) The more difficult version has no word bank to choose from. Fill-in-the-blank tests with no word bank can be anxiety producing.
	Essay (subjective)	You are presented with a question or concept that you must explain in depth. Essay questions emphasize themes and broad ideas. Essay questions allow students to demonstrate critical thinking, creative thinking, and writing skills.
Oral Test	Discussion (subjective)	The oral exam (also called an oral test or viva voce) is practiced in many schools and disciplines in which an examiner verbally poses questions to the student. The student must answer the question in such a way as to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the subject. Many science programs require students pursuing a bachelor's degree to finish the program by taking an oral exam, or a combination of oral and written exams, to show how well the student has understood the material. Usually, study guides or a syllabus are made available so that the students may prepare for the exam by reviewing practice questions and topics likely to be on the exam.
Physical Skills Test		You are presented with opportunities to perform specific tasks that require manual labor or physical skill. These tasks measure physical abilities, such as your strength, muscular flexibility, and stamina. Below is an example of physical abilities tests in the workplace:

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Purpose of Testing

You are a unique person. No one else is exactly like you. In college, you have particular ways of learning; you are interested in certain subjects; you have approaches to interacting with others that are special to you. You are an individual.

Your professors need to know as much as possible about what you know, think, or can do and how you differ from other students. Testing is one way to do that—to gauge how you learn, what you learn, and what you can do with what you've learned. By knowing more about these aspects of you as a student, your teachers are better able to serve you.

What are your instructors looking for that will yield clues about your individual learning? Mainly, your instructors are seeking, through testing, to confirm that you grasp the concepts, behaviors, or skills they are teaching. They want to know that you are achieving the objectives they set out for you. Their objectives may pertain to cognitive skills such remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. (See the Patterns of Thought section for more information about Bloom's Taxonomy and the cognitive domain of learning.) In addition, your instructors are always pleased to see good grammar, thoughtfulness, creativity, accuracy, and solid references.

Your professors are not the only people who need to know about your learning. College administrators, such as deans and provosts, also need to be informed. Student performance gives them useful information that they use to make decisions about textbooks, teacher training, professional development, and other educational or resource needs. There are a lot of stakeholders invested in seeing students be successful.

That said, your instructors are really the front line when it comes to collecting and interpreting student learning data. Tests, quizzes, homework, and other activities and assessments are often the best way to do this. Ultimately, the data your teachers collect help them refine the teaching and learning process so that everyone succeeds—students and teachers alike. Your success, though, should be the number one goal of testing.

Strategies for Question Types

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.—Albert Einstein

In many respects, test-taking is a skill. If you learn some key strategies, you can be quite successful in taking tests.

The Brigham Young University (BYU) Career & Academic Success Center has a comprehensive set of strategies to help you perform effectively with different types of test questions.

At the BYU Test-taking Strategies Web site, review detailed strategies for each type of test. Visit the practice tests, too.

- Guidelines for Answering True/false Questions: Click here for practice test on true false questions
- Guidelines for Answering Multiple-choice Questions: Click here for a practice test on multiple choice questions
- Guidelines for Answering Matching Questions: Click here for a practice test on matching questions.
- Guidelines for Answering Sentence Completion or Fill-in-the-blank Question: Click here for a practice test on fill-in-the-blank questions
- Guidelines for Essay Questions: Click here for a practice test on essay questions

Strategies for Better Test-Taking Performance[6]

There are many skills and strategies you can employ to help you be a better test taker. One of them, widely used, is LAB B2OWL—an acronym to help you remember critical aspects of successful test-taking strategies. Watch the following video, which describes the strategies in detail. Then review the main concepts in the table,[7] below.

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LAB B2OWL	DESCRIPTION
L	LOOK: Look over the entire exam before you start. Take care to read the directions, underline test words, and circle questions you don't fully understand.
A	ASK: If you have any questions at all, ask. For example, if the exam doesn't indicate total point allocation, be sure to ask your instructor.
B	BUDGET: Budget your time based on the point allocation for each question. For instance, let's say your exam has one essay question worth 50 percent, and 5 identifications worth 10 percent each. If you have two hours to take the test, this gives you one hour to complete the essay, and 10 minutes for each of the five short-answer questions. You will have 10 minutes in reserve to review your work before turning it in.
B2	BEGIN X 2: Begin with an easy question in order to build your confidence and get warmed up for the rest of the exam. Begin each answer with a thesis topic sentence. Restate the question in a single sentence to help you focus your answer.
O	OUTLINE: Be careful to write a quick outline for your essay on a separate page before you begin. This will help you organize your facts and focus your ideas. It might also serve to show your professor where you were going if you don't have time to finish.
W	WATCH: Watch for key testing words like *analyze*, *define*, *evaluate,* and *illustrate*. These help you understand what your professor will be looking for in an answer.
L	LOOK: Finally, look over your exam before turning it in to make sure you haven't missed anything important.

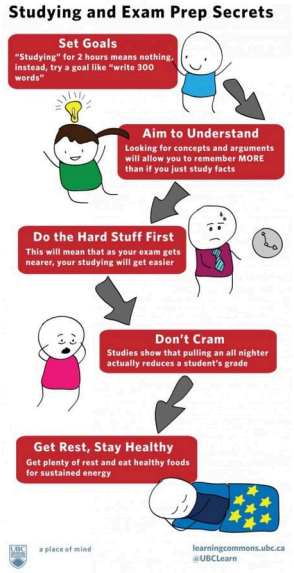
Below is another video about test-taking strategies. This one acknowledges that each student is unique, and therefore no two students approach tests in exactly the same way. In the following video you will see multiple students sharing their personal success strategies for studying and test taking.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

The infographic, below, depicts key strategies you can use to improve your performance on tests. If you carefully examine the illustrations in the infographic and connect them with the text, you will likely remember these techniques in the future when you most need them.



Activity: Ace Your Exams

Objectives

- Identify sources of test anxiety and techniques for preventing and controlling it
- Identify test-taking strategies to improve your performance

Directions

- Review the set of questions, below. Think about how you prepare (or don't prepare) for tests and exams. What do you struggle with? What steps can you take to better prepare for your exams this semester?
- Make a list of what you feel are your main worries or concerns about tests or what you find most difficult to cope with. You might consider contacting your tutor to ask for advice,or find out if there are any exam-preparation workshops at your college.
- Make another list of any good ideas and strategies you intend to try as you prepare for your next test.

Revision and Examinations

1. How would you summarize your overall feelings about tests?
2. How long is your study period? How long before the actual exam would you start studying?
3. What sort of pattern does your study take? Do you work in phases, small bits or longer periods?
4. How close to the test do you study? Up to the night before, or do you have a break?
5. How carefully do you plan or structure your study period? Do you plan a detailed outline of what you will do, or do you just start and work through?
6. If you need to memorize material, do you have any particular way of doing it?
7. Do you record material in any way, perhaps summarize it on cards or paper, or record it?
8. Do you try to include any new material while studying, or do you stick with what you have already studied?
9. Do you try to reorganize your material, perhaps rewrite notes?
10. Do you make use of back papers? Do you practice answering actual questions?
11. What do you do on the night before and the morning of the test?
12. What do you think and feel as you journey to the test location?
13. Do you stand outside talking with others, or so you stand alone?
14. Between going into the room and starting the test, do you have rituals such as where you place the things you've taken with

you? Do you meditate, pray, or practice relaxation?
15. Once the test starts, do you have a particular pattern of work?
16. Do you have a problem with timing?
17. Do you check back through your work before you submit it?
18. What do you do immediately after the test?
19. Do you contact other students or your tutor after the exam?
20. Looking back at the tests you have taken, do you feel you have learned anything that has helped you or might help you to do better?

https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/900

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1. "Test Anxiety." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation. Web. 25 Apr. 2016. ↵
2. "Text Anxiety." *American Test Anxieties Association*. Web. 25 Apr. 2016. ↵
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2.4.4: Presentation Strategies



The very best impromptu speeches are the ones written well in advance. —Ruth Gordon, actress and playwright

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify common types of presentation tasks in a college class, including individual and group projects
- Describe the purpose of presentation assignments and what an instructor might expect to see from your delivery
- Explain how to avoid common pitfalls of visual aids in presentations
- Identify techniques to reduce anxiety prior to and during presentation delivery

Imagine you are walking across your campus. As you pass the student center, you see a couple of people who have set up at a table outside, and they're passing out information about the student honor society. Open windows in the music building share the sounds of someone practicing the piano in the art studio. Upon entering your class building, you are greeted by student-made posters illustrating various phases of the process of cell division. An open class door allows you to watch a young man in a lab coat and protective gear pour liquid nitrogen over items in a tray while the rest of his classmates look on with great interest. Your own instructor is setting up the computer screen at the front of your class when you walk in, loading up the Powerpoint that he plans to use for the day.

All of these are examples of presentations, and it's very likely that you'll be asked to participate in similar activities during your college career. Presenting, whether face-to-face or online, is a skill you will hone as a college student in preparation for your future career.

Presentation Types

Presentations can take many forms and potentially serve many purposes. When reading the definitions below, keep in mind that many presentations often combine several elements into a hybrid form. You may have to pick and choose what will work best for you depending on the instructor and the course. Let's start with the different genres or types of presentations.

Informative

Some presentation assignments will ask you simply to deliver information about a topic. Often these presentations involve research, which you will shape and present to your instructor and classmates. Typically, informative presentations ask that

you NOT share your opinion about the subject at hand (which can be more challenging than it seems). With an informative presentation, your goal is to educate your audience by presenting a summary of your research and "sticking to the facts."

Persuasive

Unlike informative presentations, persuasive presentations ask that you not only form an opinion about your subject but also convince your audience to come around to your point of view. These presentations often involve research, too, and the findings of your research will be used to bolster the persuasive case you're making.

Lesson Delivery

You may be asked to do a "Teaching Presentation," which will require you to specialize in one topic of the course and give your fellow classmates instruction about it. In short, you become the teacher of a subject. Often your presentation will be the only time that this subject is covered in the class, so you will be responsible for making sure that you provide clear, detailed, and relevant information about it. You may also be asked to provide questions on the subject to be included in a quiz or test.

Demonstration

These action-based presentations typically model some behavior or subject matter that has been introduced previously in the class. Unlike the Lesson Delivery presentation, a demonstration adds a level of performance in which you show and tell the the audience what you know. You might perform the demonstration yourself, as a way of illustrating the concept or procedure, or you might provide classmates with instructions and guidance as they do it themselves.

Poster

Poster presentations should convey all the information on a subject necessary for a viewer to consider on her own. They often consist of short, punchy wording accompanied by strong visuals—graphs, charts, images, and/or illustrations. Posters frequently require research to prepare, and they allow for some creativity in design. Depending on the assignment, your poster may be part of a gallery of poster presentations with your classmates. Your poster has to communicate everything that is important without you being there to explain it to your audience.

Online

Similar to poster presentations, online presentations are generally **asynchronous—**meaning they don't require you to be present at the same time as your viewer. They often serve similar purposes as poster presentations, but due to the online format, they allow for more interactive possibilities, such as sharing a pertinent video or animated graph. Your online presentation must stand alone to teach your audience everything they need to know.

Solo and Group Presentations

You may be asked to present as an individual or as part of a group.

Individual presentations put all of the responsibility for preparation, research, and delivery on you. You rightfully take all the credit for the final product you produce.

Group presentations, in contrast, often involve more complicated tasks and therefore require more participants to make them. Your instructor may make suggestions about how the work should be divided, or the group may delegate tasks internally. Grades may be assigned equally to everyone in the group, though many instructors assign individual grades based on some participation-level factor to inspire each member to pull his or her own weight.

Presentation assignments are often open to creative interpretation, which gives you a lot of room to explore new techniques and add a personal touch to the task.



Think About Audience

Now that you've learned a bit about the various types of presentations, it's helpful to turn to another important part of presenting: the audience. Like reading and writing, presenting is a form of communication. Whether you're presenting information, giving a demonstration, creating a poster, or trying to change people's minds, your goal is to get your message across to your audience. For that reason, it's important to remember that they may not interpret the information you are presenting exactly as you have. It's your job as a presenter to explain your ideas using specific details, succinct and clear wording (avoid jargon), vivid descriptions, and meaningful images. As you organize your presentation, keeping this imaginary audience in mind can help you gauge how much background information and context to provide.

Choosing Media and Format for Visual Aids

Perhaps you've heard the phrase "Death by PowerPoint" to explain that all-too-familiar feeling of being slowly bored to death by a thoughtless presenter who's droning on and on about boring slide after boring slide. If you'd like to know what the experience is about, and you have time for a laugh, watch the following video, starring stand-up comedian Don McMillan. McMillan pokes fun at bad presentations, but he has some very sound advice about what *not to do*.

YouTube Video

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You may consider using PowerPoint for your presentation, and that's perfectly fine. PowerPoint can be a very effective tool with the right organization, layout, and design. Below is a list of five common pitfalls that you can and should avoid, and doing so will go a long way toward making your PowerPoint presentation successful:

1. **Choosing a font that is too small**. The person in the very back of the room should be able to see the same thing as the person in the front of the room.
2. **Putting too many words on a slide**. Remember it's called PowerPoint, not PowerParagraph! Keep your bullet points clear and succinct.
3. **Having spelling errors**. Have somebody proofread your slides. Any typos will detract from your presentation.
4. **Choosing distracting colors that make it hard to read the information**. PowerPoint gives you a lot of color choices in their design templates. The ideas in your brilliant presentation will be lost if your audience is struggling to read the content.
5. **Selecting images or visuals that do not clearly align with the content**. For instance, a cute photo of your cat may look lovely up on the screen, but if it doesn't connect to your topic, it's just fluff that detracts from your message. Every slide counts, so make sure the visuals support your message.

Practicing for the Presentation

Once you've put together your presentation and have an idea of the audience that will hear and see it, it's time to deal with the "nerves" that can accompany the performance part of the presentation. let's consider some strategies for reducing anxiety about the presentation. Let's turn to a final list of pointers for the "performance" part of the presentation, when you actually present your plan to an audience. You've worked hard as the owner of this presentation, so have confidence in your work. It's tough to remember this when you're nervous, but you're the person who knows the most about your presentations. The following activity can help you get there.

Activity: Make A Presentation Plan

Objective

- Practice techniques to reduce anxiety prior to and during presentation delivery

Directions:

- As you plan for your presentation, it's helpful to reflect on the challenges you may face when you present to your audience. Jot down a quick list of strengths and weaknesses. Be honest!
- Now that you have an honest reflection of those strengths and weakness, it's time to practice. Ask a friend or family member to watch you present. Request that they be honest with you and give constructive criticism about the strengths and weaknesses of your presentation. Have them jot down quick notes.
- After the practice presentation, compare notes with the friend or family member. Compare and contrast how you felt about the quality of your presentation with the feedback you received. Use this information to help improve your presentation delivery.

What if you don't have anyone available to practice your presentation? Record yourself using your phone or your laptop. It can be very difficult to listen to yourself, but it's always enlightening to watch and/or listen to yourself present.

Practicing your presentation will help you build confidence and reduce anxiety prior to and during your presentation. Remember the sage advice of Oscar Wilde: "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken." Good luck!

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2.4.5: Working with Instructors



One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil. —Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify options for communicating with instructors
- Discuss the benefits of utilizing instructor office hours
- Evaluate effective email communication strategies with instructors
- Identify strategies for resolving conflicts with an instructor

Communicating with Instructors

Of all the teachers you've had in your life, which one do you remember most fondly? If you're lucky, you've got someone in mind—a teacher who encouraged and inspired you and perhaps played a role in shaping the person you are today.

That same teacher could well be thinking similar thoughts about you!—because for every favorite teacher, there is also a favorite student. The satisfactions often go both ways.

In this section, we look at ways in which you can cultivate rich and rewarding relationships with your instructors, and also resolve conflicts, should any arise. Solid student-faculty relationships can be foundational to a successful college experience.

The following video, from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, looks at the value teachers and students place on connecting with one another.

YouTube Video

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Methods of Communicating with Instructors

College students are sometimes surprised to discover that instructors enjoy getting to know students. The human dimension of college really matters, and as a student you are an important part of your instructor's world. Most instructors are happy to work with you during their office hours, or talk a few minutes after class, respond to digital messages, talk on the phone, or engage in online discussion forums or perhaps course wikis or personal journals. These are some of the many methods of communication you and your instructors can use.

The following video, from the University of British Columbia, shares faculty perspectives on some of the many reasons why students might want to talk to their faculty or to teaching assistants (TAs).

YouTube Video

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Benefits of Communicating with Instructors

One of the many benefits of communicating with instructors is that it can help you feel more comfortable in college and more connected to the college culture. Students who communicate with their instructors are less likely to become dispirited and drop out.

Communicating with instructors is also a valuable way to learn about an academic field or a career. Maybe you don't know for sure what you want to major in, or what people with a degree in your chosen major actually do after college. Most instructors will share information and insights with you.

You may also need a reference or a letter of recommendation for a job or internship application. Getting to know some of your instructors puts you in an ideal position to ask for a letter of recommendation or a reference later on.

Because instructors are often well connected within their field, they may know of a job, internship, or research opportunity that you wouldn't otherwise know about. An instructor who knows you is a valuable part of your network. Networking is important for future job searches and other opportunities. In fact, most jobs are found through networking, not through classified ads or online job postings. (See the section on Networking.)

Think about what being "educated" truly means: how one thinks, understands society and the world, and responds to problems and new situations. Much of this learning occurs outside of the formal class. Communicating with your instructors can be among your most meaningful experiences in college.

Guidelines for Communicating with Instructors

Getting along with instructors and communicating well begins with attitude. As experts in their field, instructors deserve respect. Remember that a college education is a collaborative process that works best when students and instructors communicate freely in an exchange of ideas, information, and perspectives. So while it pays to respect your instructors, there is no need to fear them. As you get to know them better, you'll learn their personalities and find appropriate ways to talk to them. Below are some guidelines for getting along with and communicating with your instructors:

- Prepare before meeting with the instructor. Go over your notes on readings and lectures and write down your specific questions. You'll feel more comfortable, and the instructor will appreciate your being organized.
- Be sure to introduce yourself. Especially near the beginning of the term, don't assume that your instructor has learned everyone's name yet, and don't make him or her have to ask you. Unless the instructor has already asked you to address him or her as "Dr. ____," "Ms. _____," or Mr. _____," or something similar, it's appropriate to say "Professor _____."
- Respect the instructor's time. In addition to teaching, college instructors participate in committees, conduct research and other professional work, and have personal lives. It's not appropriate to arrive several minutes before the end of an office hour and expect the instructor to stay late to talk with you.
- Understand that the instructor will recognize you from class. If you spent a lecture hour not paying attention, it will reflect badly on you to come to an office hour to find out what you missed.
- Don't try to fool an instructor. Insincere praise or making excuses for not doing an assignment will rarely play in your favor (they've heard it all before!). Nor is it a good idea to act like you're "too cool" to take your classwork seriously—another attitude that's sure to put off an instructor. To earn your instructor's respect, come to class prepared, do the work, genuinely participate in class, and show respect—and the instructor will be happy to see you when you come to office hours or need some extra help.
- Try to see things from the instructor's point of view. Imagine that you spent hours preparing for class, on a topic that you find very interesting and exciting. You are gratified when people understand what you're saying—they really get it! And then a student after class asks, "Is this going to be on the test?" How would you feel?
- Be professional when talking to an instructor. You can be cordial and friendly, but it's ideal to keep it professional and on an adult level. Come to office hours prepared with your questions—not just to chat or joke around. (Don't wear sunglasses or earphones in the office or check your cell phone for messages.) Be prepared to accept constructive criticism in a professional way, without taking it personally or complaining.

The following infographic gives you a visual way to remember key concepts about communicating with your instructors.



Effective Email Communication with Instructors

Just as digital messaging has become a primary form of communication in business and society, it has a growing role in education and has become an important and valuable means of communicating with instructors. Most college students are

familiar with digital messaging, such as email, texting, and messages via the online-course learning-management system. Using digital messaging respects other people's time, allowing them to answer at a time of their choosing.

However, digital communication with instructors is a written form of communication that differs from communicating with friends. Students who text with friends often adopt shortcuts, such as not spelling out full words, ignoring capitalization and punctuation, and not focusing on grammar or using full sentences. Such texts are usually very informal and are not an appropriate style for communicating with instructors. Your instructors expect you to use a professional, respectful tone and fairly formal style.

- Use a professional email name. If you have a nickname you use with friends, create a different account with a professional name for use with instructors, work supervisors, and others. "BoatyMcBoatface" is not an appropriate, professional email name.
- Include something in the subject line that readily communicates the purpose/topic of your email: "May I make an appointment?" says something; "Help!" doesn't.
- Address digital messages as you do a letter, beginning "Dear Professor ____." Include your full name in the closing.
- Get to your point quickly and concisely.
- Write as you would in a paper for class, avoiding sarcasm, criticism, or negative language.
- Avoid abbreviations, nonstandard spelling, slang, and emoticons like smiley faces.
- Be courteous, accommodating, and respectful. Avoid stating expectations like, "I'll expect to hear from you soon" or "If I haven't heard by 4 p.m., I'll assume you'll accept my late paper."
- When you reply to a message, leave the original message within yours.
- End the message with a "Thank you" or something similar.
- Proofread your message before sending it.
- Wait to send if you are upset. With any important message, it's a good idea to wait and review the message later before sending it. You may have expressed an emotion or thought that you will think better about later. Many problems have resulted when people send messages too quickly without thinking.

Conflict-Resolution Strategies

The most common "conflict" that students experience with instructors is feeling that they've received a lower grade than they deserve. This may be especially true for new students not yet used to the higher standards of college. It can be disappointing to get a low grade, but try not to be too hard on yourself or on the instructor. Take a good look at what happened on the test or paper and make sure you know what to do better next time.

If you genuinely believe you should have a higher grade, you can talk with your instructor. How you communicate in that conversation, however, is very important. Instructors are used to hearing students complain about grades, and they will likely patiently explain their standards for grading. In general, instructors seldom change grades. Still, it can still be worthwhile to talk with the instructor. You will gain from the experience even if your grade doesn't change.

Here are guidelines for talking about a grade or resolving any other problem or disagreement with an instructor:

- Go over the requirements for the paper or test and the instructor's comments. Be sure you actually have a reason to evaluate the grade—not just that you didn't do well. Be prepared with specific points you want to discuss.
- Make an appointment with your instructor. For face-to-face classes, don't try to talk about your concern before or after class.
- Be polite. Begin by politely explaining that you thought you did better on the assignment or test (not simply that you think you deserve a better grade) and that you'd like to go over it to better understand the result.
- Allow the instructor to explain his or her comments on the assignment or grading of the test. Don't complain or whine; instead, show your appreciation for the explanation. Raise any specific questions, or make comments at this time. For example, you might say, "I really thought I was being clear here when I wrote . . ."
- Use good listening skills. Whatever you do, don't argue!
- Ask what you can do to improve the grade, if possible. Can you rewrite the paper or do any extra-credit work to help make up for a test score? While you are showing that you would like to earn a higher grade in the course, also make it clear that you're willing to put in the effort and that you want to learn more, not just get the higher grade.
- If there is no opportunity to improve on this specific project, ask the instructor for advice on what you might do on the next assignment or when preparing for the next test. You may be offered some individual help or receive good study advice, and your instructor will respect your willingness to make the effort—as long as it's clear that you're more interested in learning than getting a good grade.

Working with Instructors: Key Points[1]

- **Go the extra mile**: Talk to your professor when you
  - Need an extension
  - Need clarification on course material
  - Are experiencing challenges in your personal life that impact your academic performance
  - Are considering pursuing a major or graduate degree in their subject area
- **Visit early**: Building rapport with your professors early in the semester will pay off if you need an extension or extra help later on. Professors like it when you visit office hours, but they don't appreciate it when panicked students ask for an extension an hour before an assignment is due. Most professors will be very accommodating if you ask for help well in advance.
- **Show your interest**: Professors want you to be as interested in their subject as they are. Nothing excites them more than knowing you are passionate about what they teach. You can show your interest by participating in class, attending office hours, and emailing your professors if you have questions.
- **Meet your professor**: Professors have many responsibilities to juggle including research, teaching, traveling to conferences, and administrative tasks. However, they DO want to talk with you. Go to office hours and meet your professors!
- **Build relationships**: Believe it or not, your professors are really interesting people. You might just enjoy their company. They can also open doors to academic research, serve as mentors, and may write you a reference letter down the road. Build strong relationships with your profs while you have the chance.

The following video from the University of Toronto Scarborough is a good summary of the ideas and guidelines shared in this section on working with instructors:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42lMFQqc4LI

Activity: Interacting with Your Instructors

Objective

- Identify options for communicating with instructors
- Discuss the benefits of utilizing instructor office hours

Directions:

- The word instructor comes from the Latin word*struere*, meaning build, construct. Make a list of ten ways in which you could take advantage of communicating with your instructor to help build and construct a powerful learning experience.

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2.4.6: Deep Learning



Learning never exhausts the mind. —Leonardo da Vinci

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify differences between passing a test and gaining knowledge (cramming versus learning)
- List study techniques that help long-term retention of knowledge
- Explain how peer groups can aid in class preparation

Learning Deeply[1][2][3]

What is the ultimate formula for learning at the deepest level? Is it raw intelligence, a great teacher, good studying habits, or a perfect study space? Is it critical thinking, creative thinking, a mindset of success or dogged determination?

The formula is probably a combination of all these things and more. Each student, though, will have unique stories to tell about how deep learning has occurred for them. In fact, stories about deep learning are the basis of *What the Best College Students Do*, a book by historian and educator Dr. Ken Bain. In writing this book, Dr. Bain conducted more than one hundred interviews with notable lifelong learners, like Stephen Colbert of *The Colbert Report* and astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson. Dr. Bain asked each interviewee to talk about how they used their college experience to develop and feed their curiosity about topics that interested them—topics that came to define them in many ways. The deep learning each person experienced helped them go on to lead focused and purposeful lives.

If Dr. Bain were to interview you, what would you tell him about an experience you had in which you learned deeply? What factors account for how you absorbed knowledge during that experience and how you used the knowledge for something that mattered a lot to you? Conversely, which factors were missing when you had the experience of *not* learning deeply?

Learning deeply, says Dr. Bain, “doesn’t just mean the ability to remember stuff for an examination. It means the ability to create. It means the ability to analyze and synthesize, to solve problems, and to understand what that problem-solving means.” What matters most about the college experience and earning grades, he says, “is learning deeply, thinking about implications and applications, and expanding the powers of one’s mind. If students intend to learn deeply, grades will usually take care of themselves.”

In this section on deep learning, we examine key strategies you can use not only to get good grades but also to truly enjoy your learning experiences in college and to reap the greatest rewards from them in the future. Deep learning is a key to succeeding in college and in life.

Deep Learning vs. Cramming

How can you tell if you are actually engaged in deep learning? Dr. Bain offers the following classification of learners:

- **Surface learners**: They do as little as possible to get by.
- **Strategic learners**: They aim for the highest grades rather than for true understanding.
- **Deep learners**: They gain a real, rich education in college because they pursue their passions more than grades. They are also comfortable with experimenting more than with "getting it right," and they develop a personal connection to their studies.

Which learner do you feel you are now? Are you drawn to learn more deeply?

To illustrate the process of deep learning, let's use an example of what deep learning is not: "cramming" for a test—studying right before an exam without much preparation beforehand. Can you remember a time when you stayed up late to cram for a test the next day? How did it turn out for you? Did you pass the test? Did you learn much while you were cramming? How much do you remember now of the material you studied then?

The problem with cramming is that it doesn't give the brain ample time to process information or to make the kinds of critical connections necessary for the brain to retrieve the information later on. When you cram, you simply forget what you have learned much faster than when you study diligently and steadily over an extended period of time.

Why would this matter? Why not just cram, take a test, do reasonably well, and move on to the next challenge?

One of the main reasons not to embrace this approach is that without learning deeply, you lose the opportunity to apply what you learn to other pursuits (in college and in life). For example, if you have classes later in college that build on earlier courses, will you retain and be able to apply what you should have learned from the classes in which you crammed? Will you need to learn the material on a deeper level this time?

Another cost of cramming is that you forgo the pleasure and satisfaction of acquiring knowledge at a deep level.

In sum, learning deeply goes beyond just test scores. It connects to skills you will need the rest of your life, like critical thinking, critical analysis, applying principles to solve problems, assessing your effectiveness, revising, and applying what you know.

So, if you are looking ahead to do well on a test or some other kind of assessment, avoid cramming. Start studying now and keep studying as you go along. Use your time-management skills and tools to make the time for it. Recall improves when studying is spread out over time, because every time you retrieve information or knowledge, you're learning it more deeply. Also, by spreading out your studying, you can avoid mental exhaustion and having to cram before exams. Take study breaks to relax both mentally and physically.

Techniques for Learning and Retaining Knowledge

Sometimes the best way to learn a new idea is to first "unlearn" an old idea that's hindering the new one. This is certainly the case with principles of learning, because there are many misconceptions about how people best acquire knowledge and retain it. Below, we identify and deconstruct some of these misconceptions and replace them with ideas you can use to help you learn deeply.

Myth 1: Talent Is Everything!

If you believe that your learning abilities are fixed, you'll put up mental blocks that hinder your learning. For example, if you usually get straight A's, you may avoid taking intellectual risks that take you out of your comfort zone or jeopardize your perfect record. Similarly, if you believe you are not good at something, like math, you may avoid really trying or lower your expectations.

But students who have a "growth mindset" toward learning, and who believe they can really improve over time and with effort,

are the ones who who tend to take more chances, progress faster, and see risk and failure as part of the learning process.[4] "Research suggests that students who view intelligence as innate focus on their ability and its adequacy/inadequacy, whereas students who view intelligence as malleable use strategy and effort as they work toward mastery."[5]

Bust the Myth

- **Know that your beliefs affect your behaviors**. Cognitive psychologist Dr. Stephen Chew calls these "beliefs that make you stupid." Watch his video, below, for suggestions on how to overcome these beliefs.

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

- **Apply what you learn in practice**. Practice builds accuracy and fluency. This fluency also builds the confidence and flexibility to apply what you've learned in different situations. Professor of mathematics, Michael Starbird, describes how practice leads to deeper understanding in the following video:

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- **Feed your curiosity**. Ask questions, perform experiments, talk to experts, work with others, make mistakes, and explore your questions from many different angles. This helps develop a mindset of growth and will take you farther in your development.

Myth 2: I Only Need One Good Method for Studying

If your tried-and-true study strategies aren't working, use a different approach. Monitor your learning by measuring your knowledge against what you expect. Before you start studying, think about how it will go. Predict your homework and test results, and see if you're accurate or not. Notice when your expectations fall short of reality, or overshoot it, and adjust your approach accordingly. This is called "metacognition," and it's an important part of deep learning.

Bust the Myth

- **Reflect on your studying** by asking yourself these three questions: What did you do? Was it effective? What can you change? Practice self-testing, described in the following video:

YouTube Video

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- **Test your perceptions.** After an exam, make a prediction of how many questions/problems you answered correctly. When you get the test back, see how your score matched with your prediction. If you were way off, consider changing your study strategy to incorporate more self-testing, spaced study sessions and varied approaches to practice.
- **Use strategies** like generating your own questions and creating concept maps. Need some guidance? Take a look at the following video by Dr. Stephen Chew:

YouTube Video

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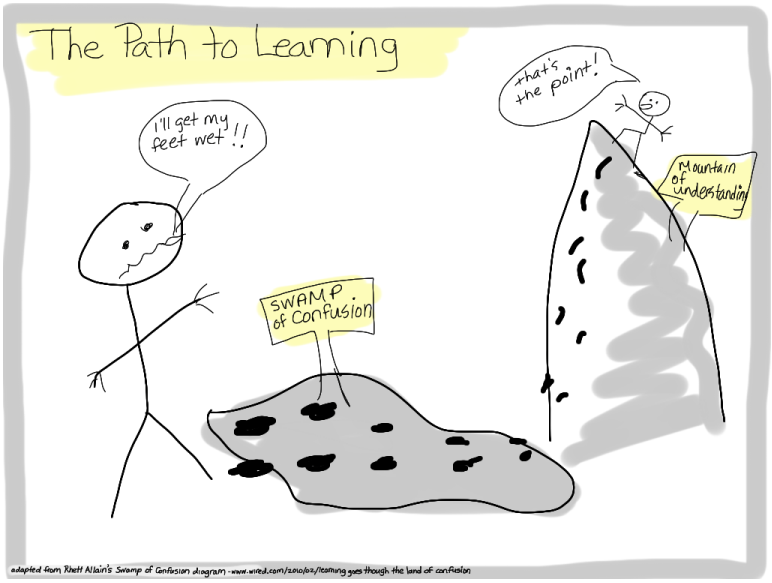
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Myth 3: If It's Easy, I Must Be Learning

When faced with familiar terms or examples, you might find yourself feeling like you really understand the material. But in fact your brain might really just be responding to the fact that it has seen this exact material before. This is called the familiarity trap—when everything seems familiar and your brain doesn't have to work so hard and so it feels like you've mastered the material, even though you haven't. Try to mix things up as you're studying.

More and more evidence suggests that confusion is where deep learning lies. It might even be that some level of confusion actually activates the parts of your brain that regulate learning and motivation, helping you achieve a greater level of understanding. If you're not confused, you might not be learning.

Try not to let yourself get discouraged if it feels like you aren't understanding something. Not understanding can be a good sign. For a brief explanation, see Learning Goes Through the Land of Confusion by Rhett Alan, a physics professor at Southern Louisiana University.



Bust the Myth

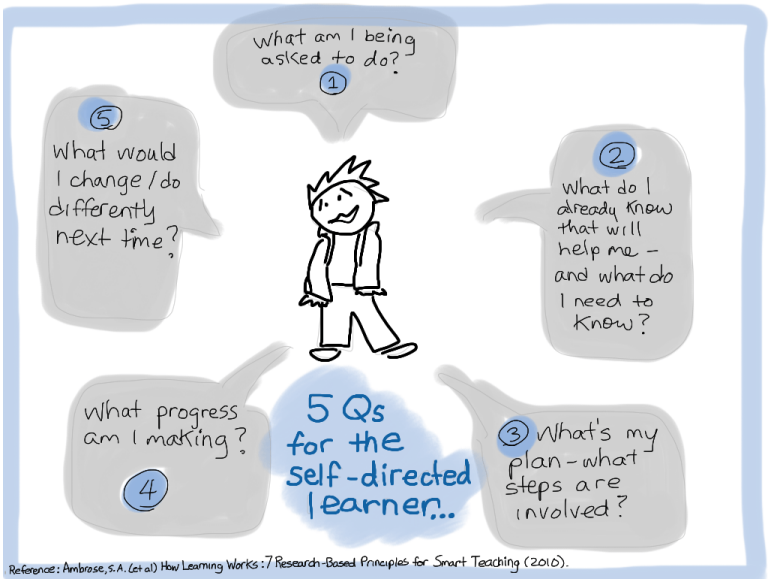
- Retrieve—don't regurgitate. Develop your own test questions, ask yourself questions, solve sample problems, and analyze for deeper meanings. Need some good questions to ask yourself? Try this: Why is this answer important? What does it relate to? How does this answer connect with what I already know? Can I elaborate this answer? Can I illustrate it with an example? Retrieving what you've learned from your memory helps you strengthen connections and relearn each time you do it, that is, every time you retrieve something from memory, you're essentially re-learning it and creating different pathways for retrieval. The more paths you create to knowledge, the more likely it is that you'll find a way there when you need it. You can find some more at the Teaching Professor Blog.
- If you're confused, don't give up. Working hard to understand a problem or to figure something out isn't a bad thing, and it will likely lead to a deeper understanding of the material, which will stay with you for a long time. This is especially important if your other courses build on that concept you are grappling with. If you need help developing new strategies, the following video might do the trick.

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Myth 4: Planning My Learning Is a Waste of Time



Being a self-directed learner requires planning. Answering the five questions from the graphic, above, can help to build a disciplined approach, which will help you tackle your academic work.

Planning can also help you develop a workable schedule for studying. “Research shows spacing study episodes out with breaks in between study sessions or repetitions of the same material is more effective than massing such study episodes. Massing practice is akin to cramming all night before the test.”[6]

Planning reduces stress, helps you avoid cramming, and builds skills in metacognition. Planning is an important part of any career or occupation, so learning to plan well contributes to your overall competency. Even learning to plan takes practice, so start early!

Bust the Myth

- **Target your studying**: Try to study key themes, and take what you know about the exam structure into account when you’re planning. If you know you’ll have an essay, write outlines! If you have to solve problems, go over homework or make up your own problems.
- **Review or practice throughout the term**. Without regular review, you may have to relearn a large portion of the course right before the final.

Myth 5: Failure should be avoided at all costs

“Every success is built on the ash heap of failed attempts.” This reminder from Prof. Michael Starbird (University of Texas at Austin) offers a good reason not to fear failure. Failure doesn’t often feel good, but it may be your best teacher in helping you learn deeply. In fact, in the book *5 Elements of Effective Thinking*, authors Edward Burger and Michael Starbird say that failure is an important foundation on which to build success.

But seeing failure as an opportunity for learning requires a fresh mindset. Once you make a mistake, you can ask, why is THAT wrong? Failure is an important aspect of much creative work, though it goes by a different name: iteration. Iteration is important in refining, working though problems, starting small, and refining until more can be added. Iteration is a feature of work in design, science, technology, and really any field where innovation is important.

Bust the Myth

- Use failure as an opportunity to rethink and relearn. Ask yourself why you got it wrong and what happened. What is an alternative approach? How might a new approach be more successful? Watch Prof. Michael Starbird’s video about making

mistakes as a strategy for learning:

YouTube Video

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- Give yourself permission to fail. When working through problems or studying unfamiliar concepts, consider allowing yourself to fail nine times before getting it right. This may free your mind to think creatively about solutions without the pressure to "get it right." You may find that repeated failures may actually lead you to new insights about the problem that you can take into other contexts.

Additional Study Techniques

The following are additional study techniques you can use to work your brain, raise your grades, perform well on assignments, and, most important, learn deeply.

- **Consider real-world applications**. Use what you are learning when tackling real world events or problems, or consider real-world applications of what you're learning. Reflect on how the skills and knowledge you are building can be used beyond college. This creates more pathways in your brain and can help keep you motivated.
- **Monitor your learning**. Self-monitoring your learning includes evaluating, planning, and reflecting on your learning strategies and approaches. Reflecting on what you've done helps you see the value of certain strategies that leverage your strengths and improve on your weaknesses. It also increases your sense of control over outcomes.
- **Seek specific and meaningful feedback**. Ask for and use feedback from instructors, teaching assistants, and peers to adjust your learning and studying techniques. This can help you avoid studying and working very hard without results.
- **Chunk the information you're studying**. With chunking, you break the concept you're struggling with into smaller pieces, and sort those pieces by theme. Focus on understanding these chunks and they'll be much easier to digest. Test yourself 5–15 minutes later. Mind maps and visual note taking can help with chunking.
- **Set priorities**. Set realistic goals and prioritize your studying by surveying your syllabus, reviewing material, and identifying the most important topics covered in the class, or areas you're struggling with.
- **Create association maps**. Mind maps and concept maps can lead to meaningful learning, as they force you to reorganize and make sense of the information. Redo your notes as a diagram or as a concept map.
- **Make connections**. What you're learning ideally applies to the real world. Make connections between course concepts, different courses, and real-world situations. If you're having trouble understanding something, ask yourself how these concepts apply to your life.
- **Ask questions to reduce bias**. Check your thinking by asking questions about what you're learning. What's being said? Who is saying it? Why are they saying it? Who else says this? What do I believe? Why do I believe it? What's missing? Asking good questions helps us solve problems, make thoughtful decisions, and think creatively.

Activity: Describe A Deep-Learning Experience

Objective

- Identify differences between passing a test and gaining knowledge (cramming versus learning)

Directions

- Review the list below of attributes of experiences that led to deep learning. Which of them remind you of an experience you had in which you learned deeply?
- Write a journal-style reflection (1–2 pages) of the deep-learning experience you remember. When and where did it take place?

How old were you? Were you with peers? Was it a classroom experience or did it take place in another environment—perhaps not a formal learning environment? What were your feelings at the time? What did you learn? Were you able to apply your newly gained knowledge to a real-world situation?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

Some Attributes of Deep-Learning Experiences

- Be actively involved with your learning.
- Be engaged in real and meaningful learning activities.
- Understand how the learning fits into a bigger picture beyond the structure of a course or class.
- Engage in reflective writing that personalizes your learning.
- Sense or believe that you are in a supportive environment without fear of making mistakes or fear of taking risks.
- Sense a freedom from judgment of others.
- Actively synthesize concepts.
- Actively relate the information to your life and experience.
- Actively integrate new ideas and knowledge with existing knowledge.
- Engage in discussion with peers or others.
- Take deep interest in the subject.
- Reflect on your learning.

Getting the Most out of Peer Groups

Studying with fellow classmates and/or working with them on projects and class assignments can significantly enhance deep learning. Group work can help teams chunk bigger tasks into more manageable parts and steps. It can also help participants manage their time better. In addition, group work often involves discussion and collaboration, which can improve everyone's understanding of the material. Another benefit is the opportunity for feedback on ideas and performance. And working in groups always helps members develop stronger communication skills—both speaking and listening skills.

Getting the most out of working in a group, though, itself requires some special skills. The following video, *Group Work*, from the University of British Columbia, offers some pointers.

YouTube Video

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Below is a summary of the key points in the video:

- Know your strengths and learn what others can bring to the table. Consider these strengths when assigning roles or project tasks.
- First meetings are key to setting a good tone. Plan enough time to
  - Learn people's goals for the group
  - Learn people's strengths
  - Assign roles
  - Set up a meeting schedule
  - Review the tools you will need to support your work (Google docs, Wiki page, etc.)
- Be clear about everyone's goals so that the group has a clear idea of what people expect to get from the group study process. Goals are important to motivation.
- Get everyone working:
  - Assign tasks that play to individual strengths
  - Assign a progress-checker role to follow up on progress
  - Use meetings to review progress and provide guidance and support where needed.

    - Choose a good online tool to help you collect and respond to one another's ideas and questions between meetings.
- Conflict is natural and can be necessary to achieve collaboration. Learn to manage it.
    - Develop effective communication skills.
    - Work toward mutual understanding.
    - Keep group interests at the forefront.
    - Be flexible in looking for solutions.
    - Make sure solutions work for everyone.

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2.4.7: Academic Honesty



I would prefer even to fail with honor than win by cheating. —Sophocles

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define academic honesty and common forms of academic dishonesty
- Identify common scenarios that can lead to academic dishonesty, and possible consequences
- Identify strategies for avoiding plagiarism

Academic Honesty and Dishonesty

At most educational institutions, “academic honesty” means demonstrating and upholding the highest integrity and honesty in all the academic work that you do. In short, it means doing your own work and not cheating, and not presenting the work of others as your own.

The following are some common forms of academic dishonesty prohibited by most academic institutions:

Cheating

Cheating can take the form of crib notes, looking over someone’s shoulder during an exam, or any forbidden sharing of information between students regarding an exam or exercise. Many elaborate methods of cheating have been developed over the years—from hiding notes in the bathroom toilet tank to storing information in graphing calculators, pagers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Cheating differs from most other forms of academic dishonesty, in that people can engage in it without benefiting themselves academically at all. For example, a student who illicitly telegraphed answers to a friend during a test would be cheating, even though the student’s own work is in no way affected.

Deception

Deception is providing false information to an instructor concerning an academic assignment. Examples of this include taking more time on a take-home test than is allowed, giving a dishonest excuse when asking for a deadline extension, or falsely claiming to have submitted work.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the falsification of data, information, or citations in an academic assignment. This includes making up citations to back up arguments or inventing quotations. Fabrication is most common in the natural sciences, where students sometimes falsify data to make experiments "work" or false claims are made about the research performed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, as defined in the 1995 *Random House Compact Unabridged Dictionary*, is the "use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work."[1] In an academic setting, it is seen as the adoption or reproduction of original intellectual creations (such as concepts, ideas, methods, pieces of information or expressions, etc.) of another author (whether an individual, group, or organization) without proper acknowledgment. This can range from borrowing a particular phrase or sentence to paraphrasing someone else's original idea without citing it. Today, in our networked digital world, the most common form of plagiarism is copying and pasting online material without crediting the source.

Common Forms of Plagiarism

According to "The Reality and Solution of College Plagiarism" created by the Health Informatics department of the University of Illinois at Chicago, there are ten main forms of plagiarism that students commit:

1. Submitting someone else's work as their own.
2. Taking passages from their own previous work without adding citations.
3. Rewriting someone's work without properly citing sources.
4. Using quotations, but not citing the source.
5. Interweaving various sources together in the work without citing.
6. Citing some, but not all passages that should be cited.
7. Melding together cited and uncited sections of the piece.
8. Providing proper citations, but failing to change the structure and wording of the borrowed ideas enough.
9. Inaccurately citing the source.
10. Relying too heavily on other people's work. Failing to bring original thought into the text.

As a college student, you are now a member of a scholarly community that values other people's ideas. In fact, you will routinely be asked to reference and discuss other people's thoughts and writing in the course of producing your own work. That's why it's so important to understand what plagiarism is and steps you can take to avoid it.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Below are some useful guidelines to help you avoid plagiarism and show academic honesty in your work:

- **Quotes:** If you quote another work directly in your work, cite your source.
- **Paraphrase:** If put someone else's idea into your own words, you still need to cite the author.
- **Visual Materials:** If you cite statistics, graphs, or charts from a study, cite the source. Keep in mind that if you didn't do the original research, then you need to credit the person(s) or institution, etc. that did.

The easiest way to make sure you don't accidentally plagiarize someone else's work is by taking careful notes as you research. If you are doing research on the Web, be sure to copy and paste the links into your notes so can keep track of the sites you're visiting. Be sure to list all the sources you consult.

There are many handy online tools to help you create and track references as you go. For example, you can try using Son of Citation Machine. Keeping careful notes will not only help you avoid inadvertent plagiarism; it will also help you if you need to return to a source later (to check or get more information). If you use citation tools like Son of Citation, be sure to check the accuracy of the citations before you submit your assignment.

Lastly, if you're in doubt about whether something constitutes plagiarism, cite the source or leave the material out. Better still, ask for help. Most colleges have a writing center, a tutoring center, and a library where students can get help with their writing. Taking the time to seek advice is better than getting in trouble for not attributing your sources. Be honest about your ideas, and

give credit where it's due.

Consequences of Plagiarism

In the academic world, plagiarism by students is usually considered a very serious offense that can result in punishments such as a failing grade on the particular assignment, the entire course, or even being expelled from the institution. Individual instructors and courses may have their own policies regarding academic honesty and plagiarism; statements of these can usually be found in the course syllabus or online course description.

Activity: Gather Campus Resources

Objective

- Identify common scenarios that can lead to academic dishonesty, and possible consequences

Directions

- Indiana University has a clever list of different types of plagiarism. Their names for different types of plagiarism can help you learn how to avoid situations of academic dishonesty. Go to this link and read through the various examples. Jot down a few notes on examples that are new to you.
- Start by finding information about plagiarism in one of your courses. You may find information on the course syllabus and/or the course Web site. You may want to bookmark this information or make a note to yourself. Knowing your rights as a student may help if there is a misunderstanding.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/904

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2.4.8: Evaluating Results



However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results. —Winston Churchill

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the learning benefits of test taking
- Identify strategies for learning from mistakes and from doing poorly on tests or exams

Learning from Testing and Test Results[1]

Earlier in this module we discussed strategies for taking tests and for reducing the anxiety that can accompany them. We also touched on some reasons why tests are such a central part of the educational experience: namely, they yield important learning data that instructors and administrators can use to improve teaching and education. You may be thinking, "Well, I'm glad to help out and provide my valuable 'learning data,' but what about me? Tests still seem like a cruel exercise designed to torment students and stress them out."

In this section we offer a response to that thought: believe it or not, testing benefits you, too. Consider the following:[2]

- You may learn more when you take a test than when you study for it or are just taught the material. For example, if you are asked to learn five formulas for a math test, you will likely remember the three formulas you are actually tested on better than the others.
- When you are tested—especially often—it encourages you to study more and procrastinate less.
- The more you retrieve information, as you do during a test or quiz, the more likely you are to retain it in the long run.
- Taking a test helps your brain organize knowledge better, and that helps you retrieve the knowledge more efficiently.

So, testing is not just a method of measuring how much you know (or torturing you). It can actually help you learn. In addition, the results of a test—even when you don't do very well—can also enhance your learning in valuable ways.

Learning from Mistakes

Two of the most important messages that students hear from teachers is "Don't be afraid to fail" and "Learn from your

mistakes—yours, mine, and ours." The following TedEd talk explores these familiar ideas. The speaker, Diana Laufenberg, makes the case for why learning through experience, feeling empowered, and embracing failure are all so important to students—so much more so than just going to school to get information. You can download a transcript of the video here.

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The idea of "learning from one's mistakes" seems straightforward enough . . . but how does one actually do it? After all, who isn't disappointed to get a low grade on anything—a test, a quiz, a paper, a project? We all want to do well. Consider the following college students evaluating their own performance:

I recently took a general biology exam and I was so certain that I got all questions right—that I got a 100 percent on the exam. Then I found out this morning that I got a 94 percent! And what annoys me more than the grade is the fact that my mistakes were dumb. Why did I make dumb mistakes? The tests are timed and I don't have much time to check my answers.[3]

I'm so mad at myself. I've tried everything, I come back to look at the answer after I've completed the rest of the test. I go over the answers carefully. It seems as though no matter what I do I can't catch my mistakes. I just did it on an accounting test. I missed one question because I didn't notice the answer was "All of the above." I have the same problem in another class.

At times we can be hard on ourselves, especially if we feel we could have done better. Learning from mistakes takes practice and reinforcement. As Diana Laufenberg pointed out in her Ted Talk, mistakes can be one of the most important events that happen in a classroom, because they tell you where you need to focus next.[4]

After you get over the disappointment of making a mistake in the first place, the next step is to home in on why you made it. That's the learning opportunity. Below are some tips for following up on—and addressing—a range of errors that students commonly make on exams and other assessments.

Tips for Test Follow-up[5]

TEST-TAKING ERROR	WHERE TO FOCUS NEXT
I didn't read the directions correctly.	Read all directions slowly and carefully. Underline or highlight key words so that you affirm your clear understanding.
I didn't read the question properly.	Sometimes the brain sees what it wants to see rather than what is actually written or presented. This can happen if you didn't study the right material or if you wanted to answer a question that isn't quite the question you are being asked. If you are in a high-pressure situation, mistakes can be all the more an issue. Read each question thoroughly, then read it again. Underline or highlight key words.
I was careless.	Watch carefully for simple mistakes as you work each problem. Save time to review each problem step-by-step. Check again before you submit.
I just didn't understand.	Go back to your study materials, textbook, or media and learn why you missed the problems. Talk with your instructor.
I knew the concept but I didn't apply it properly to the problem.	When you are studying, practice predicting the type of problems that will be on the test. Ask in advance.

TEST-TAKING ERROR	WHERE TO FOCUS NEXT
I messed up on the last part of the test. This seems to be a recurring problem.	If you find that you consistently miss more questions in a certain part of a test, use your remaining test time to review that part of the test first.
I didn't complete the full problem.	When you review your test before turning it in, review the last step of a problem first. When the last steps are checked, then you can do a review of the full test.
I changed a few test answers from the correct ones to incorrect ones.	If you find this happening regularly, try not to second-guess yourself. You can write on your test "Don't change answers." Only change answers if you have double-checked and if you can prove to yourself that the changed answer is correct.
I got stuck on one problem and spent too much time on it.	Set a time limit for each problem before moving to the next one.
I have a tendency to rush through the easiest part of the test, and then I make silly errors.	After finishing the test, review the easy problems first, then review the harder problems. But do try to answer the easiest questions first; this way you get good points right off the bat, which can also increase your confidence. Answer trickier questions after the easier ones.
I had the correct answer on my scratch sheet but I copied it wrong onto the test.	Systematically compare your last problem step on scratch paper with the answer on the test. Place your scratch paper on top of the test paper, not off to the side.
I left some answers blank.	It usually pays to write something rather than nothing. Insert minimal information or the first step, etc.
I studied the wrong type of material.	Participating in a study group can help keep individuals on the right track. Start studying well in advance of an exam. Give yourself time to discover and focus.
I left the exam room a bit early.	You may be tempted to leave the exam room as soon as you believe you are truly done, but force yourself to take a little more time to review your work. You may find areas that could use tweaking, perhaps even spelling or grammar errors. Patience pays off.
I was tired.	Your body chemistry can help or hinder you during a test. Get a good night's rest the night before an exam. Eat a solid breakfast in the morning. Avoid sugary items because they can cause your blood sugar to drop and make you sleepy or foggy brained. Some students meditate beforehand to clear and focus the mind and affirm an intention to do well.
I feel deflated by my grade.	You can learn from any mistakes and do better next time. Study more, review mistakes, and be sure to congratulate yourself for getting through the exam. Identify one fun thing you are proud of and happy about.

Reflection and Further Study

For some additional guidance on what to do in the event of failure and how to proceed with your studies, watch Dr. Stephen Chew's video *I Blew The Exam—Now What?*

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Chew emphasizes the following points:

What not to do:

- Don't panic
- Don't go into denial

What to do:

- Do examine how you prepared; be honest with yourself
- Do review the exam; compare errors with notes taken
- Do talk with your professor
- Do examine your study habits
- Do develop a plan

Helpful strategies to raise your grade:

- Commit time and effort
- Minimize distractions
- Attend class
- Set realistic goals
- Don't begin to slide
- Don't give away points

Don't be the student who . . .

- Keeps studying the same way, hoping to improve
- Waits until the end of the term to ask for help
- Skips class to focus on other classes
- Falls further behind waiting to find time to catch up
- Crams at the last minute
- Doesn't do assignments because they are small or late
- Panics and gives up

Activity: Learn from Returned Tests

Objective

- Identify strategies for learning from mistakes and from doing poorly on tests or exams

Directions

- Visit Duquesne University's Web site, Help Students to Learn from Returned Tests. It has exam wrappers, post-test surveys, and error-analysis exercises you can use to help you learn from returned exams and perform better on future tests.
- Keep in mind this sage advice: "All too often when students receive a graded exam, they focus on a single feature—the score they earned. Although this focus on 'the grade' is understandable, it can lead students to miss out on several learning

opportunities that such an assessment can provide." (Ambrose, et al, 2010)

https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/905

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2.5: COLLEGE LEVEL CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

2.5.1: Words of Wisdom- Thinking Critically and Creatively

2.5.2: Comprehending College Level Reading by Using the Reading Apprenticeship Approach

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2.5.1: Words of Wisdom- Thinking Critically and Creatively

Dr. Andrew Robert Baker

Critical and creative thinking skills are perhaps the most fundamental skills involved in making judgments and solving problems. They are some of the most important skills I have ever developed. I use them everyday and continue to work to improve them both.

The ability to think critically about a matter—to analyze a question, situation, or problem down to its most basic parts—is what helps us evaluate the accuracy and truthfulness of statements, claims, and information we read and hear. It is the sharp knife that, when honed, separates fact from fiction, honesty from lies, and the accurate from the misleading. We all use this skill to one degree or another almost every day. For example, we use critical thinking every day as we consider the latest consumer products and why one particular product is the best among its peers. Is it a quality product because a celebrity endorses it? Because a lot of other people may have used it? Because it is made by one company versus another? Or perhaps because it is made in one country or another? These are questions representative of critical thinking.

The academic setting demands more of us in terms of critical thinking than everyday life. It demands that we evaluate information and analyze a myriad of issues. It is the environment where our critical thinking skills can be the difference between success and failure. In this environment we must consider information in an analytical, critical manner. We must ask questions—What is the source of this information? Is this source an expert one and what makes it so? Are there multiple perspectives to consider on an issue? Do multiple sources agree or disagree on an issue? Does quality research substantiate information or opinion? Do I have *any* personal biases that may affect my consideration of this information? It is only through purposeful, frequent, intentional questioning such as this that we can sharpen our critical thinking skills and improve as students, learners, and researchers. Developing my critical thinking skills over a twenty year period as a student in higher education enabled me to complete a quantitative dissertation, including analyzing research and completing statistical analysis, and earning my Ph.D. in 2014.

While critical thinking analyzes information and roots out the true nature and facets of problems, it is *creative* thinking that drives progress forward when it comes to solving these problems. Exceptional creative thinkers are people that invent new solutions to existing problems that do not rely on past or current solutions. They are the ones who invent solution C when everyone else is still arguing between A and B. Creative thinking skills involve using strategies to clear the mind so that our thoughts and ideas can transcend the current limitations of a problem and allow us to see beyond barriers that prevent new solutions from being found.

Brainstorming is the simplest example of intentional creative thinking that most people have tried at least once. With the quick generation of many ideas at once we can block-out our brain's natural tendency to limit our solution-generating abilities so we can access and combine many possible solutions/thoughts and invent new ones. It is sort of like sprinting through a race's finish line only to find there is new track on the other side and we can keep going, if we choose. As with critical thinking, higher education both demands creative thinking from us and is the perfect place to practice and develop the skill. Everything from word problems in a math class, to opinion or persuasive speeches and papers, call upon our creative thinking skills to generate new solutions and perspectives in response to our professor's demands. Creative thinking skills ask questions such as—What if? Why not? What else is out there? Can I combine perspectives/solutions? What is something no one else has brought-up? What is being forgotten/ignored? What about _____? It is the opening of doors and options that follows problem-identification.

Consider an assignment that required you to compare two different authors on the topic of education and select and defend one as better. Now add to this scenario that your professor clearly prefers one author over the other. While critical thinking can get you as far as identifying the similarities and differences between these authors and evaluating their merits, it is creative thinking that you must use if you wish to challenge your professor's opinion and invent new perspectives on the authors that have not previously been considered.

So, what can we do to develop our critical and creative thinking skills? Although many students may dislike it, group work is an excellent way to develop our thinking skills. Many times I have heard from students their disdain for working in groups based on scheduling, varied levels of commitment to the group or project, and personality conflicts too, of course. True—it's not always easy, but that is why it is so effective. When we work collaboratively on a project or problem we bring many brains to bear on a subject. These different brains will naturally develop varied ways of solving or explaining problems and examining information. To the observant individual we see that this places us in a constant state of back and forth critical/creative thinking modes.

For example, in group work we are simultaneously analyzing information and generating solutions on our own, while challenging other's analyses/ideas and responding to challenges to our own analyses/ideas. This is part of why students tend to avoid group work—it challenges us as thinkers and forces us to analyze others while defending ourselves, which is not something we are used to or comfortable with as most of our educational experiences involve solo work. Your professors know this—that's why we assign it—to help you grow as students, learners, and thinkers!

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2.5.2: Comprehending College Level Reading by Using the Reading Apprenticeship Approach

Phyllis Nissila



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Most students entering college have not yet dealt with the level of difficulty involved in reading–and comprehending–scholarly textbooks and articles. The challenge may even surprise some who have pretty good reading and comprehension skills so far. Other students for whom reading has mostly consisted of social media, texts, forum chat rooms, and emails, find they are intimidated by the sheer *amount* of reading there is in college classes.

Reading Comprehension Definition

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. Comprehension is a "creative, multifaceted process" dependent upon four language skills: phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. It is also determined by an individual's cognitive development, which is "the construction of thought processes." Some people learn through education or instruction and others through direct experiences.

There are specific traits that determine how successfully an individual will comprehend text, including prior knowledge about the subject, well-developed language, and the ability to make inferences. Having the skill to monitor comprehension is a factor: "Why is this important?" and "Do I need to read the entire text?" are examples. Another trait is the ability to be self-correcting, which allows for solutions to comprehension challenges.

Reading Comprehension Levels

Reading comprehension involves two levels of processing, shallow (low-level) processing and deep (high-level) processing. Deep processing involves semantic processing, which happens when we encode the meaning of a word and relate it to similar words. Shallow processing involves structural and phonemic recognition, the processing of sentence and word structure and their associated sounds. This theory was first identified by Fergus I. M. Craik and Robert S. Lockhart.

Brain Region Activation

Comprehension levels can now be observed through the use of a fMRI, functional magnetic resonance imaging. fMRIs' are used

to determine the specific neural pathways of activation across two conditions, narrative-level comprehension and sentence-level comprehension. Images showed that there was less brain region activation during sentence-level comprehension, suggesting a shared reliance with comprehension pathways. The scans also showed an enhanced temporal activation during narrative levels tests indicating this approach activates situation and spatial processing.

History

Initially most comprehension teaching was based on imparting selected techniques that when taken together would allow students to be strategic readers. However, in 40 years of testing these methods never seemed to win support in empirical research. One such strategy for improving reading comprehension is the technique called SQ3R: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review, that was introduced by Francis Pleasant Robinson in his 1946 book *Effective Study*.

Between 1969 and to about 2000 a number of "strategies" were devised for teaching students to employ self-guided methods for improving reading comprehension. In 1969 Anthony Manzo designed and found empirical support for the ReQuest, or Reciprocal Questioning Procedure, it was the first method to convert emerging theories of social and imitation learning into teaching methods through the use of a talk rotation between students and teacher called cognitive modeling.

Since the turn of the 21st century, comprehension lessons usually consist of students answering teachers' questions, writing responses to questions on their own, or both. The whole group version of this practice also often included "Round-robin reading", wherein teachers called on individual students to read a portion of the text. In the last quarter of the 20th century, evidence accumulated that the read-test methods were more successful assessing rather than teaching comprehension. Instead of using the prior read-test method, research studies have concluded that there are much more effective ways to teach comprehension. Much work has been done in the area of teaching novice readers a bank of "reading strategies," or tools to interpret and analyze text.

Instruction in comprehension strategy use often involves the gradual release of responsibility, wherein teachers initially explain and model strategies. Over time, they give students more and more responsibility for using the strategies until they can use them independently. This technique is generally associated with the idea of self-regulation and reflects social cognitive theory, originally conceptualized by Albert Bandura.

Vocabulary

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are inextricably linked. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve comprehension is to improve vocabulary.

Most words are learned gradually through a wide variety of environments: television, books, and conversations. Some words are more complex and difficult to learn, such as homonyms, words that have multiple meanings and those with figurative meanings, like idioms, similes, and metaphors.

Three Tier Vocabulary Words

Several theories of vocabulary instruction exist, namely, one focused on intensive instruction of a few high value words, one focused on broad instruction of many useful words, and a third focused on strategies for learning low frequency, context specific vocabulary.

Broad Vocabulary Approach

The method of focusing of broad instruction on many words was developed by Andrew Biemiller who argued that more words would benefit students more, even if the instruction was short and teacher-directed. He suggested that teachers teach a large number of words before reading a book to students, by merely giving short definitions, such as synonyms, and then pointing out the words and their meaning while reading the book to students. The method contrasts with the approach by emphasizing quantity versus quality. There is no evidence to suggest the primacy of either approach.

Morphemic Instruction

Another vocabulary technique, strategies for learning new words, can be further subdivided into instruction on using context and instruction on using morphemes, or meaningful units within words to learn their meaning. Morphemic instruction has been shown to produce positive outcomes for students reading and vocabulary knowledge, but context has proved unreliable as a strategy and it is no longer considered a useful strategy to teach students. This conclusion does not disqualify the value in "learning" morphemic analysis – prefixes, suffixes and roots – but rather suggests that it be imparted incidentally and in context. Accordingly, there are methods designed to achieve this, such as Incidental Morpheme Analysis.

Reciprocal Teaching

In the 1980s Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann L. Brown developed a technique called reciprocal teaching that taught students to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for sections of a text. The use of strategies like summarizing after each paragraph have come to be seen as effective strategies for building students' comprehension. The idea is that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text.

Instructional Conversations

"Instructional conversations", or comprehension through discussion, create higher-level thinking opportunities for students by promoting critical and aesthetic thinking about the text. There are several types of questions that a teacher should focus on: remembering; testing understanding; application or solving; invite synthesis or creating; and evaluation and judging. Teachers should model these types of questions through "think-alouds" before, during, and after reading a text. When a student can relate a passage to an experience, another book, or other facts about the world, they are "making a connection." Making connections help students understand the author's purpose and fiction or non-fiction story.

Text Factors

There are factors, that once discerned, make it easier for the reader to understand the written text. One is the genre, like folktales, historical fiction, biographies or poetry. Each genre has its own characteristics for text structure, that once understood help the reader comprehend it. A story is composed of a plot, characters, setting, point of view, and theme. Informational books provide real world knowledge for students and have unique features such as: headings, maps, vocabulary, and an index. Poems are written in different forms and the most commonly used are: rhymed verse, haiku, free verse, and narratives. Poetry uses devices such as: alliteration, repetition, rhyme, metaphors, and similes. "When children are familiar with genres, organizational patterns, and text features in books they're reading, they're better able to create those text factors in their own writing."

The Reading Apprenticeship (RA) Approach to Comprehension

Now to some strategies to help you with some typical college-level comprehension challenges as well as some of your specific challenges identified in the previous exercise.

This lesson focuses on a method called Reading Apprenticeship. It is based on the premise that people who have become expert readers can assist learners by modeling what they have learned to do. As explained in the text, *Reading for Understanding, How Reading Apprenticeship Improves Disciplinary Learning in Secondary and College Classrooms,* "One literacy educator describes the idea of the cognitive apprenticeship in reading by comparing the process of learning to read with that of learning to ride a bike. In both cases, a more proficient other is present to support the beginner, engaging the beginner in the activity and calling attention to often overlooked or hidden strategies."

This is a strategy that takes a metacognitive approach to comprehension, utilizing various strategies readers may already know they know how to do, then adding more. For example, most readers have learned to make predictions, ask questions concerning meanings ("I wonder about..."), visualize a scene being described, associate the material being read to some other material, and, at the end, summarize the material.

I like to call these our "hard drive" skills. Like a computer hard drive always humming in the background doing its thing behind the scenes, our metacognitive skills have already been assisting us as readers. We just don't usually talk about what we are doing, for example, "Well, by golly, now I'm predicting what Godzilla will do to the poor villagers in about two scenes from now," we just automatically predict, especially if we are familiar with characters and plot lines. For another example, "I am now going to

visualize this scene in graveyard when Hamlet comes across the deceased court jester's skull in Act V, Scene 1." We just *see* it in our mind's eye.

Now review and affirm important comprehension skills you already possess and complete the exercise below.

Exercise

Go back through the excerpt, above, on reading comprehension and THIS time, write marginal notes where you used any of the comprehension tools listed below:

- predicting
- asking questions of the material such as, "I wonder about," "Could this mean?"
- visualizing
- connecting this material to something else you have learned
- noting where you think you might need to read something over again for comprehension
- summarizing

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2.5.3: Getting the Most Out of Your Textbooks

Phyllis Nissila

Reading Textbooks: Front and Back Matter



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Before diving into every line of text in a textbook reading assignment, it is helpful–and saves time–to find out, first, what resources the entire book has to offer you. Then, as those chapter readings are assigned, it helps to first skim read them for the big picture meaning.

The first exercise in this chapter will help you find all the resources in your textbook–and some textbooks have a lot more help in the front matter and back matter of the text than you may realize. I always think of one student who, when given this exercise to use on any textbook he had with him, picked his math book. He was at that time re-taking that math class because he had failed it the term before. As he did the exercise, he realized the back matter of the book included an answer key for half of the problems for every exercise. "Had I known this last term," he said, "I would have passed!" See if you, too, find something useful in your textbook that perhaps you didn't know was there, either.

The Exercises in this chapter cover strategies for skim reading specific chapters and a strategy for getting the most out of graphics included in textbooks.

Exercise

Here is a list of several kinds of resources typically in the front of a textbook, known as "front matter," and a list of typical "back matter" resources. For one of your textbooks, put a check mark next to the front and back matter features it includes, then answer the two questions, below.

Textbook title_____

FRONT MATTER

__Table of Contents

___Preface

___Introduction

___To the Teacher

___To the Student

___Other (list, here): _____

BACK MATTER

___Glossary of Terms

___Index of subjects

___Answer Keys

___Additional Exercises

___Additional Readings

___Tables, graphs, charts

___Maps

___Other (list, here): _____

Answer the following questions:

1. Were there any surprises for you?
2. How can you use the front and back matter in your text to help you with your studies? (3 or 4 sentences)

Skim Reading Textbook Chapters

Before doing a detailed reading of a textbook chapter, get the big picture by following these steps:

- Similar to reading the Table of Contents for the entire book, read the Introduction or Chapter Overview, whichever the textbook features, for the main ideas and how they are divided.
- Read the headings and sub-headings.
- Note the graphics (charts, tables, illustrations, etc.).
- Read the first one or two sentences in the paragraphs (the paragraph topic is sometimes covered in more than one sentence).
- Read the last sentence in each paragraph which might be a paragraph summary.
- Read the summary of the entire chapter, if given.
- Read any sentence with boldface or italicized words or word groups in it (usually either key ideas or technical terms).
- Stop when needed if you come across a complicated idea or topic and take a little more time to skim it until you understand it.
- Skim the study questions, too. They will help you focus on key points.

Exercise

Using the recommendations on how to skim through textbook chapters, do so with a textbook chapter of your choice. When you are finished, close the book and write about the following: write down as many of the main ideas of this chapter as you can remember by skim reading it. Try not to look back. When finished, check your work to make sure you have transcribed the information correctly.

Reading Graphics



"Statistic" by JuralMin is in the Public Domain, CC0

Listed below are various types of data found on most graphics, whether a pie chart, bar graph, line chart, or other type.

The key to comprehending graphics and using them to get more meaning from a textbook chapter or an article, or to answer study questions, is to pay close attention to the typical elements of the graphic. Not every graphic includes all of the elements listed.

1. Title
2. Captions
3. Legend
4. Axis information (vertical information, or "Y" data, and horizontal information, or "X" data)
5. Publication date (important for the most current information)
6. Publisher (important for credibility)
7. Labels
8. Color (used to differentiate and compare data)
9. Size (also used to represent comparisons)
10. Spatial positions (helps for comparing and contrasting)
11. Patterns represented by the content, itself, and
12. Trends that appear more evident when viewing the visual representation of the data.

It is easy to overlook all of the information present in a graphic, so give yourself enough time to note all the elements and their meanings before answering questions about them. This exercise offers some practice.

Exercise

This exercise uses Thematic Maps of the United States Census Bureau.

1. Choose a theme of the many listed that include, for example, Agricultural, Business, Income and Poverty, and Natural Disasters. There are many categories to choose from.
2. Click through to the actual graphic for the information on that theme. For example, click on Natural Disasters, then Hurricane Katrina Resource Maps, then to more options listed from there.
3. Write down the title of the thematic graphic you choose, and list all of the elements of the graphic from the list, above. Not all may be present on the specific type of graphic you choose.
4. Summarize three things you learned about the information presented in this graphic form.

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2.5.4: Reading Textbooks

Dave Dillon

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."

– Walt Disney

Practice

If you want to be a better swimmer, you practice. If you want to be a better magician, you practice. If you want to be a better reader, you practice. I encourage you to read. Read, read, read. Read newspapers. Read magazines. Read books. Use your library card (get one if you don't have one). Read blogs. Read tweets. Read Wikipedia articles. Read about history, politics, world leaders, current events, sports, art, music—whatever interests you. Why? Because the more you read, the better reader you become. And because the more you read, the more knowledge you will have. That is an important piece in learning and understanding. When we are learning new information, it's easier to learn if we have some kind of background knowledge about it.

Background Knowledge

In their book, *Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum*, Vacca and Vacca postulate that a student's prior knowledge is "the single most important resource in learning with texts."[1]

Reading and learning are processes that work together. Students draw on prior knowledge and experiences to make sense of new information. "Research shows that if learners have advanced knowledge of how the information they're about to learn is organized — if they see how the parts relate to the whole before they attempt to start learning the specifics — they're better able to comprehend and retain the material."[2]

For example, you are studying astronomy and the lecture is about Mars. Students with knowledge of what Mars looks like, or how it compares in size to other planets or any information about Mars will help students digest new information and connect it to prior knowledge. The more you read, the more background knowledge you have, and the better you will be able to connect information and learn. "Content overlap between text and knowledge appears to be a necessary condition for learning from text."[3]

There are a lot of recent advances in technology that have made information more accessible to us. Use this resource! If you are going to read a chemistry textbook, experiment with listening or watching a podcast or a YouTube video on the subject you are studying. Ask your instructor if they recommend specific websites for further understanding.

"The greatest gift is a passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you the knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination."

– Elizabeth Hardwick

The Seven Reading Principles

Read the assigned material. I know this sounds like a no-brainer, but you might be surprised to learn how many students don't read the assigned material. Often, it takes longer to read the material than had been anticipated. Sometimes it is not interesting material to us and we procrastinate reading it. Sometimes we're busy and it is just not a priority. It makes it difficult to learn the information your instructor wants you to learn if you do not read about it before coming to class.

Read it when assigned. This is almost as big of a problem for students as the first principle. You will benefit exponentially from reading assignments when they are assigned (which usually means reading them before the instructor lectures on them). If there is a date for a reading on your syllabus, finish reading it before that date. The background knowledge you will attain from reading the information will help you learn and connect information when your instructor lectures on it, and it will leave you better prepared for class discussions. Further, if your instructor assigns you 70 pages to read by next week, don't wait until the night

before to read it all. Break it down into chunks. Try scheduling time each day to read 10 or so pages. It takes discipline and self-control but doing it this way will make understanding and remembering what you read much easier.

Take notes when you read. You may recall Hermann Ebbinghaus' research from a previous chapter. He determined that 42% of information we take in is lost after only 20 minutes without review. For the same reasons that it's important to take notes during lectures, it's important to take notes when you are reading. Your notes will help you concentrate, remember and review.

Relate the information to you. We remember information that we deem is important. The strategy then is to make what you are studying important to you. Find a way to directly relate what you are studying to something in your life. Sometimes it is easy and sometimes it is not. But if your attitude is "I will never use this information" and "it's not important," chances are good that you will not remember it.

Read with a dictionary or use an online dictionary. Especially with information that is new to us, we may not always recognize all the words in a textbook or their meanings. If you read without a dictionary and you don't know what a word means, you probably still won't know what it means when you finish reading. Students who read with a dictionary (or who look the word up online) expand their vocabulary and have a better understanding of the text. Take the time to look up words you do not know. Another strategy is to try to determine definitions of unknown words by context, thus eliminating the interruption to look up words.

Ask a classmate or instructor when you have questions or if there are concepts you do not understand. Visiting an instructor's office hours is one of the most underutilized college resources. I think some students are shy about going, and I understand that, but ultimately, it's your experience, and it's up to you if you want to make the most of it. If you go, you will get answers to your questions; at the same time, you'll demonstrate to your instructor that their course is important to you. Find out when your professor's office hours are (they are often listed in the syllabus), ask before or after class or e-mail your professor to find out. Be polite and respectful.

Read it again. Some students will benefit from reading the material a second or third time as it allows them to better understand the material. The students who understand the material the best usually score the highest on exams. It may be especially helpful to reread the chapter just after the instructor has lectured on it.

Strategies To Think About When You Open Your Textbook

Preview: Look at what you are reading and how it is connected with other areas of the class. How does it connect with the lecture? How does it connect with the course description? How does it connect with the syllabus or with a specific assignment? What piece of the puzzle are you looking at and how does it fit into the whole picture? If your textbook has a chapter summary, reading it first may help you preview and understand what you are going to be reading.

Headings and designated words: Pay close attention to section headings and subheadings, and boldface, underlined or italicized words and sentences. There is a reason why these are different than regular text. The author feels they are more important and so should you.

Highlighting: Highlighting is not recommended because there is not evidence supporting it helps students with reading comprehension or higher test scores.[4]

Pace: One of the biggest challenges I see students have with reading is accurately assessing how long it will take to read what is assigned. In many cases, it's important to break the information up in chunks rather than to try and read it all at once. If you procrastinate and leave it until the day before it needs to be read, and then find out it will take you longer than you anticipate, it causes problems. One strategy that works well for many students is to break the information up equally per day and adjust accordingly if it takes longer than you had thought. Accurately estimating how much time it will take to practice the seven reading principles applied to your reading assignments is a skill that takes practice.

"Drink Deeply from Good Books"

– John Wooden

It's Not All Equal

Keep in mind that the best students develop reading skills that are different for different subjects. The main question you want to ask yourself is: Who are you reading for? And what are the questions that drive the discipline? We read different things for

different purposes. Reading texts, blogs, leisure books and textbooks are all different experiences, and we read them with different mindsets and different strategies. The same is true for textbooks in different areas. Reading a mathematics textbook is going to be different than reading a history textbook, a psychology textbook, a Spanish textbook or a criminal justice textbook. Further, students may be assigned to read scientific journals or academic articles often housed in college libraries' online databases. Scholarly articles require a different kind of reading and librarians are a resource for how to find and read this kind of information. Applying the principles in this chapter will help with your reading comprehension, but it's important to remember that you will need to develop specific reading skills most helpful to the particular subject you are studying.

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2. Joe Cuseo, Viki Fecas and Aaron Thompson, *Thriving in College AND Beyond: Research-Based Strategies for Academic Success and Personal Development,* (Dubuque, IA: Kendal Hunt Publishing, 2010), 115. ↩
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2.5.5: Context Clues and Close Reading for Literature

Phyllis Nissila

Context Clues

Besides clues to help you determine the pattern or genre of a reading selection, there are clues to help you figure out the meaning of specific words that are unfamiliar to you. Here are the five most common:

1. **Definition/Explanation Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word or phrase is given right after its use.
   Example: Taxidermy, the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals (especially vertebrates) for display or for other sources of study, is popular among museum curators.
2. **Restatement/Synonym Clues**: sometimes a word is presented in a simpler way.
   Example: Stuffing dead animals has been a dream of Stedman Nimblebody, author of *Taxidermy Through the Ages,* ever since his pet snake died when Steddie was six years old. He still misses Mr. Scaly Face.
3. **Contrast/Antonym Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word is clarified by presenting a word or phrase opposite of its meaning.
   Example: Little Steddie wanted to visit the Taxidermy Museum but the rest of the family preferred a trip to the Zoo to see live animals.
4. **Inference/General Context Clues**: sometimes the meaning of a word or phrase is in the surrounding sentences, or must be inferred or implied by the general meaning of a selection.
   Example: When Steddie finally got the chance to visit the Taxidermy Museum, he was very excited. He even found a stuffed snake that looked exactly like Mr. Scaly Face! “Just think,” he exclaimed to his parents, “If Mr. Scaly Face was stuffed, I could still tease the cat and the dog with him!”
5. **Punctuation**: the correct use of punctuation helps a reader get the meaning of a term, phrase, or thought. Likewise, incorrectly placed or missing punctuation sometimes gives an entirely different and incorrect meaning across.
   Example:
   Missing punctuation: Is it time to eat Grandma?
   Corrected: Is it time to eat, Grandma?

Exercise

There are many examples online of punctuation errors in signs that change the meaning. Create a chart such as the one below for 5 of the signs that you really like.
WHAT THE SIGN SAYS WHAT THE SIGN REALLY MEANS
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Close Reading



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In addition to using reading comprehension skills such as predicting, visualizing, "talking to the text," skimming a textbook before reading, and noting context clues, another strategy called "close reading" is helpful. This is popular with literature professors; however, the skills involved in close reading are applicable to any complex reading assignment.

Since this kind of comprehension starts with knowing nothing about the elements of a story, novel, poem, or essay, I stand with my arms spread wide.

I then discuss, briefly, each element of a work starting with the title as a place to begin comprehension, while slowly moving my arms toward one another, a few inches per element.

Titles, for starters, particularly of non-fiction works, usually tell you precisely what the main idea, or thesis, is. For example, a book about "The History of the Roman Empire" usually gives you just that–the history of the Roman Empire.

This is not usually true, however, for works of fiction, for which inference is the key to comprehension. For example, "Story of an Hour," by Kate Chopin, while it might seem to be something about time, also suggests it is about something other than a clock ticking away seconds and minutes, and indeed it is.

I next add the author, as this might aid comprehension. For example, most students are familiar with Stephen King, who writes in the horror genre. Knowing this element brings the arms in a bit closer as the reader will know to anticipate (and predict) a horror story with a lot of plot twists and turns in some horrible ways. Prediction has begun.

Next, I briefly discuss how knowing about the remaining elements – plot, characters, and setting – help the reader close in on meaning enough to be able to discuss the theme or themes of the work with reasonable evidence to support one's conclusion.

This visual of the arms getting closer together can continue through a discussion of close reading of small passages, individual sentences, and even specific words. Each level of careful attention and thought helps a reader "read between the lines" when meaning is not overtly stated, when themes are inferred rather than explained outright.

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2.6: LISTENING AND NOTE-TAKING

2.6.1: Preparation for Note-Taking
2.6.2: Taking Notes in Class

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2.6.1: Preparation for Note-Taking

Phyllis Nissila

Non-Verbal Communication

When we think about listening we think about, well, hearing sounds via the ears. However, when it comes to listening in order to pick up key points for note-taking, it takes more than just hearing. In this case, it takes a “critical ear,” that is, absorbing key points by noticing not only the words spoken, but also by noting tones, volume, and even the body language that goes along. Additionally, being an active listener increases a note-taker’s chances of getting the information needed. Exercise 1 illustrates common non-verbal communication.

Exercise

Part A

List as many non-verbal, emotional cues as you can by studying the faces in the pictures below.



“Universal Emotions” by Icerko Lýdia is licensed under CC BY 3.0

Part B

The image below illustrates non-verbal body language. Describe a few poses or body movements one or more of your teachers now, or from the past, takes or has taken that communicates: pay closer attention. It might be from these examples, or something quite different. For example, an instructor might move close to the front row and fold his/her arms to indicate that what he or she will be saying is of a more serious nature. For another example, if he or she moves toward the white board to write something, it’s probably key information.



“Men Silhouette” by geralt is in the Public Domain, CC0

Active Listening

In previous units, we covered ways that students can actively engage in the learning process in order to get the most out of their education. There are ways to actively listen as well, in order to get the most out of lectures and, more importantly, take all of the notes that might be required. The video in the next exercise covers several active listening strategies along with why we sometimes have difficulty listening.

Exercise

Part A

Watch the TED talk below and answer the following questions:

Video: *5 Ways to Listen Better*, Julian Treasure at TED Global 2011

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

1. What 3 types of listening does the speaker discuss?
2. How and why have we been “losing our ability to listen,” as the speaker suggests? He cites 5 ways.
3. What are the 5 tools we can use to listen better?

Part B

Taking into consideration all of the activities in the exercises above, write a one-page (250-300 words) reflection on how you can use the information on non-verbal and listening skills to enhance both your ability to pay attention to lectures and to take better notes on them.

Perhaps the most useful learning tools of all are notes taken from both lectures and course materials. By annotating for key information, then condensing it, students create personalized summaries helpful for studying.

Often, students are unsure about what constitutes “key information.” Here is a list of items to highlight or annotate for in textbooks and a list of items to listen for in lectures.

Key Information in Textbooks

The following elements of a textbook chapter are especially important in helping you discern key information:

- Introductions
- Summaries
- Study questions
- Topic sentences (as the speaker in the video on “Skim Reading,” exercise 3.2, also in Lesson 3.2 notes: sometimes the reader has to read the first two or even three sentences of a paragraph or section to get the entire main topic).
- Anything that is bolded, or in some other way set off from the default print size and style. Sub-topic titles are good examples of this.
- “Side bars,” which are boxes of related information. These might include statistics, brief biographies of authors or persons of note related to the chapter content, price points on brochures for businesses, charts, graphs, photographs, and/or illustrations. They are typically a different color or in some other way set off for attention but not as the focal point of the text. Pay attention to the captions or legends that might accompany graphics. In this e-text, the exercises are set apart in side bars.
- Glossary terms that may be incorporated in the margins or otherwise set apart.
- Some textbooks include outlines of each chapter’s main points in the introductory section.

Key Information in Lectures

As the lecturer, live or video, presents the material, there are two types of key information cues to be aware of.

NONVERBAL CUES

A speaker will often have unique facial and body nonverbal cues that alert you to several things, as you learn to “read” your professor:

- Stances or movements that alert you to when he/she will shift to a different topic or subtopic.
- Other cues that alert you to when the information is of special significance (including verbal clues, below).

VERBAL CLUES

- Pay attention to when the speaker uses any of the transition clues used in reading comprehension.
- Many speakers also announce when they are adding information or changing topics in various other ways.

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Adaptions: Changed formatting, removed emoticon image, embedded Ted Talk video, slight edits for consistency, combined Lessons 4.1 and 4.2, retitled chapter.

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2.6.2: Taking Notes in Class

Dave Dillon

"He listens well who takes notes."

– Dante Alighieri

Take Notes To Remember

If for no other reason, you should take notes during class so that you do not forget valuable and important information. Despite living with incredible search engines on computers and smart phones that give us a plethora of information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, students do not have the ability to access those during exams. Instructors want to know what you know not what Google knows. We've become accustomed to searching for information on demand to find what we need when we need it. The consequence is that we don't often commit information to memory because we know it will be there tomorrow if we wish to search for it again. This causes challenges with preparation for exams as what we're tested on is in our brain rather than information we can search for. Thus, there is an importance of taking notes. "Note-taking facilitates both recall of factual material and the synthesis and application of new knowledge, particularly when notes are reviewed prior to exams."[1]

As you may recall from The Basics of Study Skills Chapter, Hermann Ebbinghaus studied the rate of forgetting and formulated his "forgetting curve" theory. Perform a web search for "Ebbinghaus forgetting curve."

The curve shows that after one month, only 20 percent of information is retained after initial memorization. Without review, 47 percent of learned information is lost after only 20 minutes. After one day, 62 percent of learned information is lost without review.

In order to try to retain information long term, we must move it from our short-term memory to our long-term memory. One of the best ways to do that is through repetition. The more we review information, and the sooner we review once we initially learn it, the more reinforced that information is in our long-term memory.

The first step in being able to review is to take notes when you are originally learning the information. Students who do not take notes in class in the first place will not be able to recall all of the information covered in order to best review.

Taking notes during lectures is a skill, just like riding a bike. If you have never taken notes while someone else is speaking before, it's important to know that you will not be an expert at it right away. It is challenging to listen to someone speak and then make a note about what they said, while at the same time continuing to listen to their next thought.

When learning to ride a bike, everyone is going to fall. With practice and concentration, we gain confidence and improve our skill. The more we practice, the better we get. In his book Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell refers to the "10,000-hour rule." Based on research by Anders Ericsson, the rule states that 10,000 hours of dedicated practice in your particular field will allow for the greatest potential of mastery. I do not expect you to practice taking notes for 10,000 hours, but the point is that practice, just like many things, is necessary to become more skilled[2].

Some instructors will give you cues to let you know something is important. If you hear or see one of these cues, it's something you should write down. This might include an instructor saying, "this is important," or "this will be covered on the exam." If you notice an instructor giving multiple examples, repeating information or spending a lot of time with one idea, these may be cues. Writing on the board or presenting a handout or visual information may also be a cue.

There are many different ways to take notes during lectures and I encourage you to find the way that works best for you. Different systems work best for different people. Experiment in different ways to find the most success.

Tips for Taking Notes During the Lecture

Arrive early and find a good seat. Seats in the front and center are best for being able to see and hear information. A seat at the 50-yard line for the Super Bowl is more expensive for a reason: it gives the spectator the greatest experience.

Do not try to write down everything the instructor talks about. It's impossible and inefficient. Instead, try to distinguish between the most important topics and ideas and write those down. This is also a skill that students can improve upon. You may wish to ask your instructor during office hours if you have identified the main topics in your notes, or compare your notes to one of your classmates.

Use shorthand and/or abbreviations. So long as you will be able to decipher what you are writing, the least amount of pen or pencil strokes, the better. It will free you up so you can pay more attention to the lecture and help you be able to determine what is most important.

Write down what your instructor writes. Anything on a dry erase board, chalkboard, overhead projector and in some cases in presentations; these are cues for important information.

Leave space to add information to your notes. You can use this space during or after lectures to elaborate on ideas.

Do not write in complete sentences. Do not worry about spelling or punctuation. Getting the important information, concepts and main ideas is much more important. You can always revise your notes later and correct spelling.

Often, the most important information is delivered at the beginning and/or the end of a lecture. Many students arrive late or pack up their belongings and mentally check out a few minutes before the lecture ends. They are missing out on the opportunity to write down valuable information. Keep taking notes until the lecture is complete.

The Cornell System

One way of taking notes in class is using the Cornell System. Created in the 1950s by Walter Pauk at Cornell University, the Cornell System is still widely used today. Perform a web search for "Cornell note taking method."

The note-taking area is for you to use to record notes during lectures.

Students use the column on the left to create questions after the lecture has ended. The questions are based on the material covered. Think of it as a way to quiz yourself. The notes you took should answer the questions you create.

Tips for after the lecture

Consolidate notes as soon as possible after the lecture has ended. Identify the main ideas and underline or highlight them.

Test yourself by looking only at the questions on the left. If you can provide most of the information on the notes side without looking at it, you're in good shape. If you cannot, keep studying until you improve your retention. Review periodically as needed to keep the information fresh in your mind.

Students use the bottom area for summarizing information. Practice summarizing information — it's a great study skill. It allows you to determine how information fits together. It should be written in your own words (don't use the chapter summary in the textbook to write your summary, but check the chapter summary after you write yours for accuracy).

The Outline Method

Another way to take notes is the outline method. Students use an outline to show the relationship between ideas in the lecture. Outlines can help students separate main ideas from supporting details and show how one topic connects to another.

Perform a web search for "outline note taking method" to see what they look like.

Mind Maps

Visual learners may want to experiment with mind maps (also called clustering). Invented by Tony Buzan in the 1960s, it's another way of organizing information during lectures. Start with a central idea in the center of the paper (landscape is recommended). Using branches (like a tree), supporting ideas can supplement the main idea. Recall everything you can as the lecture is happening. Reorganization can be done later. Perform a web search for mind maps for note-taking.

Review

The most important aspect of reviewing your lecture notes is when your review takes place in relation to when your notes were taken. For maximum efficiency and retention of memory, it's best to review within 20 minutes of when the lecture ends. For this reason, I do not advise students to take back-to-back classes without 30 minutes in between. It is important to have adequate review time and to give your brain a break. Reviewing shortly after the lecture will allow you to best highlight or underline main points as well as fill in any missing portions of your notes. Students who take lecture notes on a Monday and then review them for the first time a week later often have challenges recalling information that help make the notes coherent.

If you wish to go "above and beyond," you may consider discussing your notes in a study group with your classmates, which can give you a different perspective on main points and deepen your understanding of the material. You may also want to make flashcards for yourself with vocabulary terms, formulas, important dates, people, places, etc.

The Big Picture

Keep in mind that students who know what their instructor is going to lecture on before the lecture are at an advantage. Why? Because the more they understand about what the instructor will be talking about, the easier it is to take notes. How? Take a look at the syllabus before the lecture. It won't take much time but it can make a world of difference. You will also be more prepared and be able to see important connections if you read your assigned reading before the lecture. It's not easy to do, but students that do it will be rewarded. If I have read information assigned before the lecture and know what the lecture will be about, I have best prepared myself for taking notes during the lecture and given myself the greatest potential for understanding relationships between the reading material and the lecture. Online flash cards are another option. Students can make them for free and test themselves online or on their phone.

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1. Deborah DeZure, Matthew Kaplan, and Martha A. Deerman, "Research on Student Notetaking: Implications for Faculty and Graduate Student Instructors," 2001, http://www.math.lsa.umich.edu/~krasny/math156_crlt.pdf. ↵
2. Anders Ericsson et al., "The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance," *Psychological Review*, (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1993), 393-394. ↵

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2.7: MEMORY PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES

2.7.1: Memory
2.7.2: Concentration and Distraction

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2.7.1: Memory

Phyllis Nissila and Dave Dillon

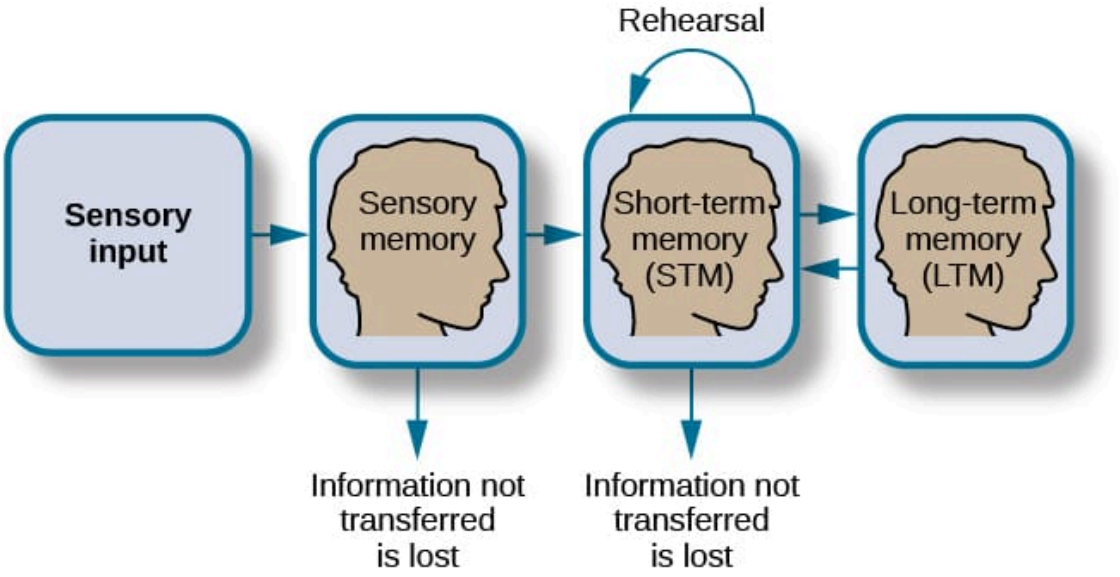
"If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six hours sharpening my ax."

– Abraham Lincoln

An Information Processing Model

Once information has been encoded, we have to retain it. Our brains take the encoded information and place it in storage. Storage is the creation of a permanent record of information.

In order for a memory to go into storage (i.e., long-term memory), it has to pass through three distinct stages: Sensory Memory, Short-Term Memory, and finally Long-Term Memory. These stages were first proposed by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin (1968). Their model of human memory is based on the belief that we process memories in the same way that a computer processes information.



"Atkinson-Shiffrin model of memory" by OpenStax is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Learning, Remembering, and Retrieving Information Is Important for Academic Success

The first thing our brains do is to take in information from our senses (what we see, hear, taste, touch and smell). In many classroom and homework settings, we primarily use hearing for lectures and seeing for reading textbooks. Information we perceive from our senses is stored in what we call the short-term memory.

It is useful to then be able to do multiple things with information in the short-term memory. We want to: 1) decide if that information is important; 2) for the information that is important, be able to save the information in our brain on a longer-term basis—this storage is called the long-term memory; 3) retrieve that information when we need to. Exams often measure how effectively the student can retrieve "important information."

In some classes and with some textbooks it is easy to determine information important to memorize. In other courses with other textbooks, that process may be more difficult. Your instructor can be a valuable resource to assist with determining the

information that needs to be memorized. Once the important information is identified, it is helpful to organize it in a way that will help you best understand.

Author's Story

I do not have a great memory. I write a lot of things down to help me remember. And I have always had to work hard to memorize and study for exams.

In my high school and college years I spent a lot of time cramming the night before the exam. In retrospect, I believe this was partly due to procrastination, partly due to lack of interest in the material, and partly—subconsciously—wanting to perform well on the exam without putting a lot of time into preparation (an attempt to get the maximum of the minimum). Cramming allowed me to store a lot of information in my short-term memory. I would regurgitate information on the exam and then forget nearly all of it shortly thereafter. It is not how learning and education were intended.

My performance on the exams were satisfactory, but I could've done much better had I adequately prepared and been disciplined enough to review more frequently. Doing so would have allowed much of that information to enter my long-term memory, which would have had many benefits. Students often believe the information they are learning in classes that are required for general education have little to do with what is needed for them in their future career. However, skills like critical thinking, communication (both oral and written), and literacy are often developed from these courses and are extremely beneficial for the student. Sometimes these skills are acquired without the student realizing it! This makes for a better student, better person and better member of society.

In addition, I would love to be able to recall information from some classes I took in high school and college, but cannot because the information never entered my long-term memory. I did some of it the wrong way and hope that you do not make the same mistake. Students who take in information by gradually reviewing and memorizing over a longer period of time and can store more information in their long-term memory will be able to access it long after the course they are taking is over.

Moving Information from the Short-term Memory To the Long-term Memory

This is something that takes a lot of time: there is no shortcut for it. Students who skip putting in the time and work often end up cramming at the end.

Preview the information you are trying to memorize. The more familiar you are with what you are learning, the better. Create acronyms like SCUBA for memorizing "self-contained underwater breathing apparatus." Organizing information in this way can be helpful because it is not as difficult to memorize the acronym, and with practice and repetition, the acronym can trigger the brain to recall the entire piece of information.

Flash cards are a valuable tool for memorization because they allow students to be able to test themselves. They are convenient to bring with you anywhere, and can be used effectively whether a student has one minute or an hour.

Once information is memorized, regardless of when the exam is, the last step is to apply the information. Ask yourself: In what real world scenarios could you apply this information? And for mastery, try to teach the information to someone else.

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Adaptions: Changed formatting, removed image, removed pre-test link, removed exercises.

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2.7.2: Concentration and Distraction

Dave Dillon

concentration. n. exclusive attention to one object.

– dictionary.com

Where To Study

In order to study successfully, students must learn to concentrate at a high level. It is important to know where we study best. Some students study well at home. Other students study well at a library or coffee shop. There is no best for all. Your best environment is based on you and your preferences.

Watch this selective attention test video and see if you come up with the correct answer.

Video: *Selective Attention Test*, Daniel Simmons

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

When To Study

It is also important to know when we study best. Many students are most efficient studying in the morning when they are fresh. Studying late in the day may be the only option for some students but often we are tired at the end of the day, and this can have a major effect on study efficiency. Figuring out where and when we study best may take some time. And even when we find the best place and time to study, we also have to be aware of distractions, which can be internal or external.

Internal Distractions

An internal distraction includes thought processes, self-esteem, or confidence. It's something that interrupts you from what you're doing. It might also be a computer or cell phone – something that is controlled by you. Many students intend to study but easily get distracted with surfing the Internet, checking social media, watching YouTube videos, or receiving a text message. If you don't absolutely need your computer or cell phone for your study, it is my suggestion to not bring them or turn them off. If you do study with your phone or computer, it is best to have all potential alerts turned off. Notifications of text messages, emails, or social media updates all can serve as a major distraction to your studying.

External Distractions

External distractions might be your roommates, family or friends. Even if they are supportive of your study, it may be challenging to concentrate when they are around. Saying "no" is an important skill that may need to be utilized in order for you to have your study time without interruption.

Keep in mind that it may take 20 minutes to reach a high level of concentration. When we are interrupted, it takes on average

another 23 minutes to get back to the level of concentration that we were at prior to the disruption.[1] If a student is studying for an hour and is interrupted twice, the consequence to study efficiency is devastating.

One way to try to monitor how many interruptions you incur and how well you maintain your level of concentration is to keep track of it. Take a blank piece of paper when you are studying and mark down each time you were interrupted.

Over time, with practice, you should be able to decrease the number of interruptions you incur. This will allow you to be most efficient when studying.

I always find it odd to think that before mobile phones, we invented the answering machine. Its purpose was to allow us to receive a message when someone called if we were not home or it was not convenient to answer the phone at the time. In contrast, text messaging is designed in most cases (user's notification preferences) to interrupt us and alert us immediately that someone has contacted us. Whatever your opinion may be on this, my point is to tread cautiously when using technology that may be addicting and may frequently (consciously or unconsciously) distract you from studying and concentrating.

Author's Story

When I was a first-year student in college, I lived in the dormitories and enjoyed socializing with my friends. I didn't want to miss out on any social interaction opportunities, so I waited to study after everyone else was asleep. I regularly studied from midnight to two or three in the morning. I would not ordinarily suggest this for most students. It worked for me because I did not have any early morning classes or work. I took my classes in the late morning and afternoon, worked in the afternoon, and attended basketball practices in the afternoon or early evening. I was able to stay awake and concentrate well at that age and also be able to get adequate sleep. However, if I was studying for an exam or doing the heavy work on a paper, I would do it in the morning because that was when I concentrated the best. Now, almost two decades after college, as someone who works full time and takes care of two young children, there is no way I could stay up that late and be productive on a regular basis. It's important to find out what works best for you, and it's also important to understand how the environment you are in effects your concentration ability.

Multitasking

Millennials are considered extraordinary multitaskers, though brain science tells us that multitasking is a myth[2]. More likely, they are apt to switch tasks quickly enough to appear to be doing them simultaneously. When it comes to heavy media multitasking, studies show greater vulnerability to interference, leading to decreased performance[3].

My classes have had lively discussions on multitasking. Most of the time, I am able to convince students that multitasking is not a good idea for them. (There are always a few stubborn hold outs). Trying to do multiple things at the same time may seem like it may allow you to accomplish more but when studying it often leads to accomplishing less. There are things that I think can be successfully multitasked. I could throw clothes in the washer and make a snack, then eat and read a book at the same time while waiting for the clothes to be washed. But if I try to text, check e-mail, watch TV and look at my Twitter timeline all while studying, it won't work well.

A study from Carnegie Mellon University found that driving while listening to a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent[4]. Why would anyone choose to use less brain activity when they study?

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2.8: TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

2.8.1: Pre- Mid- and Post-Test-Taking Strategies

2.8.2: Test-Taking Strategy Specifics

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2.8.1: Pre- Mid- and Post-Test-Taking Strategies

Phyllis Nissila

Pre-Test Strategies



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Q: When should you start preparing for the first test? Circle...

1. The night before.
2. The week prior.
3. The first day of classes.

If you answered “3. The first day of classes,” you are correct. If you circled all three, you are also correct. Preparing to pass tests is something that begins when learning begins and continues all the way through to the final exam.

Many students, however, don’t start thinking about test taking, whether weekly exams, mid-terms, or finals, until the day before when they engage in an all-nighter, or cramming. From the previous unit on memory, you might recall that the brain can only process an average of 5-7 new pieces of information at a time. Additionally, unless memory devices are used to aid memory and to cement information into long term memory (or at least until the test is over tomorrow!) chances are slim that students who cram will effectively learn and remember the information.

Additionally, a lot of students are unaware of the many strategies available to help with the test-taking experience before, during, and after. For starters, take a look at what has helped you so far.

Exercise

Pre-Test Taking Strategies

Part A:

Put a check mark next to the pre-test strategies you already employ.

___ Organize your notebook and other class materials the first week of classes.

___ Maintain your organized materials throughout the term.

___ Take notes on key points from lectures and other materials.

___ Make sure you understand the information as you go along.

___ Access your instructor's help and the help of a study group, as needed.

___ Organize a study group, if desired.

___ Create study tools such as flashcards, graphic organizers, etc. as study aids.

___ Complete all homework assignments on time.

___ Review likely test items several times beforehand.

___ Ask your instructor what items are likely to be covered on the test.

___ Ask your instructor if she or he can provide a study guide or practice test.

___ Ask your instructor if he/she gives partial credit for test items such as essays.

___ Maintain an active learner attitude.

___ Schedule extra study time in the days just prior to the test.

___ Gather all notes, handouts, and other materials needed before studying.

___ Review all notes, handouts, and other materials.

___ Organize your study area for maximum concentration and efficiency.

___ Create and use mnemonic devices to aid memory.

___ Put key terms, formulas, etc., on a single study sheet that can be quickly reviewed.

___ Schedule study times short enough (1-2 hours) so you do not get burned out.

___ Get plenty of sleep the night before.

___ Set a back-up alarm in case the first alarm doesn't sound or you sleep through it.

___ Have a good breakfast with complex carbs and protein to see you through.

___ Show up 5-10 minutes early to get completely settled before the test begins.

___ Use the restroom beforehand to minimize distractions.

Part B

By reviewing the pre-test strategies, above, you have likely discovered new ideas to add to what you already use. Make a list of them.

Mid-Test Strategies

Here is a list of the most common–and useful–strategies to survive this ubiquitous college experience.

- Scan the test, first, to get the big picture of how many test items there are, what types there are (multiple choice, matching, essay, etc.), and the point values of each item or group of items.
- Determine which way you want to approach the test: Some students start with the easy questions first, that is, the ones they immediately know the answers to, saving the difficult ones for later, knowing they can spend the remaining time on them. Some students begin with the biggest-point items first, to make sure they get the most points.
- Determine a schedule that takes into consideration how long you have to test, and the types of questions on the test. Essay questions, for example, will require more time than multiple choice, or matching questions.
- Keep your eye on the clock.

- If you can mark on the test, put a check mark next to items you are not sure of just yet. It is easy to go back and find them to answer later on. You might just find help in other test questions covering similar information.
- Sit where you are most comfortable. That said, sitting near the front has a couple of advantages: You may be less distracted by other students. If a classmate comes up with a question for the instructor and there is an important clarification given, you will be better able to hear it and apply it, if needed.
- Wear ear plugs, if noise distracts you.
- You do NOT have to start with #1! It you are unsure of it, mark it to come back to later on.
- Bring water...this helps calm the nerves, for one, and water is also needed for optimum brain function.
- If permitted, get up and stretch (or stretch in your chair) from time to time to relieve tension and assist the blood to the brain!
- Remember to employ strategies to reduce test-taking anxiety (covered in the next lesson)

If despite all of your best efforts to prepare for a test you just cannot remember the answer to a given item for multiple choice, matching, and/or true/false questions, employ one or more of the following educated guessing (also known as "educated selection") techniques. By using these techniques, you have a *better* chance of selecting the correct answer. It is usually best to avoid selecting an extreme or all-inclusive answer (also known as 100% modifiers) such as "always," and "never". Choose, instead, words such as "usually," "sometimes," etc. (also known as in-between modifiers). If the answers are numbers, choose one of the middle numbers. If you have options such as "all of the above," or "both A and B," make sure each item is true before selecting those options. Choose the longest, or most inclusive, answer. Make sure to match the grammar of question and answer. For example, if the question indicates a plural answer, look for the plural answer. Regarding matching tests: count both sides to be matched. If there are more questions than answers, ask if you can use an answer more than once. Pay close attention to items that ask you to choose the "best" answer. This means one answer is better or more inclusive than a similar answer. Read all of the response options.

Post-Test Strategies

In addition to sighing that big sigh of relief, here are a few suggestions to help with future tests.

- If you don't understand why you did not get an item right, ask the instructor. This is especially useful for quizzes that contain information that may be incorporated into more inclusive exams such as mid-terms and finals.
- Analyze your results to help you in the future. For example, see if most of your incorrect answers were small things such as failing to include the last step in a math item, or neglecting to double-check for simple errors in a short-answer or essay item. See where in the test you made the most errors: beginning, middle, or end. Also analyze which type of questions, true/false, multiple choice, essay, etc. And which topics were missed. This will help you pay closer attention to those sections in the future.

Exercise

Write a letter of advice to Chen incorporating 10 test-taking tips and strategies you think will help him.

Chen believes he is good at organization, and he usually is–for about the first two weeks of classes. He then becomes overwhelmed with all of the handouts and materials and tends to start slipping in the organization department. When it comes to tests, he worries that his notes might not cover all of the right topics and that he will not be able to remember all of the key terms and points–especially for his math class. During tests, he sometimes gets stuck on an item and tends to spend too much time there. He also sometimes changes answers but finds out later that his original selection was correct. Chen is also easily distracted by other students and noises which makes it hard for him to concentrate sometimes, and, unfortunately, he does admit to occasionally "cramming" the night before.

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2.8.2: Test-Taking Strategy Specifics

Dave Dillon

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."

– Benjamin Franklin

Discipline, Preparation and Execution

From what I have seen in my own educational experiences, along with coaching and teaching at the college and university level for over 20 years, test taking (with few exceptions) comes down to discipline, preparation and execution. Students wanting to be successful have to have the self-discipline to schedule time to study well in advance of the exam. They have to actually do the work: the preparation needed in order to have the best opportunity for success on the exam. Then they must execute: they have to be able to apply their preparation accordingly and perform well on the exam.

Preparation for an exam is not glamorous. It's easy to find other things to do that are more interesting and fun. Students need to keep themselves motivated with their "eyes on the prize." Think of it like this: if the most important event of your life was coming up and you wanted to perform to the best of your ability in that event, you would likely spend some time preparing for it, rehearsing for it, practicing it, etc. A student may argue that an exam they will be taking would not be the most important event of their life, but think back to the chapter on Passion. If you're already spending the time, effort, energy and money to attend college, why not do it to the best of your ability?

It would be beneficial to spread this preparation and practice out over time and prepare periodically rather than to wait until the last minute and binge study or cram. Your preparation would not be the same and this may affect your test score. Binge studying and cramming also are not healthy. Staying up late puts stress on our brain and body, and not getting adequate sleep places our bodies at risk for getting sick.

"One of the most important keys to success is having the discipline to do what you know you should do, even when you don't feel like doing it."

– Unknown

"The will to succeed is important, but what's more important is the will to prepare."

– Bobby Knight

Everyone wants to be successful. When the exam is passed out, everyone wants to perform well. But what often separates successful students and less successful students is the preparation time put in.

Studying the right thing is a process and a skill. As you gain more experience, you will learn how to become better at knowing what to study. It can be very frustrating to spend a lot of time preparing and studying and then finding out that what you studied was not on the exam. You will see a lot of variance with exams due to different instructors, classes and types of tests. The better you become at predicting what will be on the exam and study accordingly, the better you will perform on your exams. Try placing yourself in your instructor's shoes and design questions you think your instructor would ask. It's often an eye-opening experience for students and a great study strategy.

Preparation for Exam Strategies

Find out as much about the exam in advance as you can

Some professors will tell you how many questions there will be, what format the exam will be in, how much time you will have, etc., and others will not. I encourage students to ask questions about the exam if there is not information given. I also encourage students to ask those questions before class, after class, in professors' office hours or via e-mail rather than during class.

Know the test

If you know how many questions, what the format is, and/or how much time you will have, you can start to mentally prepare for the exam much more so than if you are coming in with no information. There are two more important aspects that you may or may not know: a) what will be covered or asked on the exam; b) how the exam will be scored. Obviously, the more you know about what will be covered, the easier it is for you to be able to prepare for the exam. Most exam scoring is standardized, but not always.

Look for opportunities where some areas of the exam are worth more points than others. For example: An exam consists of 21 questions, with 10 being True/False, 10 being multiple choice, and one essay question. The T/F questions are worth 1 point each (10 points), the multiple-choice questions are worth 2 points each (20 points), and the essay question is worth 30 points. We know that the essay question is the most valuable (it is worth half of the value of the exam). And we should allocate our time for it accordingly. I would advise starting with the essay question. Do a quick analysis of time to be able to spend your time on the exam wisely. You want to spend some time with the exam question since it is so valuable, without sacrificing adequate time to ensure the T/F and multiple-choice questions are answered.

Often, the order of the exam in this scenario will be: T/F first, multiple choice second and essay third. Most students will go in the chronological order of the exam, but a savvy student would start with the essay. If an exam were to last for 30 minutes with this format of questions, I might recommend a student spent 15 minutes on the essay question, ten minutes on the multiple choice, three minutes on the T/F and two minutes reviewing their answer.

Also, look for situations where exams penalize students for incorrectly answering a question. This does not occur very often, but is the case with some exams. With the SAT for example, students are awarded one point for a correct answer and ¼ of a point subtracted for an incorrect answer. Points are not awarded nor subtracted for leaving a question blank. Thus, the strategy for a multiple-choice question is: if you can narrow down the potentially correct answer to two rather than four or five, it is statistically advantageous to answer the question and guess between the two answers; however, if a student had no idea if any of the answers were correct or incorrect, it would be best to leave the answer blank. Remember, this is rare, but it is important to understand the strategy when students take these exams.

In conclusion, the more information you have about the exam, the better you can prepare for content, allocation of time spent on aspects of the exam, and the more confident you will be in knowing how and when to attempt to answer questions.

Take care of your body

Before the exam, it is important to prepare your brain and body for optimal performance for your exam. Do not cram the night before. Get a good night's sleep. Make sure you eat (nutritiously) before the exam. I recommend exercising the day before and if possible a few hours before the exam.

Strategies for Specific Exam Formats

True or False Questions

Look for qualifiers. A qualifier is a word that is absolute. Examples are: all, never, no, always, none, every, only, entirely. They are often seen in false statements. This is because it is more difficult to create a true statement using a qualifier like never, no, always, etc. For example, "All cats chase mice." Cats may be known for chasing mice, but not all of them do so. The answer here is false and the qualifier "all" gave us a tip. Qualifiers such as: sometimes, many, some, most, often, and usually are commonly found in true statements. For example: "Most cats chase mice." This is true and the qualifier "most" gave us a tip.

Make sure to read the entire statement. All parts of a sentence must be true if the whole statement is to be true. If one part of it is false, the whole sentence is false. Long sentences are often false for this reason.

Students should guess on True or False questions they do not know the answer to unless there is a penalty for an incorrect answer.

Multiple Choice Questions

Think of multiple choice questions as four (or five) true or false statements in one. One of the statements is true (the correct answer) and the others will be false. Apply the same strategy toward qualifiers. If you see an absolute qualifier in one of the

answer choices, it is probably false and not the correct answer. Try to identify the true statement. If you can do this, you have the answer as there is only one. If you cannot do this at first, try eliminating answers you know to be false.

If there is no penalty for incorrect answers, my suggestion is to guess if you are not certain of the answer. If there is a penalty for incorrect answers, common logic is to guess if you can eliminate two of the answers as incorrect (pending what the penalty is). If there's a penalty and you cannot narrow down the answers, it's best to leave it blank. You may wish to ask your instructor for clarification.

Answers that are strange and unrelated to the question are usually false. If two answers have a word that looks or sounds similar, one of those is usually correct. For example: abductor/ adductor. If you see these as two of the four or five choices, one of them is usually correct. Also look for answers that are grammatically incorrect. These are usually incorrect answers. If you have to completely guess, choose B or C. It is statistically proven to be correct more than 25 percent of the time. If there are four answers for each question, and an exam had standardized the answers, each answer on the exam A, B, C and D would be equal. But most instructors do not standardize their answers, and more correct answers are found in the middle (B and C then the extremes A and D or E). "People writing isolated four-choice questions hide the correct answer in the two middle positions about 70% of the time."[1] This is 20 percent more correct answers found in B or C than a standardized exam with equal correct answers for each letter.

Matching Questions

Although less common than the other types of exams, you will likely see some matching exams during your time in college. First, read the instructions and take a look at both lists to determine what the items are and their relationship. It is especially important to determine if both lists have the same number of items and if all items are to be used, and used only once.

Matching exams become much more difficult if one list has more items than the other or if items either might not be used or could be used more than once. If your exam instructions do not discern this, you may wish to ask your instructor for further clarification. I advise students to take a look at the whole list before selecting an answer because a more correct answer may be found further into the list. Mark items when you are sure you have a match (pending the number of items in the list this may eliminate answers for the future). Guessing (if needed) should take place once you have selected answers you are certain about.

Short-Answer Questions

Read all of the instructions first. Budget your time and then read all of the questions. Answer the ones you know best or feel the most confident with. Then go back to the other ones. If you do not know the answer and there is no penalty for incorrect answers, guess. Use common sense. Sometimes instructors will award partial credit for a logical answer that is related even if it is not the correct answer.

Essay Questions

Keep in mind that knowing the format of the exam can help you determine how to study. If I know that I am taking a True-False exam, I know that I will need to discern whether a statement is True or False. I will need to know subject content for the course. But if I am studying for short answer and especially for essay questions, I must know a lot more. For essay questions, I must have much greater content knowledge and be able to make a coherent argument that answers the question using information from textbooks, lectures or other course materials. I have to place a lot more time and thought into studying for an essay exam than for True-False or Multiple-Choice exams.

Read the essay question(s) and the instructions first. Plan your time wisely and organize your answer before you start to write. Address the answer to the question in your first or second sentence. It may help to restate the original question. Write clearly and legibly. Instructors have difficulty grading essays that they cannot read. Save some time for review when you have finished writing to check spelling, grammar and coherent thought in your answer. Make sure you have addressed all parts of the essay question.

During the Exam:

Always read the directions first. Read them thoroughly.

Preview the exam to help you allocate proper time for each area.

Skip questions if you do not know the answer but make a mark somewhere to ensure you are able to go back to those questions (you may need to reallocate your prepared time for this depending on how many there are).

Allocate some time to review your answers before submitting your exam or the exam time expiring.

One of the biggest mistakes that students make after they take an exam in a course is that they do not use the exam for the future. The exam contains a lot of information that can be helpful in studying for future exams. Students that perform well on an exam often put it away thinking they do not need it anymore. Students who do poorly on an exam often put it away, not wanting to think about it any further.

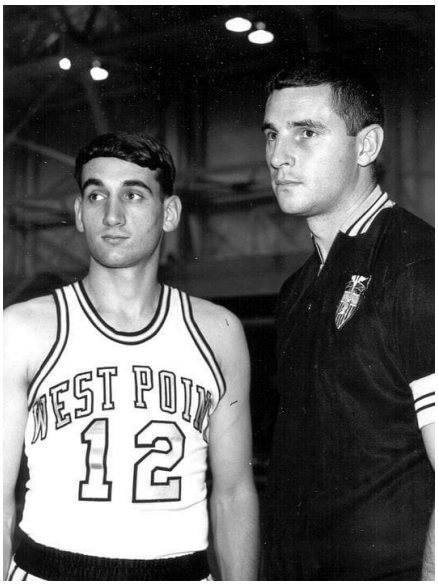
In both cases, students are missing out on the value of reviewing their exams. It is wise to review exams for three reasons: 1) students should review the answers that were correct because they may see those questions on future exams and it is important to reinforce learning; 2) students should review the answers that were incorrect in order to learn what the correct answer was and why. These questions also may appear on a future exam. In addition, occasionally an answer is marked incorrect, when it should have been marked correct. The student would never know this if they didn't review their exam; and 3) there is value in reviewing the exam to try to predict what questions or what format will be used by a professor for a future exam in the same course.

Author's Story

What does it mean to be a "poor test taker?" Think about that. Does it mean that the student has put effort into studying but has difficulty under pressure? Does it mean that a student studies the wrong material? Is the student prepared but does not execute well? Could the student have a learning disability? Are they missing key strategies for taking tests? It could mean any of those things. And while I believe that it may be true that a student may be a "poor test taker," it does not by any means mean it is permanent. Students willing to work hard and learn can improve their test taking skills and raise their confidence.

In high school chemistry, I earned a D grade. In microeconomics at UC Santa Cruz, I struggled and barely passed. Both of these classes had grading systems that were heavily weighted by exams. I was an above average student in my other classes in both high school and college, and so I was told (and believed for a long time) that I was not a "good test taker." I no longer believe this. I will not make excuses. The responsibility for the grade I earned rests solely with me. I mention this because many students come to my office and complain that their professor grades in a way that is unfair to them because so much emphasis is on exams and that they understand the material but are "not good test takers." It may be the case that my grade or another students' grade would have been better had the course grade been determined with less weight levied to exams. That to me is irrelevant. It does not absolve me from being responsible for knowing what the grading metrics were at the beginning of the course and choosing to continue in the course after learning this knowledge. In the end, I realized I was not a poor test taker and that I needed to spend more time studying and preparing to perform well on exams. I changed my attitude from being afraid of exams to one of believing I was going to do well regardless of the class or the format of the exam. Once I had confidence that I had the necessary tools and was willing to work hard, it changed my entire perspective and experience with exams.

Note: If you think you may have a learning disability and would like to get assessed, contact your college to see what steps to follow to begin the assessment process.



Mike Krzyzewski, point guard at Army with Bob Knight, coach at Army.

Thinking about excuses reminds me of a story about Mike Krzyzewski, the successful Duke University men's basketball coach. Before Krzyzewski coached, he was a student at the United States Military Academy at West Point. One day in his first year, Krzyzweski and his roommate were walking and his roommate stepped in a puddle. Mud splashed onto Krzyzewski's uniform. Immediately, an upperclassman screamed at Krzyzewski about not knowing the rules of wearing a clean uniform. Plebes (first-year students at military academies) are allowed three answers when asked a question: "Yes sir!" "No sir!" And "No excuse sir!" Krzyzewski repeated himself, "No excuse sir!" Despite wanting to explain what had happened and that it was not his fault, he realized that there was no excuse. It was his responsibility to keep a clean uniform.

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1. Yigal Attali and Maya Bar-Hillel, "Guess Where: The Position of Correct Answers in Multiple-Choice Test Items as a Psychometric Variable," *Journal of Educational Measurement* 40 no. 2 (2003):109-128. ↵

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2.9: Time Management in College

Learning Objectives

This is a unit for teaching time management to college students, including:

1. Introduction: Why manage time in college?
2. How to make master calendars (month at-a-glance)
3. How to make weekly routines
4. How to make daily to-do lists

Many college students are unprepared to manage their own time. In high school, teachers manage time for students - announcing deadlines, breaking long assignments into small chunks with repeated accountability milestones, etc. Also in high school teachers review and teach everything a student needs to know in class. Last but not least, many college students are needing to balance work and/or family with school demands.

Time management unit with lessons

Background: In Effective Learning (EL115) it was typical to spend a week (3 class hours plus homework) on time management. In College Preparatory Reading (RD80) it was typical to spend several class days on this and assign related homework.

The goal in this unit was to teach students to use a trio of paper-based time management tools simultaneously during the term. See below for a summary, with a sample lesson plan and resources for each of these tools.

Note

I gleaned and this material from other instructors at Lane Community College, testing out their resources and trying out a variety of textbooks. All thanks to others for sharing and educating me - all errors are mine. Essential Study Skills, by former Lane Community College faculty member Linda Wong, is a thorough teaching reference.

Why college students need to manage their time

1. Objective: Students identify the need to manage their time in college.

2. Scenarios: I have used and adapted student problem scenarios from that term's reading and effective learning textbooks (copyright materials). You could create new (and better) ones. Textbook scenarios could be used as models for the format. I listed below the big ideas that you want the sample scenarios to set up for your whole class discussion. Divide the ideas among the stories in your sample for more realism.

3. Agenda:

- Put students in groups of three.
- Give each trio a handout that has a story of a student having a time management problem. A sample of three scenarios works well. Here are big ideas that you want students to learn from working with your three-problem sample:
    - In college students have to track their own deadlines and manage their time
    - It's stressful for most people to keep your deadlines in your head
    - It's stressful and time-consuming to have to figure out what to do/when each day

- Your time to focus on school can get lost as you take care of other obligations like work, family, friends, etc. unless you consciously protect it
- You can study less if you study with no distractions, when you are alert
- You can study less if you study regularly - attending every class, doing the homework on time helps your brain absorb the material gradually by repetition
- Maybe your schedule is unmanageable and by using time management tools you'll see that in time to adjust by asking for support and/or dropping something

- Ask the trio to read the story silently or aloud to each other (S choice) and then discuss the problem and possible solutions.
- Wrap-up with whole class: Have trios share problems and conclusions. See list of big ideas, above, for emphasis and drawing out during whole class discussion.

4. Common myths:

- I got by in high school without planning *(college is different, college instructors can tell you it is rare for students to succeed without some kind of system)*
- I can study fine with distractions *(yes, some people can, but the brain isn't wired for this, see more on this in the Brain Rules site)*
- I can cram effectively *(for exams your brain needs long-term memory, which the brain can't make in a cram session, see more on this in the Brain Rules site)*
- Seeing my deadlines freaks me out *(me too, but then if I don't look and get a handle on this, I'm going to have several bigger freaks coming at me when I least expect it)*

5. Extensions for teacher and students/Open Education Resource: The brain is the tool you use to learn. If you know how the brain works, you know how to study efficiently (avoid stress and study for less time with better results) and how to support students' learning. John Medina's brain rules book and website is excellent. On the website there are short, relatively entertaining videos explaining how the brain works (scroll down to the list of links for the 12 rules). Also here is an interesting article from the Cornell University site for students with another way to think about time management for people who are not list-making types.

Master schedule/monthly calendar lesson

1. Objective: Students prepare a master schedule for all of their courses and college deadlines.

2. Tool: A master schedule shows a month at a glance with all college deadlines, including assignments in all courses, scholarship or registration deadlines, etc. Here is a link to a blank tool form.

The purposes of this tool:

- See where deadlines overlap.
- Prepare in advance for assignments that will take time to complete.
- Decrease stress by using a calendar, instead of relying on memory, to keep track of deadlines.

3. Agenda:

- Give students 2 blank forms and a model of the form already filled out.
- Review the instructions.
- Demonstrate how to fill out the form
- Have students start filling out the form for a few minutes with a partner in class

- Have students complete the form at home
- Have students bring completed form back to class
- Put students in pairs, have them review the other's draft using these directions
- Have pairs share common problems and questions from the review
- Give students time to start making changes in class with partner support
- Have students update their forms at home
- Ask students to bring the forms to class every day - you can spot check as needed
- When you introduce a deadline for a few weeks, ask students to enter on master sched.
- After a few weeks, when you introduce a deadline, ask students what they need to do...
- Towards end of term, ask students to use master sched. to tell you deadlines coming up

4. Common Errors:

- Writing in pen instead of pencil - deadlines may change
- Putting this somewhere you don't see it (try the front of a binder, the refrigerator, etc.).
- Neglecting to update this during the term as deadlines are announced and change
- Putting weekly routine entries here, such as when classes meet

5. Open Educational Resources:

My favorite is the Dartmouth College time management site, especially the link to the Cornell University directions for the monthly calendar and weekly routine, also the videos (minus pictures of Dartmouth campus).

Weekly routine lesson:

1. Objective: Students prepare a weekly routine.

2. Tool: A weekly routine shows all academic, personal and work routines for each day of the week, including work, transportation, sleep, meals, exercise, and regular personal obligations like preparing meals, housework, errands, taking care of children or family, community/religious activities, group meetings and standing appointments, etc.

Note that weekly routines often have to be updated during the term, for example, when a work schedule or a transportation arrangement changes.

There are forms on the Dartmouth College site. Here is a link to a Lane version of a blank tool form and a model form. Here are samples from one student: 1,2,3,4, and a sample from another student. Here is a link to a Lane worksheet for calculating the amount of study time needed (see below).

The purposes of this tool:

- Take stock of what you are trying to do each day of the week and each week.
- See where demands on your time overlap.
- Create sufficient study time (2 study hours for every hour of class each week/credit hour for classes that have homework, in other words, don't count gym)
- Decrease stress by moving around the activities that are in your control.

- Decrease stress by making regular time for sleep, meals, exercise and fun.
- Increase the amount you learn by studying in small, regular chunks at times when you are likely that material best (max 50 mins. in a study block followed by a 10 min. break, no more than 3 blocks in a row without a bigger break, good time of day for you, just before a math or language class and just after a lecture class)
- Decrease stress by increasing the amount of time in your week when you can move from activity to activity on auto-pilot (saving your energy and attention for better things than figuring out what to do next).

3. Agenda: Same as for master schedule/monthly calendar, except use these directions for the peer review step.

4. Common Errors:

- Writing in pen instead of pencil - it takes time and testing to develop a solid routine
- Putting this somewhere you don't see it (try the front of a binder, the refrigerator, etc.)
- Starting this in week one but neglecting to test it out and adjust it during the term - if your work or child care schedule changes, your routine will need to be adjusted
- Being unrealistic - you may need more support from family, friends, the college and your employer than you thought - ask and explore your options
- Skimping on time for sleep and exercise, which your brain needs in order to learn

5. Alternatives:

One way students learn they need to manage time is by finding out how they spend their time without planning. Before you ask students to create a future routine, assign them to record how they spend their time on the blank form. They could also analyze this data, for example, by creating a pie chart comparing the time spent on school (class and study), work, family, free time, etc. Here is a student sample from Week 1, revisited by the same student with another sample in Week 10.

Another way to support students in learning about how to create a good routine would be to have them analyze the student samples, using the links above, comparing the results to the purposes to see if the student has effective routines, and to see what is changing over time in the students' life.

Another alternative is to have students explore phone-based systems, apps and online resources.

6. Extension: With a final project or final exam looming, you can review this technique and help students prepare by asking students to make special routines to plan for the weeks before the big deadline. Here is a link to directions.

7. Open Educational Resources: My favorite is the Dartmouth College time management site, especially the link there to the succinct Cornell University directions for the monthly calendar and weekly routine. The student videos are helpful, too, although the visuals are all about the Dartmouth campus, which could be off-putting.

Daily to do list lesson:

1. Objective: Students create a series of daily to do lists.

2. Tool: Daily to do lists show what you hope to accomplish tomorrow, with the things that must get done tomorrow at the top.

The purposes of this tool:

- Take stock of what you are trying to do tomorrow
- See what the demands on your time will be
- Figure out which things must get done, and which ones can wait for another day
- Decrease stress by moving around the activities that are in your control

- Decrease stress by figuring out what to start so you can work on your list when you are fresh (instead of using that time to figure out what to do)

3. Common errors:

- making the list at the start of the day (overwhelming and usually derailing)
- putting too much on the list
- not taking time to put things in order (must do vs. in my dreams)

4. Agenda: Same as for master schedule/monthly calendar, except with different directions for the peer review step.

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3: Information Literacy

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4: CULTURE AND CULTURAL WEALTH

4.1: Understanding Civility and Cultural Competence

4.1.1: Understanding Civility and Cultural Competence

4.1.2: What Is Diversity, and Why Is Everybody Talking About It?

4.1.3: Categories of Diversity

4.1.4: Navigating the Diversity Landscape

4.1.5: Inclusivity and Civility- What Role Can I Play?

4.1.6: Summary

4.1.7: Career Connection

4.1.8: Rethinking

4.1.9: Where do you go from here?

4.2: Social Interaction and Diversity

4.2.1: Socializing

4.2.2: Diversity and Accessibility

4.2.3: Campus and Student Life

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4.1: UNDERSTANDING CIVILITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE

4.1.1: Understanding Civility and Cultural Competence

4.1.2: What Is Diversity, and Why Is Everybody Talking About It?

4.1.3: Categories of Diversity

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4.1.7: Career Connection

4.1.8: Rethinking

4.1.9: Where do you go from here?

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4.1.1: Understanding Civility and Cultural Competence



Figure 4.1.1.1: (Credit John Martinez Pavliga / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Student Survey

How do you feel about diversity, equity, and inclusion? These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As you are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed. Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me."

1. I'm aware of the different categories of diversity and the various populations I may encounter.
2. I think we sometimes go too far in trying to be sensitive to different groups.
3. I think nearly everybody in our society has equal opportunity.
4. It's not my role to ensure equity and inclusiveness among my peers or colleagues.

You can also take the Chapter 9 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"For the vast majority of my life, I thought being an Asian-American—who went through the Palo Alto School District—meant that I was supposed to excel in academics. But, in reality, I did the opposite. I struggled through college, both in classes and in seeking experiences for my future. At first, I thought I was unique in not living up to expectations. But as I met more people from all different backgrounds, I realized my challenges were not unique.

"I began capturing videos of students sharing their educational issues. Like me, many of my peers lack the study skills required to achieve our academic goals. The more I researched and developed videos documenting this lack of skill, the more I realized that student identities are often lost as they learn according to a traditional pedagogy. I began documenting students' narratives and the specific strategies they used to overcome difficulty. Once we can celebrate a diverse student body and showcase their strengths and identities as well as the skills necessary to excel academically, my hope is that students of all backgrounds can begin to feel that they belong."

—Henry Fan, Foothill College and San Jose State University

About This Chapter

In this chapter you will learn about diversity and how it plays a role in personal, civic, academic, and professional aspects of our lives. By the end of the chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Articulate how diverse voices have been historically ignored or minimized in American civic life, education, and culture.
- Describe categories of identity and experience that contribute to diverse points of view.
- Acknowledge implicit bias and recognize privilege.
- Evaluate statements and situations based on their inclusion of diverse perspectives.

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4.1.2: What Is Diversity, and Why Is Everybody Talking About It?

Questions to Consider:

- Historically, has diversity always been a concern?
- What does it mean to be civil?
- Why do people argue about diversity?

What Would Shakespeare Say?

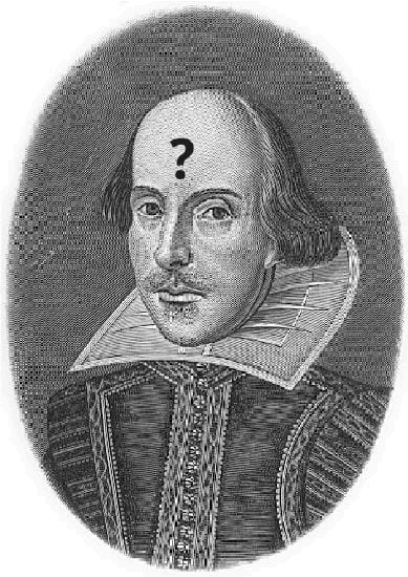


Figure 4.1.2.1: (Credit: Sourced originally from Helmolt, H.F., ed. History of the World. Dodd, Mead and Company, 1902 / Perry-Castañeda Library, University of Texas at Austin / Wikimedia Commons / Public Domain).

In our classroom, everyone is the same...

Consider a classroom containing 25 college students and their instructor. In this particular class, all of the students and the instructor share the same racial group—white. In fact, everyone in the class is a white American from the Midwest.

The instructor is leading the class through reading a scene from William Shakespeare's drama *Romeo and Juliet*. As students read their parts, each one is thinking carefully about the role he or she has been given.

One of the male students wonders what it would be like to read the part of Juliet; after all, men originally played the part in Shakespeare's day. The young woman reading Juliet wonders if anyone would object to her taking the role if they knew she was a lesbian. What would it be like, she wonders, if Romeo, her love interest, were also played by a woman? One reader strongly identifies as German American, but he is reading the part of an Italian. Another student has a grandmother who is African American, but he looks like every other white student in the room. No one recognizes his mixed-race heritage.

After the students finish reading the scene, the instructor announces, "In our classroom, everyone is the same, but these days when Shakespeare is staged, there is a tendency for nontraditional casting. Romeo could be black, Juliet could be Latina, Lady Montague could be Asian. Do you think that kind of casting would disrupt the experience of seeing the play?"

In this case, the instructor makes the assumption that because everyone in the class *looks* the same, they *are* the same. What did the instructor miss about the potential for diversity in his classroom? Have you ever made a similar mistake?

Diversity is more than what we can recognize from external clues such as race and gender. Diversity includes many unseen

aspects of identity, like sexual orientation, political point of view, veteran status, and many other aspects that you may have not considered. To be inclusive and civil within your community, it is essential that you avoid making assumptions about how other people define or identify themselves.

In this chapter we will discover that each person is more than the sum of surface clues presented to the world. Personal experience, social and family history, public policy, and even geography play a role in how diversity is constructed. We'll also explore elements of civility and fairness within the college community.

One important objective of civility is to become culturally competent. Culturally competent people understand the complexity of their own personal identity, values, and culture. In addition, they respect the personal identities and values of others who may not share their identity and values. Further, culturally competent people remain open-minded when confronted with new cultural experiences. They learn to relate to and respect difference; they look beyond the obvious and learn as much as they can about what makes each person different and appreciated.

These concepts tie closely to Chapter 8: Communication, particularly the section on Emotional Intelligence and Overcoming Barriers to Communication.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. Do you think the diversity of your school's student body is reflected in course offerings and campus activities?
   a. Yes
   b. Somewhat
   c. No
2. How comfortable are you when discussing issues of race, sexuality, religion, and other aspects of civility?
   a. Extremely comfortable
   b. Somewhat comfortable
   c. Somewhat uncomfortable
   d. Extremely uncomfortable
3. Do you generally feel welcomed and included on campus?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. It varies significantly by class or environment.

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

Do you think the diversity of your school's student body is reflected in course offerings and campus activities?

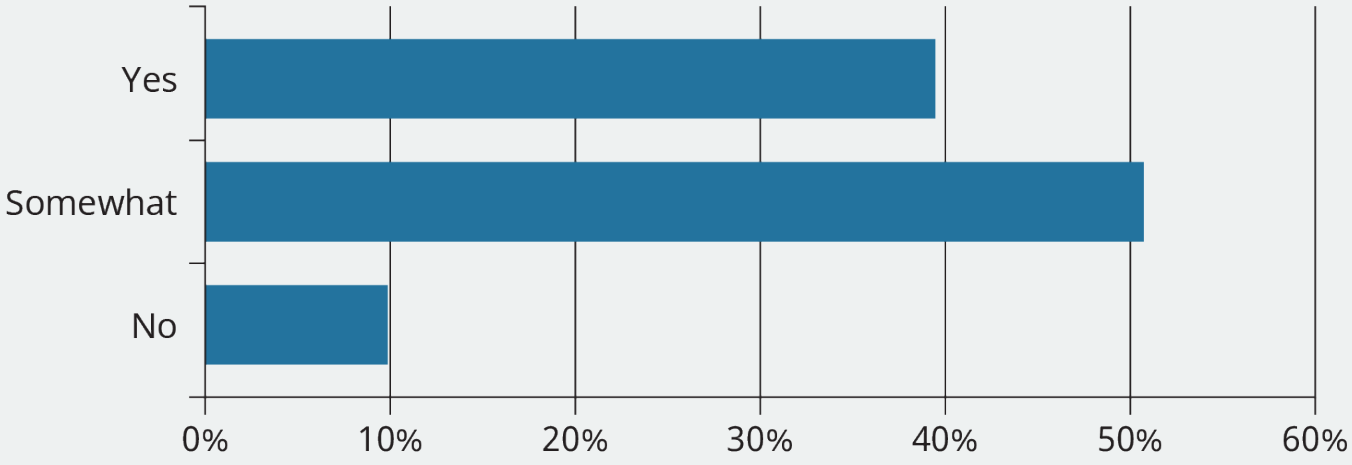


Figure 4.1.2.3

How comfortable are you when discussing issues of race, sexuality, religion, and other aspects of civility?

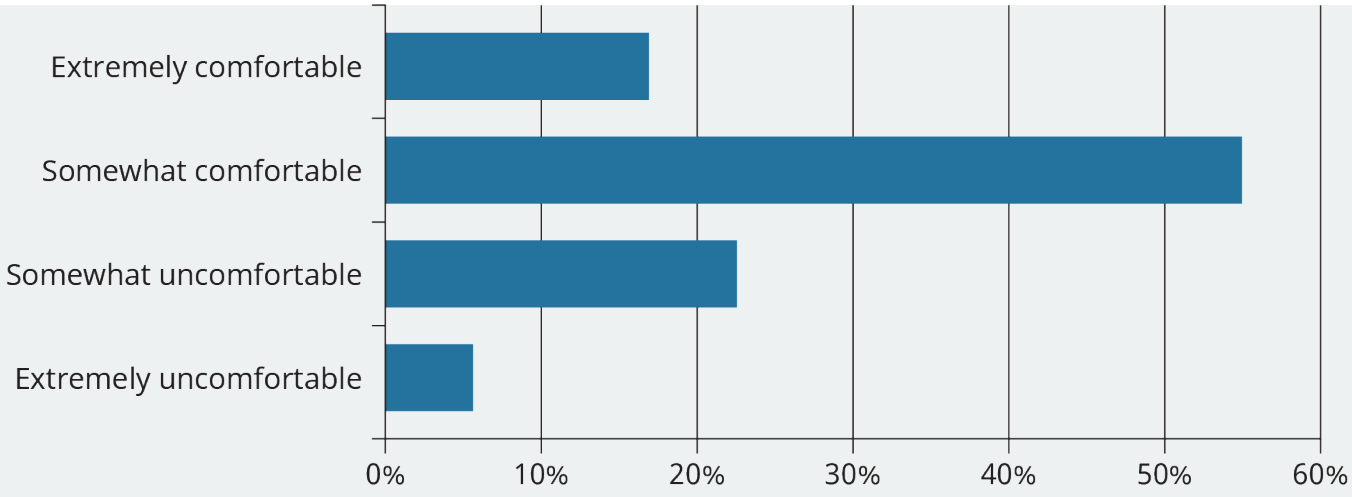


Figure 4.1.2.4

Do you generally feel welcomed and included on campus?

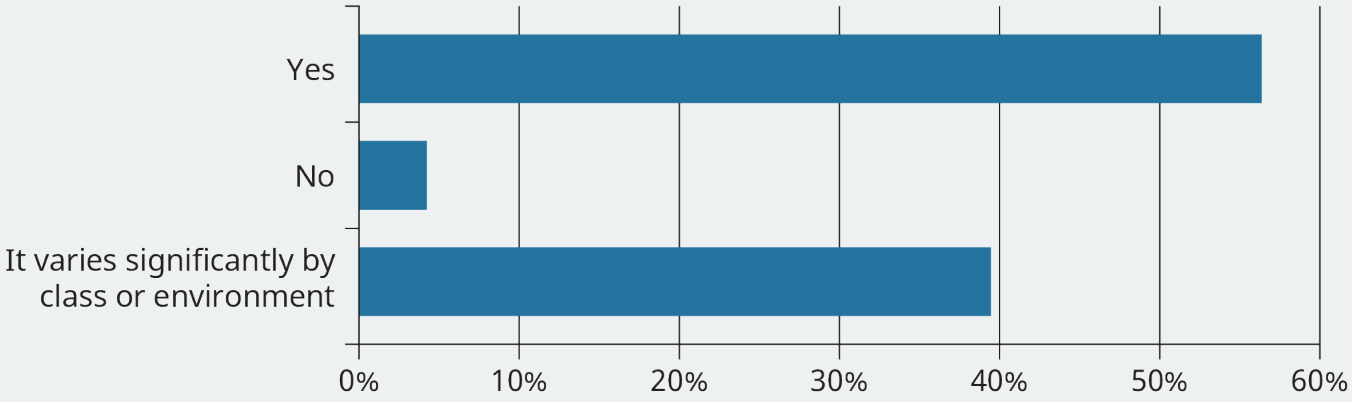


Figure 4.1.2.5

Why Diversity Matters

The United States of America is viewed the world over as a leader in democracy and democratic ideals. Our nation, young by most standards, continues to evolve to make the freedoms and opportunities available to all. Where the benefits of citizenship have been imperfect, discord over issues related to civil rights and inclusion have often been at the center of the conflict.

To understand the importance of civility and civil engagement, it is necessary to acknowledge our country's history. The United States is a country born out of protest. Colonists protesting what they felt were unfair taxes under King George III was at the foundation of the Revolutionary War. Over time, many groups have been given their civil liberties and equal access to all that our country has to offer through that same spirit of protest and petition.



Figure 4.1.2.6: (Credit: Carl Campbell / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

The United States is often described as a “melting pot,” a rich mixture made up of people of many colors, religions, abilities, etc. working together to make one great big stew. That is the image generations of Americans grew up learning, and it is a true one. The United States is a nation of immigrants, and cultural influences from around the world have added to its strength.

Historically, however, not all contributions and voices have been acknowledged equally or adequately. Some groups have had to struggle to have their contributions acknowledged, be treated fairly, and be allowed full participation in the civic life of the country. Entire populations of people have been oppressed as a part of the nation’s history, something important for Americans to confront and acknowledge. For example, in what is known as the Trail of Tears, the U.S. government forcibly removed Native Americans from their homelands and made them walk to reservations; some had to travel more than 1,000 miles, and over 10,000 died on the journey. Further, in an act of forced assimilation, Native American children were taken from their families and placed in schools where they were not allowed to practice cultural traditions or speak their Native languages. This practice continued as late as the 1970s. As a result, many Native American languages have been lost or are at risk of being lost.

The slavery of Africans occurred in America for close to 250 years. Much of the wealth in the United States during that time came directly from the labor of enslaved people; however, the enslaved people themselves did not benefit financially. During World War II, Japanese Americans were placed into internment camps and considered a danger to our country because our nation was at war with Japan.

For many years, all women and minority men were traditionally left out of public discourse and denied participation in government, industry, and even cultural institutions such as sports. For example, the United States Supreme Court was founded in 1789; however, the court’s first female justice, Sandra Day O’Connor, was not appointed until 1981, almost 200 years later. Jackie Robinson famously became the first African American major league baseball player in 1947 when he was hired by the Brooklyn Dodgers, although the major leagues were established in 1869, decades earlier. The absence of white women and minorities was not an accident. Their exclusion was based on legal discrimination or unfair treatment.

These are all examples of mistreatment, inequality, and discrimination, and they didn’t end without incredible sacrifice and heroism. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the equal rights movement for women’s rights in the 1970s are examples of how public protests work to bring attention to discriminatory practices and to create change. Because racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and other forms of bias and intolerance still exist, civil engagement and protests continue, and policies must be constantly monitored. Many people still work to ensure the gains these communities have made in acquiring the rights of full citizenship are not lost.

Diversity refers to differences in the human experience. As different groups have gained in number and influence, our definition of diversity has evolved to embrace many variables that reflect a multitude of different backgrounds, experiences, and points of view, not just race and gender. Diversity takes into account age, socioeconomic factors, ability (such as sight, hearing, and mobility), ethnicity, veteran status, geography, language, sexual orientation, religion, size, and other factors. At one time or another, each group has had to make petitions to the government for equal treatment under the law and appeals to society for respect. Safeguarding these groups’ hard-won rights and public regard maintains diversity and its two closely related factors, *equity* and

inclusion.

ACTIVITY

Our rights and protections are often acquired through awareness, effort, and, sometimes, protest. Each one of the following groups has launched protests over discrimination or compromises to their civil rights. Choose three of the groups below and do a quick search on protests or efforts members of the group undertook to secure their rights. To expand your knowledge, choose some with which you are not familiar.

Record the name, time frame, and outcomes of the protest or movements you researched.

The groups are as follows:

- Veterans
- Senior citizens
- Blind or visually impaired people
- Muslims
- Christians
- LGBTQ+ community
- Hispanic/Latinos
- People with intellectual disabilities
- Undocumented immigrants
- Little people
- College students
- Jewish Americans
- Farm workers
- Wheelchair users

The Role of Equity and Inclusion

Equity plays a major part in achieving fairness in a diverse landscape. Equity gives everyone equal access to opportunity and success. For example, you may have seen interpreters for deaf or hard of hearing people in situations where a public official is making an announcement about an impending weather emergency. Providing immediate translation into sign language means that there is no gap between what the public official is saying and when all people receive the information. Simultaneous sign language provides equity.[1] Similarly, many students have learning differences that require accommodations in the classroom. For example, a student with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) might be given more time to complete tests or writing assignments. The extra time granted takes into account that students with ADHD process information differently.

If a student with a learning difference is given more time than other students to complete a test, that is a matter of equity. The student is not being given an advantage; the extra time gives them an equal chance at success.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) is a federal government policy that addresses equity in the workplace, housing, and public places. The ADA requires “reasonable accommodations” so that people with disabilities have equal access to the same services as people without disabilities. For example, wheelchair lifts on public transportation, automatic doors, entrance ramps, and elevators are examples of accommodations that eliminate barriers of participation for people with certain disabilities.

Without the above accommodations, those with a disability may justly feel like second-class citizens because their needs were not anticipated. Further, they might have to use their own resources to gain equal access to services although their tax dollars contribute to providing that same access and service to other citizens.

Equity levels the playing field so that everyone’s needs are anticipated and everyone has an equal starting point. However, understanding equity is not enough.

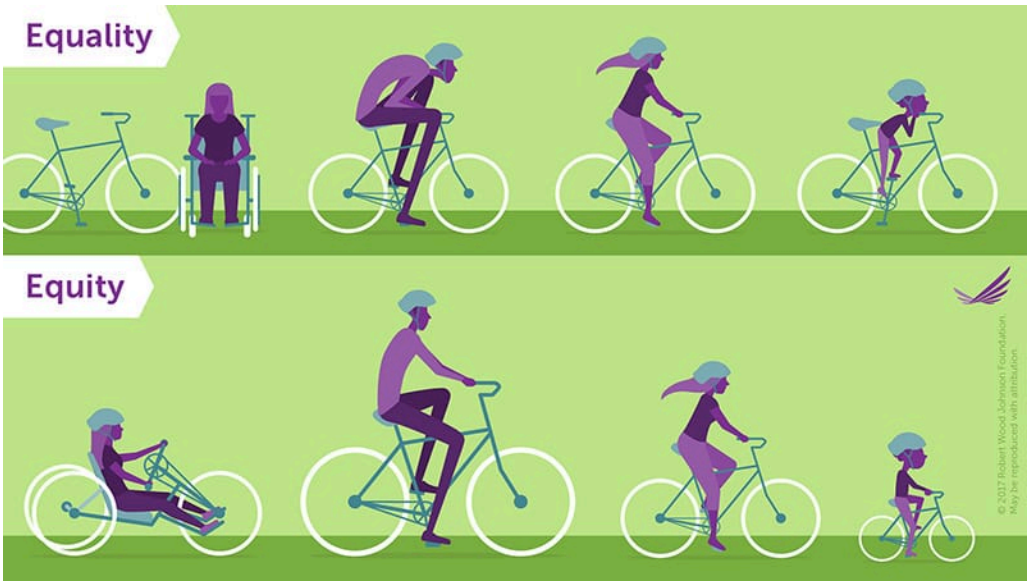


Figure 4.1.2.7: Equality is a meaningful goal, but it can leave people with unmet needs; equity is more empowering and fair. In equality portion of the graphic, people all sizes and a person who uses a wheelchair are all given the same bicycle, which is unusable for most. In the equity portion, each person gets a bicycle specifically designed for them, enabling them to successfully ride it. Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation / Custom License: "May be Produced with Attribution[2]")

When equity is properly considered, there is also inclusion. *Inclusion* means that there are a multiplicity of voices, skills, and interests represented in any given situation. Inclusion has played a major role in education, especially in terms of creating inclusion classrooms and inclusive curricula. In an inclusion classroom, students of different skill levels study together. For example, students with and without developmental disabilities study in the same classroom. Such an arrangement eliminates the stigma of the "special education classroom" where students were once segregated. In addition, in inclusion classrooms all students receive support when needed. Students benefit from seeing how others learn. In an inclusive curriculum, a course includes content and perspectives from underrepresented groups. For example, a college course in psychology might include consideration of different contexts such as immigration, incarceration, or unemployment in addition to addressing societal norms.

Inclusion means that these voices of varied background and experience are integrated into discussions, research, and assignments rather than ignored.

Our Country Is Becoming More Diverse

You may have heard the phrase "the browning of America," meaning it is predicted that today's racial minorities will, collectively, be the majority of the population in the future. The graph from the Pew Research Center projects that by the year 2065, U.S. demographics will have shifted significantly. In 2019, the white population made up just over 60% of the population. In 2065, the Pew Research Center predicts that whites will be approximately 46% of the population. The majority of Americans will be the non-white majority, 54% Hispanic/Latinos, blacks, and Asians.

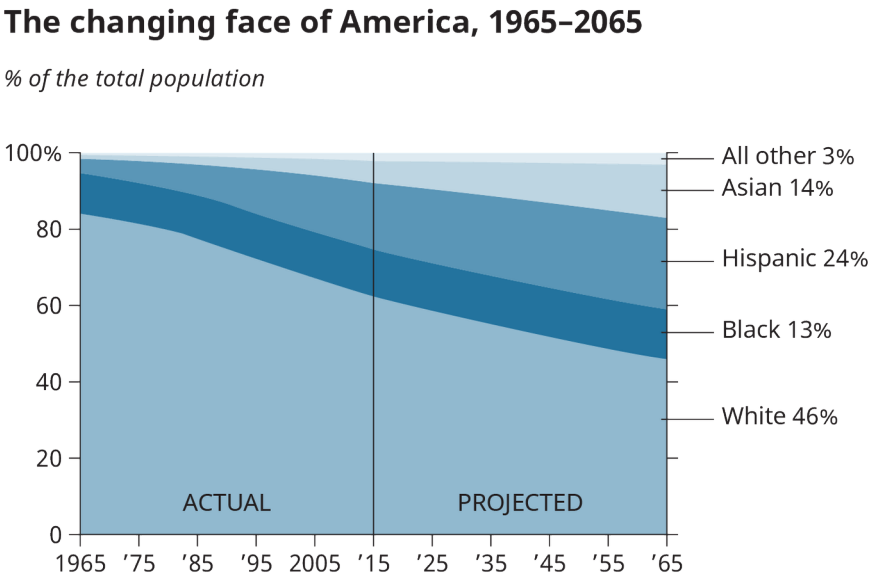


Figure 4.1.2.8: United States demographics (or statistical characteristics of populations) are changing rapidly. In just over 35 years, the country as a whole will be a "majority minority" nation, with ethnic/racial minorities making up more than half of the population. (Credit: Based on work by the Pew Research Center.)

What does this mean? It could mean that the United States begins accepting Spanish as a mainstream language since the Hispanic/Latino population will be significantly larger. It could mean a changing face for local governments. It could mean that our country will elect its second nonwhite president. Beyond anything specific, the shifting demographics of the United States could mean greater attention is paid to diversity awareness, equity, and inclusion.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

How should the United States prepare for its projected demographic shift? What changes do you suppose will take place as part of the "browning of America"?

Education: Equity for All

Education has been one of the most significant arenas for social change related to our rights as Americans. And the effects of that change have significantly impacted other power dynamics in society. You need look no further than the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) to see how our nation has responded passionately in civil and uncivil ways to appeals for equity and inclusion in public education.

For much of the 20th century, African Americans lived under government-sanctioned separation better known as segregation. Not only were schools segregated, but Jim Crow laws allowed for legal separation in transportation, hospitals, parks, restaurants, theaters, and just about every aspect of public life. These laws enacted that there be "whites only" water fountains and restrooms. Only white people could enter the front door of a restaurant or sit on the main level of a movie theater, while African Americans had to enter through the back door and sit in the balcony. The segregation also included Mexican Americans and Catholics, who were forced to attend separate schools. *Brown v. Board of Education* was a landmark Supreme Court case that challenged the interpretation of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The case involved the father of Linda Brown suing the Topeka, Kansas, board of education for denying his daughter the right to attend an all-white school. Oliver Brown maintained that segregation left his black community with inferior schools, a condition counter to the equal protection clause contained in Section I of the 14th Amendment:

> **"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."**

There was widespread heated opposition to desegregated education across the country. Passions were even more severe after *Brown v. Board of Education* was won by the plaintiff on appeal to the United States Supreme Court. In effect, the case changed the power dynamics in America by leveling the playing field for education. No longer were white schools (and their better resources) legally segregated. In principal, there was equity—equal access.

Debates in the courtrooms surrounding *Brown* were passionate but professional. Protests and debate in those communities directly affected by the decision, especially in the South, were intense, violent confrontations that demonstrated the height of incivility. One thing you may notice about uncivil behavior is the difficulty most have looking back on those actions.



Figure 4.1.2.9: After the Brown v Board of Education decision, Americans pursued their rights for equal education in other districts. In Arkansas, a group of teenagers, which would come to be known as the Little Rock Nine, were blocked from entering a formerly whites-only school. Facing angry protestors, the state governor, and even the National Guard, the nine students finally took their rightful place in the school after a judge ruled in their favor and President Eisenhower sent the 101st Airborne Division to secure the situation. (Credit: Courtesy of the National Archives, sourced from The US Army / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY))

Educational institutions like colleges and school districts are critically important spaces for equity and inclusion, and debates around them remain challenging. Transgender students in America's schools face discrimination, harrassment, and bullying, which causes nearly 45 percent of LGBTQ+ to feel unsafe becuase of their gender expression and 60 percent of to feel unsafe due to their sexual orientation. Many of these students miss school or experience significant stress, which usually has a negative impact on their grades, participation, and overall success.[3] In essence, this hostility creates inequality. Regardless of individual state or district laws on bathroom use and overall accommodation, federal law protects *all* students from discrimination, especially that based on categories such as gender. But implementation of these federal protections varies, and, in general, many outside the transgender community do not fully unerstand, empathize with, or support transgender rights.

How can the circumstances improve for transgender students? In other societal changes throughout our nation's history, court decisions, new legislation, protests, and general public opinion combined to right past wrongs and provide justice and protection for mistreated people. For example, in 2015, the Supreme Court upheld the right to same-sex marriage under the 14th Amendment. Just as African Americans publicly debated and protested educational inequality, the gay community used discusion, protest, and debate to sway public and legal opinion. Proponents of gay marriage faced fervent argument against their position based on religion and culture; like other minority groups, they were confronted with name-calling, job insecurity, family division, religious isolation, and physical confrontation. And as has often been the case, success in achieving marriage equality eventually came through the courts.

Legal remedies are significant, but can take a very long time. Before they see success in the courts or legislatures, transgender students in America's schools will continue to undergo harsh treatment. Their lives and education will remain very difficult until people from outside their community better understand their situation.

Debates: Civility vs. Incivility

Healthy debate is a desirable part of a community. In a healthy debate, people are given room to explain their point of view. In a healthy airing of differences, people on opposing sides of an argument can reach common ground and compromise or even agree to disagree and move on.

However, incivility occurs when people are not *culturally competent*. An individual who is not culturally competent might make negative assumptions about others' values, lack an open mindset, or be inflexible in thinking. Instead of being tolerant of different points of view, they may try to shut down communication by not listening or by keeping someone with a different point of view from being heard at all. Out of frustration, a person who is uncivil may resort to name-calling or discrediting another person only with the intention of causing confusion and division within a community. Incivility can also propagate violence. Such uncivil reaction to difficult issues is what makes many people avoid certain topics at all costs. Instead of seeking out diverse communities, people retreat to safe spaces where they will not be challenged to hear opposing opinions or have their beliefs contested.

Debates on difficult or divisive topics surrounding diversity, especially those promoting orchestrated change, are often passionate. People on each side may base their positions on deeply held beliefs, family traditions, personal experience, academic expertise, and a desire to orchestrate change. With such a strong foundation, emotions can be intense, and debates can become uncivil.

Even when the disagreement is based on information rather than personal feelings, discussions can quickly turn to arguments. For example, in academic environments, it's common to find extremely well-informed arguments in direct opposition to each other. Two well-known economics faculty members from your college could debate for hours on financial policies, with each professor's position backed by data, research, and publications. Each person could feel very strongly that they are right and the other person is wrong. They may even feel that the approach proposed by their opponent would actually do damage to the country or to certain groups of people. But for this debate—whether it occurs over lunch or on an auditorium stage—to remain civil, the participants need to maintain certain standards of behavior.

ACTIVITY

1. Describe a time when you could not reach an agreement with someone on a controversial issue.
2. Did you try to compromise, combining your points of view so that each of you would be partially satisfied?
3. Did either of you shut down communication? Was ending the conversation a good choice? Why or why not?

Civility is a valued practice that takes advantage of cultural and political systems we have in place to work through disagreements while maintaining respect for others' points of view. Civil behavior allows for a respectful airing of grievances. The benefit of civil discussion is that members of a community can hear different sides of an argument, weigh evidence, and decide for themselves which side to support.

You have probably witnessed or taken part in debates in your courses, at social events, or even at family gatherings. What makes people so passionate about certain issues? First, some may have a personal stake in an issue, such as abortion rights. Convincing other people to share their beliefs may be intended to create a community that will protect their rights. Second, others may have deeply held beliefs based on faith or cultural practices. They argue based on deeply held moral and ethical beliefs. Third, others may be limited in their background knowledge about an issue but are able to speak from a "script" of conventional points of view. They may not want to stray from the script because they do not have enough information to extend an argument.

Rules for Fair Debate



Figure 4.1.2.10: You'll participate in classroom or workplace debate throughout your academic or professional career. Civility is important to productive discussions, and will lead to worthwhile outcomes. (Credit: Creative Sustainability / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

The courtroom and the public square are not the only places where serious debate takes place. Every day we tackle tough decisions that involve other people, some of whom have strong opposing points of view. To be successful in college, you will need to master sound and ethical approaches to argument, whether it be for a mathematical proof or an essay in a composition class.

You probably already know how to be sensitive and thoughtful when giving feedback to a family member or friend. You think about their feelings and the best way to confront your disagreement without attacking them. Of course, sometimes it's easier to be less sensitive with people who love you no matter what. Still, whether in a classroom, a workplace, or your family dinner table, there are rules for debating that help people with opposing points of view get to the heart of an issue while remaining civil:

1. Avoid direct insults and personal attacks—the quickest way to turn someone away from your discussion is to attack them personally. This is actually a common logical fallacy called ad hominem, which means "to the person," and it means to attack the person rather than the issue.
2. Avoid generalizations and extreme examples—these are two more logical fallacies called bandwagon, or ad populum, and reduction to absurdity, or argumentum ad absurdum. The first is when you argue that everyone is doing something so it must be right. The second is when you argue that a belief or position would lead to an absurd or extreme outcome.
3. Avoid appealing to emotions rather than facts—it's easy to get emotional if you're debating something about which you feel passionate. Someone disagreeing with you can feel like a personal affront. This fallacy, called argument to compassion, appeals to one's emotions and happens when we mistake feelings for facts. While strong and motivating, our feelings are not great arbiters of the truth.
4. Avoid irrelevant arguments—sometimes it's easy to change the subject when we're debating, especially if we feel flustered or like we're not being heard. Irrelevant conclusion is the fallacy of introducing a topic that may or may not be sound logic but is not about the issue under debate.
5. Avoid appeal to bias—you may not have strong opinions on every topic but, no doubt, you are opinionated about things that matter to you. This strong view can create a bias, or a leaning toward an idea or belief. While there's nothing wrong with having a strong opinion, you must be mindful to ensure that your bias doesn't create prejudice. Ask yourself if your biases influence the ways in which you interact with other people and with ideas that differ from your own.
6. Avoid appeal to tradition—just because something worked in the past or was true in the past does not necessarily mean that it is true today. It's easy to commit this fallacy, as we often default to "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." It's appealing because it seems to be common sense. However, it ignores questions such as whether the existing or old policy truly works as well as it could and if new technology or new ways of thinking can offer an improvement. Old ways can certainly be good ways, but not simply because they are old.
7. Avoid making assumptions—often, we think we know enough about a topic or maybe even more than the person talking, so we jump ahead to the outcome. We assume we know what they're referring to, thinking about, or even imagining, but this is a dangerous practice because it often leads to misunderstandings. In fact, most logical fallacies are the result of assuming.
8. Strive for root cause analysis—getting at the root cause of something means to dig deeper and deeper until you discover

why a problem or disagreement occurred. Sometimes, the most obvious or immediate cause for a problem is not actually the most significant one. Discovering the root cause can help to resolve the conflict or reveal that there isn't one at all.

9. Avoid obstinacy—in the heat of a debate, it's easy to dig in your heels and refuse to acknowledge when you're wrong. Your argument is at stake, and so is your ego. However, it's important to give credit where it's due and to say you're wrong if you are. If you misquoted a fact or made an incorrect assumption, admit to it and move on.
10. Strive for resolution—while some people like to debate for the sake of debating, in the case of a true conflict, both parties should seek agreement, or at least a truce. One way to do this is to listen more than you speak. Listen, listen, listen: you'll learn and perhaps make better points of your own if you deeply consider the other point of view.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Have you ever witnessed incivility in person or an argument in the news? Briefly describe what happened. Why do you think individuals are willing to shut down communication over issues they are passionate about?

Online Civility

The Internet is the watershed innovation of our time. It provides incredible access to information and resources, helping us to connect in ways inconceivable just a few decades ago. But it also presents risks, and these risks seem to be changing and increasing at the same rate as technology itself. Because of our regular access to the Internet, it's important to create a safe, healthy, and enjoyable online space.

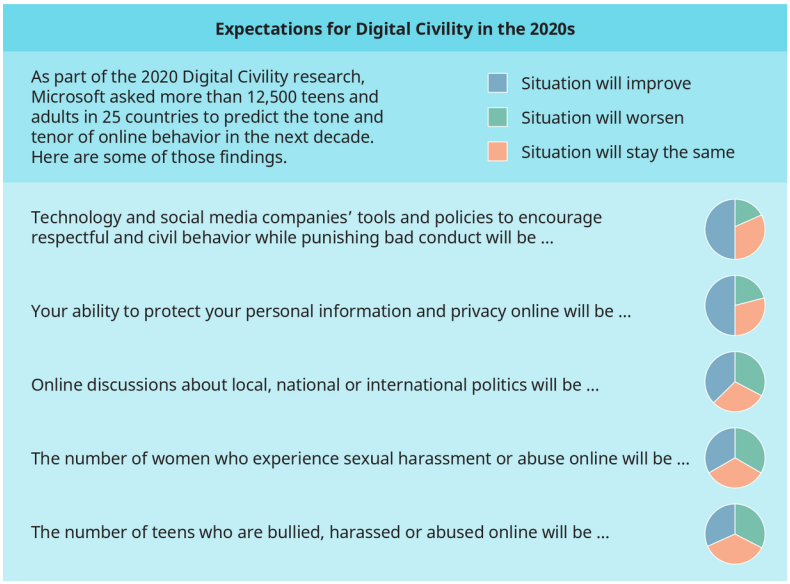


Figure 4.1.2.11: Microsoft's Digital Civility Research survey asked people their opinions on the future of online behavior and communication. While in some cases, the respondents thought circumstances would improve, predictions about the others, such as harassment and bullying, are more bleak. (Credit: Based on work from Microsoft, "Expectations for Digital Civility 2020."[4])

In the survey conducted by Microsoft, "nearly 4 in 10 [respondents] feel unwanted online contact (39%), bullying (39%) and unwelcome sexual attention (39%) will worsen [in 2020]. A slightly smaller percentage (35%) expect people's reputations, both professional and personal, will continue to be attacked online. One-quarter (25%) of respondents see improvement across each of these risk areas in 2020."

Digital civility is the practice of leading with empathy and kindness in all online interactions and treating each other with respect and dignity. This type of civility requires users to fully understand and appreciate potential harms and to follow the new rules of the digital road. You can find a discussion on best practices for online communication, often referred to as Netiquette, in Chapter 8 on Communicating. Following, are some basic guidelines to help exercise digital civility:

- **Live the "Golden Rule"** and treat others with respect and dignity both online and off.
- **Respect differences** of culture, geography, and opinion, and when disagreements surface, engage thoughtfully.

- **Pause before replying** to comments or posts you disagree with, and ensure responses are considerate and free of name-calling and abuse.
- **Stand up for yourself and others** if it's safe and prudent to do so.

Footnotes

- 1 https://www.nad.org/resources/americ...ked-questions/
- 2 https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/info...html#/download
- 3 2017 National School Climate Survey, GLESN. https://www.glsen.org/research/school-climate-survey
- 4 Expectations for Digital Civility. Note: Link leads to direct download.

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4.1.3: Categories of Diversity

Questions to consider:

- What is identity?
- Can a person have more than one identity?
- Can identity be ambiguous?
- What are fluidity and intersectionality?

The multiple roles we play in life—student, sibling, employee, roommate, for example—are only a partial glimpse into our true identity. Right now, you may think, "I really don't know what I want to be," meaning you don't know what you want to do for a living, but have you ever tried to define yourself in terms of the sum of your parts?

Social roles are those identities we assume in relationship to others. Our social roles tend to shift based on where we are and who we are with. Taking into account your social roles as well as your nationality, ethnicity, race, friends, gender, sexuality, beliefs, abilities, geography, etc., who are you?

Who Am I?

Popeye, a familiar 20th-century cartoon character, was a sailor-philosopher. He declared his own identity in a circular manner, landing us right where we started: "I am what I am and that's all that I am." Popeye proves his existence rather than help us identify him. It is his title, "The Sailor Man," that tells us how Popeye operates in the social sphere.

According to the American Psychological Association, personal identity is an individual's sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical, psychological, and interpersonal characteristics that is not wholly shared with any other person and (b) a range of affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles. Your identity is tied to the most dominant aspects of your background and personality.[1] It determines the lens through which you see the world and the lens through which you receive information.

ACTIVITY

Complete the following statement using no more than four words:

I am _____.

It is difficult to narrow down our identity to just a few options. One way to complete the statement would be to use gender and geography markers. For example, "I am a male New Englander" or "I am an American woman." Assuming they are true, no one can argue against those identities, but do those statements represent everything or at least most things that identify the speakers? Probably not.

Try finishing the statement again by using as many words as you wish.

I am _____.

If you ended up with a long string of descriptors that would be hard for a new acquaintance to manage, don't worry. Our identities are complex and reflect that we lead interesting and multifaceted lives.

To better understand identity, consider how social psychologists describe it. Social psychologists, those who study how social interactions take place, often categorize identity into four types: personal identity, role identity, social identity, and collective identity.

Personal identity captures what distinguishes one person from another based on life experiences. No two people, even identical twins, live the same life.

Role identity defines how we interact in certain situations. Our roles change from setting to setting, and so do our identities.

At work you may be a supervisor; in the classroom you are a peer working collaboratively; at home, you may be the parent of a 10-year-old. In each setting, your bubbly personality may be the same, but how your coworkers, classmates, and family see you is different.

Social identity shapes our public lives by our awareness of how we relate to certain groups. For example, an individual might relate to or "identify with" Korean Americans, Chicagoans, Methodists, and Lakers fans. These identities influence our interactions with others. Upon meeting someone, for example, we look for connections as to how we are the same or different. Our awareness of who we are makes us behave a certain way in relation to others. If you identify as a hockey fan, you may feel an affinity for someone else who also loves the game.

Collective identity refers to how groups form around a common cause or belief. For example, individuals may bond over similar political ideologies or social movements. Their identity is as much a physical formation as a shared understanding of the issues they believe in. For example, many people consider themselves part of the collective energy surrounding the #metoo movement. Others may identify as fans of a specific type of entertainment such as Trekkies, fans of the Star Trek series.

"I am large. I contain multitudes." Walt Whitman

In his epic poem *Song of Myself*, Walt Whitman writes, "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself (I am large. I contain multitudes.)." Whitman was asserting and defending his shifting sense of self and identity. Those lines importantly point out that our identities may evolve over time. What we do and believe today may not be the same tomorrow. Further, at any one moment, the identities we claim may seem at odds with each other. Shifting identities are a part of personal growth. While we are figuring out who we truly are and what we believe, our sense of self and the image that others have of us may be unclear or ambiguous.

Many people are uncomfortable with identities that do not fit squarely into one category. How do you respond when someone's identity or social role is unclear? Such ambiguity may challenge your sense of certainty about the roles that we all play in relationship to one another. Racial, ethnic, and gender ambiguity, in particular, can challenge some people's sense of social order and social identity.

When we force others to choose only one category of identity (race, ethnicity, or gender, for example) to make ourselves feel comfortable, we do a disservice to the person who identifies with more than one group. For instance, people with multiracial ancestry are often told that they are too much of one and not enough of another.

The actor Keanu Reeves has a complex background. He was born in Beirut, Lebanon, to a white English mother and a father with Chinese-Hawaiian ancestry. His childhood was spent in Hawaii, Australia, New York, and Toronto. Reeves considers himself Canadian and has publicly acknowledged influences from all aspects of his heritage. Would you feel comfortable telling Keanu Reeves how he must identify racially and ethnically?

There is a question many people ask when they meet someone whom they cannot clearly identify by checking a specific identity box. Inappropriate or not, you have probably heard people ask, "What are you?" Would it surprise you if someone like Keanu Reeves shrugged and answered, "I'm just me"?

Malcom Gladwell is an author of five New York Times best-sellers and is hailed as one of Foreign Policy's Top Global Thinkers. He has spoken on his experience with identity as well. Gladwell has a black Jamaican mother and a white Irish father. He often tells the story of how the perception of his hair has allowed him to straddle racial groups. As long as he kept his hair cut very short, his fair skin obscured his black ancestry, and he was most often perceived as white. However, once he let his hair grow long into a curly Afro style, Gladwell says he began being pulled over for speeding tickets and stopped at airport check-ins. His racial expression carried serious consequences.



Figure 4.1.3.12: Writer Malcolm Gladwell's racial expression has impacted his treatment by others and his everyday experiences. (Credit: Kris Krug, Pop!Tech / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Gender

More and more, gender is also a diversity category that we increasingly understand to be less clearly defined. Some people identify themselves as gender fluid or non-binary. "Binary" refers to the notion that gender is only one of two possibilities, male or female. Fluidity suggests that there is a range or continuum of expression. Gender fluidity acknowledges that a person may vacillate between male and female identity.

Asia Kate Dillon is an American actor and the first non-binary actor to perform in a major television show with their roles on *Orange is the New Black* and *Billions*. In an article about the actor, a reporter conducting the interview describes his struggle with trying to describe Dillon to the manager of the restaurant where the two planned to meet. The reporter and the manger struggle with describing someone who does not fit a pre-defined notion of gender identity. Imagine the situation: You're meeting someone at a restaurant for the first time, and you need to describe the person to a manager. Typically, the person's gender would be a part of the description, but what if the person cannot be described as a man or a woman?



Figure 4.1.3.13: Asia Kate Dillon is a non-binary actor best known for their roles on *Orange Is the New Black* and *Billions*. (Credit: *Billions* Official Youtube Channel / Wikimedia Commons / Attribution 3.0 Unported (CC-BY 3.0))

Within any group, individuals obviously have a right to define themselves; however, collectively, a group's self-determination is also important. The history of black Americans demonstrates a progression of self-determined labels: Negro, Afro-American, colored, black, African American. Similarly, in the nonbinary community, self-described labels have evolved. Nouns such as *genderqueer* and pronouns such as *hir, ze,* and *Mx*. (instead of *Miss, Mrs. or Mr.)* have entered not only our informal lexicon, but the dictionary as well.

> **Merriam-Webster's dictionary includes a definition of "they" that denotes a nonbinary identity, that is, someone who fluidly moves between male and female identities.**

Transgender men and women were assigned a gender identity at birth that does not fit their true identity. Even though our culture is increasingly giving space to non-heteronormative (straight) people to speak out and live openly, they do so at a risk. Violence against gay, nonbinary, and transgender people occurs at more frequent rates than for other groups.

To make ourselves feel comfortable, we often want people to fall into specific categories so that our own social identity is clear. However, instead of asking someone to make us feel comfortable, we should accept the identity people choose for themselves. Cultural competency includes respectfully addressing individuals as they ask to be addressed.

Table 9.1 The website Transstudent.org provides educational resources such as the above graphic for anyone seeking clarity on gender identity. Note that these are only examples of some gender pronouns, not a complete list.

Table Gender Pronoun Examples				
Subjective	**Objective**	**Possessive**	**Reflexive**	**Example**
She	Her	Hers	Herself	She is speaking. I listened to her. The backpack is hers.
He	Him	His	Himself	He is speaking. I listened to him. The backpack is his.
They	Them	Theirs	Themself	They are speaking. I listened to them. The backpack is theirs.
Ze	Hir/Zir	Hirs/Zirs	Hirself/Zirself	Ze is speaking. I listened to hir. The backpack is zirs.

Intersectionality

The many layers of our multiple identities do not fit together like puzzle pieces with clear boundaries between one piece and another. Our identities overlap, creating a combined identity in which one aspect is inseparable from the next.

The term intersectionality was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how the experience of black women

was a unique combination of gender and race that could not be divided into two separate identities. In other words, this group could not be seen solely as women or solely as black; where their identities overlapped is considered the “intersection,” or crossroads, where identities combine in specific and inseparable ways.



Figure 4.1.3.14: Our identities are formed by dozens of factors, sometimes represented in intersection wheels. Consider the subset of identity elements represented here. Generally, the outer ring are elements that may change relatively often, while the inner circle are often considered more permanent. (There are certainly exceptions.) How does each contribute to who you are, and how would possible change alter your self-defined identity?

Intersectionality and awareness of intersectionality can drive societal change, both in how people see themselves and how they interact with others. That experience can be very inward-facing, or can be more external. It can also lead to debate and challenges. For example, the term “Latinx” is growing in use because it is seen as more inclusive than “Latino/Latina,” but some people—including scholars and advocates—lay out substantive arguments against its use. While the debate continues, it serves as an important reminder of a key element of intersectionality: Never assume that all people in a certain group or population feel the same way. Why not? Because people are more than any one element of their identity; they are defined by more than their race, color, geographic origin, gender, or socio-economic status. The overlapping aspects of each person’s identity and experiences will create a unique perspective.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Consider the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality; religion, ethnicity, and geography; military experience; age and socioeconomic status; and many other ways our identities overlap. Consider how these overlap in you.

Do you know people who talk easily about their various identities? How does it inform the way you interact with them?

Footnotes

1. APA Dictionary of Psychology https://dictionary.apa.org/identity proper citation to come

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4.1.4: Navigating the Diversity Landscape

Questions to consider:

- What happens when we make assumptions about others?
- Are microaggressions honest mistakes?
- How do I know if I have a diversity "problem"?
- How important is diversity awareness in the college classroom?

Avoid Making Assumptions

By now you should be aware of the many ways diversity can be both observable and less apparent. Based on surface clues, we may be able to approximate someone's age, weight, and perhaps their geographical origin, but even with those observable characteristics, we cannot be sure about how individuals define themselves. If we rely too heavily on assumptions, we may be buying into stereotypes, or generalizations.

Stereotyping robs people of their individual identities. If we buy into stereotypes, we project a profile onto someone that probably is not true. Prejudging people without knowing them, better known as prejudice or bias, has consequences for both the person who is biased and the individual or group that is prejudged. In such a scenario, the intimacy of real human connections is lost. Individuals are objectified, meaning that they only serve as symbolic examples of who we assume they are instead of the complex, intersectional individuals we know each person to be.

Stereotyping may be our way of avoiding others' complexities. When we stereotype, we do not have to remember distinguishing details about a person. We simply write their stories for ourselves and let those stories fulfill who we expect those individuals to be. For example, a hiring manager may project onto an Asian American the stereotype of being good at math, and hire her as a researcher over her Hispanic counterpart. Similarly, an elementary school teacher may recruit an Indian American sixth-grader to the spelling bee team because many Indian American students have won national tournaments in the recent past. A real estate developer may hire a gay man as an interior designer because he has seen so many gay men performing this job on television programs. A coach chooses a white male student to be a quarterback because traditionally, quarterbacks have been white men. In those scenarios, individuals of other backgrounds, with similar abilities, may have been overlooked because they do not fit the stereotype of who others suspect them to be.

Earlier in this chapter, equity and inclusion were discussed as going hand in hand with achieving civility and diversity. In the above scenarios, equity and inclusion are needed as guiding principles for those with decision-making power who are blocking opportunity for nontraditional groups. Equity might be achieved by giving a diverse group of people access to internships to demonstrate their skills. Inclusion might be achieved by assembling a hiring or recruiting committee that might have a better chance of seeing beyond stereotypical expectations.

APPLICATION

Often, our assumptions and their impacts are not life-changing, but they can be damaging to others and limiting to our own understanding. Consider the following scenarios, and answer the questions that follow.

Scenario 1:

During an in-class conversation about a new mission to explore Mars, two classmates offer opinions.

- Student A says, "We should focus on this planet before we focus on others."
- Student B responds immediately with, "If we're going to stop climate change, we'll probably find the answer through science related to space travel."

What assumption did student B make about student A's point? What else, aside from climate change, could student A have been considering?

Scenario 2:

For an important group project, an instructor designates teams of six students and gives them time to set up their work schedule for the assignment. One group of students, most of whom don't know each other well, agrees to meet two nights later. They initially propose to get together in the library, but at the last moment one member suggests an off-campus restaurant; several of the others agree right away and move on to other topics. The remaining two students look at each other uncomfortably. One interjects, suggesting they go back to the original idea of meeting in the library, but the others are already getting up to leave. It's clear that two of the students are uncomfortable meeting at the restaurant.

What might be the reason that two of the students are not comfortable meeting over dinner? What assumptions did the others make?

Being civil and inclusive does not require a deep-seated knowledge of the backgrounds and perspectives of everyone you meet. That would be impossible. But avoiding assumptions and being considerate will build better relationships and provide a more effective learning experience. It takes openness and self-awareness and sometimes requires help or advice, but learning to be sensitive—practicing assumption avoidance—is like a muscle you can strengthen.

Be Mindful of Microaggressions

Whether we mean to or not, we sometimes offend people by not thinking about what we say and the manner in which we say it. One danger of limiting our social interactions to people who are from our own social group is in being insensitive to people who are not like us. The term *microaggression* refers to acts of insensitivity that reveal our inherent biases, cultural incompetency, and hostility toward someone outside of our community. Those biases can be toward race, gender, nationality, or any other diversity variable. The individual on the receiving end of a microaggression is reminded of the barriers to complete acceptance and understanding in the relationship. Let's consider an example.

Ann is new to her office job. Her colleagues are friendly and helpful, and her first two months have been promising. She uncovered a significant oversight in a financial report, and, based on her attention to detail, was put on a team working with a large client. While waiting in line at the cafeteria one day, Ann's new boss overhears her laughing and talking loudly with some colleagues. He then steps into the conversation, saying, "Ann, this isn't a night at one of your clubs. Quiet down." As people from the nearby tables look on, Ann is humiliated and angered.

What was Ann's manager implying? What could he have meant by referring to "*your* clubs?" How would you feel if such a comment were openly directed at you? One reaction to this interaction might be to say, "So what? Why let other people determine how you feel? Ignore them." While that is certainly reasonable, it may ignore the pain and invalidation of the experience. And even if you could simply ignore some of these comments, there is a compounding effect of being frequently, if not constantly, barraged by such experiences.

Consider the table below, which highlights common examples of microaggressions. In many cases, the person speaking these phrases may not mean to be offensive. In fact, in some cases the speaker might think they are being *nice*. However, appropriate terminology and other attitudes or acceptable descriptions change all the time. Before saying something, consider how a person could take the words differently than you meant them. As we discussed in Chapter 8, emotional intelligence and empathy can help understand another's perspective.

Table 9.2 Have you made statements like these, perhaps without realizing the offense they might cause? Some of these could be intended as compliments, but they could have the unintended effect of diminishing or invalidating someone. (Credit: Modification of work by Derald Wing Sue[1].)

Microaggressions		
Category	**Microaggression**	**Why It's Offensive**
Educational Status or Situation	"You're an athlete; you don't need to study."	Stereotypes athletes and ignores their hard work.
	"You don't get financial aid; you must be rich.	"Even an assumption of privilege can be invalidating.

Microaggressions		
	"Did they have honors classes at your high school?"	Implies that someone is less prepared or intelligent based on their geography.
Race, Ethnicity, National Origin"	You speak so well for someone like you."	Implies that people of a certain race/ethnicity can't speak well.
	"No, where are you *really* from?"	Calling attention to someone's national origin makes them feel separate."
	You must be good at ____."	Falsely connects identity to ability.
	"My people had it so much worse than yours did."	Makes assumptions and diminishes suffering/difficulty.
	"I'm not even going to try your name. It looks too difficult."	Dismisses a person's culture and heritage.
	"It's so much easier for black people to get into college."	Assumes that merit is not the basis for achievement.
Gender and Gender Identity	"They're *so* emotional."	Assumes a person cannot be emotional and rational.
	"I guess you can't meet tonight because you have to take care of your son?"	Assumes a parent (of any gender) cannot participate.
	"I don't get all this pronoun stuff, so I'm just gonna call you what I call you."	Diminishes the importance of gender identity; indicates a lack of empathy.
	"I can't even tell you used to be a woman."	Conflates identity with appearance, and assumes a person needs someone else's validation.
	"You're too good-looking to be so smart."	Connects outward appearance to ability.
Sexual Orientation	"I support you; just don't throw it in my face."	Denies another person's right to express their identity or point of view.
	"You seem so rugged for a gay guy."	Stereotypes all gay people as being "not rugged," and could likely offend the recipient.
	"I might try being a lesbian."	May imply that sexual orientation is a choice.
	"I can't even keep track of all these new categories."	Bisexual, pansexual, asexual, and other sexual orientations are just as valid and deserving of respect as more binary orientations.
	"You can't just love whomever you want; pick one."	
Age	"Are you going to need help with the software?"	May stereotype an older person as lacking experience with the latest technology.
	"Young people have it so easy nowadays."	Makes a false comparison between age and experience.
	"Okay, boomer."	Dismisses an older generation as out of touch.
Size	"I bet no one messes with you."	Projects a tendency to be aggressive onto a person of large stature.
	"You are so cute and tiny."	Condescending to a person of small stature.
	"I wish I was thin and perfect like you."	Equates a person's size with character.
Ability	(To a person using a wheelchair) "I wish I could sit down wherever I went."	Falsely assumes a wheelchair is a luxury; minimizes disabilities.
	"You don't have to complete the whole test. Just do your best."	Assumes that a disability means limited intellectual potential.

Microaggressions		
	“I’m blind without my glasses.”	Equating diminished capacity with a true disability.

Everyone Has a Problem: Implicit Bias

One reason we fall prey to stereotypes is our own implicit bias. Jo Handelsman and Natasha Sakraney, who developed science and technology policy during the Obama administration, defined implicit bias.

According to Handelsman and Sakraney, “A lifetime of experience and cultural history shapes people and their judgments of others. Research demonstrates that most people hold unconscious, implicit assumptions that influence their judgments and perceptions of others. Implicit bias manifests in expectations or assumptions about physical or social characteristics dictated by stereotypes that are based on a person’s race, gender, age, or ethnicity. People who intend to be fair, and believe they are egalitarian, apply biases unintentionally. Some behaviors that result from implicit bias manifest in actions, and others are embodied in the absence of action; either can reduce the quality of the workforce and create an unfair and destructive environment.”[2]

The notion of bias being “implicit,” or unconsciously embedded in our thoughts and actions, is what makes this characteristic hard to recognize and evaluate. You may assume that you hold no racial bias, but messages from our upbringing, social groups, and media can feed us negative racial stereotypes no matter how carefully we select and consume information. Further, online environments have algorithms that reduce our exposure to diverse points of view. Psychologists generally agree that implicit bias affects the judgements we make about others.

Harvard University’s Project Implicit website offers an interactive implicit association test that measures individual preference for characteristics such as weight, skin color, and gender. During the test, participants are asked to match a series of words and images with positive or negative associations. Test results, researchers suggest, can indicate the extent to which there is implicit bias in favor of or against a certain group. Completing a test like this might reveal unconscious feelings you were previously aware you had.

The researchers who developed the test make clear that there are limitations to its validity and that for some, the results of the test can be unsettling. The test makers advise not taking the test if you feel unprepared to receive unexpected results.

APPLICATION

Take the Project Implicit test and write a brief passage about your results.

Do you think the results accurately reflect your attitude toward the group you tested on? Can you point to any actions or thoughts you have about the group you tested on that are or are not reflected in the test results? Will you change any behaviors or try to think differently about the group you tested on based on your results? Why or why not?

Cultural Competency in the College Classroom

We carry our attitudes about gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and other diversity categories with us wherever we go. The college classroom is no different than any other place. Both educators and students maintain their implicit bias and are sometimes made uncomfortable by interacting with people different than themselves. Take for example a female freshman who has attended a school for girls for six years before college. She might find being in the classroom with her new male classmates a culture shock and dismiss male students’ contributions to class discussions. Similarly, a homeschooled student may be surprised to find that no one on campus shares his religion. He may feel isolated in class until he finds other students of similar background and experience. Embedded in your classroom may be peers who are food insecure, undocumented, veterans, atheist, Muslim, or politically liberal or conservative. These identities may not be visible, but they still may separate and even marginalize these members of your community. If, in the context of classroom conversations, their perspectives are overlooked, they may also feel very isolated.

In each case, the students’ assumptions, previous experience with diversity of any kind, and implicit bias surface. How each student reacts to the new situation can differ. One reaction might be to self-segregate, that is, locate people they believe are

similar to them based on how they look, the assumption being that those people will share the same academic skills, cultural interests, and personal values that make the student feel comfortable. The English instructor at the beginning of this chapter who assumed all of his students were the same demonstrated how this strategy could backfire.

You do not have to be enrolled in a course related to diversity, such as Asian American literature, to be concerned about diversity in the classroom. Diversity touches all aspects of our lives and can enter a curriculum or discussion at any time because each student and the instructor bring multiple identities and concerns into the classroom. Ignoring these concerns, which often reveal themselves as questions, makes for an unfulfilling educational experience.

In higher education, diversity includes not only the identities we have discussed such as race and gender, but also academic preparation and ability, learning differences, familiarity with technology, part-time status, language, and other factors students bring with them. Of course, the instructor, too, brings diversity into the classroom setting. They decide how to incorporate diverse perspectives into class discussions, maintain rules of civility, choose inclusive materials to study or reference, receive training on giving accommodations to students who need them, and acknowledge their own implicit bias. If they are culturally competent, both students and instructors are juggling many concerns.

How do you navigate diversity in the college classroom?

Academic Freedom Allows for Honest Conversations

Academic freedom applies to the permission instructors and students have to follow a line of intellectual inquiry without the fear of censorship or sanction. There are many heavily contested intellectual and cultural debates that, for some, are not resolved. A student who wants to argue against prevailing opinion has the right to do so based on academic freedom. Many point to a liberal bias on college campuses. Conservative points of view on immigration, education, and even science, are often not accepted on campus as readily as liberal viewpoints. An instructor or student who wants to posit a conservative idea, however, has the right to do so because of academic freedom.

Uncomfortable conversations about diversity are a part of the college classroom landscape. For example, a student might use statistical data to argue that disparities in degrees for men and women in chemistry reflect an advantage in analytical ability for men. While many would disagree with that theory, the student could pursue that topic in a discussion or paper as long as they use evidence and sound, logical reasoning.

“I’m just me.”

Remember the response to the “What are you?” question for people whose racial or gender identity was ambiguous? “I’m just me” also serves those who are undecided about diversity issues or those who do not fall into hard categories such as feminist, liberal, conservative, or religious. Ambiguity sometimes makes others feel uncomfortable. For example, if someone states she is a Catholic feminist unsure about abortion rights, another student may wonder how to compare her own strong pro-life position to her classmate’s uncertainty. It would be much easier to know exactly which side her classmate is on. Some people straddle the fence on big issues, and that is OK. You do not have to fit neatly into one school of thought. Answer your detractors with “I’m just me,” or tell them if you genuinely don’t know enough about an issue or are not ready to take a strong position.

Seek Resources and Projects That Contribute to Civility

A culturally responsive curriculum addresses cultural and ethnic differences of students. Even in classrooms full of minority students, the textbooks and topics may only reflect American cultural norms determined by the mainstream and tradition. Students may not relate to teaching that never makes reference to their socio-economic background, race, or their own way of thinking and expression. Educators widely believe that a culturally responsive curriculum, one that integrates relatable contexts for learning and reinforces cultural norms of the students receiving the information, makes a difference.

The K-12 classroom is different than the college classroom. Because of academic freedom, college instructors are not required to be culturally inclusive. (They *are* usually required to be respectful and civil, but there are different interpretations of those qualities.) Because American colleges are increasingly more sensitive to issues regarding diversity, faculty are compelled to be inclusive. Still, diversity is not always adequately addressed. In his TED “Talk Can Art Amend History?” the artist Titus Kaphar tells the story of the art history class that influenced him to become an artist and provides an example of this absence of diversity in the college classroom. Kaphar explains that his instructor led his class through important periods and artists throughout history, but failed to spend time on black artists, something that Kaphar was anxiously awaiting. The instructor stated that there was just

not enough time to cover it. While the professor probably did not intend to be noninclusive, her choice resulted in just that. Kaphar let his disappointment fuel his passion and mission to amend the representation of black figures in historical paintings. His work brings to light the unnoticed black figures that are too often overlooked.



Figure 4.1.4.15: In *Twisted Tropes,* Titus Kaphar reworks a painting to bring a black figure to the forefront of an arrangement in which she had previously been marginalized. (Credit: smallcurio / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Any student can respond to a lack of diversity in a curriculum as Titus Kaphar did. Where you find diversity missing, when possible, fill in the gaps with research papers and projects that broaden your exposure to diverse perspectives. Take the time to research contributions in your field by underrepresented groups. Discover the diversity issues relevant to your major. Are women well-represented in your field? Is there equity when it comes to access to opportunities such as internships? Are veterans welcomed? Do the academic societies in your discipline have subgroups or boards focused on diversity and equity? (Most do.) Resources for expanding our understanding and inclusion of diversity issues are all around us.

Directly Confront Prejudice

To draw our attention to possible danger, the Department of Homeland Security has adopted the phrase, "If you see something, say something." That credo can easily be adopted to confront stereotypes and bias: "If you hear something, say something." Academic freedom protects students and instructors from reprisal for having unpopular opinions, but prejudice is never correct, nor should it be tolerated. Do not confuse hate speech, such as sexist language, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and acts that reflect those points of view, with academic freedom. Yes, the classroom is a place to discuss these attitudes, but it is not a place to direct those sentiments toward fellow students, educators, or society in general.

Most higher education institutions have mission statements and codes of conduct that warn students about engaging in such behavior. The consequences for violators are usually probation and possibly dismissal. Further policies such as affirmative action and Title IX are instituted to evaluate and maintain racial and gender equity.

APPLICATION

No one knows when a racist or sexist attack is coming. The Barnard Center for Research on Women has created a video suggesting ways to be an ally to people victimized by intolerant behavior.

Affirmative Action and Higher Education

Affirmative action is a policy that began during the John F. Kennedy administration to eliminate discrimination in employment. Since that time, it has expanded as a policy to protect from discrimination in a number of contexts, including higher education. Most notably in higher education, affirmative action has been used to create equity in access. Institutions have used affirmative

action as a mandate of sorts in admission policies to create diverse student bodies. Colleges sometimes overlook traditional admissions criteria and use socioeconomic and historical disparities in education equity as criteria to admit underrepresented groups. Affirmative action is a federal requirement to be met by entities that contract with the federal government; most colleges are federal government contractors and must adhere to the policy by stating a timeline by which its affirmative action goals are met.

Many interpret "goals" as quotas, meaning that a certain number of students from underrepresented groups would be admitted, presumably to meet affirmative action requirements. Opposition to affirmative action in college admissions has been pursued in several well-known court cases.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke

This 1978 case resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court decision to allow race to be used as one of the criteria in higher education admission policies as long as quotas were not established and race was not the only criterion for admission. The case stemmed from Alan Bakke, an applicant to the University of California at Davis Medical School, suing the university because he was not admitted but had higher test scores and grades than minority students who had been accepted. Lawyers for Bakke referenced the same equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment used to desegregate public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The "reverse discrimination" denied him equal protection under the law.

Fisher v. University of Texas

In 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court decided another affirmative action case regarding Fisher v. University of Texas. Abigail Fisher also argued that she had been denied college admission based on race. The case ended in favor of the university. Justice Kennedy, in the majority opinion, wrote:

> **"A university is in large part defined by those intangible "qualities which are incapable of objective measurement but which make for greatness." Considerable deference is owed to a university in defining those intangible characteristics, like student body diversity, that are central to its identity and educational mission."**

In each of the above landmark cases, affirmative action in college admission policies were upheld. However, cases of reverse discrimination in college admission policies continue to be pursued.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Examine your college's code of conduct. You may find it in your student handbook, as part of an office of community standards or engagement, or by simply searching your college site. How does the code of conduct protect academic freedom but guard against hate speech, prejudice, and intolerance?

Title IX and Higher Education

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." As with affirmative action, Title IX applies to institutions that receive federal funding, such as public and charter schools, for-profit schools, libraries, and museums in the United States and its territories.

According to the Office for Civil Rights, educational programs and activities receiving federal funds must operate in a nondiscriminatory manner. Title IX addresses recruitment, admissions, and counseling; financial assistance; athletics; sex-based harassment; treatment of pregnant and parenting students; discipline; single-sex education; and employment.

Before the enactment of Title IX, there were few if any protections provided for women college students. To give some perspective, consider this description of the circumstances:

"Young women were not admitted into many colleges and universities, athletic scholarships for women were rare, and math and science was a realm reserved for boys. Girls square danced instead of playing sports, studied home economics instead of training for 'male-oriented' (read: higher-paying) trades. Girls could become teachers and nurses, but not doctors or principals; women

rarely were awarded tenure and even more rarely appointed college presidents. There was no such thing as sexual harassment because 'boys will be boys,' after all, and if a student got pregnant, her formal education ended. Graduate professional schools openly discriminated against women."[3]

The protections of Title IX have been invoked in college athletics to ensure women's athletic programs are sustained. In addition, schools must make efforts to prevent sexual harassment and violence. Gender discrimination under Title IX extends to the protection of transgender students so that they are treated as the gender they identify with.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Based on the cases against affirmative action in higher education, are admissions policies that use race, along with other factors, as admissions criteria fair? What other options do you think would create equity in admissions?

Footnotes

1. Adapted from Sue, Derald Wing, Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation, Wiley & Sons, 2010
2. Handlesman, Jo and Sakraney, Natasha. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov...4-15_final.pdf.
3. WInslow, Barbara. "The Impact of Title IX." Gilder-Lerhman Institute. https://faculty.uml.edu/sgallagher/T...derLehrman.pdf

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4.1.5: Inclusivity and Civility- What Role Can I Play?

Questions to consider:

- Is it my fault that I have privilege?
- How long will diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts continue?
- What is to be gained by cultural competency?

Privilege Is Not Just for White People

Privilege is a right or exemption from liability or duty granted as a special benefit or advantage. Oppression is the result of the "use of institutional privilege and power, wherein one person or group benefits at the expense of another,"[1] according to the University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak Peck School of Social Work.

Just as everyone has implicit bias, everyone has a certain amount of privilege, too. For example, consider the privilege brought by being a certain height. If someone's height is close to the average height, they likely have a privilege of convenience when it comes to many day-to-day activities. A person of average height does not need assistance reaching items on high store shelves and does not need adjustments to their car to reach the brake pedal. There's nothing wrong with having this privilege, but recognizing it, especially when considering others who do not share it, can be eye-opening and empowering.

Wealthy people have privilege of not having to struggle economically. The wealthy can build retirement savings, can afford to live in the safest of neighborhoods, and can afford to pay out of pocket for their children's private education. People with a college education and advanced degrees are privileged because a college degree allows for a better choice of employment and earning potential. Their privilege doesn't erase the hard work and sacrifice necessary to earn those degrees, but the degrees often lead to advantages. And, yes, white people are privileged over racial minorities. Remember Malcolm Gladwell's explanation of how he was treated when people assumed he was white as opposed to how people treated him when they assumed he was black?

It is no one's fault that they may have privilege in any given situation. In pursuit of civility, diversity, equity, and inclusion, the goal is to not exploit privilege but to share it. What does that mean? It means that when given an opportunity to hire a new employee or even pick someone for your study group, you make an effort to be inclusive and not dismiss someone who has not had the same academic advantages as you. Perhaps you could mentor a student who might otherwise feel isolated. Sharing your privilege could also mean recognizing when diversity is absent, speaking out on issues others feel intimidated about supporting, and making donations to causes you find worthy.

In pursuit of civility, diversity, equity, and inclusion, the goal is to not exploit privilege but to share it.

When you are culturally competent, you become aware of how your privilege may put others at a disadvantage. With some effort, you can level the playing field without making yourself vulnerable to falling behind.

APPLICATION

Think about a regular activity such as going to a class. In what ways are you privileged in that situation? How can you share your privilege with others?

"Eternal vigilance is the price of civility."

The original statement reads, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." History sometimes credits that statement to Thomas Jefferson and sometimes to Wendell Holmes. Ironically, no one was paying enough attention to document it accurately. Still, the meaning is clear—if we relax our standards, we may lose everything.

Civility is like liberty; it requires constant attention. We have to adjust diversity awareness, policies, and laws to accommodate the ever-changing needs of society. Without the vigilance of civil rights workers, society could have lapsed back into the Jim Crow era. Without activists such as Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Flo Kennedy remaining vigilant, women might not have made

the gains they did in the 1970s. Constant attention is still needed because in the case of women's earning power, they only make about 80 cents for every dollar a man makes. Constant vigilance requires passion and persistence. The activism chronologies of Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, students, labor, and other groups is full of stops and starts, twists and turns that represent adjustments to their movements based on the shifting needs of younger generations. As long as there are new generations of these groups, we will need to pursue diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Your Future and Cultural Competency

Where will you be in five years? Will you own your own business? Will you be a stay-at-home parent? Will you be making your way up the corporate ladder of your dream job? Will you be pursuing an advanced degree? Maybe you will have settled into an entry-level job with good benefits and be willing to stay there for a while. Wherever life leads you in the future, you will need to be culturally competent. Your competency will be a valuable skill not only because of the increasing diversity and awareness in America, but also because we live in a world with increasing global connections.

If you do not speak a second language, try to learn one. If you can travel, do so, even if it's to another state or region of the United States. See how others live in order to understand their experience and yours. To quote Mark Twain, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness." The more we expose ourselves to different cultures and experiences, the more understanding and tolerance we tend to have.

The United States is not perfect in its practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Still, compared to much of the world, Americans are privileged on a number of fronts. Not everyone can pursue their dreams as freely as Americans do. Our democratic elections and representative government give us a role in our future.

Understanding diversity and being culturally competent will make for a better future for everyone.

Footnotes

1. Golbach, Jeremy. "A Guide to Discussion Identity, Power, and Priveledge." https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/dive...and-privilege/

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4.1.6: Summary

Understanding diversity, especially in the context of our country's history, is an important part of being an engaged citizen who can help us to adapt to a changing world. Diversity goes hand in hand with the concepts of equity and inclusion, which increase the chances of equal opportunity and representation. Sometimes creating inclusive communities upsets the social order with which people are familiar. Change can be difficult, and people are passionate. These passions can disrupt communities and communication with uncivil behavior, or people can "fight fair" and use strategies that allow for the smooth exchange of ideas.

Everyone has a personal identity made up of various aspects and experiences—intersectionality. Some elements of identity place people in a diversity category. Some categories are expansive and well understood; others are new and may face scrutiny. Policies and laws have been put in place to protect underrepresented citizens from discrimination. These standards are constantly being challenged to make sure that they allow for the shifting demographics of the United States and shifting values of its citizens.

Cultural competency, which includes our ability to adapt to diversity, is a valuable skill in our communities and workplaces. The more culturally competent we are, the more we can help safeguard diversity and make equitable and inclusive connections on a global scale.

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4.1.7: Career Connection

Keisha went to a temp agency to sign up for part-time work. The person in charge there gave her several tests on office skills. She checked Keisha's typing speed, her ability to handle phone calls, and her writing skills. Keisha also took a grammar test and a test about how to handle disputes in the office. The tester also had Keisha answer questions about whether it was OK to take home office supplies and other appropriate things to do and not to do.

The tester told Keisha that she scored very well on the evaluations, but she never called Keisha back for a job or even an interview. Keisha knows that she presented herself well, but wonders if she was not called back because she wears her hair in dreadlocks or because she has been told that her name sounds African American?

Reflection questions:

- Can this student say that she was discriminated against?
- What would you do to determine why you were not called back for a job?
- Should Keisha ask about how her name and appearance were received?

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4.1.8: Rethinking

Revisit the questions you answered at the beginning of the chapter, and consider one option you learned in this chapter that might make you rethink how you answered each one. Has this chapter prompted you to consider changing any of your feelings or practices?

Rank the following questions on a scale of 1–4. 1 = “least like me” and 4 = “most like me.”

1. I'm aware of the different categories of diversity and the various populations I may encounter.
2. I think we sometimes go too far in trying to be sensitive to different groups.
3. I think nearly everybody in our society has equal opportunity.
4. It’s not my role to ensure equity and inclusiveness among my peers or colleagues.

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4.1.9: Where do you go from here?

This chapter touched on many elements of civility and diversity, and mentioned a wide array of groups, identities, and populations. But the chapter certainly did not explore every concept or reflect every group you may encounter. In a similar way, you can't know everything about everyone, but you can build cultural competency and understanding to make people feel included and deepen your abilities and relationships.

Sometimes learning about one group or making one person feel comfortable can be as important as addressing a larger population. To that end, consider researching or discussing one of the following topics to increase your level of civility and understanding:

- Appropriate terminology and ways to address members of certain populations. For example, ways to properly describe people with certain disabilities, or discuss issues around racial or gender identity.
- Discussions or debates related to civility and intersectionality, such as whether "Latinx" should be used instead of "Latino/Latina," or whether certain sports team mascots can be considered offensive.
- Major historical figures or events related to a certain group.
- Academic majors and research centers/groups related to aspects of diversity.
- Historical events at your college or in your city related to civil rights.

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4.2: SOCIAL INTERACTION AND DIVERSITY

4.2.1: Socializing
4.2.2: Diversity and Accessibility
4.2.3: Campus and Student Life

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4.2.1: Socializing



It is not hard for me to remember when I was in college. I loved many things about college life: I loved learning. I loved the camaraderie. And I loved football.
—Joseph B. Wirthlin, businessman and religious leader

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define interdependence
- Describe benefits of social interaction in college
- Identify communication strategies for effective communication
- Identify social conflicts and resolution strategies

Interdependence

When we explore relationships between people and groups of people, *interdependence* may well be one of the most meaningful words in the English language. It's meaningful because it speaks to the importance of connecting with others and maintaining viable relationships.

Interdependence is defined as the mutual reliance, or mutual dependence, between two or more people or groups. "In an interdependent relationship, participants may be emotionally, economically, ecologically, and/or morally reliant on and responsible to each other."[1]

An interdependent relationship is different from dependent and codependent relationships, though. In dependent relationships, some members are dependent while some are not (dependent people believe that they may not be able to achieve goals on their own). In codependent relationships, there is a sense that one must help others achieve their goals before pursuing one's own. Contrast these relationships with interdependent relationships, in which the dependency, support, and gain is shared for the enrichment of all.

Interdependence in College

Interdependence is valuable in college because it contributes to your success as a student. When you feel comfortable with interdependence, for example, you may be more likely to ask a friend to help you with a class project. You may also be more likely

to offer that same help to someone else. You may be more inclined to visit a faculty member during office hours. You may be more likely to attend the tutoring center for help with a difficult subject. Perhaps you would visit the career counseling center.

Overall, when you have a sense of interdependence, you cultivate support networks for yourself, and you help others, too. Interdependence is a win-win relationship.

The following table illustrates how interdependence can play a role in college life.

Interdependence Struggle Mode	Interdependence Success Mode
Students in struggle mode maintain a stance of dependence, co-dependence, or perhaps dogged independence, but not interdependence	Students in success mode develop relationships that support themselves and support other people, too
Students in struggle mode may avoid cooperating with others in situations where the common good could be achieved	Students in success mode develop networks of friends, family members, professionals, and others as a support team
Students in struggle mode may be reluctant to listen compassionately and attempt to understand the perspective of another person	Students in success mode actively and compassionately listen to others as an action of support; they demonstrate care and concern

Benefits of Social Interaction in College

If you were to ask fellow students what they think are the greatest benefits of social interaction in college, you would probably get a wide and colorful range of responses. How would you answer? Gaining good friends to “talk shop” with? Easing loneliness during difficult times? Having a group to join for Friday night fun? Indeed there are many, many benefits personal to each of us. But you may find, too, that there are certain benefits that are recognizable to all. These are highlighted below.

Form Deep and Lasting Relationships

When you socialize regularly in college, you tend to develop deep and lasting relationships. Even if some of the connections are shorter term, they can support you in different ways. For example, maybe a college friend in your same major is interested in starting a business with you. Or maybe a roommate helps you find a job. With a foundation of caring and concern, you are bound to find that your interdependent relationships fulfill you and others. It’s unlikely that students without interdependent relationships will experience these kinds of benefits.

Develop Good Study Habits

Study habits vary from student to student, but you can usually tell when studying and social life are at odds. Creative, organized students can combine studying and socializing for maximum advantage. For example, you might join a peer study group for a subject that you find difficult or even for a subject that you excel in. Either way, you and others gain from this relationship. There is mutual support not only for studying but for building social connections.

Minimize Stress

When you feel stressed, what are your “go-to” behaviors? It can be hard to reach out to others during times of stress, but socializing can be a great stress reliever. When you connect with others, you may find that life is a little easier and burdens can be shared and lightened. Helping is mutual. The key is to balance social activities with responsibilities.

Share Interests

In college, there are opportunities not only to explore a wide spectrum of interests but also to share them. In the process of exploring and developing your personal interests, you may join a club or perhaps work in a campus location that fits your interests. By connecting with others in a context of shared interests, everyone stands to gain because you expand knowledge and experience through social interaction.

Develop Social Skills

As you engage in social activities in college, you have the opportunity to observe how other people act in these situations. You may see behaviors you want to emulate or behaviors you wish to avoid. Throughout these observations and experiences, you can learn new ways to handle yourself in social situations. These skills will benefit you as you pursue a career and engage with people who interest and inspire you.

Communication Strategies for Effective Interactions

Socializing is generally considered a leisurely, enjoyable activity. But depending on your personality and attitude, it can also feel like work or provoke anxiety.

Whatever your natural inclinations are, you can learn how to communicate more effectively with others and foster supportive interactions. The "doors" of change to more effective interactions are threefold:

1. Examine your reservations
2. Engage with others
3. Expand your social circle

Examine Your Reservations

Everybody feels shy or insecure from time to time, but if you feel inhibited by your shyness, it may be because you've developed certain habits of thought that don't serve your best interests anymore. Below are some strategies to help you examine reservations you may have about engaging in social activities.

- **Change ideas and thoughts**: In our busy, high-octane lives, it's not always easy to be aware of our thoughts, especially habitual thoughts that sometimes lurk behind the others. But if we make a point to listen to our thoughts, we may discover some that we'd like to change. Once you begin to recognize thoughts you'd like to change, you can train yourself in new directions. For example, you can start by closing your eyes and visualizing the negative thought. Let it slowly dissolve until it disappears completely.
- **Turn a negative thought into a constructive thought**: If you find yourself thinking that you're not suited to joining a group that interests you, turn this thought into a positive one by saying, "I am an interesting person and I have a lot to offer and share." This affirmation is true! You might want to come up with three or more replacement thoughts.
- **Acknowledge that everyone is unique**: Everybody experiences high and low points in life. But even if we cannot change external circumstances, we can change our perceptions and attitudes. A happy attitude will always serve you well. "Most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." —Abraham Lincoln

Engage with Others

- **Smile**: One of the easiest ways to compel yourself into socializing is to smile. Smiling can instantly make you feel more positive. It also draws other people to you.
- **Use welcoming body language**: If you are at a social gathering, be aware of your body language. Does it signal that you are approachable? Make eye contact with people, give them a small wave or a nod, and look in front of you instead of at your feet or at the floor. When you look happy and ready to talk, people are more likely to come up to you.
- **Put your phone away**: If you look busy, people won't want to interrupt you. Your body language should say that you are ready to interact.
- **Be genuine**: Whether you are talking to an old friend or somebody you have just met, show genuine interest in the conversation. Being fully engaged shows that you are compassionate and makes for more stimulating and fulfilling interactions with others.
- **Keep conversations balanced**: Ask people questions about themselves. Show that you care by asking others to share.
- **Be open-minded**: The old adage "Don't judge a book by its cover" is relevant here. Someone you're ambivalent about could end up being your best friend. Give yourself a chance to get to know others. What interests might you share?

Expand Your Social Circle

- **Offer invitations**: As you reach out to others, others will be more likely to reciprocate and reach out to you. Call old friends

that you haven't seen in a while and set up a time to get together. Invite a friend to the movies, a baseball game, a concert, or other activity. Consider having a party and telling your friends to bring guests.
- **Accept more invitations**: Granted, there are only so many hours in the day for socializing. But if you're in the habit of turning down invitations, try to make a point to accept some—even if the invitation is to attend something out of your comfort zone. You might even want to make a habit of arbitrarily saying yes three times for every one time you say no.
- **Join a club or group with like-minded people**: Making new friends and expanding one's social network can be accomplished by joining a club or group. You may even want to consider joining a group focused on something different from what you're used to.
- **Meet mutual friends**: Meeting friends of friends is one of the easiest ways to meet new people. Try to view every person you meet in your life as a doorway into a new social circle.
- **Look for unique opportunities to be social**: This can be as simple as starting a conversation with a checkout clerk—"Hey, how's your day going?"—instead of remaining quiet.

All in all, make your social life one of your top priorities. Everyone needs some alone time, too, but it's important to stay connected. Keeping those connections alive contributes to healthy interdependence and personal success.

Activity: Reflections on Self-Confidence

Objective

- Identify personal traits that give you self-confidence and use them as a springboard to social interaction

Directions:

- Make a list of your positive qualities. Acknowledge your accomplishments, talents, and good nature. Ask yourself the following questions to get you started:
  - What have I done in the past year that I am proud of?
  - What is my proudest accomplishment of all time?
  - What unique talents do I have?
  - What do people tend to compliment me for?
  - What positive impact have I had on other people's lives?
- Draft your responses as a journal entry, or a diary entry, or even a poem or a brief essay.
- Submit your writing to a friend, a family member, or a social network. Reach out. Be social.

Social Conflict Situations and Resolution Strategies

Now that you know more about communication strategies for interacting in college, you may find it helpful to identify common situations that can evoke anxiety or social problems and conflict.

Campus Parties and Hookups

Many college students report that they have social limits not shared by their some of their friends. For example, you may join a group of friends to attend a party off-campus where a lot of drinking is taking place, along with other activities you are not comfortable with. If this kind of situation clashes with your personal, cultural, or religious values, you may feel best leaving the event and seeking out other social settings in the future. Angle your social interests toward people and situations that are compatible with your values and preferences.

Academic Problems

When you're in college, it's not unusual hit a rough patch and find yourself struggling academically, and such challenges can have an impact on your social life. If you may find yourself in this situation—and especially if it includes other stressors, such as employment difficulties, responsibilities for family member, of financial problems—you may benefit from slowing down and getting help. Your college or university has support systems in place to help you. Take advantage of resources such as the tutoring center, counseling center, and academic advisers to help you restore your social life to a balanced state.

Homesickness

Homesickness is a common among college freshman, but it can persist in later college years, too. During this time, one may not feel up to being fully sociable or outgoing, especially if depression is involved. In fact, depression and social isolation tend to go together. As unappealing as it may feel, one of the best antidotes to homesickness (and depression, too,) is try to make new social connections. Try to appreciate your new environment and know that you are not alone in feeling a bit out of place and alone. Many potential new friends may be sharing the same feeling and hoping to connect with someone just like you. Give yourself time to acclimate, but reach out as soon as possible and take an active role in building your new college life.

Too Much Social Networking

It's pretty obvious that social media is an integral part of the social landscape in college. From tweeting about a football game, to posting an album on Facebook about your spring break, to beefing up your LinkedIn profile before a job hunt, to Instagramming picture of party hijinks, social networking is everywhere in college, and it's likely to say. The following video gives an insider look at why college students use social media.

YouTube Video

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Despite the many benefits, as you know, social networking can be a major distraction. If social networking is getting in the way of any part of your college success—whether its social or academic success—take a break and disconnect for a while.

Here are ten reasons why you may wish to step away from social media, at least temporarily: When It's Time to Unplug—10 Reasons Why Too Much Social Media Is Bad for You

With a Little Help from My Friends

In a 2014 research study by the University of California-Los Angeles (the American Freshman Survey), 153,000 full-time, first-year students at more than 200 four-year public and private institutions were surveyed. Only 18 percent of those surveyed said they spend more than 16 hours weekly with friends. Compare this data point with a similar survey conducted in 1987: in that year, two-thirds of surveyed students said they spent more than 16 hours each week socializing.

What accounts for this change? Are academic pursuits now taking a larger percentage of students' time? Is socializing being replaced by part-time jobs? And what is the impact of less socializing? You can read about the survey results to find out more: College Freshmen Socialize Less, Feel Depressed More.

For now, keep in mind the many benefits of socializing in college. It's possible to have a healthy social life that's balanced with other responsibilities.

The following essay, "With a Little Help from My Friends," is an essay about the importance of friends and friendships in college.

With a Little Help from My Friends

We often hear about the importance of relationships: a necessary aspect of integration in society. Unfortunately, we rarely follow that advice. Perhaps we live an excessively busy life or we already have a close group of friends and do not feel compelled to meet new people. I have come to learn through my time in college that neglecting to cultivate new relationships is detrimental to living a happy and successful life. I would like to offer this piece of advice: no matter how difficult it seems at first, always try to make new friends. College is not always easy. However, having friends makes it much easier. Friends are a vital part of your life that can expose you to new subjects, cultures, and experiences while giving you the opportunity to do the same for them.

At my college, there was a small space that the students called “the bat cave.” It was by no means a first-class lounge, but it was a place where friends could help others better understand their course material. We gave it this peculiar nickname because it was our place to get together and conquer villains one after another. These were not your everyday super villains, however. Sometimes they were complicated homework assignments and other times they were difficult exams. No matter the challenge, someone was always willing to help. I went to the bat cave several times and every visit I learned something new. Professors and teaching assistants could not relate to us like our friends could. That made a difference, because nothing was better than being taught by a friend.

Friends are not only an essential support for your time in school, but also can be integral in helping realize post-college aspirations. During a visit to New York City, I visited the offices of the company Spotify. After touring their facilities I had the opportunity to talk to some of the employees. One man I talked with was a senior employee who worked at Microsoft prior to joining Spotify’s team. Our conversation stuck in my head because he gave a very striking piece of advice: make friends. It never truly occurred to me that the friends you make in college could impact your future in the workforce. They could be partners in potential business ventures or help you land your dream job. In any case, having strong connections with friends can undoubtedly make a major difference in your career.

The best part of making new friends, however, is trading life experiences, skills, and interests with them. For a year and a half before my final semester of college, I studied abroad in the United States. My family was concerned because typically, students search for first jobs prior to graduation. I, on the other hand, had no trepidations about going because I knew that I would have countless, exciting learning experiences. I can say today, without a doubt, that my trip was a great decision. I met incredible people, and through knowing them, I grew and changed. I also know that I was a positive feature in the lives of my new friends. The greatest thing that I learned was that meeting different people with different backgrounds, histories, perspectives, or even different musical tastes, inevitably changes you and lets you see the world in an entirely different way. You no longer see the world as simply a big, blue sphere with freezing winters or sizzling summers (although that certainly seems to be the case up North!), but as a place in which people like you live, learn, and love.

Going to college may seem hard, but it does not need to be. I have learned that the way I perceive my life as a student completely relies upon my relationships with my friends. They are not only the people that I like to spend time with, but also are essential in my growth and development as a human being. The pages in this book include insights from others just like you and me. They want to help you get through the common struggles of college with confidence and perseverance. Consider them your most most recent new friends. I truly hope that this inspires you in your quest for a great future.

—Paulo Fernandes (State University of New York), *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interdependence ↵

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4.2.2: Diversity and Accessibility



Diversity: the art of thinking independently together. —Malcolm Forbes, entrepreneur, founder of *Forbes* magazine

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define diversity and identify factors that define a diverse group
- Differentiate between surface diversity and deep diversity, and explain what relationships exist between the two
- Explore the positive effects of diversity in an educational setting
- Define accessibility, and identify implications of accessibility on campus and in communities

What Is Diversity?

There are few words in the English language that have more diverse interpretations than *diversity*. What does *diversity* mean? Better yet—what does diversity mean to *you*? And what does it mean to your best friend, your teacher, your parents, your religious leader, or the person standing behind you in a grocery store?

For each of us, diversity has unique meaning. Below are a few of the many definitions offered by college students at a 2010 conference on the topic of diversity. Which of these definitions rings out to you as most accurate and thoughtful? Which definitions could use some embellishment or clarification, in your opinion?

Diversity is a group of people who are different in the same place.

Diversity to me is the ability for differences to coexist together, with some type of mutual understanding or acceptance present. Acceptance of different viewpoints is key.

Tolerance of thought, ideas, people with differing viewpoints, backgrounds, and life experiences.

Anything that sets one individual apart from another.

People with different opinions, backgrounds (degrees and social experience), religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientations, heritage, and life experience.

Dissimilar

Having a multitude of people from different backgrounds and cultures together in the same environment working for the same goals.

Difference in students' background, especially race and gender.

Differences in characteristics of humans.

Diversity is a satisfying mix of ideas, cultures, races, genders, economic statuses and other characteristics necessary for promoting growth and learning among a group.

Diversity is the immersion and comprehensive integration of various cultures, experiences, and people.

Heterogeneity brings about opportunities to share, learn and grow from the journeys of others. Without it, limitations arise and knowledge is gained in the absence of understanding.

Diversity is not tolerance for difference but inclusion of those who are not the majority. It should not be measured as a count or a fraction—that is somehow demeaning. Success at maintaining diversity would be when we no longer ask if we are diverse enough, because it has become the norm, not remarkable.[1]

Diversity means different things to different people, and it can be understood differently in different environments. In the context of your college experience, diversity generally refers to people around you who differ by race, culture, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, abilities, opinions, political views, and in other ways. When it comes to diversity on the college campus, we also think about how groups interact with one another, given their differences (even if they're just perceived differences.) How do diverse populations experience and explore their relationships?

"More and more organizations define diversity really broadly," says Eric Peterson, who works on diversity issues for the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). "Really, it's any way any group of people can differ significantly from another group of people—appearance, sexual orientation, veteran status, your level in the organization. It has moved far beyond the legally protected categories that we've always looked at."[2]

In the following video, students from Juniata College describe what diversity means to them and explain why it's an important aspect of their college experience.

YouTube Video

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Surface Diversity and Deep Diversity

Surface diversity and deep diversity are categories of personal attributes—or differences in attributes—that people perceive to exist between people or groups of people.

Surface-level diversity refers to differences you can generally observe in others, like ethnicity, race, gender, age, culture, language, disability, etc. You can quickly and easily observe these features in a person. And people often do just that, making subtle judgments at the same time, which can lead to bias or discrimination. For example, if a teacher believes that older students perform better than younger students, she may give slightly higher grades to the older students than the younger students. This bias is based on perception of the attribute of age, which is surface-level diversity.

Deep-level diversity, on the other hand, reflects differences that are less visible, like personality, attitude, beliefs, and values. These attributes are generally communicated verbally and nonverbally, so they are not easily noticeable or measurable. You may not detect deep-level diversity in a classmate, for example, until you get to know him or her, at which point you may find that you

are either comfortable with these deeper character levels, or perhaps not. But once you gain this deeper level of awareness, you may focus less on surface diversity. For example: At the beginning of a term, a classmate belonging to a minority ethnic group, whose native language is not English (surface diversity), may be treated differently by fellow classmates in another ethnic group. But as the term gets under way, classmates begin discovering the person's values and beliefs (deep-level diversity), which they find they are comfortable with. The surface-level attributes of language and perhaps skin color become more "transparent" (less noticeable) as comfort is gained with deep-level attributes.

The following video is a quick summary of the differences between surface-level and deep-level diversity.

YouTube Video

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Positive Effects of Diversity in an Educational Setting

Why does diversity matter in college? It matters because when you are exposed to new ideas, viewpoints, customs, and perspectives—which invariably happens when you come in contact with diverse groups of people—you expand your frame of reference for understanding the world. Your thinking becomes more open and global. You become comfortable working and interacting with people of all nationalities. You gain a new knowledge base as you learn from people who are different from yourself. You think "harder" and more creatively. You perceive in new ways, seeing issues and problems from new angles. You can absorb and consider a wider range of options, and your values may be enriched. In short, it contributes to your education.

Consider the following facts about diversity in the United States:

- More than half of all U.S. babies today are people of color, and by 2050 the U.S. will have no clear racial or ethnic majority. As communities of color are tomorrow's leaders, college campuses play a major role in helping prepare these leaders.
- But in 2009, while 28 percent of Americans older than 25 years of age had a four-year college degree, only 17 percent of African Americans and 13 percent of Hispanics had a four-year degree. More must be done to adequately educate the population and help prepare students to enter the workforce.
- Today, people of color make up about 36 percent of the workforce (roughly one in three workers). But by 2050, half the workforce (one in two workers) will be a person of color. Again, college campuses can help navigate these changes.[3]

All in all, diversity brings richness to relationships on campus and off campus, and it further prepares college students to thrive and work in a multicultural world. Diversity is fast becoming America's middle name.

Activity: Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity in Practice

Objective

- Identify ways in which you can make diversity more personal

Instructions

This activity will help you examine ways in which you can develop your awareness of and commitment to diversity on campus. Answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

- What are my plans for expanding myself personally and intellectually in college?
- What kind of community will help me expand most fully, with diversity as a factor in my expansion?
- What are my comfort zones, and how might I expand them to connect more diversely?

- Do I want to be challenged by new viewpoints, or will I feel more comfortable connecting with people who are like me?
- What are my biggest questions about diversity?
- Write several paragraphs reflecting on the questions above.
- Submit this assignment according to directions from your instructor.

Consider the following strategies to help you answer the questions:

- Examine extracurricular activities. Can you get involved with clubs or organizations that promote and expand diversity?
- Review your college's curriculum. In what ways does it reflect diversity? Does it have departments and courses on historically unrepresented peoples, e.g., cultural and ethnic studies, and gender and sexuality studies. Look for study-abroad programs, as well.
- Read your college's mission statement. Read the mission statement of other colleges. How do they match up with your values and beliefs? How do they align with the value of diversity?
- Inquire with friends, faculty, colleagues, family. Be open about diversity. What does it mean to others? What positive effects has it had on them? Ask people about diversity.
- Research can help. You might consult college literature, Web sites, resource centers and organizations on campus, etc.

Accessibility and Diversity on Campus

The idea of "accessibility" is an important force of change on college campuses today. *Accessibility* is about making education accessible to all, and and it's particularly focused on providing educational support to a diverse group of students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. According to the American with Disabilities Act, you can be considered disabled if you meet one of the following criteria:

- You have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as seeing, hearing, walking, learning, and others.
- You must have a history of such impairment.
- Others perceive that you have such impairment.

If you meet one of these criteria, you have special legal rights to certain accommodations on your campus. These accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Academic accommodations, like alternate format for print materials, classroom captioning, arranging for priority registration, reducing a course load, substituting one course for another, providing note takers, recording devices, sign language interpreters, a TTY in your dorm room, and equipping school computers with screen-reading, voice recognition, or other adaptive software or hardware.
- Exam accommodations, like extended time on exams
- Financial support and assistance
- Priority access to housing
- Transportation and access, like Wheelchair-accessible community shuttles

Assistive technologies and Web-accessibility accommodations are critical in today's technology-driven economy and society. The following are some examples of assistive technologies are the following:

- Software like Dragon Naturally Speaking, Kurzweil, Zoom Text, CCTV Magnifier, Inspiration Software
- Computer input devices, like keyboards, electronic pointing devices, sip-and-puff systems, wands and sticks, joysticks, trackballs, and touch screens
- Other Web-accessibility aids, like screen readers, screen enlargers, and screen magnifiers, speech recognition or voice recognition programs, and Text-to-Speech (TTS) or speech synthesizers

Students in the following video share some of their experiences with the Web accessibility.

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For more information about Web accessibility, visit http://webaim.org/.

Why So Many Questions?

The following essay about experiences of diversity in college is by Fatima Rodriguez Johnson (State University of New York). Even though at first the writer felt like an ethnic outsider at college, she grew in understanding the importance of diversity of campus and of speaking openly and honestly about connecting with diverse cultures.

Why So Many Questions?

I chose to attend a small liberal arts college. The campus was predominately white and was nestled in a wealthy suburb among beautiful trees and landscaped lawns. My stepfather and I pulled into the parking lot and followed the path to my residence hall. The looks we received from most of the families made me feel like everyone knew we didn't belong. But, he and I greeted all we encountered, smiling and saying, "Hello." Once I was unpacked and settled into my residence hall, he gave me a hug and said, "Good luck." I wasn't sure if he meant good luck with classes or good luck with meeting new friends, but I heard a weight in his voice. He was worried. Had he and my mother prepared me for what was ahead?

With excitement, I greeted my roommate who I had already met through the summer Higher Educational Opportunity Program (HEOP). She and I were very happy to see each other. After decorating and organizing our room, we set out to meet new people. We went to every room introducing ourselves. We were pretty sure no one would forget us; it would be hard to miss the only Black and Latina girls whose room was next to the pay phone (yes, in my day each floor shared one pay phone).

Everyone on our floor was nice and we often hung out in each other's rooms. And like some of you, we answered some of those annoying questions:

- Why does your perm make your hair straight when ours makes our hair curly?
- How did your hair grow so long (whenever we had weave braids)?
- Why don't you wash your hair everyday (the most intriguing question of all)?

We were also asked questions that made us angry:

- Did you grow up with your father?
- Aren't you scared to take public transportation?
- Have you ever seen anyone get shot (because we both lived in the inner city)?

It was those questions that, depending on the day and what kind of mood we were in, made a fellow student either walk away with a better understanding of who we were as Black and Latina women or made a fellow student walk away red and confused. I guess that's why my stepfather said, "Good luck." He knew that I was living in a community where I would stand out—where I would have to explain who I was. Some days I was really good at answering those questions and some days I was not. I learned the questions were not the problem; it was not asking that was troubling.

My roommate and I put forth a lot of effort to fit in with the community—we spent time hanging out with our peers, we ate together almost every evening in the dining hall, and we participated in student organizations. We were invited to join the German Club, and were the only students of color there. In doing all these things we made ourselves approachable. Our peers became comfortable around us and trusted us.

Although my peers and I all had similar college stresses (tests, papers, projects, etc.) my roommate and I also had become a

student resource for diversity. Not because we wanted to, but because we had too. There were very few students of color on campus, and I think students really wanted to learn about people different from themselves. It was a responsibility that we had accepted. The director of HEOP would often remind us that for many students, college was the first opportunity they had to ask these types of questions. He said we would learn to discern when people were really interested in learning about our differences or insulting us. If someone was interested in insulting us, there was no need to respond at all.

Although I transferred to another college at the end of my sophomore year, during those two years I learned a great deal about having honest conversations. Taking part in honest conversations challenged my notions of the world and how I viewed people from all walks of life (race, class, sexual orientation, ability, etc.). Those late nights studying or walks to the student center were when many of us listened to each other's stories.

My advice is to take time to examine your attitudes and perceptions of people different from yourself, put yourself in situations that will challenge your assumptions, and lastly, when you make a mistake do not get discouraged. Keep trying. It's easy to stay where we are comfortable. College is such a wonderful experience. Take it all in, and I am sure you will enjoy it!

—Fatima Rodriguez Johnson, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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1. https://sph.unc.edu/files/2013/07/define_diversity.pdf ↩
2. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122327104 ↩
3. "10 Reasons Why We Need Diversity on College Campuses." *Center for American Progress*. 2016. Web. 2 Feb 2016. ↩

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4.2.3: Campus and Student Life



I even lived on campus to get the college experience. I had five roommates and I still keep in touch with them while I'm on the road.
—Tatyana Ali, actress, model, and R&B singer

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the variety of organized groups available on campus for both resident and nonresident students
- Identify resources for learning more about campus organizations
- Describe the benefits of participating in student life

Student Life

Whether your campus is small, tall, *grande*, or *venti*, you are probably amazed by the array of institutionally supported student activities available for your enrichment and enjoyment. Perhaps your biggest challenge is deciding how much extra time you have after studying and which added activities yield the greatest reward.

Below are two videos that give a sample of campus life at two different types of colleges. The first is from a large state institution—the University of Maryland. The second is from a smaller, private college—Baldwin Wallace University. Regardless, though, of where your institution fits on the spectrum of size, or how many activities, clubs, and organizations your institution offers, it's very important for you to be able to explore cocurricular interests—for learning, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction. Student life should always be satisfying and rewarding to students, as well as to alumni, faculty, staff, and community members. Together, these groups are an institution's lifeblood.

University of Maryland

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Baldwin Wallace

YouTube Video

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Organized Groups on Campus

Student Organizations

Colleges have an abundance of student organizations. Some examples you may be familiar with are the Hillel Student Organization for enriching the lives of Jewish students, the Chess Club, and Model United Nations. Larger institutions may have hundreds of such organizations. Here is a lengthy and exciting list of student organizations at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Generally, an organization is created and run by current students, and it's sponsored by an executive officer, dean, or director of a major academic or operational unit. An organization must also have a mission that's consistent with the mission of the college and sponsor. It might also collect dues from members, but in many cases, membership is free.

To link up with a student organization, you may not need to do much more than take stock of your interests. What do you love to do? In a later section, you'll find a list of ways to learn about student organizations at your institution. If you find that your college doesn't have an organization that speaks to your particular interests, you might consider starting one.

Fraternities and Sororities

Fraternities and sororities are social organizations at colleges and universities. The terms "Greek letter organization" ("GLO") and "Greek life" are often used to describe fraternities and sororities. Generally, you obtain membership while you are an undergraduate, but your membership continues for life. Most Greek organizations have five shared elements: secrecy, single-sex membership, rushing and pledging to select new members, occupancy in a shared residence, and identification with Greek letters. Fraternities and sororities also engage in philanthropic activities, and they often host parties and other events that may be popular across campus.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

Diversity and multiculturalism are indeed critical pursuits not just on college campuses but in communities, businesses, and organizations around the world. If you are interested in expanding and promoting awareness of this issues on campus and further

afield, you can seek opportunities at your college for starters. You will likely find informal gatherings, presentations, campus-wide events, individual students and classes focused on creating diverse, multicultural, and inclusive communities. As an example, here is a list of student clubs relating to culture and diversity at Goucher College.

Civic Engagement and Leadership

Most colleges have many opportunities for you to learn about and prepare for civic engagement and leadership on campus and in the wider community. What is civic engagement? It's your involvement in protecting and promoting a diverse and democratic society—and clearly, leadership is an important part of this. Student organizations and activities related to these pursuits may be student government associations, leadership courses and retreats, social change projects, service opportunities, social innovation initiatives, and many others.

Service and Volunteerism

If you are like many new college students, you probably already have experience volunteering. It may have been part of your high school requirements. Or perhaps you engaged in volunteering as part of a faith organization or as part of a community fundraising effort. Any of your volunteering can continue in college, too, as your institution will have many special and meaningful ways to stay involved, work on social problems, and contribute to a better world. Service and volunteer efforts may include philanthropy, activism, social entrepreneurship, advocacy, and direct service.[1]

Student Activities

On any college campus, satellite center, or virtual space, students may be involved in activities around the clock on any given day. These activities may include student organization activities as well as special presentations, meetings, performing arts events, sporting events, intramurals, recreational activities, local community activities, holiday events, commemorative events, and so on.

You are heartily encouraged to pursue any interests that enhance your education and enrich your student experience. Your participation can expand your horizons, deepen your interests, and connect you with new people.

Resources for Learning About Campus Organizations

It can seem overwhelming to learn about all the activities, events, clubs, organizations, athletics, performing arts, etc. on campus. Sometimes you may need to dig a little, too. The following resources are a good place to start:

- **Your institution's Web site**: Try a keywords search at your college's Web site, using any of the following: *student life*, *college life, student organizations, clubs, student activities office, student services, special events, events calendar, performing arts calendar, athletics calendar*, etc.
- **Email**: Keep alert to the many email messages you receive from campus offices and organizations. They publicize all kinds of activities and opportunities for you to engage with campus and student life.
- **Other technology-based support services**: Take advantage of other technology-based student support services if they are available. For example, some colleges use an online platform that connects student organizations and allows them to reach out to prospective new members. With this service, you could access a list of student organizations to see which ones you might like to join and see what events are ahead. You can also can search for organizations based on categories or interests.
- **Social media**: Most institutions keep up-to-date information on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more. Individual groups on campus may also have separate social media presences that you can locate through the institution's offerings.
- **Bulletin boards**: Take a look at bulletin boards as you pass through hallways in academic buildings, dining halls, sports facilities, dormitories, even local service centers, and retail stores. You can often find fliers with event details and contact information.
- **Friends**: Keep a pulse on what others are doing in their spare time. This is also a good way to make new friends and align yourself with others who have similar interests.
- **Campus offices for social functions**: Make a point to visit the student activities office or the student affairs office. Both often have physical spaces for student organizations.
- **Campus offices for academic functions**: Inquire with your academic adviser. He or she will likely be knowledgeable about campus organizations related to your interests and may know about local, regional and national organizations, too.

Activity: Campus and Community Activities

This project involves attending two campus and/or community culture activities (not athletic events), collecting mementos from each event, and displaying evidence of your experience via social media.

Objectives

- Attend campus activities/events to heighten a sense of connection with your institution
- Use social media to display artifacts from these events

Directions

- Choose two activities to attend (athletic events not included).
- Collect mementos (such as a ticket stub, a program, take pictures and/or video).
- Digitally archive them (for example, take a digital picture of the ticket stub).
- Create a digital presentation about your two activities. For each activity, include the following:
  - what, when, and where the activity occurred
  - why you chose the activity
  - uploads of the related mementos
  - what you learned from the experience
- Follow your instructor's directions for submitting this activity.

Benefits of Participating in Student Life

How is it that becoming fully involved in student life can have such a positive impact on student satisfaction and academic success?

The National Survey of Student Engagement—a survey measuring student involvement in academic and cocurricular activities—shows that student success is directly linked to student involvement in the institution. In fact, survey results show that the higher the level of student involvement is, the higher student grades are and the more likely students are to reenroll the next semester. All of this seems to translate to satisfaction. The following lists some of the many benefits and rewards that result from active participation in campus and student life.

- **Personal interests are tapped**: Cocurricular programs and activities encourage students to explore personal interests and passions. As students pursue these interests, they learn more about their strengths and possible career paths. These discoveries can be lasting and life-changing.
- **A portfolio of experience develops**: Experience with just about any aspect of college life may be relevant to a prospective employer. Is freshman year too soon to be thinking about résumés? Definitely not! If you gain leadership experience in a club, for example, be sure to document what you did so you can refer back to it (you might want to keep track of your activities and experiences in a journal, for instance).
- **Fun leads to good feelings**: Students typically pursue cocurricular activities because the activities are enjoyable and personally rewarding. Having fun is also a good way to balance the stress of meeting academic deadlines and studying intensely.
- **Social connections grow**: When students are involved in cocurricular activities, they usually interact with others, which means meeting new people, developing social skills, and being a part of a community. It's always good to have friends who share your interests and to develop these relationships over time.
- **Awareness of diversity expands**: The multicultural nature of American society is increasingly reflected and celebrated on college campuses today. You will see this not only in the classroom but also in the cocurricular activities, clubs, organizations, and events. For example, your college might have a Black Student Union, an Asian Pacific Student Union, a Japanese Student Association, a Chinese Student Association, and many others. Having access to these resources gives students the opportunity to explore different cultures and prepare to live, work, and thrive in a vibrantly diverse world.
- **Self-esteem grows**: When students pursue their special interests through cocurricular activities, it can be a real boost to self-esteem. Academic achievement can certainly be a source of affirmation and satisfaction, but it's nice to have additional activities that validate your special contributions in other ways.



All in all, being involved in the campus community is vital to every student, and it's vital to the college, too. It's a symbiotic relationship that serves everyone well.

The key to getting the most out of college is to take advantage of as many facets of student life as possible while still keeping up with your academic commitments. That's pretty obvious, right? What may be less obvious is that focusing exclusively on your academic work and not getting involved in any of the rich and diverse cocurricular activities on campus can come at a real price and even hamper your success.

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5: FINANCIAL LITERACY

5.1: Understanding Financial literacy

5.1.1: Prelude to Understanding Financial literacy

5.1.2: Personal Financial Planning

5.1.3: Savings, Expenses, and Budgeting

5.1.4: Banking and Emergency Funds

5.1.5: Credit Cards and Other Debt

5.1.6: Education Debt- Paying for College

5.1.7: Defending against Attack- Securing Your Identity and Accounts

5.1.8: Summary

5.1.9: Career Connection

5.1.10: Rethinking

5.1.11: Where do you go from here?

5.2: Financial Management

5.2.1: Personal Finance

5.2.2: Financial Aid

5.2.3: Working

5.2.4: Saving

5.2.5: Budgeting

5.2.6: Credit

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5.1: UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL LITERACY

5.1.1: Prelude to Understanding Financial literacy

5.1.2: Personal Financial Planning

5.1.3: Savings, Expenses, and Budgeting

5.1.4: Banking and Emergency Funds

5.1.5: Credit Cards and Other Debt

5.1.6: Education Debt- Paying for College

5.1.7: Defending against Attack- Securing Your Identity and Accounts

5.1.8: Summary

5.1.9: Career Connection

5.1.10: Rethinking

5.1.11: Where do you go from here?

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5.1.1: Prelude to Understanding Financial literacy



Figure 5.1.1.1: Financial success depends on getting a good start and avoiding setbacks and wrong turns. It's a lifelong process, more like a marathon than a sprint. (Credit: Bengt Nyman / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Student Survey

How financially literate are you? This survey will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As we are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to see whether your feelings have changed. Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking the statements on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me."

1. I actively and regularly plan and/or monitor my finances.
2. I understand the benefits and risks of credit.
3. I have a plan to repay my student loans.
4. I regularly take steps to protect my identity and assets.

You can also take the Chapter 1 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"A big part of the college experience for many students is the art of the student loan process. This has been both a painful and challenging experience for me over the course of the first semester. The biggest struggle for me has been simply understanding what everything means and what I'm supposed to do. Another challenge has been determining how exactly I'm going to pay these loans back while also saving for rent, utilities, additional expenses, and a study abroad fund with a part-time job that I don't even have yet."

—Hanna Moyster

About This Chapter

In this chapter, you will learn to reach your personal life goals by implementing financial planning and strategies to protect yourself, manage your money today, and put yourself in a better position for tomorrow. How you act today impacts your tomorrow.

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Align your personal and financial goals through smart financial planning.
2. Create a saving and spending plan and track your performance.
3. Plan for emergencies.
4. Identify best practices and risks associated with credit cards and other debt.
5. Determine the best opportunities for you to finance your college education.
6. Articulate specific ways to secure your identity and accounts.

What Would You Do?

Everything was working out for Elan. They got into the college they wanted to, and some friends were planning to attend as well. They felt like an adult, and were looking forward to new freedoms and opportunities. Elan's parents let them get a credit card after high school graduation. Elan shared an apartment with their friends just off campus, and was able to get where they needed to go because they had a car. Elan had also saved over $1,000 from gifts and a summer job. They needed a new laptop.

Elan planned to stay within set limits. They went to the store found a very knowledgeable salesperson, Jermain, who said he knew exactly what Elan needed. Jermain pointed out that the laptop in Elan's budget would do schoolwork just fine, but it was not as powerful as the best top-of-the line unit with advanced gaming features. Plus, the better computer came with new headphones! Jermain suggested that Elan could later sell the computer to incoming students. (Most freshmen bought used computers if they did not have one when they came to school.) The high-powered computer was $2,000, though, and Elan didn't have that much money. Maybe they should use the credit card? Maybe their new part-time job would pay for it. But Jermain arranged for a small down payment and monthly payments of only $100. That did not seem too bad to Elan. The future looked bright!

At least, that's what Elan thought. They soon realized that working more hours meant fewer hours to study. Meanwhile, Elan's rent and gas usage went up, and, as a young car owner, their insurance was through the roof. Only three months into the first semester, Elan missed a payment on the laptop and accrued a late fee. They put the next laptop payment on the credit card. Soon, Elan was alternating payments between the credit card, laptop, and car, building up interest and late charges. Now Elan was having trouble paying their rent and started getting calls from creditors. Everything had seemed so promising. Elan didn't know where they had gone wrong.

Elan comes to you and shares the situation. They ask, "What could I have done differently?"

This chapter offers you insight into your finances so that you can make good decisions and avoid costly mistakes. We all face chances to spend money and try to get what we want. Many think only about now and not next month, next year, or ten years from now, but our behavior now has consequences later. Not everyone can own all the latest technology, drive their dream car, continually invest for their retirement, or live in the perfect home at this moment. But by understanding the different components of earning money, banking, credit, and budgeting, you can begin working toward your personal and financial goals. We'll also discuss a related topic, safeguarding your accounts and personal information, which is critical to protecting everything you've worked for. By the end of this chapter, you will have good insights for Elan . . . and you!

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5.1.2: Personal Financial Planning

Questions to consider:

- What simple steps do I take to create a financial plan?
- How do I use financial planning in everyday life?
- How is the financial planning process implemented for every purchase?

If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.

Honestly, practicing money management isn't that hard to figure out. In many ways it's similar to playing a video game. The first time you play a game, you may feel awkward or have the lowest score. Playing for a while can make you OK at the game. But if you learn the rules of the game, figure out how to best use each tool in the game, read strategy guides from experts, and practice, you can get really good at it.

Money management is the same. It's not enough to "figure it out as you go." If you want to get good at managing your money, you must treat money like you treat your favorite game. You have to come at it with a well-researched plan. Research has shown that people with stronger finances are healthier[1] and happier,[2] have better marriages,[3] and even have better cognitive functioning.[4]

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. What is your top immediate financial priority?
   a. Minimizing debt
   b. Get a better job
   c. Pay for college
   d. Move out on my own
   e. Get a car
   f. Increase my savings or money on hand
2. Which aspect of your finances concerns you the most?
   a. The amount of debt I have or will have
   b. Getting a job that will pay well enough
   c. Being financially independent
   d. Supporting my family
   e. Planning/saving for the future
3. When considering how to pay for college, which of the following do you know *least* about?
   a. Grants
   b. Scholarships
   c. Loans
   d. Work-study programs

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

What is your top immediate financial priority?

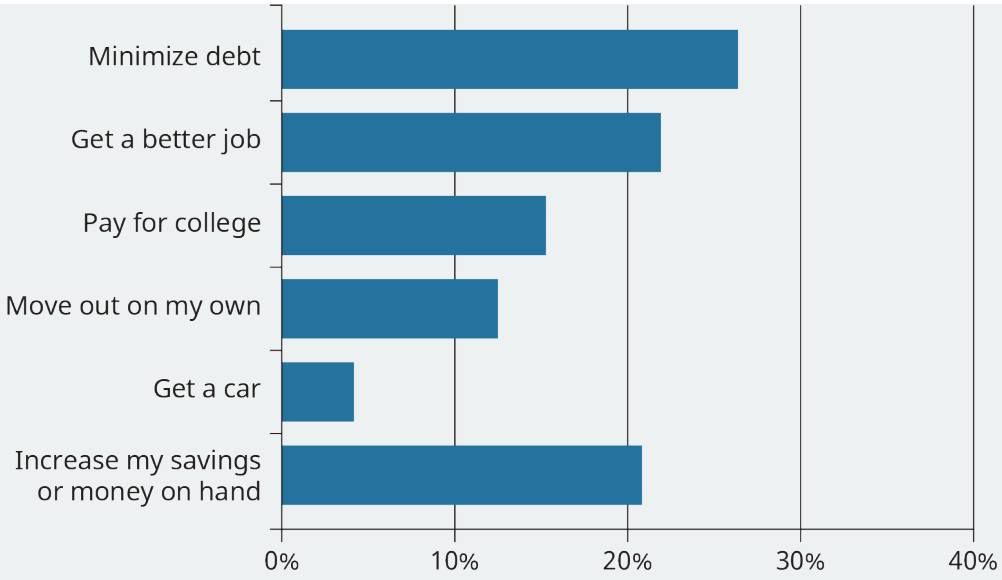


Figure 5.1.2.2

Which aspect of your finances concerns you the most?

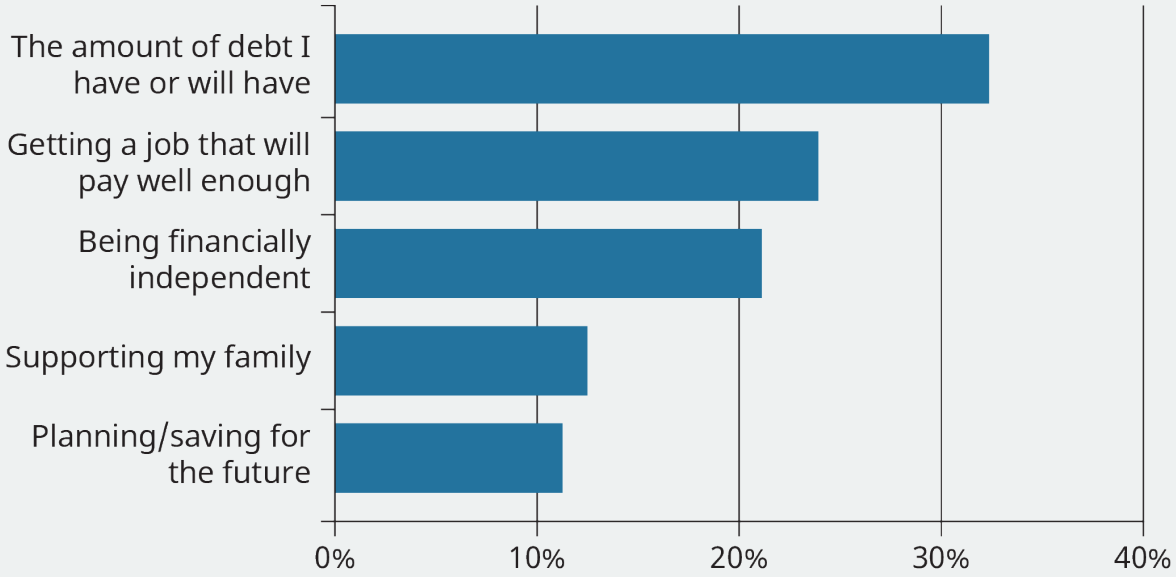


Figure 5.1.2.3

When considering how to pay for college, which of the following do you know *least* about?

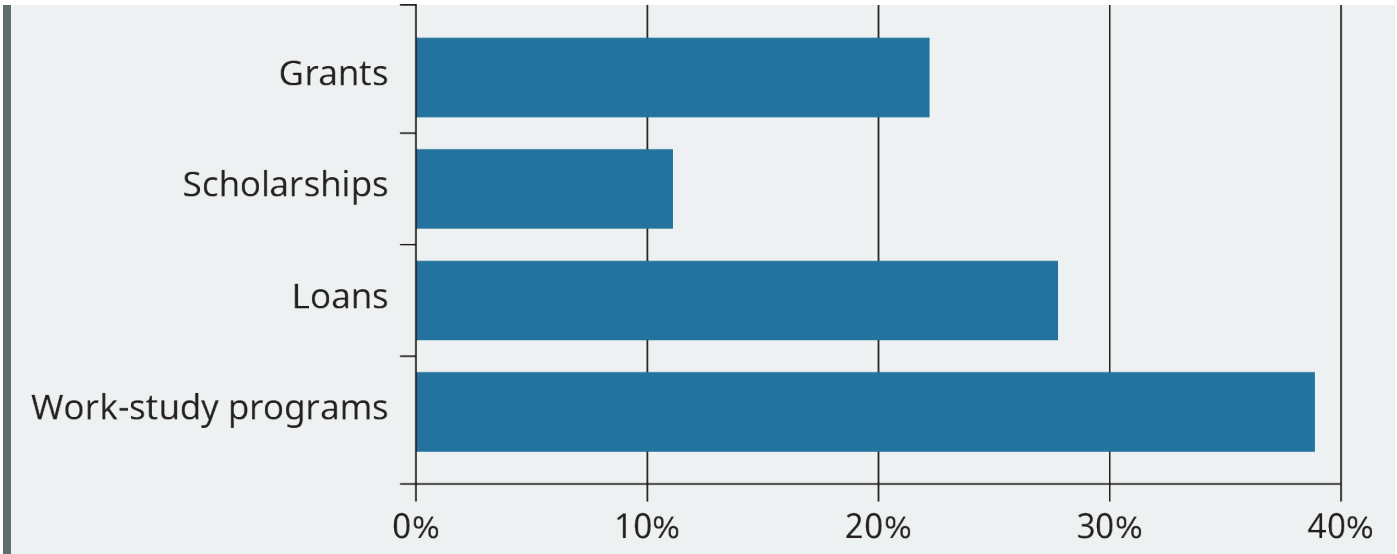


Figure 5.1.2.4

Financial Planning Process

Personal goals and behaviors have a financial component or consequence. To make the most of your financial resources, you need to do some financial planning. The financial planning process consists of five distinct steps: goal setting, evaluating, planning, implementing, and monitoring. You can read in more depth about SMART goals in chapter 3.

Financial Planning in Five Steps

1. Develop Personal Goals
    - What do I want my life to look like?
2. Identify and Evaluate Alternatives for Achieving Goals for My Situation
    - What do my savings, debt, income, and expenses look like?
    - What creative ways are available to get the life I want?
3. Write My Financial Plan
    - What small steps can I take to start working toward my goals?
4. Implement the Plan
    - Begin taking those steps, even if I can only do a few small things each week.
5. Monitor and Adjust the Plan
    - Make sure I don't get distracted by life. Keep taking those small steps each week. Make adjustments when needed.



Figure 5.1.2.5: Steps of financial planning.

How to Use Financial Planning in Everyday Life

The financial planning process isn't only about creating one big financial plan. You can also use it to get a better deal when you buy a car or computer or rent an apartment. In fact, anytime you are thinking about spending a lot of money, you can use the financial planning process to pay less and get more.

To explore financial planning in depth, we'll use the example of buying a car.

1. Develop Goals

First, what do you really need? If you're looking for a car, you probably need transportation. Before you decide to buy a car, consider alternatives to buying a car. Could you take a bus, walk, or bike instead? Often one goal can impact another goal. Cars are typically not good financial investments. We have cars for convenience and necessity, to earn an income and to enjoy life. Financially, they are an expense. They lose value, or depreciate, rather than increasing in value, like savings. So buying a car may slow your savings or retirement plan goals. Cars continually use up cash for gas, repairs, taxes, parking, and so on. Keep this in mind throughout the planning process.

2. Identify and Evaluate Alternatives for Achieving Goals in Your Current Situation.

For this example, let's assume that you have determined the best alternative is to buy a car. Do you need a new car? Will your current car last with some upkeep? Consider a used car over a new one. On average, a new car will lose one-fifth of its value during its first year.[5] Buying a one-year-old car is like getting a practically new car for a 20 percent discount. So in many cases, the best deal may be to buy a five- or six-year-old car. Sites such as the Kelley Blue Book website (KBB.com) and Edmunds.com can show you depreciation tables for the cars you are considering. Perhaps someone in your family has a car they will sell you at a discount.

Do you know how much it will cost in total to own the car? It will help to check out the total cost of ownership tools (also on KBB.com and Edmunds.com) to estimate how much each car will cost you in maintenance, repairs, gas, and insurance. A cheap car that gets poor gas mileage and breaks down all the time will actually cost you more in the long run.



Figure 5.1.2.6: Weighing all the factors is critical when deciding on any purchase, especially amajor one like a car. (Credit: Greg Gjerdingen / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

3. Write Down Your Financial Plan

Table 10.1 Examples of financial plans for a car and a computer.

Goal	Item	Details	Budget	Timeline
Transportation/ Car	2014 Toyota Camry	Black, A/C, power windows, less than 60,000 miles	Car $12,000 (max) Down payment $3,000 Insurance $100/mo Sales tax $900 + Licensing $145 Cash needed $4,145	Have $3600 in savings for this. Save $50/week. Purchase in approximately 11 weeks.
Computer	Used or refurbished laptop	Dell w/ Windows, minimum 13", 128G hard drive, HD Graphics	$300 Use free Windows update from school. Use free Wi-Fi at school.	Sell current laptop for $100. Buy refurbished from Dell site for $289. $189 on credit card. Pay off when statement comes.

4. Implement Your Plan

Once you've narrowed down which car you are looking for, do more online research with resources such as Kelley Blue Book to see what is for sale in your area. You can also begin contacting dealerships and asking them if they have the car you are looking for with the features you want. Ask the dealerships with the car you want to give you their best offer, then compare their price to

your researched price. You may have to spend more time looking at other dealerships to compare offers, but one goal of online research is to save time and avoid driving from place to place if possible.

When you do go to buy the car, bring a copy of your written plan into the dealership and stick to it. If a dealership tries to switch you to a more expensive option, just say no, or you can leave to go to another dealership. Remember Elan in our opening scenario? He went shopping alone and caved to the pressure and persuasion of the salesperson. If you feel it is helpful, take a responsible friend or family member with you for support.

5. Monitor and Adjust the Plan to Changing Circumstances and New Life Goals

Life changes, and things wear out. Keep up the recommended maintenance on the car (or any other purchase). Keep saving money for your emergency fund, then for your next car. The worst time to buy a car is when your current car breaks down, because you are easier to take advantage of when you are desperate. When your car starts giving you trouble or your life circumstances start to change, you will be ready to shop smart again.

A good practice is to keep making car payments once the car loan is paid off. If you are paying $300 per month for a car loan, when the loan is paid off, put $300 per month into a savings account for a new car instead. Do it long enough and you can buy your next car using your own money!

Use the Financial Planning Process for Everything

The same process can be used to make every major purchase in your life. When you rent an apartment, begin with the same assessment of your current financial situation, what you need in an apartment, and what goals it will impact or fulfill. Then look for an apartment using a written plan to avoid being sold on a more expensive place than you want.

You can even use the process of assessing and planning for small things such as buying textbooks or weekly groceries. While saving a few bucks each week may seem like a small deal, you will gain practice using the financial planning process, so it will become automatic for when you make the big decisions in life. Stick to your plan.

Footnotes

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5.1.3: Savings, Expenses, and Budgeting

Questions to consider:

- How is the flow of money best measured?
- How do I keep things balanced?

> **"Do not save what is left after spending; instead spend what is left after saving."**
>
> —Warren Buffett[6]

What is the best way to get to the Mississippi River from here? Do you know? To answer the question, even with a map app, you would need to know where you are starting from and exactly where on the river you want to arrive before you can map the best route. Our financial lives need maps, too. You need to know where you are now and where you want to end up in order to map a course to meet the goal.

You map your financial path using a spending and savings plan, or budget, which tracks your income, savings, and spending. You check on your progress using a balance sheet that lists your *assets*, or what you own, and your *liabilities*, or what you owe. A balance sheet is like a snapshot, a moment in time, that we use to check our progress.

Budgets

The term *budget* is unpleasant to some people because it just looks like work. But who will care more about your money than you? We all want to know if we have enough money to pay our bills, travel, get an education, buy a car, etc. Technically, a budget is a specific financial plan for a specified time. Budgets have three elements: income, saving and investing, and expenses.

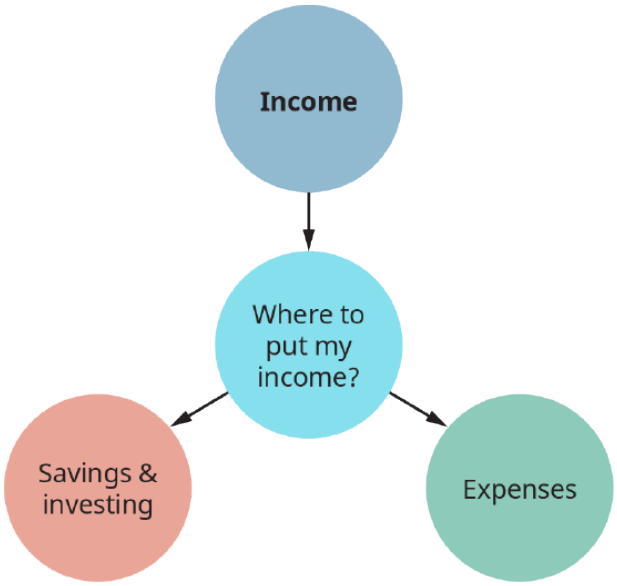


Figure 5.1.3.7: A budget is a specific financial plan for a finite amount of time. For example, you can set a budget for your family for a year.

Income

Income most often comes from our jobs in the form of a paper or electronic paycheck. When listing your income for your monthly budget, you should use your *net pay*, also called your disposable income. It is the only money you can use to pay bills. If you currently have a job, look at the pay stub or statement. You will find *gross pay*, then some money deducted for a variety of taxes, leaving a smaller amount—your net pay. Sometimes you have the opportunity to have some other, optional deductions taken from your paycheck before you get your net pay. Examples of optional deductions include 401(k) or health insurance payments. You

can change these amounts, but you should still use your net pay when considering your budget.

Some individuals receive disability income, social security income, investment income, alimony, child support, and other forms of payment on a regular basis. All of these go under income. During school, you may receive support from family that could be considered income. You may also receive scholarships, grants, or student loan money.

Saving and Investing

The first bill you should pay is to yourself. You owe yourself today and tomorrow. That means you should set aside a certain amount of money for savings and investments, before paying bills and making discretionary, or optional, purchases. Savings can be for an emergency fund or for short-term goals such as education, a wedding, travel, or a car. Investing, such as putting your money into stocks, bonds, or real estate, offers higher returns at a higher risk than money saved in a bank. Investments include retirement accounts that can be automatically funded with money deducted from your paycheck. Automatic payroll deductions are an effective way to save money before you can get your hands on it. Setting saving as a priority assures that you will work to make the payment to yourself as hard as you work to make your car or housing payment. The money you "pay" toward saving or investing will earn you back your money, plus some money earned on your money. Compare this to the cost of buying an item on credit and paying your money plus interest to a creditor. Paying yourself first is a habit that pays off!

> **Pay yourself first! Put something in savings from every paycheck or gift.**

Expenses

Expenses are categorized in two ways. One method separates them into fixed expenses and variable expenses. Rent, insurance costs, and utilities (power, water) are fixed: they cost about the same every month and are predictable based on your arrangement with the provider. Variable expenses, on the other hand, change based on your priorities and available funds; they include groceries, restaurants, cell phone plans, gas, clothing, and so on. You have a good degree of control over your variable expenses. You can begin organizing your expenses by categorizing each one as either fixed or variable.

A second way to categorize expenses is to identify them as either needs or wants. Your needs come first: food, basic clothing, safe housing, medical care, and water. Your wants come afterward, if you can afford them while sticking to a savings plan. Wants may include meals at a restaurant, designer clothes, video games, other forms of entertainment, or a new car. After you identify an item as a need or want, you must exercise self-control to avoid caving to your desire for too many wants.

ACTIVITY

List the last ten purchases you made, and place each of them in the category you think is correct.

Table 10.2

Item	Need Expense $	Want Expense $
Totals		

How do your total "need" expenses compare to your total "want" expenses? Should either of them change?

Budgets are done in a chart or spreadsheet format and often look like the ones below. Pay attention to how the first budget differs

from the second.

Table 10.3 This budget balances because all money is accounted for.

Income (use net monthly pay)	
Paycheck	$2200
Other	$300
Total Income	**$2500**
Saving and Investing	
Savings Account	$120
Investments	$240
Amount Left for Expenses	$2140
Expenses (Monthly)	
Housing	$750
Car Payment/Insurance	$450
Groceries	$400
Restaurants/Food Delivery	$100
Internet	$60
Phone	$60
Medical Insurance and Copays	$120
Gas	$200
Total Expenses	**$2140**
Balance (Amount left for expenses minus total expenses)	$0

Table 10.4 Note that Restaurants, Phone, and Gas are more expensive in this budget, so the total expenses are more than the amount left for them.

Income (use net monthly pay)	
Paycheck	$2200
Other	$300
Total Income	**$2500**
Saving and Investing	
Savings Account	$120
Investments	$240
Amount Left for Expenses	$2140
Expenses (Monthly)	
Housing	$750
Car Payment/Insurance	$450
Groceries	$400
Restaurants/Food Delivery	$225
Internet	$60

Phone	$75
Medical Insurance and Copays	$120
Gas	$250
Total Expenses	**$2330**
Balance (Amount left for expenses minus total expenses)	**-$190**

Balancing Your Budget

Would you take all your cash outside and throw it up in the air on a windy day? Probably not. We want to hold on to every cent and decide where we want it to go. Our budget allows us to find a place for each dollar. We should not regularly have money left over. If we do, we should consider increasing our saving and investing. We also should not have a negative balance, meaning we don't have enough to pay our bills. If we are short of money, we can look at all three categories of our budget: income, savings, and expenses.

We could increase our income by taking a second job or working overtime, although this is rarely advisable alongside college coursework. The time commitment quickly becomes overwhelming. Another option is to cut savings, or there's always the possibility of reducing expenses. Any of these options in combination can work.

Another, even less desirable option is to take on debt to make up the shortfall. This is usually only a short-term solution that makes future months and cash shortages worse as we pay off the debt. When we budget for each successive month, we can look at what we actually spent the month before and make adjustments.

Tracking the Big Picture

When you think about becoming more financially secure, you're usually considering your *net worth*, or the total measure of your wealth. Earnings, savings, and investments build up your assets—that is, the valuable things you own. Borrowed money, or debt, increases your liabilities, or what you owe. If you subtract what you owe from what you own, the result is your net worth. Your goal is to own more than you owe.

When people first get out of college and have student debt, they often owe more than they own. But over time and with good financial strategies, they can reverse that situation. You can track information about your assets, liabilities, and net worth on a balance sheet or part of a personal financial statement. This information will be required to get a home loan or other types of loans. For your net worth to grow in a positive direction, you must increase your assets and decrease your liabilities over time.

Assets (Owned) – Liabilities (Owed) = Net Worth

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Can you identify areas in your life where you are losing money by paying fees on your checking account or interest on your loans? What actions could you take to stop giving away money and instead set yourself up to start earning money?

Table 10.5

Good Practices That Build Wealth	Bad Practices That Dig a Debt Hole
Tracking all spending and saving	Living paycheck to paycheck with no plan
Knowing the difference between needs and wants	Spending money on wants instead of saving
Resisting impulse buying and emotional spending	Using credit to buy more that you need and increasing what you owe

GET CONNECTED

You can write down your budget on paper or using a computer spreadsheet program such as Excel, or you can find popular budgeting apps that work for you.[7] Some apps link to your accounts and offer other services such as tracking credit cards and your credit score. The key is to find an app that does what you need and use it.

Here are some examples:

- Mint
- Mvelopes
- Wally
- Goodbudget

Footnotes

6. Buffett, Warren. The Essays of Warren Buffett: Lessons for Corporate America. 1991. Cardozo Law Review.
7. http://www.techtimes.com/articles/80...t-and-more.htm

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5.1.4: Banking and Emergency Funds

Questions to consider:

- How do I plan appropriately for a financial emergency?
- What do I need to keep in mind when it comes to the banking system?

Emergency Funds

> **"Time and unexpected events [affect us] all."**
>
> —King Solomon

Plan on the unplanned happening to you. It happens to all of us: a car repair, a broken computer, an unplanned visit to the doctor, a friend or relative in desperate need, etc. How will you pay for it? A recent study found that over 60 percent of households could not pay cash for a $400 unexpected expense.[8] Could you?

What Is an Emergency Fund?

An emergency fund is a cash reserve that's specifically set aside for unplanned expenses or financial emergencies[9]. Some common examples include car repairs, home repairs, medical bills, and a loss of income. In general, emergency savings can be used for large or small unplanned bills or payments that are not part of your routine monthly expenses and spending.

Why Do I Need an Emergency Fund?

Without savings, even a minor financial shock could set you back, and if it turns into debt, it can potentially have a lasting impact.

Research suggests that individuals who struggle to recover from a financial shock have less savings to help protect against a future emergency. They may rely on credit cards or loans, which can lead to debt that's generally harder to pay off. They may also pull from other savings, such as retirement funds, to cover these costs.

How Much Money Should I Keep in My Emergency Fund?

There is no magic or "official" amount to keep in an emergency fund, but you can look at your own life to get an idea to start with. How much could you put into a bank account to have for emergencies? Some students and their parents will not have a problem paying for most emergencies, but many students are on their own. What can you save up over time? A common recommendation for graduates with full-time jobs is perhaps three to six months' worth of expenses. This may not be practical for you. A large sampling of students in financial literacy classes recommend approximately $1,000.

One thousand dollars can cover a lot of small to medium unexpected expenses, such as last-minute textbooks, computer repair or replacement, car repair, or a prescription or doctor's visit. The emergency fund is best kept separate from other money for living expenses to protect it as emergency money. While you could keep cash, an emergency fund is often best kept in a bank, in order to avoid theft or loss and still have easy access by debit card or ATM. Pizza is not an emergency!



Figure 5.1.4.8: Emergency funds can cover the cost of a broken phone. (Credit: Simon Clancy / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

How Do I Create an Emergency Fund?

Emergency funds can be created quickly if you have the money, or over time if you need to save a little from each paycheck, loan, or gift. You can use a financial planning tool similar to the one in section 10.1. Follow these steps:

- Set an emergency fund goal.
- Identify an amount to keep on hand.
- Determine how to fund it, monthly or all at once.
- Decide where you will keep your fund (e.g., a savings account), and set specific dates to deposit money in it.
- Start now!

ANALYSIS QUESTION

How do you feel when you do not have enough money for something? Will you stop spending on some wants while you build up your emergency fund?

Safety and Success: Bank on It!

The banking system in the United States is one of the safest and most regulated banking systems in the world. A host of federal and state agencies regulate financial institutions to keep them from accidentally or purposefully losing customer money.

Banks, Credit Unions, and Online Banking

In the United States, financial institutions (FIs) are divided into multiple types of companies. The banking system is generally divided into banks and credit unions, which have similar offerings and are both regulated and insured by the federal government.

Choosing a Bank or Credit Union

When choosing a bank or credit union, it is important to understand what you are looking for and what benefits each company provides. Generally, large national banks offer the most advanced technology and a large network of branches. There are also smaller community banks that serve specific groups of people and may offer products to meet the specific needs of the community. For example, a community bank that serves Latino customers might make it easier to send money to family in South American countries, while a bank that focuses on small businesses will promote products specifically needed by business owners.

Credit unions differ from banks in that they don't have a profit motive. Instead, they are not-for-profit organizations that are owned by the people who bank with them. Each member of a credit union gets one vote for the board of directors, which runs the credit union. This means that whether you have $5 in your account or $5 million, you get the same vote. Credit unions tend to offer better rates and lower fees, on average, than banks.

There is no single best answer for what bank or credit union you should choose. The most vital question to ask and answer about a financial institution is whether it meets both your current and your future needs. Use figure 10.3 to compare different options and determine the best one for you.

Many banks and credit unions do not publish the interest rates paid on deposit accounts or charged on loans. While some colleges have their own bank or credit union right on campus, you should consider visiting at least one other bank or one credit union to compare. You may also explore at least one online bank, which will publish interest rates on their website. Consider interest rates, access to automated teller machines (ATMs), online transfers, automatic paycheck deposits, branch locations if you will use one, and other services important to you. Since you will select a bank or credit union that is insured, do not feel pressure to use any specific institution.

Table 10.6

Comparison Chart for Choosing a Bank/Credit Union			
Item	**Local Bank**	**Credit Union**	**Online Only Bank**
	Yes/No/Amount	Yes/No/Amount	Yes/No/Amount
Checking Accounts			
• Monthly Fees			
• Methods to Avoid Fees			
Savings Accounts			
• Interest Percentage			
• Monthly Fees			
• Methods to Avoid Fees			
Loans			
• Auto Loans			
• Home Loans			
• Credit Cards			
Nearest Branch Location*			
• Near Home?			

Comparison Chart for Choosing a Bank/Credit Union			
• Near School or Work?			
• Convenient ATMs?			
Online Banking Services*			
• Transfer Funds between Accounts			
• Open New Accounts			
• Pay Bills			
• Fees			
• Budgeting/Daily Transaction Access			
Additional Services or Fees			
* Branch locations are less important if you use online banking for most banking activity.			

Banking Products and Services

Banks and credit unions offer a similar set of financial products or services, called account types. The difference between the account types lies primarily in how easy it is to put money into or take money out of an account. Regulations set maximum numbers of transactions (deposits or withdrawals) for each type of account at a bank or credit union.

How you use these accounts is less about the rules and more about how long you plan to keep the money in the account. The main reason to use a bank is to keep your money safe and available. Banks may offer other services that benefit you, such as certificates of deposit (which allow you to earn higher interest over a longer time), retirement accounts, and car and home loans.

Checking

Checking accounts allow you to deposit money and take money out anytime you want. There are no government limits on the number of transactions, although a bank or credit union might begin to charge you if you make too many transactions. Checking accounts often don't pay any interest or pay an extremely low rate of interest. They are used to keep money safe and pay bills conveniently.

Checking accounts are ideal for depositing paychecks, cashing paper checks, buying everyday items, and paying your bills. The money you have in your checking account should be money you plan to spend by the end of the month. Any money you don't plan to spend within a month should be transferred from your checking account to a savings account. Your savings account should be the *first* bill that you pay each month. You can still add extra at the end of the month!

Savings Accounts

Savings accounts allow you a specific number of transactions each month or each quarter. If you go over the maximum number of transactions, the bank won't let you take any more money out or put any more money into the account until the next month.

Savings accounts pay a small amount of interest on your money, but usually not enough to keep up with inflation or overcome banking fees (see below).

This actually causes your savings to go backwards. If you earn 2 percent on a savings account but inflation is 3 percent per year, you are losing 1 percent of purchasing power each year. For this reason, money in a savings account should be money you plan to spend within the next 12–48 months. The only exception to this is money you have saved for an emergency, called an emergency fund. Since you never know when an emergency (such as losing your job) is going to happen, you want the money to be available to you in a savings account.



Figure 5.1.4.9: Banks and credit unions can be accessed in many forms, both physical and online. (Credit David Hilowitz / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Debit Cards

When you get a checking account, you'll also get a debit card, or check card. This card allows you to access the money in your checking account (and savings account at an ATM) using a plastic card similar to a credit card. But it is not a credit card.

A debit card only uses money available in your account. Paying with a debit card is like paying with a paper check, but more immediate and convenient. You will have the option of selecting overdraft protection, which means the bank or credit union will allow you to buy stuff even if you don't have enough money in your account; they'll just charge you a fee, perhaps $25, for each event. This can be compared to a high-interest loan. Depending on how many things you buy in a week, overdraft protection could add many fees to your statement and use up your cash so it will not be available for your planned expenses. Consider opting out of overdraft protection and carefully keeping track of your account balance. This way you can only spend the money that you have.

Be aware that by using your debit card at an ATM associated with a different bank, you can incur fees—sometimes from both banks!

Debit cards offer a lot of security benefits over carrying around cash, including the ability to cancel a lost or stolen debit card. While the legal protections on debit cards are not as great as the legal protections on credit cards, you can't go into debt using a debit card. This inability to go into significant debt is a major advantage for those who struggle with debt.

Banking Fees

Banks and credit unions charge fees to operate. Many charge fees for a checking or savings account, overdrafts, and other services. You should seek to avoid fees for which you receive no extra services or when you can get similar services elsewhere for free. Two areas that are most subject to fees are services and "triggered" events. Triggered events are primarily caused by actions such as overdrawing your account (an overdraft). Overdraft fees are avoidable. The best way to avoid an overdraft fee is to continually monitor your bank balance and only spend money that you have.

Standard bank fees can often be avoided by taking one or more measures as specified by the bank, such as maintaining a minimum balance or using direct deposit. Avoid getting paid on a payroll or prepaid card unless you know all related costs or have a reason to want to be paid in that manner. Payroll cards often lead to ATM and banking fees, so federal law requires employers to offer you an alternative.[10] Ask at your financial institution for assistance in setting up an account or accounts that are best for you.

Online and Mobile Banking

There are other important banking tools you should also consider. Online and mobile banking are among the most important activities in banking. You should list all the things you might want to do regularly with your bank accounts and make sure you can do them through the bank's website and app. This might include making payments on loans, transferring money between your checking and savings accounts, paying bills through automated bill pay, and creating new savings accounts.

Learn the rules of your account, and keep track of how you use it. This can help you keep costs down and develop a positive banking relationship.

Earning Interest and Compound Interest

Interest refers to money paid for the privilege of borrowing money. When banks use our money for their investments, they pay us interest. (Remember, our bank accounts are insured, so you can't lose your money even when the banks use it.) When you take out a loan using the bank's money, you pay the bank interest.

Compound interest means that you earn interest on the money that you deposit, called the principal, first. After that, you earn money on your money *plus* all the interest that has been paid to your account. Your earnings are reinvested. Interest on interest! You are being paid on the basis of other people's money—the interest that they paid you. Over time, this compound interest results in more and more money in your account. The same principle holds true for investing. Banks sometimes have investment services that pay higher interest but include risk to your money, which you typically access after completing your degree or certificate and obtaining full-time work. If you are employed full time and have access to investment, perhaps in a company-sponsored retirement account, see a brief section below on Investing and Buying Power.

Consider the example below, and notice that the amount of interest paid each year is larger than the year before. That is compound interest. The only money deposited by the account owner was the first $2,000.

Table 10.7

Year	Starting Deposit or Beginning Amount from End of Last Year	Annual Interest Rate	Interest Paid over Period (1 year) (Interest x Beginning Amount)	Total at End of Year / Beginning Amount for Next Year
1	$2,000.00	6%	$120	$2,120.00
2	$2,120.00	6%	$127.20	$2,247.20
3	$2,247.20	6%	$134.83	$2,382.03
4	$2,382.03	6%	$142.92	$2,524.95

In this example, at the end of four years, the account owner has put in $2,000 and has added $524.95 of other people's money in earned interest! You can use online financial calculators to try scenarios for saving, buying a car or home, and even building a retirement account. One source is bankrate.com. Look under Calculators. Do not pursue marketing efforts on the sites suggested or used for examples in this chapter. Stick to the tools used.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

What happens to the amount of compound interest when you save for a longer time? When should you start saving?

Footnotes

8. Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. “Report on the Economic Wellbeing of US Households, 2018” https://www.federalreserve.gov/publi...d-expenses.htm
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10. Dratch, Dana. “It pays to know these five things about payroll cards.” Credit Cards.com. https://www.creditcards.com/credit-c...loyer-1271.php

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5.1.5: Credit Cards and Other Debt

Questions to consider:

- What do I need to know about student loans?
- How dangerous is debt?
- What should I think about when getting and using a credit card?

Yes, taking on too much debt can (and does) have disastrous effects on people's personal finances, but if used appropriately, debt can be a tool to help you build wealth. Debt is like fire. You can use it to keep yourself warm, cook food, and ward off animals—but if you don't know how to control it, it'll burn your house down.

The Danger of Debt

When you take out a loan, you take on an obligation to pay the money back, with interest, through a monthly payment. You will take this debt with you when you apply for auto loans or home loans, when you enter into a marriage, and so on. Effectively, you have committed your future income to the loan. While this can be a good idea with student loans, take on too many loans and your future self will be poor, no matter how much money you make. Worse, you'll be transferring more and more of your money to the bank through interest payments.

Compounding Interest

While compounding works to make you money when you are earning interest on savings or investments, it works against you when you are paying the interest on loans. To avoid compounding interest on loans, make sure your payments are at least enough to cover the interest charged each month. The good news is that the interest you are charged will be listed each month on the loan account statements you are sent by the bank or credit union, and fully amortized loans will always cover the interest costs plus enough principal to pay off what you owe by the end of the loan term.

The two most common loans on which people get stuck paying compounding interest are credit cards and student loans. Paying the minimum payment each month on a credit card will just barely cover the interest charged that month, while anything you buy with the credit card will begin to accrue interest on the day you make the purchase. Since credit cards charge interest daily, you'll begin paying interest on the interest immediately, starting the compound interest snowball working against you. When you get a credit card, always pay the credit card balance down to $0 each month to avoid the compound interest trap.

Student loans are another way you can be caught in the compound interest trap. When you have an unsubsidized student loan or put your loans into deferment, the interest continues to rack up on the loans. Again, you'll be charged interest on the interest, not just on the original loan amount, forcing you to pay compound interest on the loan.

Sacrificing Your Future Fun

When you graduate college, you are most likely to graduate with student loan debt and credit card debt.[11] Many students use credit cards and student loans to allow them to pay for fun today, such as trips, clothing, and expensive meals.

Getting into debt while in college forces you to sacrifice your future fun. Say you take out $100,000 in student loans instead of the $50,000 you need, doubling your monthly payment. You are not just making an extra $338 payment; you are also sacrificing anything else you can do with that money. You sacrifice that extra $338 a month, every month, for the next twenty-five years. You can't use it to go to the movies, pay down other debt, save for a home, take a vacation, or throw a party. When you sign those papers, you sacrifice all those opportunities every month for decades. As a result, when you take out a loan, you should make sure it's a good loan.

How Much Good Debt to Take On

A drink of water is refreshing on a hot day and is required to stay alive. Too much water, however, and you will drown.

During college and for the first few years after graduation, most students should only have two loans: student loans and possibly a car loan. We've already discussed your student loans, which should be equal to or less than your first year's expected salary after graduation.

When you get a car, you should keep your car payment to between 10 and 20 percent of your monthly take-home pay. This means if your paycheck is $200 per week, your car payment should be no more than $80–$160 each month.

In total, you want your debt payments (plus rent if you are renting) to be no more than 44 percent of your take-home pay. If you are planning to build wealth, however, you want to cap it at 30 percent of take-home pay.

Signs You Have Too Much Debt

You can consider yourself in too much debt if you have any of the following situations:

- You cannot make your minimum credit card payments.
- Your money is gone before your next paycheck.
- Bill collectors are contacting you.
- You are unable to get a loan.
- Your paycheck is being garnished by creditor.
- You are considering a debt consolidation loan with extra fees added.
- Your items are repossessed.
- You do not know your debt or financial situation.

Getting and Using a Credit Card

One of the most controversial aspects of personal finance is the use of credit cards. While credit cards can be an incredibly useful tool, their high interest rates, combined with the how easily credit cards can bury you in debt, make them extremely dangerous if not managed correctly.

Reflect on Elan from the chapter introduction and how he felt. How would you (or did you) feel to hold a new credit card with a $2,000 spending limit?

Benefits of a Credit Card

There are three main benefits of getting a credit card. The first is that credit cards offer a secure and convenient method of making purchases, similar to using a debit card. When you carry cash, you have the potential of having the money lost or stolen. A credit card or debit card, on the other hand, can be canceled and replaced at no cost to you.

Additionally, credit cards offer greater consumer protections than debit cards do. These consumer protections are written into law, and with credit cards you have a maximum liability of $50. With a debit card, you are responsible for transfers made up until the point you report the card stolen. In order to have the same protections as with credit cards, you need to report the card lost or stolen within 48 hours. The longer you wait to report the loss of the card, or the longer it takes you to realize you lost your card, the more money you may be responsible for, up to an unlimited amount.[12]

The final benefit is that a credit card will allow you to build your credit score, which is helpful in many aspects of life. While most people associate a credit score with getting better rates on loans, credit scores are also important to getting a job, lowering car insurance rates, and finding an apartment.[13]

What Is a Good Credit Score?

Most credit scores have a 300–850 score range. The higher the score, the lower the risk to lenders. A "good" credit score is considered to be in the 670–739 score range.

Table 10.8

Credit Score Ranges	Rating	Description
< 580	Poor	This credit score is well below the average score of US consumers and demonstrates to lenders that the borrower may be a risk.
580-669	Fair	This credit score is below the average score of US consumers, though many lenders will approve loans with this score.
670-739	Good	This credit score is near or slightly above the average of US consumers, and most lenders consider this a good score.
740-799	Very Good	This credit score is above the average of US consumers and demonstrates to lenders that the borrower is very dependable.
800+	Exceptional	This credit score is well above the average score of US consumers and clearly demonstrates to lenders that the borrower is an exceptionally low risk.

Components of a Credit Score and How to Improve Your Credit

Credit scores contain a total of five components. These components are credit payment history (35 percent), credit utilization (30 percent), length of credit history (15 percent), new credit (10 percent), and credit mix (10 percent). The main action you can take to improve your credit score is to stop charging and pay all bills on time. Even if you cannot pay the full amount of the credit card balance, which is the best practice, pay the minimum on time. Paying more is better for your debt load but does not improve your score. Carrying a balance on a credit card does not improve your score. Your score will go down if you pay bills late and owe more than 30 percent of your credit available. Your credit score is a reflection of your willingness and ability to do what you say you will do—pay your debts on time.

How to Use a Credit Card

All the benefits of credit cards are destroyed if you carry credit card debt. Credit cards should be used as a method of paying for things you can afford, meaning you should only use a credit card if the money is already sitting in your bank account and is budgeted for the item you are buying. If you use credit cards as a loan, you are losing the game.

Every month, you should pay your credit card off in full, meaning you will be bringing the loan amount down to $0. If your statement says you charged $432.56 that month, make sure you can pay off all $432.56. If you do this, you won't pay any interest on the credit card.

But what happens if you don't pay it off in full? If you are even one cent short on the payment, meaning you pay $432.55 instead, you must pay daily interest on the entire amount from the date you made the purchases. Your credit card company, of course, will be perfectly happy for you to make smaller payments—that's how they make money. It is not uncommon for people to pay twice as much as the amount purchased and take years to pay off a credit card when they only pay the minimum payment each month.

What to Look for in Your Initial Credit Card

1. Find a Low-Rate Credit Card

   Even though you plan to never pay interest, mistakes will happen, and you don't want to be paying high interest while you fix a misstep. Start by narrowing the hundreds of card options to the few with the lowest APR (annual percentage rate).

2. Avoid Cards with Annual Fees or Minimum Usage Requirements

   Your first credit card should ideally be one you can keep forever, but that's expensive to do if they charge you an annual fee or have other requirements just for having the card. There are many options that won't require you to spend a minimum amount each month and won't charge you an annual fee.

3. Keep the Credit Limit Equal to Two Weeks' Take-Home Pay

   Even though you want to pay your credit card off in full, most people will max out their credit cards once or twice while they

are building their good financial habits. If this happens to you, having a small credit limit makes that mistake a small mistake instead of a $5,000 mistake.

4. Avoid Rewards Cards

   Everyone loves to talk about rewards cards, but credit card companies wouldn't offer rewards if they didn't earn them a profit. Rewards systems with credit cards are designed by experts to get you to spend more money and pay more interest than you otherwise would. Until you build a strong habit of paying off your card in full each month, don't step into their trap.

Footnotes

11. Debt.org. "Demographics of Debt." https://www.debt.org/faqs/americans-.../demographics/
12. Federal Trade Commission. "Lost Or Stolen Credit, ATM, and Debit Cards." 2012.
13. Purposeful Finance. "Four Surprising Ways Your Credit Score Will Affect Your Life." https://www.purposefulfinance.org/ho...fect-your-life

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5.1.6: Education Debt- Paying for College

Questions to consider:

- What choices should you consider when taking on student debt?
- How do you match debt to postgraduate income?
- What types of financial aid are available?
- How do you apply for financial aid?
- What are the best repayment strategies?

> **"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."**
>
> —Benjamin Franklin, *The Way to Wealth*: Ben Franklin on Money and Success

As you progress through your college experience, the cost of college can add up rapidly. Worse, your anxiety about the cost of college may rise faster as you hear about the rising costs of college and horror stories regarding the "student loan crisis." It is important to remember that *you* are in control of your choices and the cost of your college experience, and you do not have to be a sad statistic.

Education Choices

Education is vital to living. Education starts at the beginning of our life, and as we grow, we learn language, sharing, and to look both ways before crossing the street. We also generally pursue a secular or public education that often ends at high school graduation. After that, we have many choices, including getting a job and stopping our education, working at a trade or business started by our parents and bypassing additional schooling, earning a certificate from a community college or four-year college or university, earning a two-year or associate degree from one of the same schools, and completing a bachelor's or advanced degree at a college or university. We can choose to attend a public or private school. We can live at home or on a campus.

Each of these choices impacts our debt, happiness, and earning power. The average income goes up with an increase in education, but that is not an absolute rule. The New York Federal Reserve Bank reported in 2017 that approximately 34 percent of college graduates worked in a job that did not require a college degree,[14] and in 2013, CNN Money reported on a study from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce showing that nearly 30 percent of Americans with two-year degrees are now earning more than graduates with bachelor's degrees.[15] Of course, many well-paying occupations do require a bachelor's or master's degree. You have started on a path that may be perfect for you, but you may also choose to make adjustments.

College success from a financial perspective means that you must:

- Know the total cost of the education
- Consider job market trends
- Work hard at school during the education
- Pursue ways to reduce costs

Most importantly: Buy only the amount of education that returns more than you invest.

According to *US News & World Report*, the average cost of college (including university) tuition and fees varies widely. In-state colleges average $9,716 while out-of-state students pay $21,629 for the same state college. Private colleges average $35,676. The local community college averages approximately $3,726. On-campus housing and meals, if available, can add approximately $10,000 per year.[16] See the table below, and create your own chart after you research.

Table 10.9

Sample College Costs			
Type of School	**Annual Tuition without Housing**	**Tuition If Living on Campus**	**Total Cost at Planned Completion**

Sample College Costs			
Community College (2 yr.)	$3,726	Live at Home	$7,452
Public University, In State (4 yr.)	$9,716	Live at Home	$38,864
Public University, In State (4 yr.)		$19,716	$78,864
Public University, Out of State (4 yr.)	$21,629	$31,629	$126,516
Private College (4 yr.)	$35,676	$45,676	$182,704

You may need to adjust your college plan as circumstances change for you and in the job market. You can modify plans based on funding opportunities available to you (see next sections) and your location. You may prefer a community-college-only education, or you may complete two years at a community college and then transfer to a university to complete a bachelor's degree. Living at home for the first two years or all of your college education will save a lot of money if your circumstances allow. Be creative!

Key to Success: Matching Student Debt to Postgraduation Income

Students and parents often ask, "How much debt should I have?" The problem is that the correct answer depends on your personal situation. A big-firm attorney in a major city might make $120,000 in their first year as a lawyer. Having $100,00 or even $200,000 in student debt in this situation may be reasonable. But a high school teacher making $40,000 in their first year would never be able to pay off the debt.

The amount of debt you take on should be tied to the income you expect.

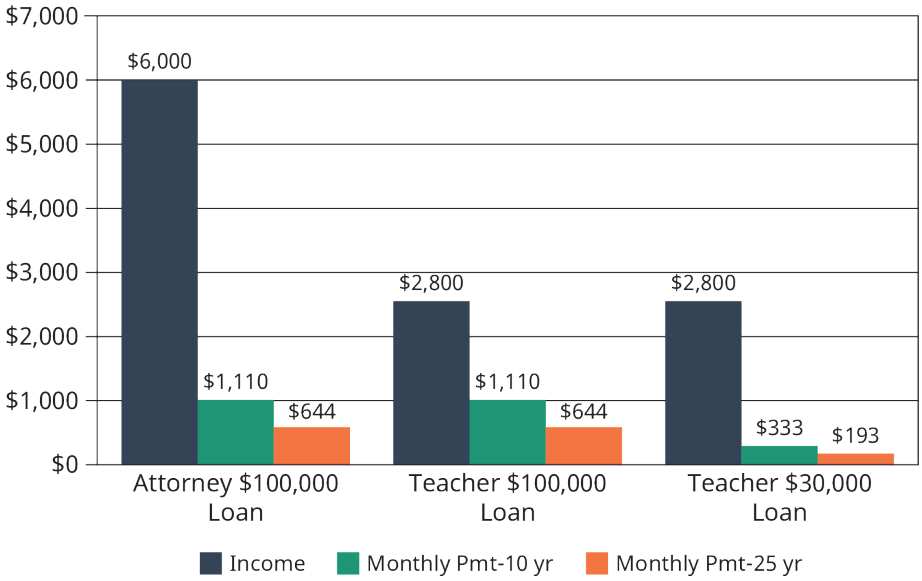


Figure 5.1.6.10: Each field of employment brings with it an average income and assumed debt. This graph shows the impact of an attorney's income versus debt, and then compares a teacher who took a $100,000 loan with one who took a $30,000 loan. Note the teacher's income is the same in both cases. (Credit: Based on information from National Association of Colleges and Employers and US Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

Research Your Starting Salary

Begin by researching your expected starting salary when you graduate. Most students expect to make significantly more than they will actually make.[17] As a result, your salary expectations are likely much higher than reality. Ask professors at your college what is typical for a recent graduate in your field, or do informational interviews with human resource managers at local companies. Explore the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook*. PayScale also has a handy tool for getting general information based on your personal experience and location. Search websites and talk to employees of companies that interest you for future employment to identify real starting salaries.

Undergraduate Degree: 1 x Annual Salary

For students working toward a bachelor's or associate degree, both forms of undergraduate degrees, you should try to keep your student loans equal to or less than your expected first year's salary. So if, based on research, you expect to make $40,000 in your first year out of college, then $33,000 in student loans would be a reasonable amount for you to pay out of a monthly budget with some sacrifice.

Advanced Degrees: 1–2 x Annual Salary

Once you've graduated with your bachelor's degree, you may want to get an advanced degree such as a master's degree, a law degree, a medical degree, or a doctorate. While these degrees can greatly increase your income, you still need to match your student debt to your expected income. Advanced degrees can often double your expected annual salary, meaning your total debt for all your degrees should be equal to or less than twice your expected first job income. A lower number for the debt portion of your education would be more manageable.

Your goal should be to pay for college using multiple methods so your student loan debt can be as small as possible, rather than just making low monthly payments on a large loan that will lead to a higher overall cost.

Types of Financial Aid: How to Pay for College

The true cost of college may be more than you expected, but you can make an effort to make the cost less than many might think. While the price tag for a school might say $40,000, the net cost of college may be significantly less. The net price for a college is the true cost a family will pay when grants, scholarships, and education tax benefits are factored in. The net cost for the average family at a public in-state school is only $3,980. And for a private school, free financial aid money reduces the cost to the average family from $32,410 per year to just $14,890.

If you haven't visited your college's financial aid office recently, it's probably worth it to talk with them. You must seek out opportunities, complete paperwork, and learn and meet criteria, but it can save you thousands of dollars.

Table 10.10

Type of College	Average Published Yearly Tuition and Fees
Public Two-Year College (in-district students)	$3,440
Public Four-Year College (in-state students)	$9,410
Public Two-Year College (out-of-state students)	$23,890
Private Four-Year College	$32,410

Grants and Scholarships

Grants and scholarships are free money you can use to pay for college. Unlike loans, you never have to pay back a grant or a scholarship. All you have to do is go to school. And you don't have to be a straight-A student to get grants and scholarships. There is so much free money, in fact, that billions of dollars go unclaimed every year.[18]

While some grants and scholarships are based on a student's academic record, many are given to average students based on their major, ethnic background, gender, religion, or other factors. There are likely dozens or hundreds of scholarships and grants available to you personally if you look for them.

Federal Grants

Federal Pell Grants are awarded to students based on financial need, although there is no income or wealth limit on the grant program. The Pell Grant can give you more than $6,000 per year in free money toward tuition, fees, and living expenses.[19] If you qualify for a Pell Grant based on your financial need, you will automatically get the money.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOGs) are additional free money available to students with financial need. Through the FSEOG program, you can receive up to an additional $4,000 in free money. These grants are distributed through your school's financial aid department on a first-come, first-served basis, so pay close attention to deadlines.

Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants are designed to help students who plan to go into the teaching profession. You can receive up to $4,000 per year through the TEACH Grant. To be eligible for a TEACH Grant, you must take specific classes and majors and must hold a qualifying teaching job for at least four years after graduation. If you do not fulfill these obligations, your TEACH Grant will be converted to a loan, which you will have to pay back with both interest and back interest.

There are numerous other grants available through individual states, employers, colleges, and private organizations.

State Grants

Most states also have grant programs for their residents, often based on financial need. Eleven states have even implemented free college tuition programs for residents who plan to continue to live in the state. Even some medical schools are beginning to be tuition free. Check your school's financial aid office and your state's department of education for details.

College/University Grants and Scholarships

Most colleges and universities have their own scholarships and grants. These are distributed through a wide variety of sources, including the school's financial aid office, the school's endowment fund, individual departments, and clubs on campus.

Private Organization Grants and Scholarships

A wide variety of grants and scholarships and are awarded by foundations, civic groups, companies, religious groups, professional organizations, and charities. Most are small awards under $4,000, but multiple awards can add up to large amounts of money each year. Your financial aid office can help you find these opportunities.

Employer Grants and Scholarships

Many employers also offer free money to help employees go to school. A common work benefit is a tuition reimbursement program, where employers will pay students extra money to cover the cost of tuition once they've earned a passing grade in a college class. And some companies are going even further, offering to pay 100 percent of college costs for employees. Check to see whether your employer offers any kind of educational support.



Figure 5.1.6.11: Employers in certain fields, such as healthcare, may offer their own grants and scholarships. (Credit: Ano Lobb / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Additional Federal Support

The federal government offers a handful of additional options for college students to find financial support.

Education Tax Credits

The IRS gives out free money to students and their parents through two tax credits, although you will have to choose between them. The American opportunity tax credit (AOTC) will refund up to $2,500 of qualifying education expenses per eligible student, while the lifetime learning credit (LLC) refunds up to $2,000 per year regardless of the number of qualifying students.

While the AOTC may be a better tax credit to choose for some, it can only be claimed for four years for each student, and it has other limitations. The LLC has fewer limitations, and there is no limit on the number of years you can claim it. Lifetime learners and nontraditional students may consider the LLC a better choice. Calculate the benefits for your situation.

The IRS warns taxpayers to be careful when claiming the credits. There are potential penalties for incorrectly claiming the credits, and you or your family should consult a tax professional or financial adviser when claiming these credits.

Federal Work-Study Program

The Federal Work-Study Program provides part-time jobs through colleges and universities to students who are enrolled in the school. The program offers students the opportunity to work in their field, for their school, or for a nonprofit or civic organization to help pay for the cost of college. If your school participates in the program, it will be offered through your school's financial aid office.

Student Loans

Federal student loans are offered through the US Department of Education and are designed to give easy and inexpensive access to loans for school. You don't have to make payments on the loans while you are in school, and the interest on the loans is tax deductible for most people. Direct Loans, also called Federal Stafford Loans, have a competitive fixed interest rate and don't require a credit check or cosigner.

Direct Subsidized Loans

Direct Subsidized Loans are federal student loans on which the government pays the interest while you are in school. Direct Subsidized Loans are made based on financial need as calculated from the information you provide in your application. Qualifying students can get up to $3,500 in subsidized loans in their first year, $4,500 in their second year, and $5,500 in later years of their college education.

Direct Unsubsidized Loans

Direct Unsubsidized Loans are federal loans on which you are charged interest while you are in school. If you don't make interest payments while in school, the interest will be added to the loan amount each year and will result in a larger student loan balance when you graduate. The amount you can borrow each year depends on numerous factors, with a maximum of $12,500 annually for undergraduates and $20,500 annually for professional or graduate students.

There are also aggregate loan limits that apply to put a maximum cap on the total amount you can borrow for student loans.

Direct PLUS Loans

Direct PLUS Loans are additional loans a parent, grandparent, or graduate student can take out to help pay for additional costs of college. PLUS loans require a credit check and have higher interest rates, but the interest is still tax deductible. The maximum PLUS loan you can receive is the remaining cost of attending the school.

Parents and other family members should be careful when taking out PLUS loans on behalf of a child. Whoever is on the loan is responsible for the loan forever, and the loan generally cannot be forgiven in bankruptcy. The government can also take Social

Security benefits should the loan not be repaid.

Private Loans

Private loans are also available for students who need them from banks, credit unions, private investors, and even predatory lenders. But with *all* the other resources for paying for college, a private loan is generally unnecessary and unwise. Private loans will require a credit check and potentially a cosigner, they will likely have higher interest rates, and the interest is not tax deductible. As a general rule, you should be wary of private student loans or avoid them altogether.

Repayment Strategies

Payments on student loans will begin shortly after you graduate. While many websites, financial "gurus," and talking heads in the media will encourage you to pay off your student loans as quickly as possible, you should give careful consideration to your repayment options and how they may impact your financial plans. Quickly paying off your student loans or refinancing your student loans into a private loan may be the worst option available to you.

Payment Plans

The federal government has eight separate loan repayment programs, each with their own way of calculating the payment you owe. Five of the programs tie loan payments to your income, which can make it easier to afford your student loans when you are just starting off in your career. The programs are described briefly below, but you should seek the help of a licensed fiduciary financial adviser familiar with student loans when making decisions related to student loan payment plans.

The standard repayment plan sets a consistent monthly payment to pay off your loan within 10 years (or up to 30 years for consolidated loans). You can also choose a graduated repayment plan, which will begin with lower payments and then increase the payment every two years. The graduated plan is also designed to pay off your student loans in 10 years (or up to 30 years for consolidated loans). A third option is the extended repayment plan, which provides a fixed or graduated payment for up to 25 years. However, none of these programs are ideal for individuals planning to seek loan forgiveness options, which are discussed below.

Beyond the "normal" repayment options, the government offers five income-based repayment options: (1) the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) repayment plan, (2) the Revised Pay As You Earn (REPAYE) repayment plan, (3) the Income-Based Repayment (IBR) plan, (4) the Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) plan, and (5) the Income-Sensitive Repayment (ISR) plan. Each program has its method of calculating payments, along with specific requirements for eligibility and rules for staying eligible in the program. Many income-based repayment plans are also eligible for loan forgiveness after a set period of time, assuming you follow all the rules and remain eligible.

Loan Forgiveness Programs

Many income-based repayment options also have a loan forgiveness feature built into the repayment plan. If you make 100 percent of your payments on time and follow all the other plan rules, any remaining loan balance at the end of the plan repayment term (typically 20 to 30 years) will be forgiven. This means you will not have to pay the remainder on your student loans.

This loan forgiveness, however, comes with a catch: taxes. Any forgiven balance will be counted and taxed as income during that year. So if you have a $100,000 loan forgiven, you could be looking at an additional $20,000 tax bill that year (assuming you were in the 20 percent marginal tax rate).

Another option is the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program for students who go on to work for a nonprofit or government organization. If eligible, you can have your loans forgiven after working for 10 years in a qualifying public service job and making 120 on-time payments on your loans. A major advantage of PSLF is that the loan forgiveness may not be taxed as income in the year the loan is forgiven.

Consider Professional Advice

The complexity of the payment and forgiveness programs makes it difficult for nonexperts to choose the best strategy to minimize costs. Additionally, the strict rules and potential tax implications create a minefield of potential financial problems. In 2017,

the first year graduates were eligible for the PSLF program, 99 percent of applicants were denied due to misunderstanding the programs or having broken one of the many requirements for eligibility.[20]

Your Rights as a Loan Recipient

As a recipient of a federal student loan, you have the same rights and protections as you would for any other loan. This includes the right to know the terms and conditions for any loan before signing the paperwork. You also have the right to know information on your credit report and to dispute any loan or information on your credit file.

If you end up in collections, you also have several rights, even though you have missed loan payments. Debt collectors can only call you between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. They also cannot harass you, threaten you, or call you at work once you've told them to stop. The United States doesn't have debtors' prisons, so anyone threatening you with arrest or jail time is automatically breaking the law.

Federal student loans also come with many other rights, including the right to put your loan in deferment or forbearance (pushing pause on making payments) under qualifying circumstances. Deferment or forbearance can be granted if you lose your job, go back to school, or have an economic hardship. If you have a life event that makes it difficult to make your payments, immediately contact the student loan servicing company on your loan statements to see if you can pause your student loan payments.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has created a series of sample letters you can use to respond to a debt collector. You can also file a complaint with the CFPB if you believe your rights have been violated.

Applying for Financial Aid, FAFSA, and Everything Else

Take this first step—you will need to do it. The federal government offers a standard form called the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which qualifies you for federal financial aid and also opens the door for nearly all other financial aid. Most grants and scholarships require you to fill out the FAFSA, and they base their decisions on the information in the application.

The FAFSA only requests financial aid for the specific year you file your application. This means you will need to file a FAFSA for each year you are in college. Since your financial needs will change over time, you may qualify for financial aid even if you did not qualify before.

You can apply for the FAFSA through your college's financial aid office or at studentaid.gov if you don't have access to a financial aid office. Once you file a FAFSA, any college can gain access to the information (with your approval), so you can shop around for financial aid offers from colleges.

Maintaining Financial Aid

To maintain your financial aid throughout your college, you need to make sure you meet the eligibility requirements for each year you are in school, not just the year of your initial application. The basic requirements include being a US citizen or eligible noncitizen, having a valid Social Security number, and registering for selective service if required. Undocumented residents may receive financial aid as well and should check with their school's financial aid office.

You also must make satisfactory academic progress, including meeting a minimum grade-point average, taking and completing a minimum number of classes, and making progress toward graduation or a certificate. Your school will have a policy for satisfactory academic progress, which you can get from the financial aid office.

What to Do with Extra Financial Aid Money

One expensive mistake that students make with financial aid money is spending the money on noneducation expenses. Students often use financial aid, including student loans, to purchase clothing, take vacations, or dine out at restaurants. Nearly 3 percent spend student loan money on alcohol and drugs.[21] While this seems like fun now, these noneducation expenses are major contributors to student loan debt, which will make it harder for you to afford a home, take vacations, or save for your retirement after you graduate.

When you have extra student loan money, consider saving it for future education expenses. Just like you will need an emergency

fund all your adult life, you will want an emergency fund for college when expensive books or travel abroad programs present unexpected costs. If you make it through your college years with extra money in your savings, you can use the money to help pay down debt.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

A closer look: How much student loan debt do you currently have, and how much do you think you'll have by the end of college? How could this debt impact your future?

Footnotes

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5.1.7: Defending against Attack- Securing Your Identity and Accounts

Questions to consider:

- How should you manage passwords and online security?
- What's the best way to deal with identity theft?
- How can you get help and avoid scams?

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States, and the FBI estimates that more than 10 million new victims are harmed each year.[22] Among the problems contributing to this rapid increase in identity theft are the significant amount of data stored online and the poor security practices of both individuals and companies. In 2017, Equifax announced that their security had been breached and the data of every adult in the country was likely compromised.[23]

Passwords and Security

The first line of defense to prevent identity theft is to create strong passwords and take other security measures with your online accounts. An important factor in the strength of a password is the length of the password.[24] This means a password of 12 characters or more is desirable. Consider using pass phrases, or short sentences, rather than passwords. You should vary your pass phrases for each site so a hacker that gets your password can only use it for a single site. Government agencies and security experts are recommending password management software such as LastPass to help with remembering all of these differing passwords.

Another important strategy is to implement two-factor authentication (TFA) on all your online accounts. TFA adds another method of identifying you in addition to your password. Many TFA systems use your cell phone and will text you a code to allow you to log in to your account. A criminal would then need both your password and access to your cell phone to log in. Check the settings on your email, bank website, and other accounts to see how to enable two-factor authentication.

Preventing and Dealing with Identity Theft

Setting strong passwords and enabling two-factor authentication will help keep criminals out of your online banking, email, and other important accounts. Many criminals use lower-tech methods of stealing your identity, however, including tricking or scaring you into giving out information or simply digging through your trash to find account statements.

Never Give Info to Someone Who Contacts You

Never provide a person with personal information unless you initiated the contact. If someone calls you asking for personal information, tell them you'll call them back. Then ignore the phone number or website they give you, and instead look up the phone number for the organization on their official website. A legitimate company or government agency will never require you to stay on the line with them to solve the problem.

Shred Everything

You should also purchase an inexpensive cross-cut shredder and get in the habit of shredding all paperwork and mail before you throw it away. A good rule of thumb is that if the paper has your name on it, you should shred it before throwing it out.

Order Your Credit Report Annually

At least once per year, you should get your credit report from the credit reporting agencies through annualcreditreport.com, which is the only website approved by the Federal and State governments. The three major agencies -- Transunion, Equifax, and Experian -- all provide the legally mandated free report through this website. Learn how to read a credit report from one of these agencies.

Look for incorrect information or accounts you don't recognize. If you see accounts you didn't open on your credit report, file a report with the local police and the local FBI field office. You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission and Internet Crime Complaint Center.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Think about your account passwords and your habits related to your identity security. Identify mistakes you have made in the past with your security. What can you start doing today to protect yourself from identity theft or financial fraud?

ACTIVITY

Credit Report Review

Using the sample credit reports below, write an analysis of the person's credit and how they are managing and using debt. Go through the factors that affect credit, and determine how this person is doing with each factor. What in the report is beneficial, and what is harmful? Carefully review each page for accuracy. Pay particular attention to the personal information, negative credit, and any notes about the person or their credit activity.

Example of a Negative Account – Missed Payments

Account Name	—
First USA bank N A	
Account #	**Address ID Number**
44171259XXXX	0963215875
Recent Balance	**Contact Information**
$1,684	1665 Center Ave Fresno, CA 93710 (800) 658-4235
Date Opened	
03/2012	
Personal Statement/Comments	
Account Type	**Recent Payment**
Credit card – revolving terms	—
Terms	**Status/Account Status**
Bank credit cards	Past due 60 days
On Record Until	**Past Due Amount**
02/2023	$50
Credit Limit/Original Amount	**Date of Status/Status Updated**
$8,850	02/2016
High Balance	**First Reported**
$2,695	04/2012
Balance	**Payment Status**
$2,695	60 days late
Balance Updated	**Responsibility**
02/2016	Individual
Monthly Payment	
—	**Payment History**

2016	
Feb.	60
Jan.	30
2015	
Dec.	OK
Nov.	OK
Oct.	OK
Sep.	OK
Aug.	OK
Jul.	

Figure 5.1.7.12: A sample credit report. (Credit: Based on information from Experian.)

Creating Strong Alliances: Getting Help and Avoiding Scams

As a college student, you are a prime target for predatory practices designed to make the adviser or company rich at your expense.

As you've read through this chapter, it may have dawned on you that this personal finance stuff is a lot more complicated than it seems. There are people who have devoted their entire educations and careers to mastering single areas of personal finance, such as taxes, investing, and estate planning. When you feel it's time to get professional help, there are many qualified professionals who can assist you. Not everyone who calls themselves a financial adviser is actually looking out for your best interest, however.

The terms *financial adviser*, *financial planner*, *wealth manager*, and many other impressive-sounding job titles are not regulated by the government. Anyone can put these job titles on their business cards. You need to be able to differentiate between a qualified professional and those who are untrained product salespeople, predatory financial businesses, or outright scams.

Predatory Practices Aimed at College Students

As a college student, you are a prime target for predatory practices designed to make the adviser or company rich at your expense.

Annuities and Life Insurance

Annuities and life insurance products are often aggressively sold to college students. They are generally inappropriate for college students and even most college graduates because they have high fees and lower returns than many other investment options, and the benefits are rarely needed by young people.[25]

Investment Schemes

Regulators identify specialized investments, such as promissory notes, real estate, oil and gas, and gold, as a major threat to investors. Investing systems, including stock picking and buying or selling strategies, are also a concern. Academic research has continually disproven these strategies.[26]

If someone is pitching you on their special system or secret strategy, be extremely skeptical. Legitimate investments are regulated by government agencies and are therefore never a secret.

Table 10.11

Scam or Scheme	Characteristics or Promises	Issues and Reasons to Avoid
"Cash Value" Life Insurance Often sold as "770(2 Plans"	Cash value life insurance and similar programs promise that a certain amount of the insurance premiums are set aside as a fund that can be used for expenditures such as college.	If they are ever paid out, the consumer must pay taxes and may also pay fees up to 50 percent, losing much of the built-up value.
Investment Schemes	These highly optimistic "sure thing" / "can't miss" opportunities are specifically geared toward quick rewards or paying for college. They are often specialized investments such as real estate, gold, or oil.	Sellers often rely on students' lack of resources and experience to prevent them from thoroughly investigating the opportunity or properly evaluating the contract terms.
Advertising, Sales, or Data Entry Opportunities "I make $40 an hour working from home. . . ."	Offers of high pay for what seems like little work are likely too good to be true. "Car wrap" opportunities (driving around with ads on your car), data entry, and online sales opportunities are typical examples.	The advertised salaries are often very difficult to achieve and come with significant conditions. Some "pay first" programs utilize fake checks to mislead students.
Financial Aid Services or Debt Consolidation	These services offer to find advantageous financial aid packages for a fee.[27]	The offers usually do not return as beneficial a package as they promise, and most financial aid can be discovered without paying for it.

Scam or Scheme	Characteristics or Promises	Issues and Reasons to Avoid
Phone Scams “The IRS has detected tax fraud. . . .” “This will be an attempt to avoid an initial appearance before a grand jury for a criminal offense. . . .”	Phone scammers use threatening, official-sounding messages to scare recipients. They often demand immediate return calls or request account or identifying information. These scams are not unique to college students.	As official as they sound, these are scams. The perpetrators will use any account information you provide to invade your privacy or steal your money.
Too-Good-to-Be-True Credit Cards	Credit cards with very low introductory interest rates, a promise of points, or other impressive-sounding benefits may be offered to students on college campuses, especially during events.	Low rates can explode into high rates or incur fees after a brief period or a single late payment. This is not technically fraudulent, but be very careful when reading the terms.
Freebie or Social Media Survey Scams	Many legitimate companies will offer free products or ask students to complete surveys, but high-risk offerings will ask for personal information or account information.	Free products or compensation may not arrive, and even if they do, they may not offset the risk of giving up account information.
Fake Universities or Degree Programs (Diploma Mills)	Offers may sound very legitimate and similar to real colleges. They often promise significant financial aid or degrees in just weeks or months.[28]	A certificate from a school with no accreditation or a poor reputation is a waste of time and money. Be certain that any college or certificate program is formally accredited; review the credentials of current faculty, and determine the job placement of alumni.

Sources of Good Information and Help

With all the high-cost, predatory, and scam financial advice out there, it is important to know where to turn for help.

Personal Finance Classes

One option is to look for a personal finance class, which will take the concepts found in this chapter and expand on them for an entire semester. Your college may have a financial literacy, personal finance, or money management class available.

Be wary of personal finance or investing classes offered through other sources, however, as many include hidden sales agendas and aggressive pitches to buy a company’s financial products. Never make an investment decision, buy a product, or sign a contract at a class, and always seek advice from others on any opportunity.

Websites and Government Resources

There are a ridiculous number of websites available to the public to help with your personal finances. When choosing a website for help, lean toward sites run by a legitimate government agencies or nonprofit organizations.

The first place you should look for help with finances is the official website of related government agencies. If you have a question about insurance, look to your state’s insurance commissioner website. If you are having problems with your apartment, contact your city’s housing authority.

Government agencies not only have the authoritative word on any legal matter, but are also generally unbiased. The downside to government websites is that they can be hard to understand, with legal wording taken directly from the law. Some government agencies are also prohibited from giving advice to the public, leaving it up to you to apply the information they provide.

There are also many nonprofit organizations that have been established to assist the public with finances. Nonprofit organizations may have information that is easier to understand, and they may also be able to offer personal advice.

Official Government Websites

- Personal Finance: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, consumerfinance.gov
- Taxes: Internal Revenue Service, irs.gov
- Retirement: Social Security Administration, ssa.gov
- Investing: Securities Exchange Commission, sec.gov
- Investing: North American Securities Administrators Association, nasaa.org (state and provincial investment regulators)

Nonprofit Organization Websites

- National Endowment for Financial Education, nefe.org
- National Foundation for Credit Counseling, nfcc.org
- Consumer Reports, consumerreports.org (national consumer advocacy organization)
- Purposeful Finance, purposefulfinance.org (a nonprofit organization run by this chapter's author)

Your College's Financial Aid Office

The financial aid or student aid office of your college may also be a good place to look for financial help, especially surrounding student loans. It is important to realize, however, that a conflict of interest exists between you and the financial aid adviser. Your college's financial aid office is charged with helping you find the money to go to college, but it isn't charged with making sure you don't take on too much student debt. It is possible to get good advice on getting money to pay for college that is also bad advice for your future finances.

College financial aid counselors are also generally not trained in other areas of finance and should not be relied on for advice on investing, taxes, noncollege debt, or other financial matters. To get help with these areas, consult a qualified professional who can guide you with fewer conflicts of interest, such as the professionals listed below.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Talk with your parents or other family members about their experience with finances, including financial advisers, taxes, legal issues, and investing. When could they have used professional advice in their past? Did they have bad experiences with getting advice that wasn't best for them? How has a lack of *good* advisers harmed your family financially (even if just because they could have had more money)?

Footnotes

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26. Kadan, Maduriera, Wang and Zach. "Stock Picking, Industry Picking, and Market Timing in Sell-Side Research." Singapore Management University. 2012.
27. Boswell, Brian. "Don't Get Suckered By These College Savings Plans." Forbes.com. 2019.
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5.1.8: Summary

There are a lot of benefits to good financial management. Primarily, it generally allows you to do more of what you want with your life. When you have poor financial habits, too much of your money goes into other people's pockets. But when you have good financial management habits, you can afford to do more because you have worked hard, separated needs from wants, saved and invested, and avoided credit card and debt pitfalls.

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5.1.9: Career Connection

Search the articles at PurposefulFinance.org and find one you deem interesting.

Why do you find it interesting, and how can you apply it to your life? How does the article relate to the concepts in this chapter?

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5.1.10: Rethinking

Revisit the questions you answered at the beginning of the chapter, and consider one concept or practice you learned in this chapter that might change your answer to one of them.

1. I actively and regularly plan and/or monitor my finances.
2. I understand the benefits and risks of credit.
3. I have a plan to repay my student loans.
4. I regularly take steps to protect my identity and assets.

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5.1.11: Where do you go from here?

Financial literacy is a topic that many college students struggle with, but good financial planning habits will benefit you long after your college days are behind you. What would you like to learn more about? Choose a topic from the list below, and create an annotated bibliography that would direct further research.

- Marrying personal finance goals with financial planning
- Creating a saving and spending plan
- Best practices concerning credit cards
- Financing a college education

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5.2: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

5.2.1: Personal Finance

5.2.2: Financial Aid

5.2.3: Working

5.2.4: Saving

5.2.5: Budgeting

5.2.6: Credit

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5.2.1: Personal Finance



The cost of college should never discourage anyone from going after a valuable degree. –Arne Duncan, former United States Secretary of Education

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify sources of major and minor expenses in your life
- Identify sources of income in your life
- Set financial goals and priorities for yourself

College students often have money concerns, such as affording college while still paying other bills. These concerns can affect their academic success. For instance, money problems are stressful and can prevent students from concentrating on their studies. Or, if students have a lot of personal expenses, they may try to work more hours to cover costs of living, leaving them with less time to study. Worse yet, some money problems, such as extreme debt, may cause students to drop out of college entirely.

Analyzing one's financial responsibilities and planning ways to pay for expenses can help reduce stress. In this section, we identify common personal expenses, sources of income, and explore steps for creating financial goals.

Expenses

College students are diverse and may be in different stages of their lives. For example, some students may have just graduated from high school, while other may be older and have families. While these differences will have an impact on financial responsibilities, there are certain financial obligations most college students have to pay for. Some are more expensive, like tuition, while others are less pricey but still important, like books and food. The following list describes basic expenses associated with college:

- **Tuition**: This includes the price for attending an institution. Students pay relatively more or less for this based on where they're going to school and how many credits they're taking.
- **Room and board**: These are essentially "food and shelter" costs. Many college students live in a dorm and eat their meals on campus. Students who live off campus will have to pay for comparable things, like renting an apartment and buying their own groceries.
- **Books and supplies**: These include books for classes and supplies like notebooks, writing utensils, and calculators. Textbooks are often very expensive, so many students try to find used textbooks for sale.

- **Personal needs**: Regardless of where students live, they typically need money for things like laundry, cell phones, computers, and going out with friends. This expense can vary a lot depending on personal preferences. For instance, some students may prefer to make their own meals while others may prioritize eating out.
- **Transportation**: Students who commute by car or need to drive to off-campus activities will need to consider the price of car insurance, maintenance, and gas. Students who attend college in more urban areas may also have public-transportation expenses.

What types of expenses do you think you might face as a college student? The following video will help you review the types of college expenses and examine particular costs that are common for both four-year and two-year institutions.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

Sources of Income

Paying for college is a big challenge, but the following financial resources can help:

- **Jobs**: Full-time students may find part-time work on or off campus, while part-time students may work during the day and then take evening classes. Students can also talk to their guidance counselor and financial resource department about work-study opportunities, which allow students to receive money for completing work related to their studies.
- **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**: This free application, available here, requires students to answer questions regarding their background and personal finances in order to find out how much financial assistance they might qualify for. The financial assistance comes in the form of government loans, grants, work study, or scholarships. Financial aid will be discussed in greater detail later in this module.

- **Loans**: Students can apply for federal loans or personal loans through banks. Loans accrue interest and eventually need to be paid back.
- **Grants and scholarships**: Students can apply for grants and scholarships through their institutions, local businesses, or online organizations. Scholarships may be awarded on the basis of merit (grades, achievements, volunteer work, etc.), financial need (economic status), or some other set of criteria (achievements and ethnic background, for instance). Unlike loans, grants and scholarships don't need to be paid back.

Setting Financial Goals

Setting financial goals for yourself is one of the best ways to track and manage your expenses. The following strategies can help:

- **Create SMART goals**: *SMART* stands for *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic*, and *timely*. These kinds of goals are more manageable and can help you reach your final target more easily. For example, instead of setting a broad, vague goal of "paying for college," you might set a goal of paying off your two college loans five years after you graduate. This more specific, measurable goal can help you keep track of your progress and whether you need to make changes to reach it.
- **Monitor your spending**: Try keeping track of what you spend money on during a one-month period. This can help you see where your money goes and where you may be able to save.
- **Create a budget**: Based on what you discovered after monitoring your spending, create a monthly budget you can stick to. While some expenses, such as food and transportation, are necessary, you may find that you can save money on both by riding a bike (instead of driving) to school and eating out in restaurants less.
- **Consider working**: Some students have full-time jobs while attending college, whereas others may not have a lot of time to work if they're taking a full academic load. Depending on your circumstances, it's worth looking into employment opportunities both on and off campus. Even if you feel like only a couple hours of work per week are possible, it could help you pay for something like books so you have one less thing to worry about when you graduate.

- **Choose loans wisely**: Many college students need some sort of financial support through loans. While loans are a good way to pay for tuition up front if you don't have the money, remember that they accrue interest until you pay them off. That means that you will end up paying back more—in some cases, thousands of dollars more—than you initially borrowed. Make sure you investigate and apply for as many scholarships and grants as you can (since they won't need to be repaid), and shop around for the loans with the lowest interest rates and best repayment plans. Check with the financial aid office on your college campus—they can provide additional help.

These are only some steps you can take for creating college financial goals, but it's important to find the right ones for you.

Activity: Financial Wellness

Objectives

- Identify sources of major and minor expenses in your life
- Identify sources of income in your life
- Set financial goals and priorities for yourself

Directions:

- Identify two larger college expenses and two smaller college expenses that you are responsible for. For example, tuition might be a large college expense while notebooks and folders might be smaller ones.
- Describe any sources of income you currently have to cover these expenses.
- Explain three financial goals you have for covering your college expenses. For example, you might want to consider work study or taking out another loan.
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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- Financial Success Journal. **Authored by**: Ronda Dorsey Neugebauer. **Provided by**: Chadron State College. **Project**: Kaleidoscope Open Course Initiative. **License**: *CC BY: Attribution*

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- What is the Price of College?. **Authored by**: Ed NCES. **Located at**: https://youtu.be/lbp2LoE1WdU. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

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5.2.2: Financial Aid



Studying is something I really love doing, and I just hope to have enough money for tuition. —Alexandra Kosteniuk, Russian chess Grandmaster

Learning Objectives

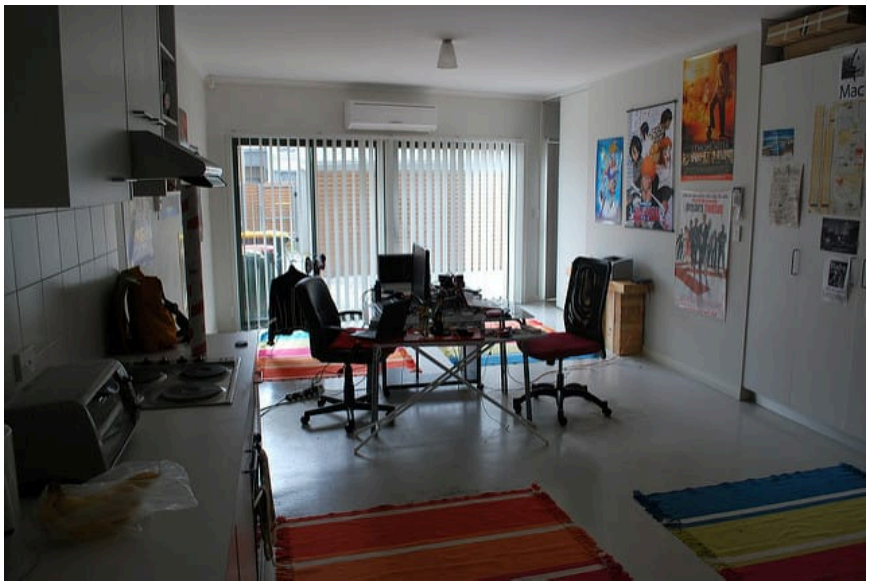
By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Determine the costs of attending the school of your choice
- Identify the potential sources of financial assistance available, including subsidized and unsubsidized loans, grants, scholarships, and work study
- Identify strategies for applying for financial aid and scholarships

The Cost of College

Usually, when people hear the words *college costs*, they think of tuition and room and board. Unfortunately, those costs are only part of the picture. The real cost of college includes a much wider list of expenses, such as the ones below:

- **Tuition**: Tuition includes the cost of attending classes. This varies by school and also depends on how many courses and credits a student takes.
- **Other institution-related fees**: Most colleges also charge quarterly or annual fees that cover student services such as the library, athletics, and campus maintenance.
- **Room and board**: Room and board fees include the cost for housing and meals (usually on campus). These vary by school and region.
- **Books and supplies**: Most students need to purchase books during their college career. They also need to pay for basic school supplies and equipment (backpack, folders, pens, etc.). Some of these, such as graphing calculators and computers, can be expensive. While they may not be required to purchase them, many students find that it's more convenient and efficient to own their own laptop or computer so they don't have to borrow one or work around library hours.
- **Living and transportation**: Students living off campus and not living at home will have to think about paying rent. Whether you live off campus or in a dorm room, you might want to purchase household items like furniture and kitchen appliances. Students may also have vehicles that need gas and routine maintenance, or they may need to purchase passes for public transportation.
- **Personal needs and entertainment**: Students will need to pay for personal items such as clothing, toiletries, etc. They will also probably want to spend money on recreational activities, going out with friends, and so on.



College students are often aware of room and board expenses but may forget to factor in the cost of necessities like furniture, kitchen appliances, and other household items for their dorm or apartment.

Financial Resources

When it comes to covering all the costs of college, depending on how much money you've saved beforehand, you will probably want to investigate one or more of the following options:

- **Student loans**: Students can apply for subsidized or unsubsidized loans through the government. Your college determines the amount of each type of loan offered to you. Subsidized loans allow you to defer payment until six months after your graduate, while unsubsidized loans still accrue interest while you're in college. Students may also obtain private loans through their banks. However, these types of loans are typically subject to more interest. Check the U.S. Department of Education site for information on applying for different types of loans.
- **Grants and scholarships**: Grants and scholarships do not need to be paid back. Student can look for grant and scholarship options through the government, their schools, and their communities. They may be awarded on the basis of financial need, academic merit, or talent. You can visit your guidance counselor or financial aid office for listings of available grants and scholarships, or conduct independent research at sites like College Scholarships.
- **Jobs**: There are a number of paid work opportunities for college students, ranging from work study to on- and off-campus jobs and internships. If you have the time to commit to working while you're in school, it's worth investigating all of them. The topic of student job opportunities is covered at length later in this module.

Activity: Personal Spending Habits

Objectives

- Determine the costs of attending the school of your choice
- Identify the potential sources of financial assistance available, including subsidized and unsubsidized loans, grants, scholarships, and work study

Directions

- Identify the college expenses you will need to cover.
- Research the college you attend and identify any additional costs that may be unique to that institution.
- Review resources that may help you pay for college in the "Financial Resources" section.
- Fill out the following table. Include at least four items under "College Expense."

College Expense	Estimated Cost	Payment Plan Ideas

Applying for Financial Aid

Applying for financial aid requires planning and organization. Below are steps you can take to increase your chances of getting help paying for college.

Complete the Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA)

This free application asks students questions about their background, personal finances, and college, and provides information about what loans, work study, and other types of aid they might be eligible for. You may be unaware of factors that affect how much financial assistance you are eligible for, such as changes to your parents' income or your job status, or having a sibling start college. This is why it is important to fill out a new FAFSA application annually.

Make Sure the Information Is Accurate

Although it can be a chore to track down exact amounts—and so much easier to estimate things like your parents' or your income—failure to provide accurate numbers can mean that you may not qualify for all the financial assistance for which you're eligible. Before you fill out the FAFSA form, be sure you have collected and have handy all the important information you'll need. This includes your (and your parents') tax forms, social security number, and income statements. The U.S. Department of Education's Site for Federal Student Aid has more tips on how to effectively fill out your application.

Ask Your High School and College

If you're still in high school or you recently graduated, ask your guidance counselor about grants and scholarships you could apply for. Your college will also be a good resource, since most institutions have their own scholarships and awards that are available to their students.

Ask Your Community

Check to see if your employer, place of worship, clubs, or volunteer organizations have any grant or scholarship opportunities. Although these sources may not offer as much as federal loans or college scholarships, they may help you cover the costs of books and/or supplies.

Check Due Dates

Whether you're filling out the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) or applying for scholarships, most organizations will have deadlines. These deadlines help ensure that if you are eligible, you will receive your financial assistance in time for the upcoming school year. If other people are helping you with your application—for example, teachers writing letters of recommendation for

you—be sure to inform them of the deadlines and give them plenty of notice.

Write Strong Essays

Many scholarship applications will have an essay component. You can assume that the other students applying for a particular scholarship also meet the basic requirements (a certain GPA or above, certain demographic criteria, etc.), so it isn't enough to just have good grades or be "eligible" for a scholarship. Often it's the essay that can really set you apart. Take the time to write multiple drafts and have family, friends, or teachers provide feedback.

As the following video shows, regardless of your background, which college you're attending, or your time commitment, there are numerous financial aid opportunities for you to consider:

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

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5.2.3: Working



Internships and work experience are a proven method of getting your foot in the door. —Duane Strauss, TV presenter and producer

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify typical job categories for college students
- Describe the pros and cons of working while in college
- Identify employment resources on campus and in the community

In *this section, we will learn about the types of jobs college students have, the advantages and disadvantages of working during college, and resources for finding jobs.*

Typical College-Student Jobs

College students can take on a range of jobs while in school, depending on their availability, experience, talents, and financial needs. For example, if a student is taking a lot of course credits in order to graduate early, he or she may not have time to work more than five hours a week. Let's look at the types of jobs college students might have.

Work-Study Programs

Work study is part-time work that's awarded to students as part of a financial aid package. Students can often find work study related to their areas of interest. For example, someone studying biology might have a work-study job taking inventory of lab supplies on campus. One drawback to work study is that because it's based on financial need, students who have adequate resources for college but who want to earn extra money may not qualify.

Campus Jobs

Not all campus jobs are work-study related. Students may be able to ask their institution's human resource director or individual campus departments to see if other work is available. For example, the office of the registrar might need help filing papers. It may also be possible to apply to become a resident adviser (RA) and get free room and board in exchange for living on campus and serving as a role model for students. Some students may prefer to seek work off-campus, instead, since they may be able to

work more hours and avoid competing with other students for on-campus jobs.

Off-Campus Jobs

Students can certainly explore job opportunities in their communities. Such work might be related to a student's field of interest—for example, a student interested in journalism might get a job writing ads for a local publication. Or it might be worth seeking a job that's unrelated to school simply because it offers the most hours and pay. On the other hand, some may prefer on-campus jobs because their work supervisors are more respectful of their academic commitments and the need for flexible hours.

Internships

Similar to work-study opportunities, internships are usually related to a student's area of interest. For example, a marketing student may get an internship working with a marketing director and contributing to the company's social media campaigns. While internships can provide invaluable work experience, unfortunately it can be hard to find ones that are paid.

Summer Jobs

Students who are concerned about not having enough time to work during college may wait and find part-time or full-time work during summer break. Such opportunities can be found through one's guidance counselor, financial aid department, community members, or even online. One disadvantage of summer jobs is that they don't last very long, which means that it won't feel like much of a break or "vacation" if you're trying to earn a significant amount of money during that time.

Activity: What Type of College Job Might Be Right for You?

Objective

- Identify jobs that college students frequently hold
- Assess what type of job might best fit your current needs and situation

Directions

- Schedule a brief interview with a college representative from an institution who works with students to help them find jobs. This representative might be from the career center, counseling services, or the human resource department.
- Considering your field(s) of interest, personal skills, and lifestyle, ask the college representative the following questions:
  - What types of jobs would you recommend based on my interests and skills as me? Why?
  - What types of jobs would be most compatible with my availability/schedule?
  - What are the pros and cons of these jobs?
- After the interview, write a short paper (1–2 pages) summarizing what you found out. Do any of the jobs the college representative mentioned sound like opportunities you might pursue? Why or why not?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting this assignment.

Working During College: Pros and Cons

Finding a job as a college student can be both exciting and stressful, and it's not for everyone. For example, students who have already received tuition assistance through scholarships and have full course loads may not have enough time for work. Let's look more closely at the advantages and disadvantages of working during college:

Pros

- **Earning extra money**: One of the most obvious benefits to working during college is earning extra money for college expenses.
- **Enhanced budgeting skills**: Students with the responsibility of working may learn to budget their money better since they

have to earn it themselves.
- **Enhanced time-management skills**: Students who have to juggle classes, work, and possibly other activities such as clubs or sports may actually excel in classes because they learn how to effectively management their time.
- **Networking**: Students may not only get work experience in a field related to their interests, but they may also meet people who can help them later when they're ready for a career. For example, a law student who gets a job as a file clerk with a law firm may be able to ask the lawyers at the firm for recommendations when she applies to law school.

Cons

- **Lack of time-management skills**: Though working during college can help students build time-management skills, those who aren't used to balancing activities may struggle. For example, a student who heads to college straight from high school without any prior job experience (or with few extracurricular activities during high school) may have trouble meeting multiple academic and job obligations and commitments.
- **Lack of free time**: If students take on a lot of work hours while in college, they may not have time for other activities or opportunities, such as joining clubs related to their interests or finding volunteer work or internships that might help them discover career opportunities and connections. These "extras" are actually significant résumé items that can make students more employable after college.

Deciding whether or not to work while you're in college is obviously personal decision that involves your own comfort level and situation. Some students may prefer to put off looking for a job until after the first semester of college, so they can better gauge their work load and schedule, while others may prefer to avoid working altogether. For some, the question isn't "Should I or shouldn't I get a job?" but "*How much* should I work?" In other words, the challenge is to strike the right balance between schoolwork, social activities, and earning money.

The following video shares one student's experience with the pros and cons of working her way through college.

YouTube Video

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Employment Resources

We've identified some categories of work that are typically available to college students, but what about the actual process of finding a suitable job? Students have a number of employment resources available to them on campus, online, and in the community:

- **Career centers**: Most colleges have a career center where students can learn about job opportunities both on and off campus and also during the summer. Career center also have staff who can help students practice the interview process and write effective résumés and cover letters.
- **Career fairs**: Many colleges organize on-campus career fairs (like the one shown in the photo, below). Local—and, in some cases, national—companies are invited to set up booths and share information with students about potential job and career opportunities.
- **Online job search**: Web sites such as Careerbuilder, Snagajob, and even Craigslist post job listings for positions ranging from seasonal retail work to freelance writing opportunities. Students should look for listings that include company and contact information, so they can confirm that the leads are legitimate and reputable.
- **Community businesses and places of worship:** Students may be surprised by the job opportunities they can find right in their own backyard. Don't overlook community bulletin boards in places like neighborhood coffee shops and grocery stores—someone always seems to need a dog walker, house sitter, or nanny. Churches, temples, and mosques are additional places that often have notice boards with "Help Wanted" listings.



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5.2.4: Saving



Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving. —Warren Buffet, investor and philanthropist

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Track your personal spending habits
- Identify strategies for cost cutting in categories where you currently spend the most
- Explore savings opportunities for college students

Tracking Personal Spending Habits

Lots of students work hard and manage to cover the cost of attending college, but plenty find that they don't have a lot left over for other important things, like housing and food. The idea of actually saving money—for things like clothes, entertainment, or other "extras"—may seem completely out of reach. In this section we challenge you to take a chance and try. You may be surprised to find that you can change your spending habits, gain better control over your finances, and wind up with money in the bank. Below are some common hazards you can avoid and tips to get you started:

- **New spending responsibilities**: If you're starting college right out of high school, this may be the first time you've had your own checking account or received regular income from a job. It may be tempting to spend what's left over after you pay for big items like tuition and books, forgetting that you still have other expenses. Even if you don't spend a lot of money on extras, you may not be aware of strategies for saving money, such keeping an eye out for coupons and sales.
- **Using credit cards**: Young college students are often targeted by credit card companies because they have comparatively few financial responsibilities and generally have clean credit records. Owning and using a credit card can be an effective way to build a credit history, and it can also be useful in an emergency, but credit cards do carry significant risk: If you don't pay them off in full every month, they accrue interest—sometimes at a very high rate—and the total amount you owe can become an enormous financial burden.
- **Neglecting to pursue scholarships**: Many college students are either unaware of scholarships they qualify for or they just don't follow through and apply. Take advantage of the financial aid office at your college. Ask questions and get help finding out what's available to you. You may be passing up an opportunity to get "free money" for tuition, room and board, and books.
- **Recreational activities**: Unlike high school students, college students don't generally have classes all day, so they may find themselves with hours of free time. To fill that time, they may want to go to places like restaurants, movies, and shopping centers. These activities add up fast and cost more money than eating on campus with a room-and-board plan or cooking

meals and socializing at home.[1]

Most of these points have budgeting skills in common. Budgeting involves knowing how much money you have and where it's going. The following activity will help you figure that out.

Activity: Personal Spending Habits, Part 1

Objectives

- Track your personal spending habits

Directions

- Monitor what you spend money on for a week.
- Use the template, below, to record your findings.

Weekly Spending Tracker

Total Income:

Day	Expenses
Monday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:
Tuesday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:

Wednesday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:
Thursday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:
Friday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:
Saturday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:

Sunday	College-Related Expenses (tuition, books, etc.): Rent/Board: Food: Transportation: Leisure: Misc.:

At the end of the week and after reviewing your spending habits, did anything surprise you?—such as, “Who knew that I was spending so much on pizza and parking?”

Saving Strategies

Whether you are starting college as a single eighteen-year-old or you are older, working, and raising a family, there’s a set of basic financial strategies that can help you lower your expenses and save money while you’re in school. Analyzing your spending habits (as you just did) is the first step. Next, you can try the following:

- **Create a detailed budget**: Budgets will enable you to treat yourself while avoiding overspending. For example, you might allot $50 a month for going out with friends. If you’ve already spent $50, you should find alternative recreational activities for the rest of the month so you don’t have to borrow money that you set aside for other expenses.
- **Cut down on meal costs**: Looking for deals and using coupons at grocery stores will save more money than eating out. Students living in dorms may not have a lot of space and supplies for cooking, but they may still have room for a refrigerator and coffeemaker to avoid overspending on snacks and trips to Starbuck’s.
- **Save on transportation**: Cut down on the cost of gas (or get rid of your car altogether) by walking to class, riding a bike, or using public transportation. Check to see whether your college offers free or reduced-price student bus/train passes.
- **Look for discounts and used items**: As long as a textbook isn’t outdated, you can often purchase used or discounted copies online or from other students. Need to furnish a dorm room or off-campus apartment? You’ll save a lot money by borrowing household goods from friends and family or by purchasing them from secondhand stores.
- **Apply for scholarships and minimize loans**: To repeat, scholarships don’t have to be repaid, and they don’t rack up interest. Do your best to apply for everything and anything that you qualify for, scholarships-wise. Winning a scholarship can have a big impact on your budget and financial health.

Given the money-saving strategies just described, let’s return to the personal spending you tracked earlier and see where you might be able to save.

Activity: Personal Spending Habits, Part 2

Objectives

- Track your personal spending habits
- Define strategies for cost-cutting in categories where you currently spend the most
- Explore savings opportunities for college students

Directions

- Carefully analyze the personal spending you monitored for a week during Part I of the activity.
- Identify the three spending categories in which you spent the most money.
- In which two of those categories could you cut costs? For example, perhaps you spent the most money on rent, food, and leisure. Rent is typically a fixed amount, but you may be able to brainstorm ways to save on food.
- Identify three strategies you will implement this month to save money.

- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting your work.

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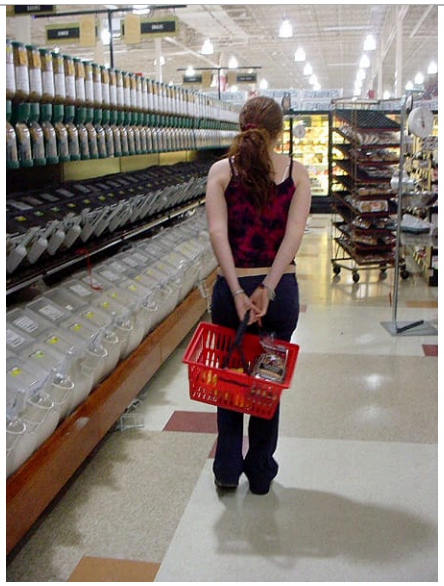
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5.2.5: Budgeting



A budget is telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went. —Dave Ramsey, financial author

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define budget strategies
- Explore the pros and cons of budgeting
- Create a personal budget

Without a personal budget, most people have a hard time gauging how much money they spend and where their money goes. If you have ever gone to an ATM to withdraw money and been surprised to discover how little you had left in your account, this section is for you. It's also for anyone who wants to learn how to manage their money better and smarter—which is an invaluable skill to have during the penny-pinching years of college but also later on in life.

Budgeting Strategies

Even if you're very conscientious about paying your bills on time and generally have frugal spending habits, creating and following a budget can put so much further ahead. In essence, a budget is a plan for how you want to spend money. It details how much money comes in each month and how much you've allocated for spending on each thing. The virtue of a budget is that it puts you in control of financial decisions—so you can avoid surprises at the ATM machine or at the end of the month. Let's look at some strategies for creating a budget:

- **Be realistic**: People are often intimidated by budgets because they're afraid the plans will be too strict or force them to cut back too much. Though a budget may reveal that you indeed spend a lot of money on clothes, that's okay—it may just also need to show that you spend very little on restaurants and eating out to make up for it. Again, it's about making choices and being realistic.
- **Choose a time line**: Creating a budget for a fixed period of time will help you monitor whether you're meeting your financial goals. The time line you choose is up to you and your goals. For example, you might create a monthly budget to monitor how you spend your paycheck every month.
- **Add financial padding**: Even if you feel like your list of financial obligations is already long, try to set aside a certain amount each month for a "rainy day" fund—to pay for unforeseen expenses and emergencies, like car repair, lost textbooks, etc.
- **Make adjustments as needed**: While sticking to your budget is important, there's nothing wrong with revisiting and adjusting your original targets. For example, if you find that you are actually spending $50 more per month on groceries

than you intended (even after shopping for sale items), you may decide to save that money elsewhere in your budget next month—on entertainment, for example.



Even though you may not be able to afford “unlimited” trips to the movies each month, an effective budget can still account for leisure and entertainment activities.

Pros and Cons of Budgeting

While budgeting can be a useful financial tool, it may not be for everybody. Some people may feel more confident by balancing their checkbook to see how much they have at any given time. Still, many argue that budgeting helps people stay on track and avoid overspending on “wants” such as restaurant food, clothes, and entertainment, so they always have enough money for “needs,” such as rent/mortgage, utilities, and food. The following lists summarize the advantages and disadvantages of budgeting:

Pros

- **Provides a realistic view of personal finances**: A personal budget provides an honest snapshot of how much money you make and how much you can spend. It can help you avoid deceptive financial thinking, such as believing that you’re “flush” right after pay day, when you really need to save that money for an upcoming bill.
- **Helps you avoid excess spending**: Because a budget gives you insight into the total picture of your income and expenses, you can make realistic decisions about spending. As above, a budget can help you avoid a having faulty sense of your financial resources and remind you that even if you just got paid, most, if not all, of your check may need to go toward fixed expenses.
- **Assists in goal setting**: Since you get to decide how to allocate your money, a budget can help you set goals. For example, if you create a yearly budget, you could plan and acccount for an upcoming family trip and start saving money for it in advance without worrying about having the money at the last minute.

Cons

- **Budgets take energy**: Planning a budget takes dedication. Since most students lead busy lives and are balancing different demands like work, school, and time with family and friends, it can be easy to slip up. For example, if you have a stressful week at work or school, you might overspend while going out with friends and forget how much you budgeted for leisure activities.
- **Results take time**: Since most budgets cover a time period of a month, year, or even longer, people may become frustrated waiting to see if their financial situation is better than it was before. Frustration can lead people to abandon their budget and go back to overspending or neglecting to save.
- **Budgets may be strict**: Remember that one of the important strategies for creating a successful budget is earmarking

money for “treats” and extras such as entertainment. However, in an effort to become more financially disciplined, some people make budgets that are too restrictive and unrealistic. This can backfire and lead to overspending in one area or abandoning the budget altogether.

Creating a Personal Budget

Even though you may be persuaded by the downsides of budgeting and think, “It’s not for me!” don’t give up until you’ve tried it. Tracking one’s income and spending is a good exercise for anyone, and if you follow the basic steps, below, it’s easier than you think:

- **Calculate regular expenses**: Using your bills, receipts, checkbook, and any other financial records you have, make a list of your regular expenses and record how much you typically pay each month or year. Since some expenses like grocery bills may vary from month to month, you’ll want to examine several months’ worth of receipts to come up with an average.
- **Record your income**: Identify all income sources and add up how much you receive during a given period of time. This amount should include all sources of money—from regular full- or part-time work and from intermittent sources, such as freelance jobs, babysitting, etc.
- **Adjust your expense percentages, and set goals**: After you outline your financial obligations and income, you can start deciding how much money you’d like to allocate for each expense. Start with fixed expenses such as rent, car payments, etc. Next, decide how much you want to devote to each of the remaining categories, such as food and entertainment. At this point you can also set specific financial goals. For example, you may decide to lower the amount you spend on clothes in order to pay off outstanding credit-card debt or save for a trip.
- **Identify a method for tracking your budget**: Develop a plan for monitoring your budget. You might decide to use an Excel or Google spreadsheet, a budgeting app, or a budget tracking tool provided by your bank. You can also write things down in a notebook. The method doesn’t matter, so long as it’s easy for you to access, use, and interpret.

Still not convinced that making and following a budget is doable? The following video describes a budgeting technique that’s very easy and straightforward to follow: the “Envelope Budget.” Simply placing cash in labeled envelopes (one for each category or purpose) each month can be a very effective means of building healthy spending habits.

YouTube Video

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Activity: Creating a Personal Budget

Objectives

- Create a personal budget

Directions

- Review the *How to Budget Using the Envelope Method* video above, or watch the *How to Set Up a Budget* video, below.
- Select one of the types of budgets suggested in these videos. Write down each step for the type of budget you selected.
- Complete each step using your own financial information.
- Do you think this process for creating a personal budget was helpful? Is there anything you’d change?

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5.2.6: Credit



Procrastination is like a credit card: it's a lot of fun until you get the bill. — Christopher Parker, actor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify credit card opportunities available to college students
- Describe the risks and rewards of credit
- Define credit history, and explain how to obtain your credit report
- Identify resources for assistance with credit issues

Credit Card Opportunities

For many college students, who may not have a lot of money or even a job at all, owning a credit card may seem out of reach. Without money in an account and assurance that you can pay your monthly credit bill, the average student may not seem very "credit-worthy." Still, it can be important to build a credit history for certain opportunities down the road (such as getting a loan to buy a house). You may be surprised to learn that there are plenty of companies that offer special options for younger customers, especially students. The following are some offers to look for:

- **Error forgiveness**: Since you may be new to the responsibility of owning a credit card, it's good to look for plans with error forgiveness. This may include a 0 percent annual percentage rate (APR) for the first six months of a contract or waive user penalties if you miss or have a late monthly payment for the first time.
- **No extra fees**: Along with 0 percent APRs for the first six months, some credit cards don't charge students for using their cards in other countries. This is a nice feature for students interested in studying or traveling abroad.
- **Rewards for good grades**: Some companies offer credit card agreements that reward students for excelling academically. For example, you may receive cash back every year if you maintain a certain grade-point average.
- **Effective customer service**: Credit card companies that have positive customer service reviews often provide extra support in answering questions from new customers. Some companies also have tools for their customers' online accounts that help them pinpoint their spending and payment habits.[1]

Activity: Credit Cards for College Students

Objectives

- Examine credit card opportunities available to college students
- Explain the risks and rewards of credit

Directions

- Research credit cards that reference college students.
- Choose one credit card that you think offers good benefits for college students.
- Identify three reasons this might be a good credit card for students.
- What are some issues you think college students should still be aware of regarding this credit card or credit cards in general?
- What is the APR for this credit card? Why would this information be important for cardholders to know about?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting this assignment.

Risks and Rewards of Credit

Credit cards can give students new opportunities, but owning them is also a big responsibility. Students should consider the advantages and disadvantages of credit before choosing the best plan.

Pros

- **Saving money**: Credit cards can be connected to checking accounts so that companies know where their customers' money is coming from and they have an account to charge interest rates to. The account can help students practice saving money rather than needing to having a lot of cash on hand. This can make it easier for students to make large payments for things like tuition and unexpected expenses like vehicle maintenance or medical bills.
- **Receiving benefits**: In addition to cash back for good grades, credit card companies may offer other benefits such as store discounts, gas rewards, and points toward air travel.
- **Building credit**: If you pay off your monthly credit card every month on time, you will start building credit and have a good credit score early on. Your credit score can be an important factor later on if you decide to open another account or take out a loan. Some employers may even want to see your credit history.

Cons

- **Overspending**: If something is out of sight, it may be out of mind, and the same can be true of money. Sometimes people overspend with credit cards because it's easy to think that you have more money than you really do.
- **Interest**: Credit card companies with student deals still typically include some level of APR or interest rate. If you don't pay off the entire balance every month, using a credit card can be expensive. Suppose you decide to use your credit card to pay for $1,000 in school supplies and books. Credit card 1 has an APR of 10 percent, and credit card 2 has an APR of 24 percent. If it takes you a year to pay off the $1,000, you'd actually pay a total of $1,055.04 with credit card 1 and $1,134.72 with Credit Card 2—that's $55 or $135 on top of the original $1,000 you charged. This example highlights the importance of making sure you pay off the balance as soon as possible AND choose a credit card with a lower interest rate.
- **Debt**: Unlike debit cards, credit cards allow users to borrow money that they can pay back at a later date. While this can be useful in emergency situations, you may end up charging more than you can afford to pay back right way, and you may find yourself saddled with debt. Carrying a lot of debt can damage your credit history and score.

Credit History and Credit Reports

You begin to establish a credit history as soon as you get your first credit card or get a loan. Your credit history includes information about the number of credit cards and loans you have and how conscientious you are about paying your bills. Three companies, TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian, collect this information and use it to create a credit report, which functions as a summary of your credit history. By law, you're entitled to one free credit report each year from Annual Credit Report. Although you have to pay extra for your credit score to be included with your credit report, a lot of people use this as a quick reference to gauge

how good or bad someone's credit is. Different companies use slightly different ratings, but 300 or so is considered to be a low credit score, and 700–850 is considered to be high.

It's a good idea to sign up for a free credit report from the Annual Credit Report, since other companies will charge to give you your credit history and score. The best thing is to keep track of your bills and pay them in a timely manner so you don't have to worry about whether your credit is good or not. Potential landlords, banks, loan companies, car dealers, and even employers will often ask for your name and social security number so that they can obtain your credit information. Every business is different, but many use credit scores to evaluate prospective customers and decide how responsible or risky they might be.

The following video shows how your credit score is determined and some rules of the road for improving your current credit rating.

YouTube Video

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Resources for Credit Issues

Maintaining credit is a big responsibility, and sometimes it can be challenging. For example, you might have to borrow more student loans than you want because you don't have time to work while attending school, or it might be difficult to find a decent-paying job as a student or recent graduate. These are just a couple of issues that could threaten your credit. Repairing bad credit can take a long time—up to seven years—so it's important to take action as soon as you're having trouble paying bills or overspending. Different resources and options are available to help you deal with credit issues, including the following:

- **Loan consolidation**: Students may consider having multiple loans consolidated with the federal government so they have to make only one loan payment per month. While this may give you more time pay off student loan debt, it may not be the best option, since the one monthly payment can cost more and accrue a higher interest rate. Students should talk to loan company representatives and financial aid resources at their institution to discuss other payment options, such as income-based payments in which the amount you pay each month is based on your income level.
- **Credit counselors**: Credit counselors are trained to help people develop personal budgets and to provide classes on savings and debt solutions. They may also offer debt management plans in which they work with your credit card and loan companies to arrange a deal and ask you for monthly deposits so that they can help you pay off your debts. If you are interested in a consultation from a credit counselor, you should ask family, friends, or your local government for references for reputable ones. You will also want to find counselors that do not charge customers too much for their services to avoid additional debt.
- **Debt settlement plans**: Debt collection companies will offer services to their clients that involve talking to credit card and loan companies and coming up with a plan to pay a lump sum instead of the total debt owed. Similar to finding credit counselors, you should contact local government offices to find reputable debt collection companies so you can avoid overpayments and scams.
- **Bankruptcy**: Bankruptcy is an official status that is obtained through court procedures, and it means that means you are unable to pay off your debts. People may file for Chapter 13 bankruptcy, which means they don't lose any assets and have a payment plan of three–five years to pay off their debts, or Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which means they may have to surrender assets that can be used to pay off their debts. Bankruptcy damages your credit score, and the fees for filing paperwork and hiring an attorney can be costly, so it is important to consider other financial solutions first.



Credit counselors may be able to recommend budgeting and credit courses that will give you tips for managing your personal finances

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6: HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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6.1: ENGAGING IN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

6.1.1: Prelude to Engaging in a Healthy Lifestyle

6.1.2: Taking Care of Your Physical Health

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6.1.1: Prelude to Engaging in a Healthy Lifestyle



Figure 6.1.1.1: Movement, in all its forms, is an important element of health and wellness. Movement contributes to balance, cardiovascular health, strength, and flexibility; it can also help clear your mind in the midst of study and stress. (Credit: Steven Pisano / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Student Survey

How do you feel about health and wellness? These questions will help you determine how the chapter concepts relate to you right now. As we are introduced to new concepts and practices, it can be informative to reflect on how your understanding changes over time. We'll revisit these questions at the end of the chapter to help you identify opportunities for improved health. Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me."

1. I eat enough fruits and vegetables every day.
2. I get enough sleep.
3. I have, for the most part, healthy relationships with friends and family.
4. I feel like I know how to manage stress.

You can also take the Chapter 11 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"My freshman year of college, I started at a pretty big university. I had what some call "social anxiety" and even cried before getting out the car on my first day. That year was a struggle for me, and I constantly had to fight with myself to step out of my comfort zone in order to succeed. I knew that if I made positive changes to my life then I would easily succeed in school. I joined a group of students who were a support system for me during my first year of college. Together we studied together and even worked out together. It helped me be more involved on my campus and less worried. Being connected with other students has taught me a lot of ways to cope with common problems many students face.

"My first advice would be first and foremost, always make sure you are being kind to yourself. It's not advisable to work 40 hours a week and also try to be a full time student. You need to set up a realistic home and school life so that way you are balanced with your assignments and other responsibilities. You need to give your body and your brain time to rest so you can absorb as much as you want to without restrictions. I found it useful to start working out to make sure that I'm dedicating the time I should be to myself and not working myself until exhaustion. Little things like exercise, yoga and meditation can do amazing things for your body as well as your mind. If you take care of your body, your body will take care of you."

> –**Felicia Santiago**, Delgado Community College

About this Chapter

This chapter explores the many ways your health is impacted by your lifestyle choices. The goal of this material is to help you do the following:

- - Describe actions you can take to improve your physical health.
- - Identify ways to maintain and enhance your emotional health.
- - Understand mental health risks and warning signs.
- - Articulate reasons and ways to maintain healthy relationships.
- - Outline steps you can take to be more safety conscious.

Recent headlines were buzzing with news about a 17-year-old boy who lost his eyesight because of a poor diet. While the boy ate enough food and his weight was considered normal, when doctors investigated, they discovered he didn't eat enough ***nutrient-rich*** food. A self-described picky eater, the teen's daily diet consisted of sausage, deli ham, white bread, Pringles, and french fries. His food choices led to numerous nutritional deficiencies of several essential vitamins and minerals, causing nutritional optic neuropathy.[1]

Have you heard the saying "you are what you eat"? If so, likely a parent or someone who loves you said it while coaxing you to eat your vegetables. Are we really what we eat, and what does this phrase actually mean? While the example of the boy who lost his vision may be extreme, the food we eat does impact our physical and mental health. What's at the end of our fork can keep us healthy or eventually make us sick. Every 27 days, our skin replaces itself and our body makes new cells from the food we eat.[2] And according to Dr. Libby Weaver, every three months we completely rebuild and replace our blood supply. What you eat becomes you.

It's not only what you eat that impacts your health but also how much you exercise, how effectively you deal with stress, how well you sleep, your work habits, and even your relationships—these things all have an impact on your well-being.

There are two primary reasons we become unhealthy. First, we do not deliver enough nutrients for our cells to operate properly, and second, our cells are bombarded with too many toxins. Keeping it simple, good health is proper nutrients in, toxins out. Toxins come from a host of sources—certain foods, the environment, stressful relationships, smoking, vaping, and alcohol and drug use. And if we don't sleep and exercise enough, toxins can hang around long enough to cause us harm.

As a first-year college student you will make many choices without parental oversight, including the food you eat and the way you take care of your body and brain. Some choices put you on a path to health, and other choices can lead you down a path toward illness. There is a strong connection between success in college and your ability to stay healthy.

Health is more than a strong body that doesn't get sick. Health also includes your overall sense of well-being (mental, emotional) and healthy relationships. Good health is about making positive choices in all of these areas, and avoiding destructive choices. It's about learning to be smart, to set boundaries, to watch out for your safety, and to take care of the one body that will carry you through life.

While health and wellness are often interchanged, it is important to differentiate the two concepts.**Health is** a state of physical, mental, and social well-being, while **wellness** is a process through which people become aware of and make choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life.

Footnotes

1. Harrison, Warburton, Lux, and Atan. Blindness caused by a junk food diet. *Annals of Intern Med*. September 3, 2019.
2. https://www.webmd.com/beauty/cosmeti...verview-skin#1

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6.1.2: Taking Care of Your Physical Health

Questions to consider:

- What is healthy eating?
- Why is it important to stay hydrated?
- How important is exercise to a healthy body?
- Are you getting enough sleep to be healthy?
- What are toxins, and how can they affect your health?

You have one body. Treat it well so as to maximize its ability to serve you throughout your life. Often physical health gets moved to the bottom of the priority list when we are busy. Taking care of your physical health doesn't mean six-pack abs or training for a marathon. It means honoring your physical needs so your body can function properly, feeding your cells the nutrients that will keep your body working well your entire life, and minimizing exposure to toxins to reduce your risk of disease.

Healthy Eating

While it's not the only thing that contributes to great health, what you eat makes a huge difference. We have 37 trillion cells in our body. The only way they function optimally is with good nutrition. As a college student, you will be surrounded by temptations to eat poorly or even to overeat. It's now up to you to make wise choices in the face of these temptations. Your dining hall is likely full of many healthy foods and just as many unhealthy foods. You may grab food on the run while racing to class or order a pizza at midnight while studying for a test. Lobby vending machines or a stash of snacks in your room should not turn into a substitute for real meals. The downside of fast food and easy access treats is that many are loaded with sugar, salt, or both.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated their Healthy Plate Guidelines in 2011. MyPlate illustrates five different food groups considered the building blocks for a healthy diet—vegetables, fruits, protein, grains, and dairy.

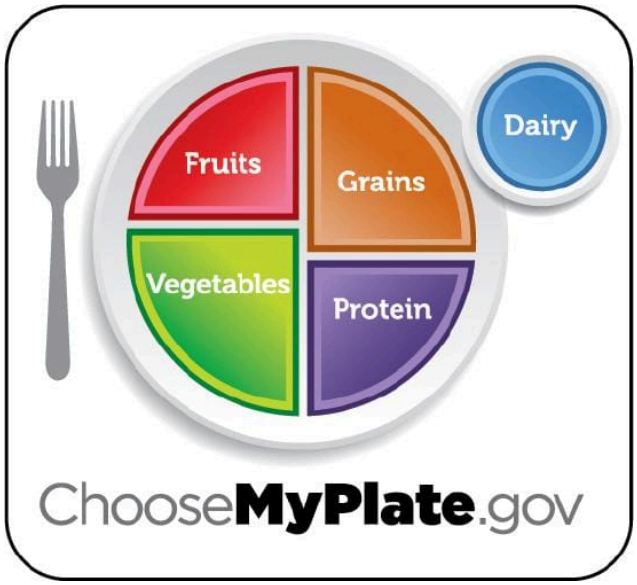


Figure 6.1.2.2: Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including our state of life, situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time. The USDA recommends that vegetables and fruits make up the largest portions of your diet, and dairy the smallest portion. All your food and beverage choices count. MyPlate offers ideas and tips to help you create a healthier eating style that meets your individual needs and improves your health. (Credit: USDA / Public Domain)

It's also important to know what is not a healthy plate. A healthy plate is low in refined carbohydrates (donuts, pastries, pasta, cookies), low in sugar, and low in saturated fat (although we need healthy fats like avocado and nuts). You can learn more at https://www.choosemyplate.gov/.

While the USDA's MyPlate was revised to reflect some key findings at that time, nutritionists at Harvard felt it didn't offer the most

complete picture when it comes to basic nutrition guidelines. They created The Healthy Eating Plate, which is based on what they consider to be the best available science. Similar to MyPlate, half the plate is vegetables and fruit. Aim for eight servings of veggies or fruits a day, more veggies than fruits. It's important to note that the Harvard version was created without the political pressure from food industry lobbyists (for example, the dairy industry). Note that grains are further defined as whole grains, protein is now healthy protein, and water is emphasized over dairy/milk. What other differences do you see?

This table provides more detail on how The Healthy Eating plate compares to USDA's MyPlate.

Healthy eating also includes choosing organic fruits and vegetables when possible. By choosing organic, you help lower the amount of toxins your body encounters (since conventional fruits and vegetables are often sprayed with pesticides). Organic foods may not be readily available on your campus or in your local grocery store, so strive to choose the best options possible given availability and your budget. Many college and universities are adding organic food as a result of student demand. If healthy eating is something you are passionate about, consider organizing an effort to influence the dining options on your campus. When shopping on your own, the Dirty Dozen list provided by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a good guide of which produce is most important to eat organic, as these are the fruits and vegetables with the most pesticide residue. The EWG also compiles a Clean 15 list of the vegetables and fruits with the least amount of pesticides.

Whole Foods vs. Processed Foods

Choose whole foods. Whole foods are any foods that have not been processed, packaged, or altered in any way. Whole foods are an essential part of a healthy diet because they contain the vitamins and minerals our bodies need.

Examples of whole foods include the following:

- **Vegetables:** Carrots, broccoli, kale, avocados, cauliflower, spinach, peppers
- **Fruits:** Apples, bananas, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, melons, peaches
- **Grains:** Brown rice, oatmeal, barley, buckwheat, quinoa, millet
- **Beans:** Black, pinto, kidney, black-eyed peas, chickpeas

Minimize **non-whole foods**. These are foods that have been processed, such as cookies, hot dogs, chips, pasta, deli meat, and ice cream. Even seemingly healthy foods like yogurt, granola, and protein bars are processed and should be checked for added sugar and other unhealthy ingredients.

The average American eats 62 percent of their daily calories from processed foods.[3] In order for your body to be as healthy as possible, it's extremely important to include lots of whole foods in your diet.

> **"When you eat junk food you think junk thoughts."**
>
> — Michael Bernard Beckwith

How to Read a Food Label

The U.S. government requires food manufacturers to put a label on every processed food product. This is so we, as consumers, know what we are putting into our bodies and can make good dietary choices. A quick review of the label will provide a lot of important information about what you are eating, yet most people don't take the time to read the label. This is a big mistake.

Think of the front of the package as a marketing billboard. Don't be fooled by the marketing. Every day millions of dollars are spent to persuade us to eat foods that are not healthy for us. Through visuals (like the strawberry on the bottle of dressing below) and words (like natural, healthy, or gluten free), the food industry wants us to make assumptions about the nature of a food product without looking at the facts. For example, many people eat protein bars thinking they are a healthy choice, but protein bars can have up to 30 grams of sugar! Understanding the nutrition information and ingredients will help you make healthier choices. When you take the time to read the labeled ingredients, you are no longer being marketed to—you are staring at the facts.



Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size **2/3 cup (55g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **230**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**10%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**13%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	**20%**
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Figure 6.1.2.3: This label displays the key nutritional information about a common container of fruit salad. Though fruit is generally healthy, be aware of the amount of calories and sugars, and particularly the serving size to which those amounts are tied. Note that the US government has updated food label requirements and this version of the label will soon be the only one you'll see. (Credit U.S. Food and Drug Administration / Public Domain)

Look at the label on the back of what appears to be a healthy item: fruit salad or fruit cocktail. One of the first things to look for is the amount of sugar. 12 grams equals just under 2.5 teaspoons. The serving size indicated is 2/3 cups, so if you have double that amount, it's the equivalent of spooning out 5 teaspoons of sugar. The lower the sugar the better.

It's also important to avoid high amounts of sodium, to minimize saturated fats, and to avoid all trans fats. Trans fats are unhealthy substances made through the process of solidifying liquid oils to increase the shelf life of foods. Also called partially hydrogenated oil, trans fats are often found in margarine, microwave popcorn, crackers, cookies, and frozen pizza. Saturated fat usually comes from animal products like butter and meat fat. Saturated fat tends to raise the level of cholesterol in the blood, and while some is OK, moderation is best.

Dietary fiber is a good thing; the higher the number the better. Fiber has virtually no calories, but it holds water in your stomach, makes you feel full, and helps with digestion. Vitamins are very important. Aim to get to 100 percent of your recommended daily value through the food you eat throughout the day.

Next, look at the ingredient list that can be found at the bottom of the nutrition label. A long list of ingredients likely contains fillers and preservatives you should avoid. If you can't pronounce an ingredient, you can generally assume it is not a healthy option. And it's not only what you eat, it's what you don't eat. As a rule, the fewer the ingredients, the better.

This video on how to read a food label is a helpful overview on what else to look for.

You can also download the **Fooducate** app, which allows you to scan the bar code of any food item and quickly see a report card and suggestions for healthier alternatives.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Take a few minutes to write down everything you ate in the last two days. Now review your list and estimate what percent of your food intake came from whole foods. How did your meals compare to The Healthy Plate? Where is there opportunity for healthier choices? How can these changes benefit you?

What You Drink

What is your go-to drink when you are thirsty? Soda? Juice? Coffee? How about water? Most of your blood and every cell in your body is composed of water. In fact, water makes up 60 to 80 percent of our entire body mass, so when we don't consume enough

water, all kinds of complications can occur. To function properly, all the cells and organs in our body need water. Proper hydration is key to overall health and well-being. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated. Dehydration is when your body does not have as much water and fluids as it needs. Researchers at Virginia Polytechnic discovered that mild dehydration (as little as losing 1 to 2 percent of body water) can impair cognitive performance.[4] Water increases energy and relieves fatigue, promotes weight loss, flushes toxins, improves skin complexion, improves digestion, and is a natural headache remedy (your brain is 76 percent water). Headaches, migraines, and back pains are commonly caused by dehydration. Your body will also let you know it needs water by messaging through muscle cramps, achy joints, constipation, dry skin, and of course a dry mouth.

Aside from feeling thirsty, the easiest way to tell if you are dehydrated is to check your urine. If it is a dark shade of yellow, your urine is over-concentrated with waste. This happens because water helps flush out waste and when you're hydrated there's a higher ratio of water to waste, turning your urine a lighter color.

One of the best habits you can develop is to drink a large glass of water first thing in the morning. Your body becomes a little dehydrated as you sleep. Drinking water first thing in the morning allows your body to rehydrate, which helps with digestion and helps move the bowels for regularity in the morning. It also helps to eliminate the toxins your liver processed while you slept.

Check out this video for more benefits of drinking water.

Staying hydrated is important to keep your body healthy, energized, and running properly. As a general guideline, aim to drink eight glasses of water a day, although a more helpful guide is to drink half your body weight in ounces (for example, if you weigh 150 lb, try to drink 75 oz of water a day). One of the best ways to remind yourself to drink throughout the day is to buy a reusable bottle and bring it everywhere you go. There are two reasons to use a refillable water bottle instead of a plastic bottle:

1. **Your own health.** Most plastic water bottles have a chemical called bisphenol A (BPA), which is added to plastics to make them more durable and pliable. BPA is known to disrupt hormones and has been linked to sperm dysfunction.
2. **The health of the planet.** Do you know that every time you drink from a plastic water bottle and casually toss it in the trash, it can stay on the planet approximately 450 years?[5] Even when you recycle, the complex nature of recycling doesn't guarantee your plastic bottle will make it through the process. Americans purchase about 50 billion water bottles per year, averaging 13 bottles a month for each of us. By using a reusable water bottle, you can save an average of 156 plastic bottles annually.[6]

"But I don't like the taste of water!" It may take time, but eventually you will. Add a little more each day, and eventually your body will feel so fantastic fully hydrated that you will have water cravings. In the meantime, you can visit the dining hall in the morning and add lemon, lime, berries, watermelon, cucumbers, or whatever taste you enjoy that will add a little healthy flavor to the water.

While water is undeniably the healthiest beverage you can drink, it is unrealistic to assume that is all you will drink. Be careful to minimize your soda intake, as most sodas are loaded with sugar or artificial sweeteners (which can be even worse than sugar). And unless you are squeezing your own fruit juice, you are also likely drinking a lot of sugar. Many fruit juices sold in supermarkets contain only a small percentage of real fruit juice, and have added sugar and other unhealthy sweeteners like high-fructose corn syrup. A 12-oz glass of orange juice can contain up to 9 teaspoons of sugar, about the same as a 12-oz can of Coke! Hot or cold herbal teas are a wonderful addition to your diet.

Exercise

Many people exercise to maintain or lose weight, but weight loss is only one potential benefit of exercise. Regular exercise can improve the quality of your sleep, strengthen your bones, increase your energy levels, and reduce your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and even some forms of cancer.[7] Regular exercise is key to living a long, healthy life.

There are three basic types of exercise—flexibility, strength training, and cardiovascular.

1. **Flexibility** is the range in motion of the joints in your body, or the ability for your muscles to move freely. Without adequate flexibility, daily activities can become difficult to do. Stretching increases your body's flexibility, improves circulation, and sends more blood to your muscles. Just a few minutes a day of deep stretching can have a powerfully positive impact on your health. Yoga and Tai Chi are other wonderful ways to improve your flexibility.
2. **Strength** is the body's ability to produce force. Strength training helps improve muscle strength and muscle mass, which will become increasingly important as you age. Increased muscle helps your body burn calories more efficiently. Strength training also helps maintain bone strength. In addition to lifting weights, other ways to build strength include push-ups, pull-

ups, squats, lunges, and yoga.

3. **Cardiovascular** is the body's ability to use oxygen efficiently during exercise. As one's ability to use oxygen improves, daily activities can be performed with less fatigue. Great cardiovascular modes of exercise include jogging, swimming, biking, and HIIT (high intensity interval training). HIIT is short bursts of intense activity followed by a rest period. With HIIT, you can squeeze a lot of benefit into a short period of time. Click here for an example of HITT workouts.



Figure 6.1.2.4: Your college may offer a variety of unique and interesting exercise programs and classes, which you can take advantage of to learn new things and stay fit. (Credit: Jo Allebon / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Research indicates that regular aerobic exercise can support memory and cognition. In these studies, aerobic exercise generally increases the number of new neurons created in the brain's memory center and also reduces inflammation.[8] Inflammation in the brain may contribute to the development of dementia and other neurodegenerative conditions. It might be good timing to take a jog before you sit down to study for a test!

It's important to move throughout the day, and every day. Aim to exercise for 150 minutes a week. You don't have to be the king or queen of CrossFit; it's the daily movement that is most important. While it is best to integrate all three types of exercise, the best exercise is the one you will actually do. Find and commit to a form of exercise you will enjoy.

Toxins

We live in an increasingly toxic world. Since the Industrial Revolution, we have released thousands of man-made chemicals into the environment. These chemical toxins are in our food (pesticides, conventional fertilizers), in food packaging, in household products, and in our personal care products. Many of these chemicals have been linked to infertility, asthma, migraines, ADHD, and cancer.

The complicated thing about these chemicals is that their effects can take years or even decades to appear. The chemicals build up over time *and they interact with each other*, which can result in problems that are not considered by "single chemical" testing (which is the majority of the limited testing that is done).

Now the good news—there are simple things you can do right now to limit the amount of toxins in your environment. First, it is best to avoid any products with "artificial colors" or "fragrance."

- **Artificial colors:** Synthetic dyes like Yellow 10, Blue 1, and Red 28 may contain carcinogens and neurotoxins and can be absorbed by your skin and go directly into your bloodstream.
- **Fragrance:** Have you ever walked down the cleaning and laundry soap aisle and been assaulted by so many fragrances you couldn't get to the next aisle fast enough? Claiming trade secrets, companies don't have to tell us what's in "fragrance," which can include highly toxic ingredients, hormone disruptors, and carcinogens. Fragranced products come in the form of soaps, cleaners, air fresheners, hand sanitizers, laundry detergents, and personal care products. Studies have repeatedly shown that the synthetic fragrances and other toxic chemicals included in these products are causing a range of health problems.[9]

There is a long and ever-growing list of common chemicals to avoid, but it's hard to remember the names when you are shopping. That's where a handy app like Healthy Living from the EWG comes in.

Simply scan the bar code of any products you use and learn about any potential health hazards.

> **"Many Americans are surprised to learn that the ingredients in their makeup, shampoo and body lotion are largely unregulated and, in some cases, harmful to their health. The fact is that companies can put potentially dangerous ingredients into the products they sell without ever having to prove they are safe."**
>
> *— Heather White, Environmental Working Group Executive Director*

Your skin is your largest organ, and in seconds will absorb what you put on it. It's important to be wary of conventional skin care products that could potentially leak toxins into your body. Think of your skin as one giant mouth. If you wouldn't eat the ingredients in your products, think twice before applying them to your skin.

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Are your eating and sleeping habits currently affecting your ability to have a super-successful college experience? Describe the health and wellness changes a commitment to eating clean and sleeping well will bring about, and how you will benefit in the short and long term.

Footnotes

3. Dr. Joel Furhman https://www.mensjournal.com/features...here-20121107/
4. University of Virginia www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4207053/
5. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/201...l-last-planet/
6. https://www.earthday.org/2018/03/29/...lastics/#_ftn5
7. Harvard Medical School https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsl...se_as_medicine
8. Kelty, Journal of Applied Physiology
9. https://www.ewg.org/

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6.1.3: Sleep

Questions to consider:

- How much sleep is enough?
- What are the impacts of sleep deprivation?
- Which strategies and support can enhance sleep?

How often do you wake up filled with energy, eager to embrace the day? How often do you wake up still tired, with heavy eyes that just don't want to open? Your answer to these questions has a direct bearing on the quality of your decisions, your ability to use good judgement, the extent to which you can focus in the classroom, and ultimately your long-term health.

A great night's sleep begins the minute you wake up. The choices you make throughout the day impact how quickly you fall asleep, whether you sleep soundly, and whether your body is able to successfully complete the cycle of critical functions that only happen while you sleep.

Sleep is the foundation of amazing health, yet almost 40 percent of adults struggle to get enough sleep.[10] Lack of sleep affects mental and physical performance and can make you more irritable. The diminished energy that results from too little sleep often leads us to make poor decisions about most things, including food. Think about the last time you were really tired. Did you crave pizza, donuts, and fries—or a healthy salad? Studies have shown that people who sleep less are more likely to eat fewer vegetables and eat more fats and refined carbohydrates, like donuts.[11]

With sufficient sleep it is easier to learn, to remember what you learned, and to have the necessary energy to make the most of your college experience. Without sufficient sleep it is harder to learn, to remember what you learned, and to have the energy to make the most of your college experience. It's that simple.

What Happens When We Sleep?

Sleep is a time when our bodies are quite busy repairing and detoxifying. While we sleep we fix damaged tissue, toxins are processed and eliminated, hormones essential for growth and appetite control are released and restocked, and energy is restored. Sleep is essential for a healthy immune system. How many colds do you catch a year? How often do you get the flu? If you are often sick, you do not have a healthy immune system, and sleep deprivation may be a key culprit.

A review of hundreds of sleep studies concluded that most adults need around eight hours of sleep to maintain good health. Some people may be able to function quite well on seven and others may need closer to nine, but as a general rule, most people need a solid eight hours of sleep each night. And when it comes to sleep, both quantity and quality are important.

When sleep is cut short, the body doesn't have time to complete all the phases needed for the repair and detoxification.

A tiny lobe called the pineal gland helps us fall asleep. The pineal gland secretes melatonin to calm the brain. The pineal gland responds to darkness. If you are watching TV until the minute you go to bed and then sleep with the artificial light from smartphones and other devices, your brain is tricked into thinking it is still daylight; this makes it difficult for the pineal gland to do its job. In addition, if the TV shows you watch before bed are violent or action-packed, your body will release cortisol (the stress hormone). Anything that creates stress close to bedtime will make it more difficult to fall asleep. A bedtime practice of quiet activities like reading, journaling, listening to music, or meditation will make it much easier to fall asleep.

What Happens If You Don't Get Enough Sleep?

Lack of sleep has a big impact on your overall state of health and well-being. Studies have linked poor sleep to a variety of health problems. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified sleep deprivation as a public health epidemic.

A lack of sleep can change the way your genes express themselves. One notable study involved a group of healthy adults limited to six hours of sleep for one week. Researchers then measured the change in gene activity compared to the prior week when these same people were getting a full eight hours of sleep a night. The lack of sleep caused the activity of 711 genes to become

distorted. About half of the genes were switched off by a lack of sleep, and these genes were associated with the immune system. The other half of the genes experienced increased activity from a lack of sleep, and these were genes associated with the promotion of tumors, genes associated with long-term chronic inflammation, and stress genes.[12]

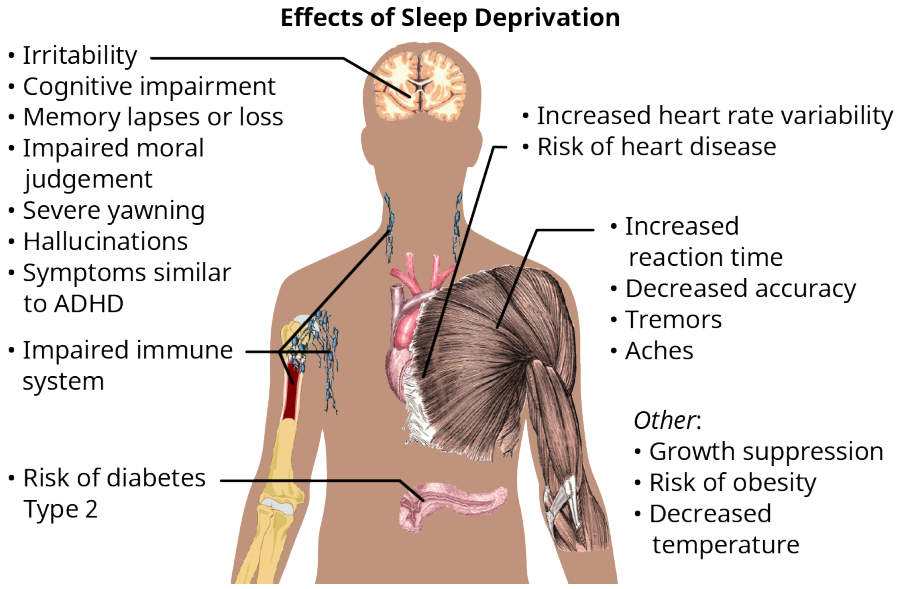


Figure 6.1.3.5: **The Effects of Sleep Deprivation** This visual depicts many of the ways we are affected by insufficient sleep. (Credit: Häggström, Mikael (2014). "Medical gallery of Mikael Häggström 2014". *WikiJournal of Medicine*. Public Domain.)

Some of the health risks of insufficient sleep include the following:

Increased risk of heart attack and stroke: In his book *Why We Sleep*, Matthew Walker, PhD, shares Japanese research showing that male workers who average six hours of sleep or less are 400 to 500 percent more likely to suffer one or more cardiac arrests than those getting more than six hours of sleep each night. Another study of women between the ages of 20 and 79 found that those who had mild sleep disturbance such as taking longer to fall asleep or waking up one or more times during the night were significantly more likely to have high blood pressure than those who fell asleep quickly and slept soundly.[13]

Impaired cognitive function: Even one night of sleeping less than six hours can impact your ability to think clearly the next day.

Increased risk of accidents: Sleep deprivation slows your reaction time, which increases your risk of accidents. You are three times more likely to be in a car crash if you are tired. According to the American Sleep Foundation, 40 percent of people admitted to falling asleep behind the wheel at least once. A Governor's Highway Safety Association report estimates there are 6,400 fatal drowsy driving crashes each year. Fifty percent of these crashes involve drivers under the age of 25.[14]

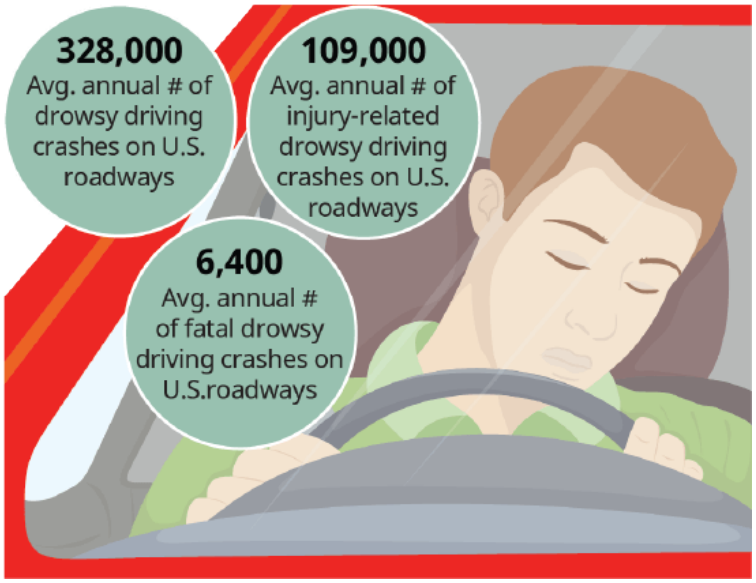


Figure 6.1.3.6: Driving while drowsy puts you, your passengers, and many others in danger. (Credit: Modification of work by Governors Highway Safety Association.)

Driving after 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent—the U.S. legal limit for drunk driving.

Weight gain/increased risk for obesity: Sleep helps balance your appetite by regulating hormones that play a role in helping you feel full after a meal. Also, cortisol is released during times of anxiety, and exhaustion causes your body to produce more cortisol. This can stimulate your appetite.

Increased risk of cancer: Tumors grow up to three times faster in laboratory animals with severe sleep dysfunctions. Researchers believe this is because of disrupted melatonin production, as melatonin has both antioxidant and anticancer activity.

Increased emotional intensity: The part of the brain responsible for emotional reactions, your amygdala, can be 60 percent more reactive when you've slept poorly, resulting in increased emotional intensity.

For more information on the advantages and health risks of sleep watch this TED Talk by Matt Walker, PhD, Director of the Sleep Center at U California Berkeley.

Tips to Improve the Quality of Your Sleep

Now that you are more aware of the ways insufficient sleep harms your body, let's review some of the things you can do to enhance your sleep.

Make sleep a priority.

It can be challenging in college, but try to get on a schedule where you sleep and wake at the same time every day to get your body accustomed to a routine. This will help your body get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.

Sleep in a cool, quiet, dark room.

Create a sleeping environment that is comfortable and conducive to sleep. If you can control the temperature in your room, keep it cool in the evening. Scientists believe a cool bedroom (around 65 degrees) may be best for sleep, since it mimics our body's natural temperature drop. Exposure to bright light suppresses our body's ability to make melatonin, so keep the room as dark as possible. A 2010 study in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* found that individuals exposed to room light "during the usual hours of sleep suppressed melatonin by greater than 50%."[15] Even the tiniest bit of light in the room (like from a clock radio LCD screen) can disrupt your internal clock and your production of melatonin, which will interfere with your sleep. A sleep mask may help eliminate light, and earplugs can help reduce noise.

Avoid eating late or drinking alcohol or caffeine close to bedtime.

It is best to finish eating at least two hours before bedtime and avoid caffeine after lunch. While not everyone is affected in the same way, caffeine hangs around a long time in most bodies. Although alcohol will make you drowsy, the effect is short-lived and you will often wake up several hours later, unable to fall back to sleep. Alcohol can also keep you from entering the deeper stages of sleep, where your body does most of the repair and healing. A 2013 *Scientific Research* study concluded that "energy drinks, other caffeinated beverages and alcoholic beverages are risk factors of poor sleep quality." It's important to finish eating hours before bedtime so your body is able to heal and detoxify and it is not spending the first few hours of sleep digesting a heavy meal.

Start to wind down an hour before bed.

There are great apps to help with relaxation, stress release, and falling asleep. Or you can simply practice 4-7-8 breathing to calm your nervous system—breathe in to the count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and release your breath slowly to the count of 8.

Consider the Insight Timer app, or any of the free apps listed by the American Sleep Association.

Exercise for 30 minutes a day.

One of the biggest benefits of exercise is its effect on sleep. A study from Stanford University found that 16 weeks in a moderate-intensity exercise program allowed people to fall asleep about 15 minutes faster and sleep about 45 minutes longer. Walking, yoga, swimming, strength training, jumping rope—whatever it is, find an exercise you like and make sure to move your body every day.

Improve your diet.

Low fiber and high saturated fat and sugar intake is associated with lighter, less restorative sleep with more wake time during the night. Processed food full of chemicals will make your body work extra hard during the night to remove the toxins and leave less time for healing and repair.

Sleep affects how we look, feel, and function on a daily basis and is vital to our health and quality of life. When you get the sleep your body needs, you look more vibrant, you feel more vibrant, and you have the energy to live your best life.

Now, with a better understanding of the benefits of getting the recommended hours of nightly sleep and the health risks of not getting enough sleep, what changes can you make to improve the quality and quantity of your sleep?

What If I'm Doing All These Things and I Still Have Trouble Sleeping?

People that have trouble falling asleep also often have low magnesium levels (sources suggest that over half of the adults in the United States are magnesium deficient). You can ask your doctor to check your magnesium levels, but you can also focus on eating magnesium-rich foods to help. One of the best magnesium-rich snacks is pumpkin seeds. Other great sources are almonds, sesame seeds, and walnuts.

Difficulty sleeping may be a sign that you have a clinical sleep problem, such as insomnia or sleep apnea. If you are doing all the right things and still have trouble falling or staying asleep, talk to your doctor.

These are some resources for insomnia:

- Healthy Sleep, Harvard Medical School Division of Sleep Medicine
- Insomnia Treatment, American Association of Sleep Medicine
- Sleep Medicine, Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine

ANALYSIS QUESTION

Do you have a ritual to shut down your day and calm your mind? If yes, can you identify two ways to improve upon your current ritual? If no, what three things can you put in place to prepare your body and mind for a restorative night's sleep?

Footnotes

10. https://news.gallup.com/poll/166553/...unt-sleep.aspx
11. Cleveland Clinic, https://health.clevelandclinic.org/l...ave-junk-food/
12. Archer, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23440187
13. Matthew Walker, PhD ***Why We Sleep***
14. Governors Highway Safety Association
15. JCEM, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3047226/

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6.1.4: Taking Care of Your Emotional Health

Questions to consider:

- What are some of the ways to tell if you are holding onto stress?
- How do mindfulness and gratitude encourage emotional health?

Identifying and Managing Stress

According to a 2018 report from the American College Health Association, in a 12-month period 42 percent of college students reported that they have felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 63 percent reported feeling overwhelming anxiety.[16] Your ability to manage stress, maintain loving relationships, and rise to the demands of school and work all impact your emotional health.

Stress is not always bad. In fact, some stress is helpful. Good stress is stress in amounts small enough to help you meet daily challenges. It's also a warning system that produces the fight-or-flight response, which increases blood pressure and your heart rate so you can avoid a potentially life-threatening situation. Feeling stressed can be perfectly normal, especially during exam time. It can motivate you to focus on your work, but it can also become so overwhelming you can't concentrate. It's when stress is chronic (meaning you always feel stressed) that it starts to damage your body.

What Chronic Stress Does to Your Body

Do you find it difficult to concentrate or complete your work? Are you frequently sick? Do you have regular headaches? Are you more anxious, angry, or irritable than usual? Do you have trouble falling asleep or staying awake? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, you may be holding on to too much stress.

Stress that hangs around for weeks or months affects your ability to concentrate, makes you more accident-prone, increases your risk for heart disease, can weaken your immune system, disrupts your sleep, and can cause fatigue, depression, and anxiety.[17] To learn more about what stress does to your body, click here: apa.org/helpcenter/stress.

Some people refer to the time we are living in as the age of overload. It's easy to get worn down by social media and the constant news cycle, and to be overwhelmed by too many choices. We live in a fast-paced, always-on world with a lot of pressures. The military created the VUCA acronym for the world we currently live in. VUCA stands for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous, and as a result of living in this VUCA world, many of us are in a constant state of overdrive.

You will have stress. Stress is inevitable. It's how you deal with it that can make all the difference. One of the most important things you can do is to keep perspective on your stressors. When feeling stressed, ask yourself, on a scale of 1 to 100, how stressful a situation is this? Will I even remember this three years from now? When facing potential stressors, the way you view what you're experiencing can intensify your stress or minimize it.

There are many ways to manage stress. Take a look at some of the ideas in the stress toolkit below. Which ones have you tried? Which ones do you want to try? It's helpful to have different tools for different situations—for example, a calming yoga pose in your dorm room and deep breathing in the classroom.

Mindfulness and Gratitude

Deep breathing, mindfulness, and a practice of gratitude are some of the most effective ways to manage stress and take care of your emotional health.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means being present with your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. Mindfulness is also without judgement—meaning there is no right or wrong way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness,

our thoughts tune into what we're sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.[18]

Anything that keeps you present in the moment and gives your prefrontal cortex (the reasoning and thinking part of your brain) a break is practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness can be a slow walk; looking intently at the grass, trees, flowers, or buildings; and being aware of what you are sensing and feeling. Mindfulness can be sitting quietly—even sitting still in a quiet place for as little as a few minutes can reduce heart rate and blood pressure.[19]

Developing a practice of mindfulness is easier than you may think:

- **Slow down.** From brushing your teeth, to washing your face, to shampooing your hair—can you take the speed out of getting ready in the morning? Focus on the activity, pay attention to what you are doing, stay present (this means don't think about what happened last night or what's in store for the day, just stay focused on the activity), and take your time.
- **Focus on your breath.** How fast are you breathing? Is your breath coming from your chest or your belly? Can you feel the air come through your nose on the inhale? Can you slow down the exhale? Can you feel your body relax when you slow the exhale?
- **Connect to your environment.** Walk for a few minutes, focused on the world around you—look at the leaves on the trees or the light at the corner, listen to the sounds around you, stay with your surroundings, and observe what you see and hear around you.

> **"We can't change the world, at least not quickly, but we can change our brains. By practicing mindfulness all of us have the capacity to develop a deeper sense of calm."**
>
> *— Rick Hanson, author, Resilient*

Deep Breathing

When people hear mindfulness they often think meditation. While meditation is one method of mindfulness, there are many others that may be simpler and easier for you to practice. Deep breathing helps lower stress and reduce anxiety, and it is simple yet very powerful. A daily mindful breathing practice has been shown to reduce test anxiety in college students.[20] A 2-4-6-8 breathing pattern is a very useful tool that can be used to help bring a sense of calm and to help mild to moderate anxiety. It takes almost no time, requires no equipment, and can be done anywhere:

- - Start by quickly exhaling any air in your lungs (to the count of 2).
- - Breathing through your nose, inhale to the count of 4.
- - Hold your breath for a count of 6.
- - Slowly exhale through your mouth to the count of 8.

This is one round. Do not repeat the quick exhale again. Instead start round two with an inhale through your nose to the count of 4, hold for 6, and exhale to 8. Repeat for three more rounds to relax your body and mind.

With practice, 2-4-6-8 breathing will become a useful tool for times when you experience tension or stress.

Meditation

Dan Harris, a news reporter at ABC, fell into drug use and suffered a major panic attack on national television. Following this embarrassing period in his life, he learned to meditate and found that it made him calmer and more resilient. He's now on a mission to make meditation approachable to everyone. Dan used to be a skeptic about meditation but now says that if he learned to meditate, anyone can learn to meditate! Dan reminds us that we ARE going to get lost, and our mind IS going to stray, and that's ok. Simply notice when you're lost and start over. Every time your mind strays and your start over, it is like a bicep curl for your brain. Start with 3 minutes and slowly work your way up to 15 or 20. To hear more about Dan's journey, watch this video, and for a simple meditation to get started, you can try one of the videos on the meditation Youtube channel.

Some great meditation apps include Insight Timer, CALM, and Headspace.

Gratitude

Too often people think it is the external factors that bring us joy and happiness, when really it's all related to internal work.

According to UCLA's Mindfulness Awareness Research Center, "Having an attitude of gratitude changes the molecular structure of the brain, and makes us healthier and happier. When you feel happiness, the central nervous system is affected. You are more peaceful, less reactive and less resistant."[21]

Numerous studies show that people who count their blessings tend to be happier and less depressed. In a UC Berkeley study, researchers recruited 300 people who were experiencing emotional or mental health challenges and randomly divided them into three groups. All three groups received counseling services. The first group also wrote a letter of gratitude every week for three weeks. The second group wrote about their thoughts and feelings with negative experiences. The third group received only counseling. The people in the group who wrote gratitude letters reported significantly better mental health for up to 12 weeks after the writing exercise ended.

This would suggest that a healthy emotional self-care practice is to take note of good experiences or when you see something that makes you smile. Think about why the experience feels so good. According to Rick Hanson, author of *Resilient*, "Each day is strewn with little jewels. The idea is to see them and pick them up. When you notice something positive, stay with the feeling for 30 seconds. Feel the emotions in your whole body. Maybe your heart feels lighter or you're smiling. The more you can deepen and lengthen positive experiences the longer those positivity neurons in your brain are firing—and the longer they fire the stronger the underlying neural networks become. Repeat that process a half dozen times a day and you'll feel stronger, more stable and calmer within a few weeks."

Build a Stress Toolkit	
Practice self- compassion	Laugh with friends
Eat clean food	Listen to music
Mindfulness Meditation Deep breathing (2-4-6-8) A walk in nature	Drink calming tea
Exercise/Movement Yoga, Tai chi Dance HIIT Run, Spin, Lift	Watch a funny movie
Epsom salt baths	Write in a gratitude journal
Hugs	Change phone screen to this picture
	Change passwords to calming words
	Keep something in your backpack that reminds you to take a deep breath every time you see it

Figure 6.1.4.7: Do you have a stress toolkit filled with a variety of stress-coping tools to help you navigate any stressful situation? (Credit: Modification of work by Robin Benzrihem)

ACTIVITY

Take a look at some of the suggested tools for your stress toolkit. Which ones have you tried? Have they been effective in helping you manage stress? Ask two friends or family members about their favorite stress-management strategies. What has worked for you and others that is not on this list? Identify two new tools you would like to explore and articulate how you will determine if they work for you, and then you can confidently add them to your stress toolkit.

Footnotes

16. American College Health Association 2018 report https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/...ve_Summary.pdf
17. *The University of Maryland Medical Center UMMC,* https://www.umms.org/ummc
18. Moran, Joan; University of California at Los Angeles, http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/gratitude-249167
19. The Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/
20. Levitin, Time Special Edition 2018, The New Mindfulness
21. 2016 Study Journal of PLoS One, https://journals.plos.org/plosmedici...l.pmed.1000316

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6.1.5: Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Question to consider:

- What is mental health?
- How can I take care of it?

The World Health Organization ranks mental health conditions as the leading cause of disability in the United States. One in four adults experience a diagnosable mental health disorder in any given year, yet more than half will not seek treatment. The primary reason people don't seek the help they need is shame and fear of judgment from friends, family, and coworkers. It is important to remove any stigma associated with mental health and encourage those who need help to seek support.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. In your opinion, which of the following is the most significant health issue facing college students?
   a. stress and/or exhaustion
   b. drinking and/or substance abuse
   c. unhealthy eating
   d. unhealthy relationships
   e. safety
2. Which of the following best describes your experience or outlook regarding healthy eating while in college?
   a. I'm generally able to eat healthy food most of the time.
   b. I have difficulty eating healthy food because of lack of choices on campus.
   c. I don't have enough money to eat healthy food.
   d. I don't have enough time to focus on eating healthy food.
   e. I need to learn more about healthy eating.
   f. It's not something I'm very concerned about.
3. When you are facing an issue regarding your emotions, stress, mental health, or relationships, what do you typically do?
   a. Wait for it to pass or work through it.
   b. Talk to a health professional.
   c. Talk to friends or family.
   d. Talk to another trusted person such as a teacher, RA, or religious person.
   e. Use a method such as meditation, exercise, or something similar.

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

In your opinion, which of the following is the most significant health issue facing college students?

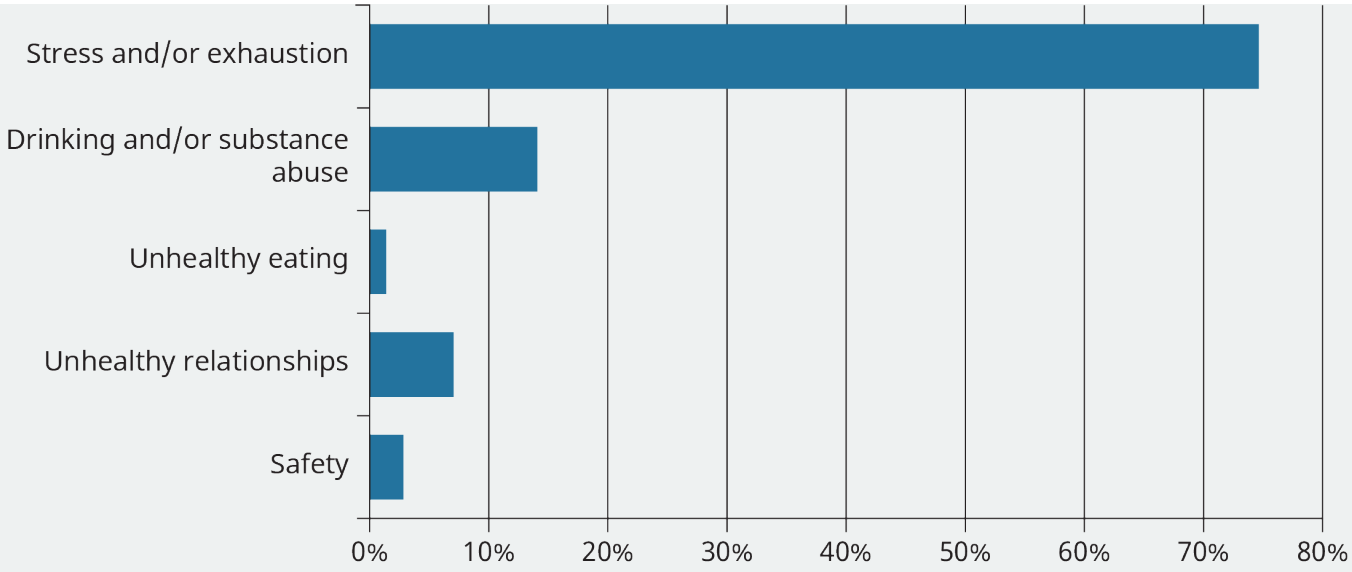


Figure 6.1.5.8

Which of the following best describes your experience or outlook regarding healthy eating while in college?

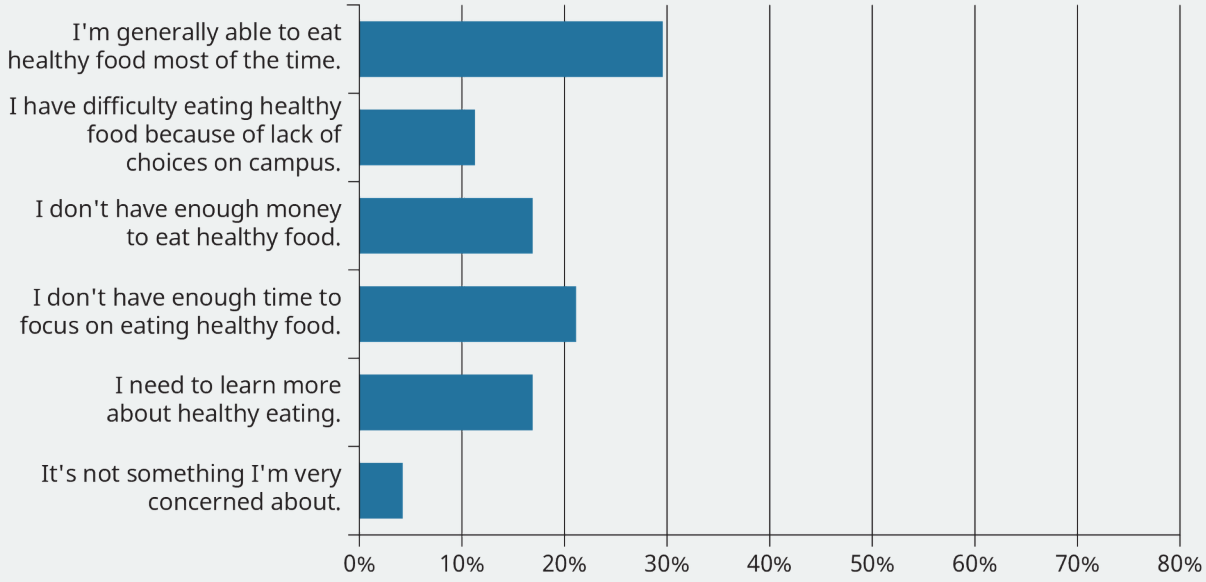


Figure 6.1.5.9

When you are facing an issue regarding your emotions, stress, mental health, or relationships, what do you typically do?

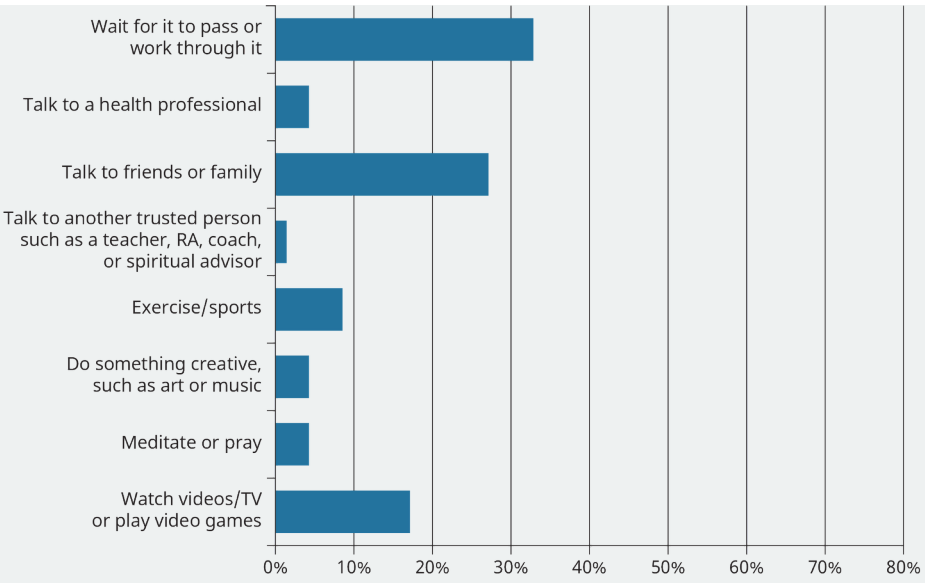


Figure 6.1.5.10

What Is Mental Health?

Mental health is “the level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness. It is the state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment.”[22]

According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), a mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, or mood. The condition may affect a person’s ability to relate to others and function throughout the day.

A mental health condition isn’t the result of one event; it is most often the result of multiple overlapping causes. Environment, lifestyle, and genetic predisposition can all be factors in whether someone develops a mental health condition. Traumatic life events or stressful experiences may make some people more susceptible, and brain biochemistry may play a role as well. Mental health conditions show up in many ways. Anxiety, depression, and eating disorders are some of the most common.

Anxiety Disorders

We all experience the occasional feeling of anxiety, which is quite normal. New situations, meeting new people, driving in traffic, and public speaking are just a few of the common activities that can cause people to feel anxious. It is important to seek help when these feelings become overwhelming, cause fear, or keep us from doing everyday activities. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health concern in the United States, and while there are many types of anxiety disorders, they all have one thing in common: “persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening.”[23] Physically, your heart may race, and you may experience shortness of breath, nausea, or intense fatigue. Talk with a mental health care professional if you experience a level of anxiety that keeps you from your regular daily activities.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are not uncommon among students. Stress or anxiety may create a desire for some students to overeat, while others may develop a concern about body shape or weight and significantly reduce their food intake.

Anorexia nervosa is a potentially fatal illness marked by self-starvation. People with anorexia usually have an irrational concern about body shape or weight and eat a very restricted diet. They may also feel the need to exercise all the time, even when they are sick or exhausted.

Binge eating is frequent consumption of large amounts of food in a short period of time. People who binge regularly (more than once a week) and feel a lack of control over their eating may have binge eating disorder (BED). It is important to seek treatment if you suspect there is an issue with binge eating. Treatment can address any underlying psychological issues that will help control

urges to binge eat.

Bulimia involves cycles of excessive eating followed by eliminating food through vomiting or with laxatives. Eating disorders can lead to many complications, some of them very serious, like heart conditions and kidney failure. It is crucial for anyone with an eating disorder to stabilize their health, then continuing medical care and counseling to reach full recovery. Eating disorders can be treated successfully with medical care, psychotherapy, counseling, or coaching.

If you think you might have an eating disorder, visit a doctor or your campus health center. The National Eating Disorders Association also offers information, help, and support.

Depression

Most people feel sad at times. This is a normal reaction to loss or struggles we face. Being sad is not the same as having depression. When intense sadness lasts for several days or even weeks and you are no longer interested in activities you once enjoyed, it may be depression. Depression can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person's ability to function at work and at home.

Depression does not have a single cause. It can follow a life crisis or physical illness, but it can also occur spontaneously. Several factors including trauma, a significant life change, brain injury, and drug and alcohol misuse may contribute to depression. Depression is a treatable medical condition. Talk with a mental health care professional if you experience an ongoing level of sadness that keeps you from your regular daily activities.

Suicidal Behavior

Suicide is when people direct violence at themselves with the intent to end their lives, and they die because of their actions.[24]

People who contemplate suicide often experience a deep feeling of hopelessness. They often don't feel they can cope with challenging life events and are not able to see solutions to problems. In the moment, they are unable to see that the challenges are really only temporary. Most survivors of suicide attempts go on to live wonderful, full lives.

Depression is a key risk factor for suicide, along with substance abuse, chronic debilitating pain, mental health disorders, and a family history of suicide.

These are some of the warning signs to help you determine if a friend or loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event:

- talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- talking about being a burden to others
- increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- sleeping too little or too much
- withdrawing or isolating themselves
- showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- extreme mood swings[25]

Help is available all day, every day, for anyone who might be in crisis. By offering immediate counseling to everyone that may need it, crisis centers provide invaluable support at the most critical times. If you or someone you know has warning signs of suicide, get help as soon as possible. Family and friends are often the first to recognize any warning signs and can help take the first step in finding treatment.

If someone is telling you that they are going to kill themselves, do not leave them alone. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A Crisis Text Line is also available 24/7 by texting HOME to 741741, 85258, or 686868. There are also near-term plans to implement a 988 suicide hotline number that will work similarly to 911.

Additional Resources

Because entering college is such a big transition, it is important to know what health services are available on your campus. Some help may be beyond the scope of a college counseling program, and if this is the case, your college health center can refer you to off-campus resources to support you.

Regardless of where you attend college, OK2TALK and NAMI offer online, text, and phone support.

- OK2TALK is a community for young adults struggling with mental health problems. It offers a safe place to talk.
- Call the NAMI helpline at 800-950-6264, or txt NAMI to 741741.

Your brain requires a constant supply of energy to function. What you eat and are exposed to have a direct impact on its processes, your mood, and your ability to make good decisions. A majority of college students feel anxious, lonely, or depressed at some point during the year. We all have bad days, and sometimes bad days string into weeks. It's OK to feel bad. What's important is to acknowledge and work through your feelings, and find a friend or a counselor to talk to.

Footnotes

22. Wikipedia, https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health
23. NAMI, https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI...sorders-FS.pdf
24. NIMH, https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publ...aq/index.shtml
25. https://suicidepreventionlifeline.or...event-suicide/; https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publ...aq/index.shtml

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6.1.6: Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Questions to consider:

- How does self-care benefit relationships?
- Why is community so important to healthy relationships?
- What is sexual health?

Relationships are key to happy and healthy lives. According to Dr. Robert Waldinger, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, people with the best health outcomes were people who “leaned into relationships, with family, with friends, with community.”



Figure 6.1.6.11: Healthy relationships involve trust, respect, and support. (Credit: Garry Knight / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

The quality of our relationships is important, however. What makes a relationship healthy? Relationships come in many forms: lovers, family, friends, coworkers, team members, and neighbors. Think of a relationship where you have mutual respect and trust, supporting each other in tough times, celebrating the good times, and communicating with ease and honesty. This is a healthy relationship. Do you have someone in mind? On the other hand, if communication is often tense or strained, confidences are broken, or you don’t feel listened to, appreciated, or valued, these are signs of an unhealthy relationship. Unhealthy relationships can have both immediate and longer-term health impacts. If you are unhappy in a relationship, try to improve the relationship, or end it. Do not stay in a relationship for the wrong reasons, such as fear of being alone or guilt.

If a partner tries to force you to do something sexually, harms you physically, or is verbally abusive, you are in an unhealthy relationship. Even if you believe the person loves you, it does not make up for the harm they are doing to you. End the relationship.

Take a moment to assess the health of your relationships. Who are the people who make you smile, who boost your confidence, who truly listen when you need to talk, and who want only the best for you? Investing in these relationships is likely to make you happier and healthier. Relationships are two-way streets. How committed are you to your relationships? How much effort do you put into nurturing your relationships?

Self-Care

Healthy relationships start with healthy individuals. Self-care is learning to take good care of yourself and to prioritize your own needs. Self-care involves any activity that nurtures and refuels you, such as taking a walk in the woods, going to a yoga class, attending a sporting event, reading a good book, or spending time with friends. When you are feeling calm and nourished, you are going to look forward to your day, and despite how busy it is, you will prioritize time with friends and family. If you don’t take care

of and learn to love yourself, you will never be able to bring your best self to any relationship.

An important dynamic you bring to any relationship is how you feel about yourself. Self-esteem is about loving yourself and being happy for who you are. Building healthy self-esteem impacts how you see yourself, which can drastically improve your relationships. While low self-esteem won't keep us from romantic love, it can act as a barrier to a healthy relationship. If you do not believe you are good enough, how can you expect your partner to think so?

When you feel secure in yourself, this allows you and your partner to feel more secure about the relationship. If you have insecurities, it may show in your relationship as jealousy, defensiveness, or tension that leads to unnecessary arguments. Healthy self-esteem goes hand in hand with self-confidence, and feeling confident about yourself will translate into a stronger and more satisfying relationship. If you are experiencing low self-esteem, you may give your partner too much credit or stay in a relationship that is not healthy for you. If you find yourself changing your personality for someone else, that is never a sign of a healthy relationship.

You can reverse negative self-talk and build your self-esteem. If you catch yourself thinking you are unlovable, unattractive, or not good enough, it's important to start talking to yourself in a positive way and to celebrate all that is uniquely you.

Self-care includes self-forgiveness. We all make mistakes. A misstep isn't the end of the world. Pick yourself up, put things in perspective, acknowledge any lessons to be learned, focus on all that makes you special, and move forward. Be kind to yourself.

The Importance of Community

The Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica is home to some of the highest number of centenarians (people who are 100 years old or older) in the world. Costa Ricans in general report a high level of life satisfaction. Dan Buettner, author of the Blue Zones study of the longest living populations in the world, explains that Costa Rica "is a place where religion, family, and social interaction are the main values, unlike trying to get ahead, or financial security, or status. Their cities are set up so they're bumping into each other all day long. They walk to the markets, where they have conversations with people."[26]

In Costa Rica, multiple generations live together under the same roof or nearby where they can be involved in each other's lives. Neighbors are like extended family, and people often stop in for a visit and go out of their way to help one another.

While this isn't the way many of us live in the United States, the lessons from the Blue Zone study underscore the importance of community and the health benefits of connecting to and staying close to a community. What communities do you belong to? Is your dorm a community? A sports team? A club or people you volunteer with? When you start seeing the social circles you connect to as communities and prioritize your time to develop more closeness with those communities, you will experience many physical, mental, and emotional health benefits.



Figure 6.1.6.12: Joining clubs in college can be an outstanding way to join and build communities. (Credit: SupportPDX, Cerritos College / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

According to an analysis of research on college students (Joe Cuseo, *The Most Potent, Research-Based Principles of College Success*), college students who have a higher sense of belonging and are more involved in their college community are more successful. Additionally, college students who are involved in extracurricular, volunteer, and part-time work experiences outside the classroom (less than 20 hours per week) earn higher grades than students who do not get involved in any out-of-class activities at all.

APPLICATION

Make a list of the communities you belong to. Your list should include formal communities—for example, sports teams, fraternities or sororities, and membership in clubs and other organizations. Your list should also include informal communities—for example, your neighbors or the people you always see at your favorite exercise class.

Next to each community, write how being a member of this community benefits you and how your involvement benefits the community. Now, make a new list of your personal interests and passions. How well do these align with the communities you already belong to? Are there new communities that would be a good fit for you?

If you are struggling to identify communities you already belong to, think about your passions, causes you care about, and ways you love to spend your time. Find a group or club that aligns with your interests. If you can't find one that already exists, start a new club!

Research has shown that friends provide a sense of meaning or purpose in our lives, and that having a healthy social life is important to staying physically healthy. In a meta-analysis of the research results from 148 studies of over 300,000 participants, researchers found that social relationships are important in improving our lifespan. Social support has been linked to lower blood pressure and better immune system functioning. The meta-analysis also showed that social support operates on a continuum: the greater the extent of the relationships, the lower the health risks.[27]

According to a 2018 report from the American College Health Association, in a 12-month period, 63 percent of college students have felt very lonely. If you are feeling lonely or having a hard time making friends, know that the majority of people around you have also felt this way. Joining a group or a club of people who share your interests and passions is one of the best ways to make great friends and stay connected.

Sexual Health

Affection, love, and sexual intimacy all play an important role in healthy relationships, and a responsible approach to intimacy is essential for sexual health. Whether you are already sexually active or become sexually active in the future, your choices can affect your safety as well as the health and safety of your sexual partners. It's important to understand what you can do to protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Table 11.1 STI data, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment information courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/std

Common Sexually Transmitted Infections		
Infection	**Symptoms**	**Diagnosis and Treatment**
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	• HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms. • Most people with HPV do not know they are infected. • Symptoms can include genital warts, abnormal Pap test results, and cancer.	• There is no test for HPV. • There is a vaccine to prevent it. • There is no treatment for HPV, although there are treatments for the health problems it can cause. • Routine Pap tests can identify problems.

Common Sexually Transmitted Infections		
Chlamydia	• Symptoms include a burning sensation when urinating and/or discharge from the penis or vagina; however, most people who have chlamydia have no symptoms. • In women, it can cause damage to the reproductive system.	• Testing usually involves a urine sample or vaginal swab. • It can be cured with the right treatment.
Genital herpes	• Genital herpes is caused by two types of viruses, herpes simplex type 1 and herpes simplex type 2. • The virus can be released through sores or through the skin even when sores are not visible. • Get examined by your doctor if you notice an unusual sore, a smelly discharge, or burning when urinating.	• It can be diagnosed through the symptoms, testing a sample from the sore(s), or a blood test. • There is no cure for herpes; however, there are medicines that can prevent or shorten outbreaks.
Gonorrhea	• Symptoms can include a burning sensation when urinating, abnormal discharge from the penis or vagina, and bleeding between periods. • Rectal infection symptoms include itching, burning, and bleeding.	• Get examined by your doctor if you or your sexual partner notice any of these symptoms. • Testing is usually a urine sample and possibly a throat or rectum swab. • It can be cured with the right treatment. • Medication will stop the infection, but it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	• HIV damages the body's immune system cells. • The most advanced stage of HIV infection is commonly referred to as AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). • It most often spreads through fluid exchange via unprotected sex or by sharing drug needles with an infected person. • Women can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy or childbirth.	• Medications such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) can reduce risk when taken consistently and with other prevention measures. • People can live with the disease for many years, especially if they are diagnosed and treated early. • Early diagnosis is also important to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

How You Can Protect Yourself against STIs

The surest way to protect yourself against STIs is to practice abstinence. This means not having any vaginal, anal, or oral sex. There are many things to consider before having sex, and it's okay to say no if you are not ready. If you do decide to have sex, you and your partner should both get tested beforehand and make sure you always use a condom. It's not safe to stop using condoms unless you've both been tested, know your status, have another form of birth control, and are in a mutually monogamous relationship. *Mutual monogamy* means that you and your partner both agree to only have sexual contact with each other. This can help protect against STIs as long as you've both been tested and know you're STI-free. Visit this website to find a confidential STI testing location near you.

Before you have sex, talk with your partner about how you will prevent STIs and pregnancy. If you think you're ready to have sex, you need to be ready to protect your body and your future. You should also talk to your partner ahead of time about what you will and will not do sexually. Your partner should always respect your right to say no to anything that doesn't feel right. Sex should

always be consensual and respectful.

It's important to discuss treatment with your doctor and begin treatment as soon as possible if you find out you have an STI. If you are living with an STI, it's important to tell your partner before you have sex. Although it may be uncomfortable to talk about your STI, open and honest conversation can help your partner make informed decisions to protect his or her health.

Footnotes

26. https://www.bluezones.com/2017/10/co...-places-earth/
27. Holt-Lunstad, *PLoS Medicine,* https://journals.plos.org/plosmedici...l.pmed.1000316

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6.1.7: Your Safety

Questions to consider:

- What makes a person safety conscious?
- How can you improve your personal safety?

Safety Consciousness

To be safety conscious means you have an awareness of potential hazards and an alertness to danger. Simply, you are conscious of being safe. This includes being smart about your physical surroundings and careful with drug and alcohol use.

A drug is a chemical substance that can change how your body and mind work and how you feel. Some drugs are illegal (like cocaine or heroin), and while others may be legal, they can still harm your body and brain. Even prescription medicines can be abused when taken to get high or to a point of dependency.

Why do people abuse drugs? The answer varies for different people, but most want to feel good and escape any bad feelings they are experiencing. Or they want to improve in an area of their life—for example, to get better grades. This may lead them to start taking drugs for more energy, to stay awake longer, or to stay focused while studying. This short-term boost is not worth the health risks and the potential for addiction.

Alcohol

The statistics are sobering. Thirty-two percent of college students who drank alcohol reported doing something they later regretted, 27 percent forgot where they were or what they did, and 11 percent physically hurt themselves.[28] Many people consume alcohol to relax, socialize, or celebrate, but there are serious health effects attributed to too much alcohol consumption.

You do not need to be an alcoholic for alcohol to interfere with your health and life, and the potential to become addicted to alcohol is a serious problem that can affect anyone.

Alcohol is classified as a drug and is a known depressant, making it the most widely used drug in the world. Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. These disruptions can change your mood and behavior and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination. This is why it is critical to never drive a vehicle if you have been drinking. Drinking can weaken your immune system and damage your heart, increasing your risk for stroke and high blood pressure. Heavy drinking also harms the liver and pancreas.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism offers the following guidelines:

- **Moderate alcohol consumption:** up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men
- **Binge drinking:** typically occurs after four drinks for women and five drinks for men in a two-hour period that brings blood alcohol concentration levels to 0.08 g/dL
- **Heavy drinking:** drinking five or more drinks on the same occasion on each of five or more days in the past 30 days

Alcohol is a part of the social scene on many college campuses. If you choose to drink, you can avoid the devastating consequences of alcohol addiction by drinking responsibly and in moderation. The quality of your schoolwork can suffer dramatically if you drink beyond moderation. Too much alcohol can result in missing classes, performing poorly on exams, and falling behind in assignments. Have you ever decided to drink instead of study even though you had a big test the next day? Have you missed a class because you were too hungover to get out of bed? Did you hand in a project or paper late or not at all due to a series of nights spent drinking? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are at risk of negatively impacting your success in college because of alcohol.

Tobacco and Vaping

Cigarettes and other forms of tobacco are also drugs. Tobacco contains nicotine, which excites the parts of the brain that make

you feel good. Nicotine gives you a mild rush of pleasure and energy but soon wears off, which makes you want more. The more frequently you smoke, the faster your body and brain get addicted.

Tobacco is not healthy. Cigarette smoke causes lung cancer and emphysema. If you live with someone who smokes, you are also susceptible to these diseases, even if you are a nonsmoker. This is called secondhand smoke. Smokers are more likely to suffer heart attacks. Chewing tobacco can lead to cancer of the mouth. If you currently smoke, there are medicines and various treatments, as well as hotlines, to help you quit.

Electronic cigarettes are marketed as a way to help people stop smoking. Unfortunately, while they do contain less nicotine, they have many health risks.

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that people use to inhale an aerosol containing nicotine, flavors, and other chemicals. When you smoke an e-cigarette (also called vaping), the nicotine is absorbed from the lungs into the bloodstream, where it stimulates the adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine. Epinephrine (also known as adrenaline) stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate. Like other addictive substances, nicotine activates the brain's reward circuits and increases dopamine. This pleasure causes some people to use nicotine with increased frequency, despite risks to their health and well-being.

The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has alerted the public to reports of serious lung illnesses and several deaths associated with vaping. While the manufacturers of e-cigarettes would like us to believe they are less harmful than cigarettes, nicotine is a highly addictive drug. It is best to stay away from it in any form. E-cigarettes are not an FDA-approved smoking cessation aid, and there is no conclusive scientific evidence on the effectiveness of e-cigarettes to help stop smoking.

Smoking e-cigarettes also exposes the lungs to chemicals. A study of some e-cigarette products found that the vapor contains known carcinogens and toxic chemicals, and the device itself can contain toxic metals.

If you are still in your teens or early adulthood, these years are critical for brain development. If you use nicotine in any form, or for that matter any substances, you are putting yourself at risk for long-lasting effects.

Marijuana

Marijuana comes from the cannabis plant. It can be rolled up and smoked like a cigarette, called a joint. It can also be smoked in a pipe, and edibles are becoming increasingly common. Marijuana can make you feel relaxed, silly, or for some people, nervous.

Marijuana makes it harder to pay attention and to remember things that just happened a few minutes ago. If you smoke before class, it is going to make it more challenging to learn. A recent study showed that if you begin regular marijuana use as a teen, you can lose an average of eight IQ points, and you do not get them back, even if you stop using.[29]

Using marijuana makes the heart beat fast and raises your risk of having a heart attack. Marijuana smoke can hurt your lungs. One of the biggest risks is drugged driving, which is driving when you are high. Marijuana makes it harder to pay attention on the road, and your reactions to traffic signs and sounds are slowed. It is dangerous to smoke and drive.

Prescription Pain Medicine

Pain medicines help relieve pain from surgery or injuries. Prescription pain medicines are legal and helpful to use when ordered by a doctor to treat a specific medical problem within a specific time frame. It is vitally important to take any prescriptions according to your doctor's instructions, and to carefully read all risks and food/medicine counteractions.

Unfortunately, people sometimes take pills without a doctor's prescription to get high, believing they are safer than street drugs. Make no mistake, prescription pain pill abuse can be just as dangerous as heroin or cocaine. Drug dealers sell these pills just like they sell heroin or cocaine. The abuse of oxycodone has become well documented—sometimes it goes by the brand names OxyContin or Percocet. Hydrocodone is also often abused and is best known under the brand name Vicodin.

Prescription pain pill abuse can lead to many problems. Pain medicine abuse can slow down or even stop your breathing. Signs of a pain medicine overdose are cold and sweaty skin, confusion, shaking, extreme sleepiness, and trouble breathing. More people overdose from pain medicines every year than from heroin and cocaine combined. If your doctor prescribes any pain relief pills for you, it is important to ask a lot of questions and understand why your doctor is prescribing them. If after consideration you decide to take pain-relief pills, stop taking them as soon as you possibly can. The longer you take them, the higher the possibility

of getting addicted.

Cocaine and Heroin

Cocaine and heroin are both powders, often snorted up the nose, smoked, or mixed with water and injected with a needle. It is easy to become addicted to both drugs, and many people who seek treatment find it hard to stay off the drug. It is not uncommon to feel strong cravings for heroin or cocaine years after seeking treatment. People who inject the drug using a shared needle put themselves at further risk of contracting blood-borne viruses, such as hepatitis or HIV.

Cocaine can make people feel full of energy for a period of time, but it can also bring about feelings of restlessness and anger. Cocaine raises blood pressure and makes the heart beat faster, which could lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Heroin brings a rush of good feelings after it's taken. The feeling then wears off, and users often feel a strong urge to take more. The reason so many people overdose on heroin is because they can't tell how strong it is until they take it. Heroin can slow or stop your breathing. It can kill you. Signs of a heroin overdose are slow breathing; blue lips and fingernails; cold, clammy skin; and shaking.

There are medicines that can help people recover from addiction, but the best course is to not start. Avoid any temptation to try heroin or cocaine. Experimentation can be deadly.

Methamphetamine (Meth)

Meth is a white powder that is sometimes made into a pill or rock. Meth powder can be eaten or snorted up the nose. Like cocaine and heroin, it can also be mixed with liquid and injected into your body with a needle. Crystal meth is smoked in a small glass pipe.

Meth at first causes a rush of good feelings, but then users feel edgy, overly excited, angry, or afraid. Meth causes many problems. It can make your body temperature so hot that you pass out and could die. If you look at pictures of meth users, you will notice how quickly the drug ages them. Teeth become stained, break, and rot. As the teeth go bad the mouth looks sunken. Meth users burn a lot of energy and don't eat well, which leads to weight loss and a sickly appearance. The skin turns dull, and sores and pimples that won't heal are common. Meth use can quickly lead to addiction and cause cognitive or emotional problems that don't go away or that come back again even after you quit using. For instance, some users feel, hear, or see things that aren't there and think that people are out to get them.

This is a dangerous drug that should be avoided at all costs.

Other Drugs

There are many other drugs of abuse, including Ecstasy, K2 (or Spice), LSD, PCP, and roofies. It's best to avoid all of them.

If your use of drugs or alcohol is interfering with your life and negatively impacting your health, school, relationships, or finances—it's time to quit and find help.

The first semester is an especially critical and vulnerable time for most first-year students. It is often a time of heavy drinking and partying. The transition to college is often difficult, and while partying may feel like it is helping to ease the transition, the health risks are real: about one-third of first-year students fail to enroll for their second year.

If you are concerned about your drug or alcohol use, or you need help quitting, visit the student health center or talk with your college counselor. If you need additional resources, the following can help:

- Drug Information Online
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP

Personal Safety

For many students, their first year in college is also the first time they have lived away from home, or for commuting students, often the most time they have spent away from home. This new freedom can feel really exciting. College should be a time for

fun, experimentation (in healthy ways), and growth. It's important to be smart about your safety and conscious that you don't put yourself in any high-risk situations. It's also important to know what to do if any problems arise. Here are some ways to remain safe while enjoying your college experience:

1. If you are worried about a friend's well-being, ask them if they are OK. If you see inappropriate behavior, let someone know. Get an RA or other authority involved if someone looks like they are in trouble or an activity looks like it is leading to trouble. In general, speak up if you notice something going on that concerns you.
2. Many colleges and universities have blue-light phones with direct access to campus security. If your campus has blue-light phones, take the time to find out where they are. If you are not familiar with the emergency system on your campus, visit your public safety department (or website) to understand how you can call for help in an emergency. Add campus security to your phone contacts.
3. A risk at bars and at college campus parties is the use of date-rape drugs to assist sexual assaults. Date-rape drugs often have no color, smell, or taste, so you can't tell if you are being drugged. The drugs can make you weak and confused so you are unable to refuse sex or defend yourself.

   It is easy for anyone to slip a date-rape drug in your drink. Never leave your drink unattended, and never accept a drink from someone you do not trust.

4. Always be aware of the people in your surrounding area. Notice anyone who looks out of place, and avoid dark and unpopulated areas. Make sure to charge your cell phone before you go out for the evening.
5. Going out with a group is the best way to make sure everyone gets home safely. In the event you find yourself alone at the end of the night, know ahead of time what escort services your school offers. Or use services like Uber and Lyft, and MAKE SURE you get in the car that matches the license plate on the app.

   It's also wise to install safety apps. These apps can automatically alert police and your emergency contacts in the event of an emergency. Always let your roommates and friends know your plans for the evening and when you expect to return.



Figure 6.1.7.13: Emergency phones and related systems are present on many campuses. Learn your system and note the locations of these devices as you travel. If you commute via public transportation, such as a train or bus, learn the safety procedures and devices available for those systems. (Credit: KOMO News / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

GET CONNECTED

Luckily, there are tech opportunities to keep yourself safe. Three good apps for the job are:

Noonlight is an app that connects all your devices to trigger an alarm with a live, 24/7 staff in case of any emergency: heart attack, car wreck, assault, or any other event that requires emergency attention.

Kitestring is an app you alert when you are headed out to a potentially risky situation, like a first date or meeting someone for the first time. The app texts you to check in, and if you don't respond, it alerts your emergency contacts to the situation.

Circle of 6 makes it easy for you to alert the six people in your circle any time you need help.

If You Are a Victim of a Crime

Most college students report feeling safe on campus. College administrators are fully committed to making your campus experience as safe as possible. If you are attacked, it is important to know what to do:

- **If possible, get to a safe place.** Move to a well-lit area to call for help.
- **Call 911** or have someone call 911 for you.
- **Follow the operator's instructions.** 911 operators will instruct you until police or paramedics arrive.
- **Contact a trusted friend or family member.** You will want emotional support and also somewhere to go after all the official procedures are complete.
- **Take time to heal.** If you are a victim of crime or assault, it can be traumatic. The healing process will take time. Check with your campus mental health services about how they can help in your recovery.

If You Are a Victim of Sexual Assault or Rape

Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity you don't agree to. This can include inappropriate touching, sexual intercourse, attempted rape, and rape. Most people are surprised to learn that 80 percent of rapes are committed by someone the victim knows.

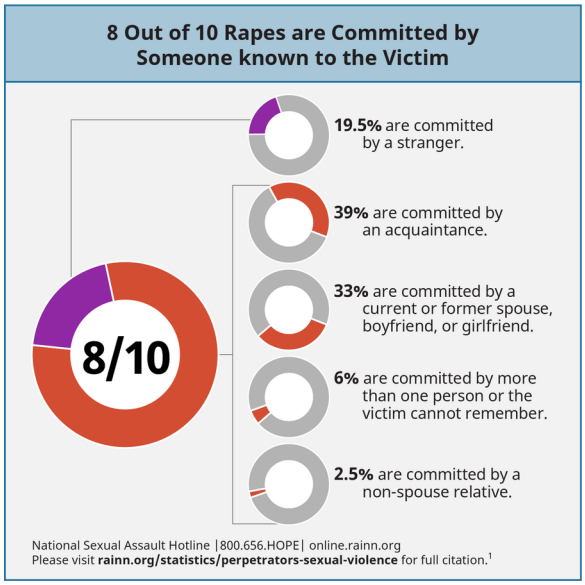


Figure 6.1.7.14: The majority of rapes are committed by people known to the victim, which can have a significant effect on prevention and reporting. (Credit: Modification of work by RAINN)

Take the following steps if you or someone you know has been raped:

- Get medical care. Go to the nearest rape crisis center, hospital, or student health service center. Do not go to the bathroom, shower, brush your teeth, wash your hands, or change clothes before you go. It's important to preserve any evidence.
- Ask the hospital or center to take a urine sample to test for date-rape drugs.
- Call the police from the hospital. Tell the police exactly what you remember. File a report.
- Arrange for follow-up counseling. A counselor can help you work through the many emotions you may feel following a sexual assault, which is important to the healing process. You can get help from the **National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE**.

Under Title IX legislation, sexual harassment and sexual violence are forms of gender discrimination and are prohibited. This

includes off-campus incidents or incidents that involve people who are not students. If you experience a hostile environment, sexual harassment, or sexual assault, schools have a responsibility to stop the discrimination, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects. Schools also have a responsibility to protect people who report sexual harassment or assault from retaliation from other students, school administrators, or faculty.

The Clery Act, a federal law that intersects with Title IX, requires colleges and universities to do the following for survivors of campus sexual assault:

- Notify survivors of counseling resources.
- Notify survivors of the option to report a case to the school and law enforcement.
- Provide requested accommodations, such as changing dorms or classes.
- Notify survivors of the final outcome of a disciplinary proceeding.

Footnotes

28. American College Health Association, 2018 https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/...ve_Summary.pdf
29. NIDA's DrugFacts: Electronic Cigarettes (e-Cigarettes)

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6.1.8: Summary

In this chapter you have been introduced to the wide range of factors that impact your health. Health is much more than keeping your physical body in good shape. Good health also includes your mental and emotional health, quality relationships, and prioritizing your personal safety.

The contributors to physical health include eating clean, non-processed food; staying hydrated; moving your body daily; and getting sufficient sleep. You now understand why it is necessary to prioritize sleep, and that quality sleep is also dependent on the way you eat and exercise. You have identified ways to improve what you eat and how you sleep. With these changes you should be able to fall asleep with ease, stay asleep all night, and wake up feeling energized. Your mind will be clear and sharp. and you'll get more done in less time, massively increasing your productivity and your success in college.

You now understand that a certain level of stress is to be expected. Chronic stress, however, is damaging to the body, so it's important to have a variety of tools to manage stress. Practicing mindfulness, deep breathing, and gratitude can have a powerful impact on your emotional, mental, and physical health.

At the beginning of this chapter, you were introduced to a simple way of thinking about your health—nutrients in, toxins out. This means eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and avoiding junk food, soda, and other sugary beverages. If you move often throughout the day, drink plenty of clean water, and prioritize your sleep, you will help your body detoxify. Reduce your exposure to toxins by paying attention to what you put in and on your body. If you wouldn't eat it, don't put it on your skin or hair. A helpful way to remember to take care of your health is to follow the rule of eights: aim each day for eight hours of sleep, eight servings of fruits and vegetables, eight glasses of water, eight minutes of mindfulness, and eight meaningful connections, and incorporate any one of these eight ways to move—walking, aerobic exercise, strength training, yoga, Tai Chi, stretching, HIIT, or dancing.

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6.1.9: Career Connection

Is putting in longer hours at work an effective strategy for meeting workplace demands? Read this article about managing your energy instead of your time.

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6.1.10: Rethinking

Revisit the questions you answered at the beginning of the chapter, and consider one option you learned in this chapter that might make you rethink how you answered each one. Has this chapter prompted you to consider changing any of your habits?

Rank the following questions on a scale of 1–4. 1 = “least like me” and 4 = “most like me.”

1. I eat enough fruits and vegetables every day.
2. I get enough sleep.
3. I have, for the most part, healthy relationships with friends and family.
4. I feel like I know how to manage stress.

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6.1.11: Where do you go from here?

It's easy to lose focus on your own health and wellness during the tumultuous first year in college. But the benefits of developing strategies to improve and maintain your emotional, physical, and mental health will only increase as you age. What would you like to learn more about? Choose a topic from the list below, and create an annotated bibliography that would direct further research.

- simple strategies to improve physical health
- daily opportunities to maintain and improve emotional well-being
- mental health risks and warning signs
- steps to take to be more safety conscious

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6.2: MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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6.2.1: Nutrition



Just imagine, how much easier our lives would be if we were born with a “user guide or owner’s manual” which could tell us what to eat and how to live healthy. —Erika M. Szabo, author

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

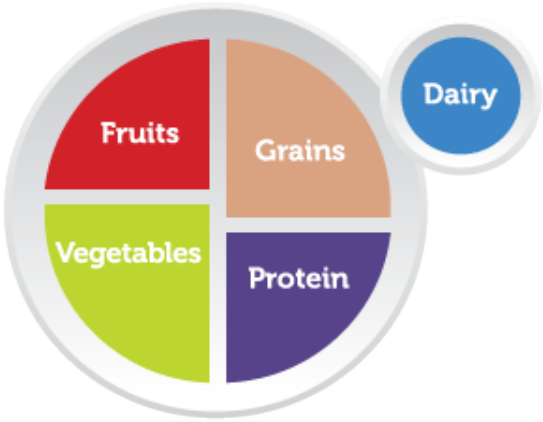
By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define healthy eating habits
- Describe the major risks of an unhealthy diet and the benefits of healthy eating
- Recognize the temptations not to eat well in a college setting
- Identify techniques for making healthy food choices

A diet is anything that you consume on a regular basis. If you drink Diet Coke for breakfast every day, that’s part of your diet. When people talk about “going on a diet,” they usually mean changing their existing dietary habits in order to lose weight or change their body shape. All people are on a diet because everyone eats! Having a *healthy diet* means making food choices that contribute to short- and long-term health. It means getting the right amounts of nutrient-rich foods and avoiding foods that contain excessive amounts of less healthy foods. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future.

Developing eating healthy eating habits doesn’t require you to sign up for a gimmicky health-food diet or lifestyle: you don’t have to become vegan, gluten-free, “paleo,” or go on regular juice fasts. The simplest way to create a healthy eating style is by learning to make wise food choices that you can enjoy, one small step at a time. The key is choosing a variety of foods and beverages from each food group (vegetables, fruits, grains, protein foods, and dairy)—and making sure that each choice is limited in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.[1] The following current USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines replace the old “food pyramid.”

USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines



Make half your plate fruits and vegetables: Focus on whole fruits, and vary your veggies

- Choose whole fruits—fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in 100% juice.
- Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks, or for a dessert.
- Try adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables to salads, side dishes, and recipes.
- Choose a variety of colorful veggies prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sautéed, roasted, or raw.

Make half your grains whole grains

- Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list—try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread, and brown rice.
- Limit grain desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies, and pastries.

Vary your protein routine

- Mix up your protein foods to include a variety—seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.
- Try main dishes made with beans and seafood, like tuna salad or bean chili.

Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

- Choose fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soy milk) to cut back on your saturated fat.
- Replace sour cream, cream, and regular cheese in recipes and dishes with low-fat yogurt, milk, and cheese.

Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars

- Eating fewer calories from foods high in saturated fat and added sugars can help you manage your calories and prevent overweight and obesity. Most of us eat too many foods that are high in saturated fat and added sugar.
- Eating foods with less sodium can reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to compare foods and drinks. Limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.
- Use vegetable oils instead of butter, and choose oil-based sauces and dips instead of those with butter, cream, or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Eat the right amount

- Eat the right amount of calories for you based on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Visit the USDA SuperTracker, which can help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.

- Building a healthier eating style can help you avoid overweight and obesity and reduce your risk of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

The following short video recaps the USDA's current healthy eating guidelines:

YouTube Video

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Healthy Eating in College

College offers many temptations for students trying to create or maintain healthy eating habits. You may be on your own for the first time, and you're free to eat whatever you want, whenever you want. Cafeterias, all-you-can-eat dining facilities, vending machines, and easy access to food twenty-four hours a day make it tempting to overeat or choose foods loaded with calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt. You may not be in the habit of shopping or cooking for yourself yet, and, when you find yourself short on time or money, it may seem easier to fuel yourself on sugary, caffeinated drinks and meals at the nearest fast-food place. Also, maybe you played basketball or volleyball in high school, but now you don't seem to be getting much exercise.

On top of that, it's common for people to overeat (or not eat enough) when they feel anxious, lonely, sad, or stressed, and college students are no exception. It's incredibly important, though, to develop healthy ways of coping and relaxing that don't involve reaching for food, drink, or other substances. It's also important to eat regular healthy meals to keep up your energy.

Kidshealth.org offers the following advice on ways for college students to adopt a healthy food attitude:[2]

- avoid eating when stressed, while studying, or while watching TV
- eat slowly
- eat at regular times and try not to skip meals
- keep between-meal and late-night snacking to a minimum
- choose a mix of nutritious foods
- pick lower-fat options when you can, such as low-fat milk instead of whole milk or light salad dressing instead of full-fat dressing
- watch the size of your portions
- resist going back for additional servings
- steer clear of vending machines and fast food
- keep healthy snacks like fruit and vegetables on hand in your room
- replace empty-calorie soft drinks with water or skim milk

Activity: Assess Your Snacking Habits

Objective

- Recognize the temptations not to eat well in a college setting

Directions

- Keep a daily snack journal for one week: Write down the types and amounts of snack foods and beverages you consume between meals each day. Record the time of day and note *where* you eat/drink each item.
- At the end of the week, review your journal. Do you notice any unhealthy snacks or empty-calorie drinks? Are there any patterns? Are there times of day when you're especially prone to choosing unhealthy snacks/drinks? Are there particular

places where you tend to reach for junk food?
- In a short, reflective essay (1–2 pages long), describe what you observed about your snacking habits during the week. Identify any habits you'd like to change, and explain why. Describe several strategies you could use to break bad habits and replace unhealthy snacks with healthier ones. Explain why you think these strategies will be effective.
- Follow your instructor's instructions for submitting assignments.

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2. "Beating the Freshman 15." Kidshealth.org. Web. 3 Mar 2016. ↩

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6.2.2: Exercise



If you are in a bad mood, go for a walk. If you are still in a bad mood, go for another walk. —Hippocrates, Greek physician

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the benefits of regular exercise, for both body and brain
- Plan a regular exercise program that works for you

Regular Exercise: Health for Life

The importance of getting regular exercise is probably nothing new to you. The health benefits are well known and established: Regular physical activity can produce long-term health benefits by reducing your risk of many health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and it can also increase your chances of living longer, help you control your weight, and even help you sleep better.

As a busy college student, you may be thinking, *I know this, but I don't have time! I have classes and work and a full life!* What you may not know is that—precisely because you have such a demanding, possibly stressful schedule—now is the perfect time to make exercise a regular part of your life. Getting into an effective exercise routine now will not only make it easier to build healthy habits that you can take with you into your life after college, but it can actually help you be a more successful student, too. As you'll see in the section on brain health, below, exercise is a powerful tool for improving one's mental health and memory—both of which are especially important when you're in school.

The good news is that most people can improve their health and quality of life through a modest increase in daily activity. You don't have to join a gym, spend a lot of money, or even do the same activity every time—just going for a walk or choosing to take the stairs (instead of the elevator) can make a difference. The following video describes how much activity you need:

https://youtu.be/lEutFrar1dI

Physical Fitness and Types of Exercise

Physical fitness is a state of well-being that gives you sufficient energy to perform daily physical activities without getting overly tired or winded. It also means being in good enough shape to handle unexpected emergencies involving physical demands—that is, if someone said, "Run for your life!" or you had to rush over and prevent a child from falling, you'd be able to do it.

There are many forms of exercise—dancing, rock climbing, walking, jogging, yoga, bike riding, you name it—that can help you become physically fit. The major types are described below.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise increases your heart rate, works your muscles, and raises your breathing rate. For most people, it's best to aim for a total of about thirty minutes a day, four or five days a week. If you haven't been very active recently, you can start out with five or ten minutes a day and work up to more time each week. Or, split up your activity for the day: try a brisk ten-minute walk after each meal. If you are trying to lose weight, you may want to exercise more than thirty minutes a day. The following are some examples of aerobic exercise:

- A brisk walk (outside or inside on a treadmill)
- Dancing
- A low-impact aerobics class
- Swimming or water aerobic exercises
- Ice-skating or roller-skating
- Playing tennis
- Riding a stationary bicycle indoors

Strength Training

Strength training, done several times a week, helps build strong bones and muscles and makes everyday chores like carrying heavy backpacks (or grocery bags) easier. When you have more muscle mass, you burn more calories, even at rest. Here are some ways to do it:

- Join a class to do strength training with weights, elastic bands, or plastic tubes (if your college has a gym, take advantage of it!)
- Lift light weights at home

Flexibility Exercises

Flexibility exercises, also called stretching, help keep your joints flexible and reduce your risk of injury during other activities. Gentle stretching for 5 to 10 minutes helps your body warm up and get ready for aerobic activities such as walking or swimming. Check to see if your college offers yoga, stretching, and/or pilates classes, and give one a try.

Being Active Throughout the Day

In addition to formal exercise, there are many opportunities to be active throughout the day. Being active helps burns calories. The more you move around, the more energy you will have. The following strategies can help you increase your activity level:

- Walk instead of drive whenever possible
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Work in the garden, rake leaves, or do some housecleaning every day
- Park at the far end of the campus lot and walk to class

Benefits of Exercise and Physical Fitness

Longevity

Exercise, even after age fifty, can add healthy, active years to one's life. Studies continue to show that it's never too late to start exercising and that even small improvements in physical fitness can significantly lower the risk of death. Simply walking regularly can prolong your life.

Moderately fit people—even if they smoke or have high blood pressure—have a lower mortality rate than the least fit. Resistance training is important because it's the only form of exercise that can slow and even reverse the decline of muscle mass, bone

density, and strength. Adding workouts that focus on speed and agility can be especially protective for older people. Flexibility exercises help reduce the stiffness and loss of balance that accompanies aging.

Diabetes

Diabetes, particularly type 2, is reaching epidemic proportions throughout the world as more and more cultures adopt Western-style diets (which tend to be high in sugar and fat). Aerobic exercise is proving to have significant and particular benefits for people with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes; it increases sensitivity to insulin, lowers blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, and decreases body fat. In fact, studies show that people who engage in regular, moderate aerobic exercise (e.g., brisk walking, biking) lower their risk for diabetes even if they do not lose weight. Anyone on insulin or who has complications from diabetes should get advice from a physician before embarking on a workout program.

Brain: Mood, Memory, Creativity

In addition to keeping your heart healthy, helping with weight loss, and helping you live longer, regular exercise can also improve your mood and help keep depression and anxiety at bay. The following video explains why and challenges you to give it a try:

YouTube Video

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If you still aren't persuaded, check out this slightly longer but excellent Tedx Talk, which describes how aerobic exercise can improve your cognitive functioning, memory, and creativity:

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

Activity: Develop an Exercise Program

Objective

- Plan a regular exercise program that works for you

Directions

- Sometimes getting started is the hardest part of being physically active. The important thing is to find activities you like to do, so you'll stick with them. Watch the following video, which can help you understand how much activity you need to do on a regular basis and how you can get going on a sensible routine. The video includes personal stories from people—even busy people like you—who have discovered what works for them.

https://youtu.be/qNdoOd11Vi8

- List 3 physical activities that you enjoy doing or would like to try doing on a regular basis.
- Identify any special requirements or equipment you need before doing them (for example, gym membership, running shoes, etc.).
- Set a realistic, weekly exercise time goal for yourself (150 minutes or more per week is ideal, but start with what you can really do).
- Using a digital or printed calendar, plan and label the days of the week, times, and places that you plan to exercise. Specify the activity or activities that you intend to do. (For example: Monday, 6–7 a.m., 30 min on stationary bike, college gym; Wednesday, 2–3 p.m., 60 min speed-walking with Maya, Riverside Park; Saturday, 1–2 p.m, lift weights, college gym.)
- Track your progress for one week, recording the amount of time you actually exercised. If you engaged in any unplanned physical activities (say you ended up riding your bike to school instead of taking the bus), include those, too.
- Write about your experience in a short journal entry (1–2 pages) and reflect on what you learned:
  - What kinds of exercise did you engage in, and which did you enjoy the most?
  - What was your weekly time goal? Did you meet it?
  - What worked or didn't work?
  - What might you need to change in order to make exercise a regular habit?
- Follow your instructor's instructions for submitting assignments.

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6.2.3: Sleep



Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together. —Thomas Dekker

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify benefits of sleep for both physical and mental health
- Examine your current sleep habits
- Identify ways to ensure good sleep habits and high-quality sleep, especially during periods of stress

The Benefits of Slumber

We have so many demands on our time—school, jobs, family, errands, not to mention finding some time to relax. To fit everything in, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. Like exercise and a healthy diet, it's vital to your well-being.

Of course, sleep helps you feel rested each day. But while you're sleeping, your brain and body don't just shut down. Internal organs and processes are hard at work throughout the night. Sleep can help you "lock in" everything you're studying and trying to remember.

"Sleep services all aspects of our body in one way or another: molecular, energy balance, as well as intellectual function, alertness and mood," says Dr. Merrill Mitler, a sleep expert and neuroscientist at NIH.

When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes, and focus better. "The fact is, when we look at well-rested people, they're operating at a different level than people trying to get by on one or two hours less nightly sleep," says Mitler.

"Loss of sleep impairs your higher levels of reasoning, problem-solving, and attention to detail," Mitler explains. Tired people tend to be less productive at work and school. They're at a much higher risk for traffic accidents. Lack of sleep also influences your mood, which can affect how you interact with others. A sleep deficit over time can even put you at greater risk for developing depression.

But sleep isn't just essential for the brain. "Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies," says Dr. Michael Twery, a sleep expert at NIH. "It affects growth and stress hormones, our immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure and cardiovascular health."

Research shows that lack of sleep increases the risk for obesity, heart disease, and infections. Throughout the night, your heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure rise and fall, a process that may be important for cardiovascular health. Your body releases hormones during sleep that help repair cells and control the body's use of energy. These hormone changes can affect your body weight.

"Ongoing research shows a lack of sleep can produce diabetic-like conditions in otherwise healthy people," says Mitler.

Recent studies also reveal that sleep can affect the efficiency of vaccinations. Twery described research showing that well-rested people who received the flu vaccine developed stronger protection against the illness.

A good night's sleep consists of four to five sleep cycles. Each cycle includes periods of deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, when we dream. "As the night goes on, the portion of that cycle that is in REM sleep increases. It turns out that this pattern of cycling and progression is critical to the biology of sleep," Twery says.

Sleep can be disrupted by many things. Stimulants such as caffeine or certain medications can keep you up. Distractions such as electronics—especially the light from TVs, cell phones, tablets and e-readers—can prevent you from falling asleep.

How Much Sleep Do We Need?

The amount of sleep each person needs depends on many factors, including age, and getting a full night of *quality* sleep is important. Infants generally require about sixteen hours a day, while teenagers need about nine hours on average. For most adults, seven to eight hours a night appears to be the best amount of sleep. The amount of sleep a person needs also increases if he or she has been deprived of sleep in previous days. Getting too little sleep creates a "sleep debt," which is a lot like being overdrawn at a bank. Eventually, your body will demand that the debt be repaid. We don't seem to adapt to getting less sleep than we need; while we may get used to a sleep-depriving schedule, our judgment, reaction time, and other functions are still impaired. If you're a student, that means that sleep-deprivation may prevent you from studying, learning, and performing as well as you can.

People tend to sleep more lightly and for shorter time spans as they get older, although they generally need about the same amount of sleep as they needed in early adulthood. Experts say that if you feel drowsy during the day, even during boring activities, you haven't had enough sleep. If you routinely fall asleep within five minutes of lying down, you probably have severe sleep deprivation, possibly even a sleep disorder. "Microsleeps," or very brief episodes of sleep in an otherwise awake person, are another mark of sleep deprivation. In many cases, people are not aware that they are experiencing microsleeps. The widespread practice of "burning the candle at both ends" in western industrialized societies has created so much sleep deprivation that what is really abnormal sleepiness is now almost the norm.

Many studies make it clear that sleep deprivation is dangerous. Sleep-deprived people who are tested by using a driving simulator or by performing a hand-eye coordination task perform as badly as or worse than those who are intoxicated. Sleep deprivation also magnifies alcohol's effects on the body, so a fatigued person who drinks will become much more impaired than someone who is well rested. Driver fatigue is responsible for an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle accidents and 1,500 deaths each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Since drowsiness is the brain's last step before falling asleep, driving while drowsy can—and often does—lead to disaster. Caffeine and other stimulants cannot overcome the effects of severe sleep deprivation. The National Sleep Foundation says that if you have trouble keeping your eyes focused, if you can't stop yawning, or if you can't remember driving the last few miles, you are probably too drowsy to drive safely.

Activity: Assess Your Sleep Habits

Objective

- Examine your current sleep habits

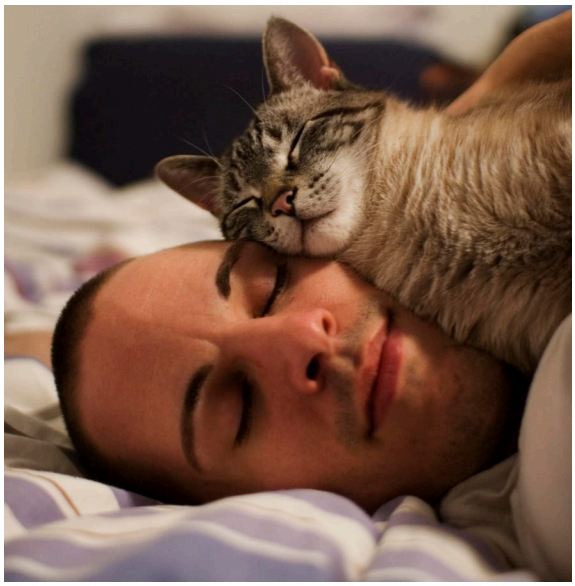
Directions

- Take a few minutes to review and assess your own sleep habits. Are you getting enough?

Check the appropriate boxes:	Usually	Sometimes	Never
I get 7–8 hours of sleep at night.			
I feel sleepy or have trouble focusing during the day.			
I take a nap when I feel drowsy or need more sleep.			
I fall asleep or have trouble staying awake in class.			
I fall asleep while studying.			
I stay up all night to study for exams or write papers.			

- Track how much sleep you get each night during a one-week period.
- At the end of the week, write a short journal entry (1–2 pages) in which you reflect on your current sleep habits:
  - How many hours of sleep do you think you need every night to function at your best? How can you tell?
  - On an average, how many hours of sleep did you get on weeknights?
  - On average, how many hours of sleep did you get on weekend nights?
- How would you rank the importance of sleep compared with studying, working, spending time with friends/family, and other activities? What things get in the way of your consistently getting enough sleep?
- What changes can you make to your schedule and/or routines that might improve your sleep habits?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

Falling Asleep and Getting a Good Night's Rest



Many people, especially those who feel stressed, anxious, or overworked, have a hard time falling asleep and/or staying asleep, and this can shorten the amount of time and the quality of sleep when it actually comes. The following tips can help you get to sleep, stay asleep, and wake up feeling well rested:

- **Set a schedule**: Go to bed at a set time each night and get up at the same time each morning. Disrupting this schedule may lead to insomnia. "Sleeping in" on weekends also makes it harder to wake up early on Monday morning because it resets your sleep cycles for a later awakening.
- **Exercise**: Try to exercise 20 to 30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep, although a workout soon before bedtime may interfere with sleep. For maximum benefit, try to get your exercise about 5 to 6 hours before going to bed.
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed**: Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, which acts as a stimulant and keeps people awake. Sources of caffeine include coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs, and some pain relievers. Smokers tend to sleep very lightly and often wake up in the early morning due to nicotine withdrawal. Alcohol robs people of deep sleep and REM sleep and keeps them in the lighter stages of sleep.
- **Relax before bed**: A warm bath, reading, or another relaxing routine can make it easier to fall sleep. It's also a good idea to put away books, homework, and screens (computer and phone) at least 30 minutes before bed. You can train yourself to

associate certain restful activities with sleep and make them part of your bedtime ritual.
- **Sleep until sunlight**: If possible, wake up with the sun, or use very bright lights in the morning. Sunlight helps the body's internal biological clock reset itself each day. Sleep experts recommend exposure to an hour of morning sunlight for people having problems falling asleep.
- **Don't lie in bed awake**: If you can't get to sleep, don't just lie in bed. Do something else, like reading or listening to music, until you feel tired. (Avoid digital screens, though: watching TV, and being on the computer or a smartphone are too stimulating and will actually make you more wakeful.) The anxiety of being unable to fall asleep can actually contribute to insomnia.
- **Control your room temperature**: Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep or prevent you from falling asleep.
- **Screen out noise and light**: Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and noise of loud roommates, etc.
- **See a doctor if your sleeping problem continues**: If you have trouble falling asleep night after night, or if you always feel tired the next day, then you may have a sleep disorder and should see a physician. Your primary care physician may be able to help you; if not, you can probably find a sleep specialist at a major hospital near you. Most sleep disorders can be treated effectively, so you can finally get that good night's sleep you need.

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6.2.4: Substance Abuse



An overindulgence of anything, even something as pure as water, can intoxicate. —Criss Jami, author

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain what substance use and abuse is and identify the warning signs that help may be needed
- Describe the effects of smoking cigarettes on the body
- Describe the effects of alcohol use and abuse on the body
- Describe the effects of prescription and illegal drug use and abuse on the body
- Identify resources for further information and guidance about substance abuse

Introduction

A drug is a chemical substance that can change how your body and mind work. Drugs of abuse are substances that people use to get high and change how they feel. They may be illegal drugs like pot, cocaine, or heroin. Or they may be legal for adults only, like alcohol and tobacco.

Medicines that treat illness can also become drugs of abuse when people take them to get high—not because they're sick and following their doctor's orders. People can even abuse cough or cold medicines from the store if they ignore the directions and take too much at one time.

People abuse drugs for many reasons:

- **They want to feel good.** Taking a drug can feel really good for a short time. That's why people keep taking them—to have those good feelings again and again. But even though someone may take more and more of a drug, the good feelings don't last. Soon the person is taking the drug just to keep from feeling bad.
- **They want to stop feeling bad.** Some people who feel very worried, afraid, or sad abuse drugs to try to stop feeling so awful. This doesn't really help their problems and can lead to addiction, which can make them feel much worse.
- **They want to do well in school or at work.** Some people who want to get good grades, get a better job, or earn more money might think drugs will give them more energy, keep them awake, or make them think faster. But it usually doesn't work, may put their health at risk, and may lead to addiction.

Cigarettes and Tobacco

It might surprise you to learn that cigarettes and other forms of tobacco are drugs. It's legal to use tobacco once you're 18 or 19 years old, depending on where you live. But it's not healthy for you at any age.

Tobacco contains nicotine, a substance that excites the parts of the brain that make you feel good. You can get addicted to nicotine just like other drugs.

When you use tobacco, the nicotine quickly gives you a mild rush of pleasure and energy. But it soon wears off, which makes you want to use it some more. Sometimes, the rush of energy that comes with nicotine can make you nervous and edgy.

Electronic cigarettes: Read NIDA's DrugFacts: Electronic Cigarettes (e-Cigarettes) for information about electronic cigarettes, including how safe they are compared to tobacco cigarettes.

Effects of Cigarettes and Tobacco on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems cigarettes and tobacco can cause:

Lung diseases: Cigarette smoke causes lung cancer and painful breathing diseases like emphysema. These diseases can happen to people who smoke, or to others around them who breathe in their smoke.

Bad breath, bad teeth, mouth cancer: Cigarettes and other kinds of tobacco stain teeth and cause bad breath. Chewing tobacco can make teeth fall out and lead to cancer of the mouth.

Heart and blood problems: If you smoke, you are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke (sometimes called a "brain attack").

Hurts babies: If a pregnant woman uses tobacco, her baby might be born too early or too small. This can cause health problems for the baby.

More diseases: Using cigarettes or other kinds of tobacco can lead to heart disease and many kinds of cancer.

Addiction: The nicotine in tobacco is what makes you addicted. When you smoke, the effects wear off quickly. This makes you want to keep using tobacco again and again throughout the day. The more you do this, the more your body and brain get addicted to the nicotine. Fortunately, there are medicines, other treatments, and hotlines that can help people quit tobacco.

Alcohol

Drinks like beer, malt liquor, wine, and hard liquor contain alcohol. Alcohol is the ingredient that gets you drunk.

Hard liquor—such as whiskey, rum, or gin—has more alcohol in it than beer, malt liquor, or wine.

The following drink sizes contain about the same amount of alcohol:

- 1 ½ ounces of hard liquor
- 5 ounces of wine
- 8 ounces of malt liquor
- 12 ounces of beer

Being drunk can make a person feel very silly, angry, or sad for no reason. It can make it hard to walk in a straight line, talk clearly, or drive.

Effects of Alcohol on the Body and Brain

Drinking too much–on a single occasion or over time—can take a serious toll on your health. Here's how alcohol can affect your body and brain:

- **Brain:** Alcohol interferes with the brain's communication pathways and can affect the way the brain looks and works. These disruptions can change mood and behavior, and make it harder to think clearly and move with coordination.

- **Heart:** Drinking a lot over a long time or too much on a single occasion can damage the heart, causing problems such as stroke, high blood pressure, and arrhythmia.
- **Liver:** Heavy drinking takes a toll on the liver and can lead to a variety of problems such as alcoholic hepatitis, fibrosis, and cirrhosis
- **Pancreas:** Alcohol causes the pancreas to produce toxic substances that can eventually lead to pancreatitis, a dangerous inflammation and swelling of the blood vessels in the pancreas that prevents proper digestion.
- **Cancer:** Drinking too much alcohol can increase your risk of developing certain cancers, including cancers of the mouth, esophagus, throat, liver, and breast.
- **Immune system:** Drinking too much can weaken your immune system, making your body a much easier target for disease. Chronic drinkers are more liable to contract diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis than people who do not drink too much. Drinking a lot on a single occasion slows your body's ability to ward off infections—even up to twenty-hour hours after getting drunk.

So how much is "drinking too much"? The following guidelines are from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:

Drinking Levels Defined

- **Moderate alcohol consumption**: According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, moderate drinking is up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men.
- **Binge drinking**: Binge drinking is a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels to 0.08 g/dL. This typically occurs after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours. Binge drinking has become a major health and safety issue on college campuses.
- **Heavy drinking**: Heavy drinking is defined as drinking 5 or more drinks on the same occasion on each of 5 or more days in the past 30 days.
- **Low risk for developing an alcohol use disorder**: For women, low-risk drinking is no more than 3 drinks on any single day and no more than 7 drinks per week. For men, it's defined as no more than 4 drinks on any single day and no more than 14 drinks per week. NIAAA research shows that only about 2 in 100 people who drink within these limits have an alcohol use disorder. Even within these limits, you can have problems if you drink too quickly or have other health issues.

Certain people should avoid alcohol completely, including those who

- Plan to drive a vehicle or operate machinery
- Take medications that interact with alcohol
- Have a medical condition that alcohol can aggravate
- Are pregnant or trying to become pregnant



Marijuana

Marijuana is a green, brown, or gray mix of dried, crumbled leaves from the marijuana plant. It can be rolled up and smoked like a cigarette (called a joint) or a cigar (called a blunt). Marijuana can also be smoked in a pipe. Sometimes people mix it in food and eat it.

Marijuana can make you feel silly, relaxed, sleepy, and happy—or nervous and scared. It may change your senses of sight, hearing, and touch. It can also make it hard to think clearly.

Effects of Marijuana on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems marijuana can cause:

- **Memory problems**: Marijuana makes it hard to remember things that just happened a few minutes ago. That makes it hard to learn in school or to pay attention to your job. A recent study showed that if you begin regular marijuana use as a teen, you can lose an average of 8 IQ points, and do not get them back, even if you stop using the drug.
- **Heart problems**: Using marijuana makes the heart beat fast and raises your risk of having a heart attack.
- **Coughing and breathing problems**: Marijuana smokers can get some of the same coughing and breathing problems as cigarette smokers. Marijuana smoke can hurt your lungs.
- **Drugged driving**: Driving when you're high on marijuana is dangerous, just like driving drunk. Your reactions to traffic signs and sounds are slow. It's hard to pay attention to the road. And it's even worse when you're high on marijuana and alcohol at the same time.
- **You stop caring**: Over time, marijuana users can get "burnt out." They don't think about much or do much. They can't concentrate. They don't seem to care about anything.
- **Addiction**: Although some people don't know it, you can get addicted to marijuana after using it for a while. This is more likely to happen to people who use marijuana every day, or who started using it when they were teenagers.

Cocaine (Coke, Crack)

Cocaine is a white powder. It can be snorted up the nose or mixed with water and injected with a needle. Cocaine can also be made into small white rocks, called crack. It's called crack because when the rocks are heated, they make a cracking sound. Crack is smoked in a small glass pipe.

Cocaine can make a person feel full of energy, but also restless, scared, or angry.

Effects of Cocaine on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems cocaine can cause:

- **You feel sick**: Cocaine can cause stomach pain and headaches. It can make you shake, throw up, or pass out.
- **No appetite**: Cocaine can make you not want to eat. Over time, you might lose a lot of weight and get sick.
- **Heart attack and stroke**: Cocaine raises your blood pressure and makes your heart beat faster. This can hurt your heart. It can give you a heart attack or stroke (brain injury from a blood clot). Some people die because of it.
- **HIV/AIDS, hepatitis**: People who inject (shoot up) cocaine can get HIV/AIDS and hepatitis (a liver disease) if they share used needles. People also get these diseases by having unsafe sex. They may forget to use condoms because they're high on the drug.
- **Addiction**: It is easy to lose control over cocaine use and become addicted. Then, even if you get treatment, it can be hard to stay off the drug. People who stopped using cocaine can still feel strong cravings for the drug, sometimes even years later.

Heroin

Heroin is a white or brown powder or a black, sticky goo. It can be mixed with water and injected with a needle. Heroin can also be smoked or snorted up the nose.

Heroin causes a rush of good feelings just after it's taken. But some people throw up or itch after taking it. For the next several

hours you want to sleep, and your heart rate and breathing slow down. Then the drug wears off and you may feel a strong urge to take more.

Effects of Heroin on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems heroin can cause:

- **Sick and itchy**: Heroin can make you throw up and feel very itchy.
- **You stop breathing**: Heroin can slow or stop your breathing. It can kill you.
- **HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis**: Sharing used needles to inject (shoot up) heroin can give you HIV/AIDS and hepatitis (a liver disease).
- **Overdose**: People overdose on heroin because they can't tell how strong it is until they take it. Signs of a heroin overdose are slow breathing, blue lips and fingernails, cold clammy skin, and shaking. You can die from a heroin overdose. People who might be overdosing should be taken to the emergency room immediately.
- **Coma**: Heroin can put you in a coma. That's when nothing can wake you up, and you may die.
- **Addiction**: It is very easy to become addicted to heroin. Then, even if you get treatment, it's hard to stay away from the drug. People who stopped using heroin can still feel strong cravings for the drug, sometimes years later. Fortunately, there are medicines that can help someone recover from heroin addiction.

Meth (Crank, Ice)

Methamphetamine—meth for short—is a white, bitter powder. Sometimes it's made into a white pill or a clear or white shiny rock (called a crystal).

Meth powder can be eaten or snorted up the nose. It can also be mixed with liquid and injected into your body with a needle. Crystal meth is smoked in a small glass pipe.

Meth at first causes a rush of good feelings, but then users feel edgy, overly excited, angry, or afraid. Their thoughts and actions go really fast. They might feel too hot.

Effects of Meth on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems meth can cause:

- **You overheat**: Meth can make your body temperature so hot that you pass out. Sometimes this can kill you.
- **Crank bugs**: Meth can make you feel like bugs are crawling on or under your skin. It makes you scratch a lot. Scratching causes sores on your face and arms.
- **Meth mouth**: Meth users' teeth become broken, stained, and rotten. Meth users often drink lots of sweet things, grind their teeth, and have dry mouth. This is called "meth mouth."
- **You look old**: People who use meth start looking old. Meth users burn a lot of energy and don't eat well. This can make them lose weight and look sick. Their hands or body might shake. Their skin looks dull and has sores and pimples that don't heal. Their mouth looks sunken as the teeth go bad.
- **HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis**: People who inject (shoot up) meth can get HIV/AIDS or hepatitis (a liver disease) if they share used needles. People also get these diseases by having unsafe sex. They often forget to use condoms because they're high on the drug.
- **Addiction**: Meth use can quickly lead to addiction and hurt different parts of your brain. It can cause thinking and emotional problems that don't go away or that come back again even after you quit using the drug. For instance, you might feel, hear, or see things that aren't there. You might think that people are out to get you, or start believing strange ideas that can't really be true.

Prescription Pain Medicine (OxyContin, Vicodin)

Pain medicines relieve pain from surgery or injuries. You need a prescription from a doctor to buy some strong kinds of these medicines. Prescription pain medicines are legal and helpful to use when a doctor orders them to treat your medical problem.

But people sometimes take these without a doctor's prescription to get high or to try to treat themselves or their friends. Drug dealers sell these pills just like they sell heroin or cocaine. Some people borrow or steal these pills from other people.

Some people think that prescription pain medicines are safer to abuse than “street” drugs because they are medicines. Prescription pain medicine abuse can be as dangerous as heroin or cocaine abuse.

Oxycodone is one pain medicine that people often abuse. Sometimes it goes by the brand names OxyContin® or Percocet®. Another one that is often abused is hydrocodone. One of its brand names is Vicodin®.

Pain medicines are usually white, round, or oval pills. They can be taken whole, smoked, or crushed into a powder that is snorted or injected.

Like heroin, pain pills can cause a rush of good feeling when they’re first taken, but they can also make you want to throw up. They can make you very sleepy, and you can get addicted to them.

Effects of Pain Medicine Abuse on the Body and Brain

These are just some of the problems pain medicine abuse can cause:

- **You stop breathing**: Pain medicine abuse can slow down or even stop your breathing.
- **Coma**: Pain medicine abuse can put you in a coma. That’s when nothing can wake you up.
- **Addiction**: Prescription pain medicines can be as addictive as heroin—especially if they are smoked or injected. Then, even if you get treatment, it’s hard to stay away from the drug. Fortunately, there are medicines that can help someone recover from prescription pain medicine addiction.
- **Overdose**: Signs of a pain medicine overdose are cold and sweaty skin, confusion, shaking, extreme sleepiness, trouble breathing, and coma.
- **Death**: Many people die from pain medicine overdoses. In fact, more people overdose from pain medicines every year than from heroin and cocaine combined.

Other Drugs of Abuse

There are many other drugs of abuse, including:

Ecstasy (X, E, XTC) is a pill that is often taken at parties and clubs. It is sometimes called the “love drug” because it makes people feel very friendly and touchy. It also raises body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure, and can make you feel sad for days after its effects wear off. Click here for more information about ecstasy.

K2 or Spice (fake weed, Skunk) is a drug made from shredded dried plant materials and chemicals. It is usually smoked. The “high” feels about the same as the “high” from marijuana. Spice users sometimes end up in the emergency room with rapid heart rates, vomiting and other uncomfortable side effects. K2/Spice is illegal. Click here for more information about K2/Spice.

LSD (acid) comes in pills or on small pieces of paper that have been soaked in liquid LSD. It makes you see, hear, and feel things that aren’t there. You might see bright colors, pretty pictures, or things that scare you. Click here for more information about LSD.

PCP (angel dust) is a pill or powder that can be eaten, smoked, or snorted up the nose. It makes people feel far away from the world around them. PCP often makes people feel angry and violent, not happy and dreamy. Click here for more information about PCP.

Inhalants are dangerous chemicals that make you feel high when you breathe them into your lungs (also called huffing or sniffing). These chemicals are found in household cleaners, spray cans, glue, and even permanent markers. Inhalants can make you pass out, stop your heart and your breathing, and kill you. Click here for more information about inhalants.

Club Drugs
Some drugs are called “club drugs” because they are sometimes passed around at nightclubs and parties:

- **GHB** is a liquid or powder that can make you pass out. It’s called a “date rape” drug because someone can secretly put it in your drink. This means that you can’t fight back or defend yourself. Then they will have sex with you without your permission.
- **Rohypnol** (roofies) is a date rape pill and can also be put in a drink.
- **Ketamine** (K, Special K) makes you feel far away from what’s going on around you and can feel scary and unpleasant. It is usually taken by mouth, snorted up the nose, or injected with a needle.

- Click here for more information about these drugs.

Bath Salts are drugs made with chemicals like the “upper” found in the Khat plant. They are only sold with the name “Bath Salts” to make them look harmless. These drugs can make you “high” but they can also make you shaky, afraid, and violent. They look like a white or brown shiny powder and are sold in small packages labeled “not for human consumption.” They can be taken by mouth, by inhaling into the lungs, or with a needle. Some people end up in the emergency room or even die after taking bath salts. Click here for more information about bath salts.

When and Where to Get Help

Here’s a simple way to think about substance use and abuse: If your use of drugs or alcohol is interfering with your life—negatively affecting your health, work, school, relationships, or finances—it’s time to quit or seek help. People who are addicted to a substance continue to abuse even though they know it can harm their physical or mental health, lead to accidents, or put others in danger. The following video dispels some myths about who is at risk of addiction:

https://youtu.be/SY2luGTX7Dk

Consequences of High-risk College Drinking Chart - Deaths 1,825; Sexual Assaults 97,000; Injuries 599,000; and Assaults 696,00

Know that first six weeks of the first semester is an especially critical and vulnerable time for most first-year students. Because lots of students get into the habit of drinking heavily and partying during these early days of college, there’s a risk that excessive alcohol consumption will interfere with successful adaptation to campus life. The transition to college is often difficult, and about one-third of first-year students fail to enroll for their second year.

If you are concerned about your drug or alcohol use, or you need help quitting, visit the student health center or talk with your college counselor. These folks are there to help you—it’s their job to provide information and support.

If you need additional resources or help, the following are good places to check:

- Drug Information Online
- Prevention Hub
- Drug and Alcohol Treatment Hotline: 1-800-662-HELP

Activity: When and Where to Get Help for Substance Abuse

Objectives

- Explain what substance use and abuse is and identify the warning signs that help may be needed
- Identify resources for further information and guidance about substance abuse

Directions

- Pick a topic: Choose alcohol or one of the drugs discussed in this section on Substance Abuse.
- Consider the following scenario: You suspect that one of your college friends may be abusing this drug. Your goal is to educate yourself about the signs of abuse and collect resources that you can share with him/her.
- Visit one of the following Web sites to get initial relevant information on your topic. You can research other sites, if you chose a topic that’s not listed here.
  - Cigarettes/Tobacco
  - Alcohol
  - Marijuana
  - Cocaine
  - Heroin
  - Meth
  - Prescription Pain Medicines
- Research additional sites to identify local resources where someone like your friend might go, or places to call, for help.

- Creative writing assignment: Write a 2-page letter to the fictional friend in which you share your concerns about his/her behavior and offer to help. Be sure to touch on the following:
  - The type of substance
  - The behavior(s) you've noticed your friend engaging in that worry you and cause you to suspect a substance abuse problem
  - The source of your information, which you're sharing with your friend. For example: "I learned about the signs of heroin abuse from this Web site: . . ."
  - Why you think your friend should quit using or cut down
  - Your suggestions for what your friend should do and where to seek help. Give the names and contact information for at least 3 resources/organizations you found.
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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6.2.5: Stress



Being in control of your life and having realistic expectations about your day-to-day challenges are the keys to stress management, which is perhaps the most important ingredient to living a happy, healthy and rewarding life. —Marilu Henner, actress

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify sources of stress, particularly for college students
- Describe the symptoms and effects of chronic stress
- List healthy ways of managing stress that fit your current lifestyle

Causes of Stress

As a student, you're probably plenty familiar with the experience of stress—a condition characterized by symptoms of physical or emotional tension. What you may not know is that it's a natural response of the mind and body to a situation in which a person feels threatened or anxious. Stress can be positive (e.g., preparing for a wedding) or negative (e.g., dealing with a natural disaster).

Stress can hit you when you least expect it—before a test, after losing a job, or during conflict in a relationship. If you're a college student, it may feel like stress is a persistent fact of life. While everyone experiences stress at times, a prolonged bout of it can affect your health and ability to cope with life. That's why social support and self-care are important. They can help you see your problems in perspective . . . and the stressful feelings ease up.

Sometimes stress can be good. For instance, it can help you develop skills needed to manage potentially challenging or threatening situations in life. However, stress can be harmful when it is severe enough to make you feel overwhelmed and out of control.

Strong emotions like fear, sadness, or other symptoms of depression are normal, as long as they are temporary and don't interfere with daily activities. If these emotions last too long or cause other problems, it's a different story.

Signs and Effects of Stress

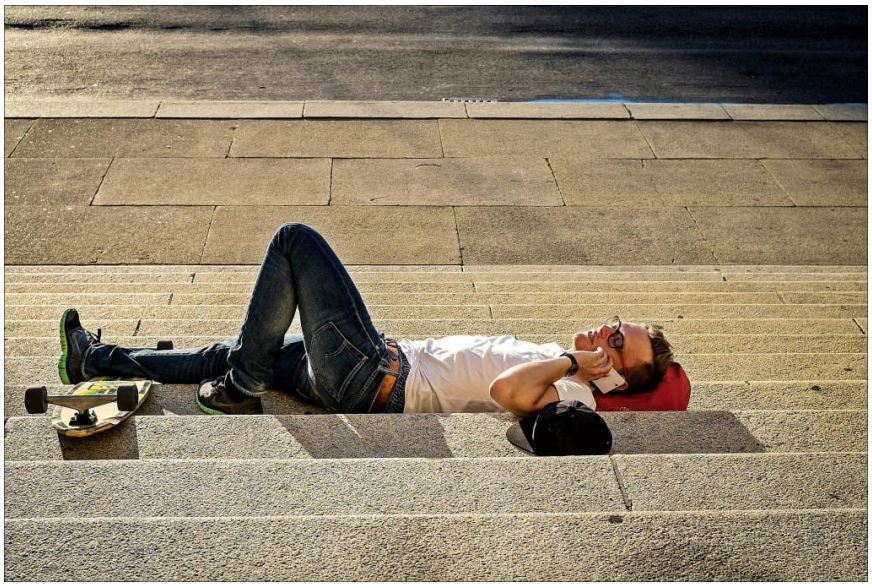
Physical or emotional tension are often signs of stress. They can be reactions to a situation that causes you to feel threatened or anxious. The following are all common symptoms of stress:

- Disbelief and shock
- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being numb to one's feelings
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of appetite (or increased appetite)
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Anger
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness and other symptoms of depression
- Feeling powerless
- Crying
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Trouble concentrating

It's not only unpleasant to live with the tension and symptoms of ongoing stress; it's actually harmful to your body, too. Chronic stress can impair your immune system and disrupt almost all of your body's processes, leading to increased risk of numerous health problems, including the following:[1]

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways of coping with the stressors in your life.



Ways of Managing Stress

The best strategy for managing stress is by taking care of yourself in the following ways:

- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** They may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run they can create more problems and add to your stress—instead of taking it away.
- **Manage your time.** Work on prioritizing and scheduling your commitments. This will help you feel in better control of your

life, which, in turn, will mean less stress.

- **Find support.** Seek help from a friend, family member, partner, counselor, doctor, or clergy person. Having a sympathetic listening ear and talking about your problems and stress really can lighten the burden.
- **Connect socially.** When you feel stressed, it's easy to isolate yourself. Try to resist this impulse and stay connected. Make time to enjoy being with classmates, friends, and family; try to schedule study breaks that you can take with other people.
- **Slow down and cut out distractions for a while**. Take a break from your phone, email, and social media.
- **Take care of your health.**
  - Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
  - Exercise regularly
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Try a relaxation technique, such as meditation or yoga, or treat yourself to a massage
  - Maintain a normal routine

The following video features a progressive muscle relaxation meditation for you to try. There are many many others available on YouTube and elsewhere.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

If the self-care techniques listed above aren't enough and stress is seriously interfering with your studies or life, don't be afraid to get help. The student health center and college counselors are both good resources.

Activity: Reduce Your Stress Level

Objective

- List healthy ways of managing stress that fit your current lifestyle

Directions

- Identify at least three things you currently do to cope with stress that aren't working or aren't good for you.
- Identify healthy replacements for each of them, and write yourself a "stress-relief prescription" that you plan to follow for one week. Try to include one stress management technique to use every day. At the end of the week, respond to the following prompts in a short, reflective essay (1–2 pages):
  - Which ineffective or unhealthy coping strategies did you set out to change and why?
  - Which stress-relief techniques did you try during the week? Were any of them new for you? Which ones were most effective?
  - How much do you think stress affects you in your current life at college? Do you feel like you have it under control or not? If not, what else might you do to reduce your stress level?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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6.2.6: Mental Health



It is only in sorrow bad weather masters us; in joy we face the storm and defy it. —Amelia Barr, British author

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify the difference between occasional negative emotions and more serious mental health issues, such as anxiety disorder or depression
- Explore practices for ensuring mental health and emotional balance in your life
- Identify resources for further information and guidance about mental health issues

Mental Health Basics

Knowing how to take care of your mental health when you're in college is just as important as maintaining your physical health. In fact, there's a strong link between the two: doctors are finding that positive mental health can actually improve your physical health.

So, what is "mental health"? *Mental health* can be defined as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."[1] Having good mental health doesn't necessarily mean being happy or successful all the time. Most people feel depressed, lonely, or anxious now and then, but those with good mental health can take these feelings in stride and overcome them. When such feelings or moods persist and interfere with a person's ability to function normally, though, it may be a sign of a more serious mental health problem and time to seek help.

The term *mental illness* refers to mental disorders or health conditions characterized by "alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning."[2] Depression is the most common type of mental illness, and it affects more than 26 percent of the U.S. adult population. It has been estimated that by the year 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability throughout the world, trailing only ischemic heart disease.

Evidence has shown that mental disorders, especially depressive disorders, are strongly linked to the occurrence and course of many chronic diseases—including diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, and obesity and many risk behaviors for chronic disease, such as physical inactivity, smoking, excessive drinking, and insufficient sleep. In other words, if your mental health is poor, you may be at greater risk for disease and poor physical health.

Mental Health Indicators

In the public health arena, more emphasis and resources have been devoted to screening, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness than mental health. Little has been done to protect the mental health of those who are free from mental illness. There are some known indicators of mental health, including the following:

- Emotional well-being: life satisfaction, happiness, cheerfulness, peacefulness.
- Psychological well-being: self-acceptance, personal growth including openness to new experiences, optimism, hopefulness, purpose in life, control of one's environment, spirituality, self-direction, and positive relationships.
- Social well-being: social acceptance, belief in the potential of people and society as a whole, personal self-worth and usefulness to society, and a sense of community.

The former surgeon general suggests that there are social determinants of mental health—just as there are social determinants of general health—that need to be in place to support mental health. These include adequate housing, safe neighborhoods, equitable jobs and wages, quality education, and equity in access to quality health care.

There are also some common-sense strategies that you can adopt to support and improve your emotional, psychological, and social health. Not surprisingly, they are very similar to the strategies one uses to cope with stress:

- Eat a balanced diet
- Get enough sleep
- Get regular physical activity
- Stay socially connected with friends and family
- Make smart choices about alcohol and drugs
- Get help if you are anxious or depressed

Depression

Depression is a common but serious mood disorder that's more than just a feeling of "being down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working. To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two weeks.

If you have been experiencing some of the following signs and symptoms most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. Current research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. It usually starts between the ages of fifteen and thirty, and is much more common in women. Women can also get postpartum depression after the birth of a baby. Some people get seasonal affective disorder in the winter, when there is less natural sunlight. Depression is one part of bipolar disorder.

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is. Depression is usually treated with medications, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two.

There are days that you will feel down, especially when the demands of college get to you. These feelings are normal and will go away. If you are feeling low, try to take a break from the pressures of college and do something you enjoy. Spend time with friends, exercise, read a good book, listen to music, watch a movie, call a friend, talk to your family, or anything else that makes you feel good. If you feel depressed for two weeks, or the feeling keeps coming back, you should talk to a counselor in the health services/center. They see lots of students who are anxious, stressed, or depressed at college.

Loneliness

Most people experience occasional loneliness, and it's an especially common experience among first-time college students, who find themselves in an unfamiliar environment with a completely new social scene. Loneliness isn't necessarily about being alone—you can be surrounded by people and still feel alone. It's the *feeling* of being alone that counts, along with feeling empty, unwanted, or isolated. In the following Ted Talk, Sherrie Turkle describes how, in this age of near-constant digital "connection," loneliness is a challenge that faces us all:

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If you're feeling lonely, try taking Turkle's advice and start a conversation with someone. College is a great place to meet new people and develop new and interesting relationships. Others in college are new, just like you, and will welcome the chance to connect with and get to know another classmate. Try joining a campus interest group or club, play a team sport, or just ask another student if they'd like to meet for coffee or to study.

If feelings of loneliness persist, and especially if you also feel depressed, you should get help from a counselor or health services.

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are mental health illnesses that involve emotional and behavioral disturbance surrounding weight and food issues. The most common are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge eating disorder. Eating disorders can have life-threatening consequences.

Anorexia nervosa is characterized by self-starvation and extreme weight loss either through restriction or through binge-purging. This may frequently be a result of body dysmorphic disorder (a condition in which someone feels that their body looks differently than it actually does) or a result of other psychiatric complications such as OCD or depression. Starvation can cause harm to vital organs such as the heart and brain, can cause nails, hair, and bones to become brittle, and can make the skin dry and sometimes yellow or covered with soft hair. Menstrual periods can become irregular or stop completely.

People with **bulimia nervosa** eat large amounts of food (also called bingeing) at least two times a week and then vomit (also called purging) or exercise compulsively. Because many people who "binge and purge" maintain their body weight, they may keep their problem a secret for years. Vomiting can cause loss of important minerals, life-threatening heart arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat), damage to the teeth, and swelling of the throat. Bulimia can also cause irregular menstrual periods.

People who binge without purging also have a disorder called **binge eating disorder**. This is frequently associated with feelings of loss of control and shame surrounding eating. People who are diagnosed with this disorder tend to gain weight, and many will have all of the consequences of being overweight, including high blood pressure and other cardiac symptoms, diabetes, and musculoskeletal complaints.

If you think you might have an eating disorder, you should go to the student health center or counseling center and get help. Talk with your family and close friends. Going for help and talking to others about your feelings and illness can be very difficult, but it's the only way that you're going to get better. Many colleges have treatment programs for these conditions and trained counselors who can relate to people with an eating disorder.



Anxiety Disorders

People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread. They have physical reactions to those objects, such as a rapid heartbeat and sweating. An anxiety disorder is diagnosed if a person:

- Has an inappropriate response to a situation
- Cannot control the response
- Has an altered way of life due to the anxiety

Anxiety disorders include the following:

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a type of anxiety disorder. If you have OCD, you have repeated, upsetting thoughts called obsessions. You do the same thing over and over again to try to make the thoughts go away. Those repeated actions are called compulsions. Examples of obsessions are a fear of germs or a fear of being hurt. Compulsions include washing your hands, counting, checking on things or cleaning. Untreated, OCD can take over your life. Researchers think brain circuits may not work properly in people who have OCD. It tends to run in families. The symptoms often begin in children or teens. Treatments that combine medicines and therapy are often effective.

Panic disorder is a kind of anxiety disorder that causes panic attacks. Panic attacks are sudden feelings of terror for no reason. You may also feel physical symptoms, such as

- Fast heartbeat
- Chest pain
- Breathing difficulty
- Dizziness

Panic attacks can happen anytime, anywhere and without warning. You may live in fear of another attack and may avoid places where you have had an attack. For some people, fear takes over their lives and they cannot leave their homes.

Panic disorder is more common in women than men. It usually starts when people are young adults. Sometimes it starts when a person is under a lot of stress. Most people get better with treatment. Therapy can show you how to recognize and change your thinking patterns before they lead to panic. Medicines can also help.

A **phobia** is a strong, irrational fear of something that poses little or no actual danger. There are many specific phobias. Acrophobia is a fear of heights. You may be able to ski the world's tallest mountains but be unable to go above the fifth floor of an office building. Agoraphobia is a fear of public places, and claustrophobia is a fear of closed-in places. If you become anxious and extremely self-conscious in everyday social situations, you could have a social phobia. Other common phobias involve tunnels, highway driving, water, flying, animals, and blood. People with phobias try to avoid what they are afraid of. If they cannot, they may

experience

- Panic and fear
- Rapid heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling
- A strong desire to get away

Treatment helps most people with phobias. Options include medicines, therapy or both.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a real illness. You can get PTSD after living through or witnessing a traumatic event, such as war, a hurricane, rape, physical abuse, or a bad accident. PTSD makes you feel stressed and afraid after the danger is over. It affects your life and the people around you. PTSD can cause problems like

- Flashbacks, or feeling like the event is happening again
- Trouble sleeping or nightmares
- Feeling alone
- Angry outbursts
- Feeling worried, guilty, or sad

PTSD starts at different times for different people. Signs of PTSD may start soon after a frightening event and then continue. Other people develop new or more severe signs months or even years later. PTSD can happen to anyone, even children.

Medicines can help you feel less afraid and tense. It might take a few weeks for them to work. Talking to a specially trained doctor or counselor also helps many people with PTSD. This is called talk therapy.

Suicidal Behavior

Suicide causes immeasurable pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and communities nationwide. On average, 112 Americans die by suicide each day. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–24-year-olds, and more than 9.4 million adults in the United States had serious thoughts of suicide within the past twelve months. But suicide is preventable, so it's important to know what to do.

Warning Signs of Suicide

If someone you know is showing one or more of the following behaviors, he or she may be thinking about suicide. Don't ignore these warning signs. Get help immediately.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Get Help

If you or someone you know needs help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.273.TALK (8255). Trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, do not leave him or her alone—stay there and call 911.

Resources

OK2TALK is a community for young adults struggling with mental health problems. It offers a safe place to talk.

Activity

Objectives

- Identify the difference between occasional negative emotions and more serious mental health issues, such as anxiety disorder or depression
- Explore practices for ensuring mental health and emotional balance in your life
- Identify resources for further information and guidance about mental health issues

Directions

- Watch the following Tedx Talk, featuring college student Jack Park. In this talk, Jack shares his story of living with a mental disorder and revisits some of the ways he found help and hope. He makes the case for seeing mental illness in a new light, so that people can begin to address some of the issues associated with suicide, depression, and other preventable mental disorders.

YouTube Video

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- Write a short (1–2 pages) response paper in which you address the following questions:
  - What do you think of Jack's practice of changing his "to-do" lists into "want-to-do" lists? What does he hope to gain from this shift?
  - Which coping mechanisms does Jack observe his fellow students using to deal with stress and mental health challenges? What does Jack think is the deeper problem?
  - Why, in Jack's view, is it hard for people to get help for mental health problems in the same way they might seek help for dental problems?
  - Add your own thoughts about the obstacles you think students may face in getting help for mental health issues.
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.com/assessments/911

Contributors and Attributions

1. "Mental Health Basics." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013. Web. 22 Apr. 2016. ↵
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6.2.7: Sexual Health



In my day we didn't have sex education, we just picked up what we could off the television. —Victoria Wood, actress

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify sexually healthy behaviors, including protecting against unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease
- Identify risks of sexual assault, including date rape, and where to go for help

Sexuality is a big part of being human. Love, affection, and sexual intimacy all play a role in healthy relationships. They also contribute to your sense of well-being. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.

Your sexuality is your own private business, of course, but whether you abstain from sexual intercourse or decide to become or continue being sexually active, the decisions you make can affect the health and safety of your sexual partner(s)—just as their decisions can affect yours. Therefore, it's important to get the facts about what you can do to protect yourself (and your partner) from sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancy, and sexual violence.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

STDs are diseases that are passed from one person to another through sexual contact. These include chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV), syphilis, and HIV. Many of these STDs do not show symptoms for a long time, but they can still be harmful and passed on during sex.

You can get an STD by having sex (vaginal, anal, or oral) with someone who has an STD. Anyone who is sexually active can get an STD. You don't even have to "go all the way" (have anal or vaginal sex) to get an STD, since some STDs, like herpes and HPV, are spread by skin-to-skin contact.

STDs are common, especially among young people. There are about twenty million new cases of STDs each year in the United States, and about half of these are in people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. Young people are at greater risk of getting an STD for several reasons:

- Young women's bodies are biologically more susceptible to STDs.

- Some young people do not get the recommended STD tests.
- Many young people are hesitant to talk openly and honestly with a doctor or nurse about their sex lives.
- Not having insurance or transportation can make it more difficult for young people to access STD testing.
- Some young people have more than one sex partner.

Types of STDS

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a common STD that can infect both men and women. It can cause serious, permanent damage to a woman's reproductive system, making it difficult or impossible for her to get pregnant later on. Chlamydia can also cause a potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy that occurs outside the womb).

You can get chlamydia by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has chlamydia. If your sex partner is male you can still get chlamydia even if he does not ejaculate (cum). If you've had chlamydia and were treated in the past, you can still get infected again if you have unprotected sex with someone who has chlamydia. If you are pregnant, you can give chlamydia to your baby during childbirth.

Most people who have chlamydia have no symptoms. However, symptoms can include a burning sensation when urinating and/or discharge from the penis or vagina. If you do have symptoms, they may not appear until several weeks after you have sex with an infected partner. Even when chlamydia causes no symptoms, it can damage your reproductive system.

Chlamydia can be cured with the right treatment. When the medication is taken properly, it will stop the infection and could decrease your chances of having complications later on. Repeat infection with chlamydia is common. You should be tested again about three months after you are treated, even if your sex partner(s) was treated.

Genital Herpes

Genital herpes is an STD caused by two types of viruses. The viruses are called herpes simplex type 1 and herpes simplex type 2.

You can get herpes by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the disease. Fluids found in a herpes sore carry the virus, and contact with those fluids can cause infection. You can also get herpes from an infected sex partner who does not have a visible sore or who may not know he or she is infected because the virus can be released through your skin and spread the infection to your sex partner(s).

Most people who have herpes have no or very mild symptoms and, as a result, don't know they have it. You may not notice mild symptoms or you may mistake them for another skin condition—like a pimple or ingrown hair.

Genital herpes sores usually appear as one or more blisters on or around the genitals, rectum, or mouth. The blisters break and leave painful sores that may take weeks to heal. These symptoms are sometimes called "having an outbreak." The first time someone has an outbreak they may also have flu-like symptoms such as fever, body aches, or swollen glands.

Repeat outbreaks of genital herpes are common, especially during the first year after infection. Repeat outbreaks are usually shorter and less severe than the first outbreak. Although the infection can stay in the body for the rest of your life, the number of outbreaks tends to decrease over a period of years.

You should be examined by your doctor if you notice any of these symptoms or if your partner has an STD or symptoms of an STD, such as an unusual sore, a smelly discharge, or burning when urinating.

There is no cure for herpes. However, there are medicines that can prevent or shorten outbreaks. One of these herpes medicines can be taken daily and makes it less likely that you will pass the infection on to your sex partner(s).

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is an STD that can infect both men and women. It can cause infections in the genitals, rectum, and throat. It's a very common infection, especially among young people ages 15–24 years.

Gonorrhea often doesn't have recognizable symptoms—or they may be mistaken for bladder or vaginal infections. Symptoms include a burning sensation when urinating, abnormal discharge from the penis or vagina, and bleeding between periods. Rectal infection symptoms include itching, burning, and bleeding.

You should be examined by your doctor if you notice any of these symptoms or if your partner has an STD or symptoms of an STD, such as an unusual sore, a smelly discharge, burning when urinating, or bleeding between periods.

Gonorrhea can be cured with the right treatment. Although medication will stop the infection, it will not undo any permanent damage caused by the disease.

It's becoming harder to treat some gonorrhea, as drug-resistant strains of gonorrhea are increasing. If your symptoms continue for more than a few days after receiving treatment, you should return to a health care provider to be checked again.

HIV/AIDS

HIV stands for *human immunodeficiency virus*. It kills or damages the body's immune system cells. AIDS stands for *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*. It is the most advanced stage of infection with HIV.

HIV most often spreads through unprotected sex with an infected person. It may also spread by sharing drug needles or through contact with the blood of an infected person. Women can give it to their babies during pregnancy or childbirth.

The first signs of HIV infection may be swollen glands and flu-like symptoms. These may come and go a month or two after infection. Severe symptoms may not appear until months or years later.

A blood test can tell if you have HIV infection. Your health care provider can perform the test, or call the national referral hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO (24 hours a day, 1-800-232-4636 in English and en español; 1-888-232-6348 – TTY).

There is no cure, but there are many medicines to fight both HIV infection and the infections and cancers that come with it. People can live with the disease for many years, especially if they are diagnosed and treated early. Early diagnosis is also important to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

HPV is the most common STD. HPV is different from the viruses that cause HIV and HSV (herpes). HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women get it at some point in their lives. There are many different types of HPV. Some types can cause health problems including genital warts and cancers. But there are vaccines that can stop these health problems from happening.

You can get HPV by having vaginal, anal, or oral sex with someone who has the virus. It is most commonly spread during vaginal or anal sex. HPV can be passed even when an infected person has no signs or symptoms. You can develop symptoms years after you have sex with someone who is infected, making it hard to know when you first became infected.

There is no test to find out a person's "HPV status." Also, there is no approved HPV test to find HPV in the mouth or throat.

However, there are HPV tests that can be used to screen for cervical cancer. These tests are recommended for screening only in women aged 30 years and older. They are not recommended to screen men, adolescents, or women under the age of 30 years.

Most people with HPV do not know they are infected and never develop symptoms or health problems from it. Some people find out that they have HPV when they get genital warts. Women may find out they have HPV when they get an abnormal Pap test result (during cervical cancer screening). Others may only find out once they've developed more serious problems from HPV, such as cancers.

There is no treatment for the virus itself. However, there are treatments for the health problems that HPV can cause:

- Genital warts can be treated by you or your physician. If left untreated, genital warts may go away, stay the same, or grow in size or number.
- Cervical precancer can be treated. Women who get routine Pap tests and follow up as needed can identify problems *before* cancer develops. Prevention is always better than treatment.
- Other HPV-related cancers are also more treatable when diagnosed and treated early.

Syphilis

Syphilis is an STD that can cause long-term complications if not treated correctly. Symptoms in adults are divided into stages. These stages are primary, secondary, latent, and late syphilis.

You can get syphilis by direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Sores can be found on the penis, vagina, anus, in the rectum, or on the lips and in the mouth. Syphilis can also be spread from an infected mother to her unborn baby.

Syphilis has been called “the great imitator” because it has so many possible symptoms, many of which look like symptoms from other diseases. The painless syphilis sore that you get after you are first infected can be mistaken for an ingrown hair, zipper cut, or other seemingly harmless bump. The non-itchy body rash that develops during the second stage of syphilis can show up on the palms of your hands and soles of your feet, all over your body, or in just a few places. Syphilis can also affect the eye and can lead to permanent blindness. This is called ocular syphilis. You could also be infected with syphilis and have very mild symptoms or none at all.

Syphilis can be cured with the right antibiotics from your health care provider. However, treatment will not undo any damage that the infection has already caused.

How You Can Protect Yourself Against STDs

The surest way to protect yourself against STDs is to not have sex (practice “abstinence”). That means not having any vaginal, anal, or oral sex. There are many things to consider before having sex, and it’s okay to say no if you don’t want to have sex.

If you do decide to have sex, you and your partner should get tested beforehand and make sure that you and your partner use a condom—every time you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex, from start to finish. Know where to get condoms and how to use them correctly. It’s not safe to stop using condoms unless you’ve both been tested, know your status, and are in a mutually monogamous relationship.

Mutual monogamy means that you and your partner both agree to only have sexual contact with each other. This can help protect against STDs, as long as you’ve both been tested and know you’re STD-free.

Before you have sex, talk with your partner about how you will prevent STDs and pregnancy. If you think you’re ready to have sex, you need to be ready to protect your body and your future. You should also talk to your partner ahead of time about what you will and will not do sexually. Your partner should always respect your right to say no to anything that doesn’t feel right.

Make sure you get the health care you need. Ask a doctor or nurse about STD testing and about vaccines against HPV and hepatitis B.

Girls and young women may have extra needs to protect their reproductive health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about regular cervical cancer screening and chlamydia testing.

Avoid using alcohol and drugs. If you use alcohol and drugs, you are more likely to take risks—like not using a condom or having sex with someone you normally wouldn’t have sex with.

Many STDs don’t cause any symptoms that you would notice, so the only way to know for sure if you have an STD is to get tested. You can get an STD from having sex with someone who has no symptoms. Just like you, that person might not even know he or she has an STD.

There are places that offer confidential and free STD tests. This means that no one has to find out you’ve been tested. Visit GetTested to find an STD testing location near you. If you find out that you have an STD, it’s important to seek treatment—since some STDs can be fatal if left untreated. Although certain STDs (like herpes and HIV) aren’t curable, a doctor can prescribe medicine to treat the symptoms. If you are living with an STD, it’s important to tell your partner before you have sex. Although it may be uncomfortable to talk about your STD, open and honest conversation can help your partner make informed decisions to protect his or her health.

Unintended Pregnancy

Seven in ten pregnancies among single women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine are *unplanned*[1] As with STDs, the surest way to avoid unintended pregnancy is abstinence, since no birth control method is 100 percent reliable. However, if you are sexually active, it's important to protect yourself and your partner from pregnancy *and* HIV and other STDs. Birth control (such as the pill, patch, ring, implant, shot, or an IUD) provides highly effective pregnancy prevention, but it doesn't protect you from HIV and other STDs. Condoms can reduce the risk to both of you for pregnancy and most STDs, including HIV. Even if you or your partner is using another type of birth control, agree to use a condom every time you have sex.

His condom + her hormonal birth control or IUD = DOUBLE PROTECTION.

If a condom breaks or you have unprotected sexual intercourse, it's possible to take an emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)—sometimes called a "morning-after pill"—which may prevent a pregnancy from occurring. ECPs generally contain a higher dose of the same hormones found in regular oral contraceptive pills, and they are most effective when used shortly after intercourse (not the next morning, as the name suggests). It's important to note that ECPs are *not* abortion pills, and they do nothing to either prevent or cure STDs.

Visit your campus health center or talk to your doctor to get more information about birth control, condoms, and other reproductive and sexual health issues.



Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is any type of sexual activity that a person doesn't agree to. It can include touching that is not okay; putting something into the vagina; sexual intercourse; rape; and attempted rape. Sexual assault happens on college campuses as well as in communities. One in five women has been sexually assaulted while in college and 80 percent of female rape victims experience their first rape before the age of twenty-five. The following statistics show that sexual assaults usually aren't random acts of violence carried out by strangers: [2]

- Approximately 4 out of 5 rapes are committed by someone known to the victim.
- 82 percent of sexual assaults are perpetrated by a non-stranger.
- 47 percent of rapists are a friend or an acquaintance.
- 25 percent are an intimate partner.
- 5 percent are a relative.

Date Rape Drugs

One of the great things about being in college is having the chance to meet and get to know so many new people. Protecting yourself against sexual assaults doesn't mean you have to sacrifice exciting social opportunities. It just means being informed about risks and taking common-sense steps to protect yourself.

One very real risk on college campuses—and elsewhere—is the use of date rape drugs to assist sexual assaults. Date rape drugs are powerful and dangerous drugs that can be slipped into your drink when you are not looking. The drugs often have no color, smell, or taste, so you can't tell if you are being drugged. The drugs can make you become weak and confused—or even pass out—so that you are unable to refuse sex or defend yourself. If you are drugged, you might not remember what happened while you were drugged. Date rape drugs are used on both women and men.

The three most common date rape drugs are Rohypnol, GHB, and Ketamine:

- Rohypnol comes as a pill that dissolves in liquids. Some are small, round, and white. Newer pills are oval and green-gray in color. When slipped into a drink, a dye in these new pills makes clear liquids turn bright blue and dark drinks turn cloudy. But this color change might be hard to see in a dark drink, like cola or dark beer, or in a dark room. Also, the pills with no dye are still available. The pills may be ground up into a powder.
- GHB has a few forms: a liquid with no odor or color, white powder, and pill. It might give your drink a slightly salty taste. Mixing it with a sweet drink, such as fruit juice, can mask the salty taste.
- Ketamine comes as a liquid and a white powder.

These drugs also are known as "club drugs" because they tend to be used at dance clubs, concerts, and "raves." The term "date rape" is widely used to describe sexual crimes involving these drugs, but most experts prefer the term "drug-facilitated sexual assault." These drugs are also used to help people commit other crimes, like robbery and physical assault. The term "date rape" can be misleading because the person who commits the crime might not be dating the victim. Rather, it could be an acquaintance or stranger.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol is also a drug that's commonly used to help commit sexual assault. Be aware of the risks you take by drinking alcohol at parties or in other social situations. When a person drinks too much alcohol,

- It's harder to think clearly.
- It's harder to set limits and make good choices.
- It's harder to tell when a situation could be dangerous.
- It's harder to say "no" to sexual advances.
- It's harder to fight back if a sexual assault occurs.
- It's possible to black out and to have memory loss.

The club drug "ecstasy" (MDMA) has been used to commit sexual assault. It can be slipped into someone's drink without the person's knowledge. Also, a person who willingly takes ecstasy is at greater risk of sexual assault. Ecstasy can make a person feel "lovey-dovey" toward others. As with alcohol, it also can lower a person's ability to give reasoned consent. Once under the drug's influence, a person is less able to sense danger or to resist a sexual assault.

Even if a victim of sexual assault drank alcohol or willingly took drugs, the victim is **not** at fault for being assaulted. You cannot "ask for it" or cause it to happen. Still, it's important to be vigilant and take common-sense steps to avoid putting yourself at risk. Take the following steps to protect yourself from becoming a victim:

- Don't accept drinks from other people.
- Open containers yourself.
- Keep your drink with you at all times, even when you go to the bathroom.
- Don't share drinks.
- Don't drink from punch bowls or other common, open containers. They may already have drugs in them.
- If someone offers to get you a drink from a bar or at a party, go with the person to order your drink. Watch the drink being poured and carry it yourself.
- Don't drink anything that tastes or smells strange. Remember, GHB sometimes tastes salty.
- Have a nondrinking friend with you to make sure nothing happens.

- If you realize you left your drink unattended, pour it out.
- If you feel drunk and haven't drunk any alcohol—or, if you feel like the effects of drinking alcohol are stronger than usual—get help right away.

How and Where to Get Help

Take the following steps if you or someone you know has been raped, or you think you might have been drugged and raped:

- Get medical care right away. Call 911 or have a trusted friend take you to a hospital emergency room. Don't urinate, douche, bathe, brush your teeth, wash your hands, change clothes, or eat or drink before you go. These things may give evidence of the rape. The hospital will use a "rape kit" to collect evidence.
- Call the police from the hospital. Tell the police exactly what you remember. Be honest about all your activities. Remember, nothing you did—including drinking alcohol or doing drugs—can justify rape.
- Ask the hospital to take a urine (pee) sample that can be used to test for date rape drugs. The drugs leave your system quickly. Rohypnol stays in the body for several hours and can be detected in the urine up to 72 hours after taking it. GHB leaves the body in 12 hours. Don't urinate before going to the hospital.
- Don't pick up or clean up where you think the assault might have occurred. There could be evidence left behind—such as on a drinking glass or bed sheets.
- Get counseling and treatment. Feelings of shame, guilt, fear, and shock are normal. A counselor can help you work through these emotions and begin the healing process. Calling a crisis center or a hotline is a good place to start. One national hotline is the **National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE**.

Activity: Sexual Assault on College Campuses

Objective

- Identify risks of sexual assault, including date rape, and where to get help

Directions

- Watch the following video, in which Emma Sulkowicz, a student at Columbia College, describes the experience and aftermath of being raped by a fellow student—who remains on campus.

YouTube Video

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View this YouTube Video online

- Click on the following link, and read the followup article, which describes Emma's response to the way the university handled her case: "Students Bring out Mattresses in Huge 'Carry That Weight' Protest Against Sexual Assault."
- Write a short essay (2–3 pages) in which you respond to the following questions:
  - What were the results of Emma's "Carry That Weight" protest?
  - Do you think it was an effective strategy for dealing with the problem of sexual assault at Columbia and other colleges? Why or why not?
  - Who has the responsibility for addressing this problem? (College administrators? The police? All students? Female or male students? Someone else?) Which approach do you think would have the greatest impact? (Education? Activism? Policy change? Something else?)
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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1. "How You Can Prevent Pregnancy." *It's Your Sex Life*. MTV. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. ↩
2. "The Offenders." *RAINN | Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network*. Web. 11 Mar. 2016. ↩

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6.2.8: Safety



You don’t need to know the whole alphabet of safety. The a, b, c of it will save you if you follow it: **A**lways **B**e **C**areful. —*Colorado School of Mines Magazine*, Golden, Colorado, August 1918

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define safety consciousness
- Describe strategies for staying safe on campus and elsewhere
- Identify resources for learning about safety in college

Safety Consciousness on Campus and in College

College and university campuses tend to have a special feel—so special that when you are on campus you may feel you are fully apart from the wider world around you. But the reality is that any campus is subject to the same influences—indeed, crimes—as the towns and cities that flank the campus. And so it is important to be aware of your surroundings, the people near you, and the goings on in your physical spaces and in your virtual spaces at all times.

In this topic, we explore college safety concerns, and share tips and resources to help ensure that you are always safe, protected, and no more than a phone call away from help if you need it.

Safety Consciousness

Safety consciousness is a term describing your awareness of hazards, and your alertness to potential danger. In order to have safety consciousness, you must value safety no matter where you are or what time of day it is.

Your college or university must also be safety conscious—not only by choice, but also by law. In 1990, Congress enacted the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act, which required all schools that receive federal student aid to share information about crime on and around their campuses. The act is now generally just referred to as the Clery Act, in memory of Jeanne Clery, a student killed in her dorm room in 1986.

What does the Clery Act require your college to do? If your college is receiving federal student aid, here are the major legal requirements it must comply with:

- Have emergency notification and evacuation procedures for alerting the campus community about significant emergencies or dangerous situations. Disclose your policies and procedures in the annual security report.
- Issue timely warnings to alert the campus community about crimes that pose a serious or continuing threat to safety. Disclose your policy in the annual security report.
- Keep a crime log that records, by date reported, all crimes reported to the campus police or security department.
- Keep a fire log that records by date reported, all fires in on-campus student housing facilities.
- Collect crime reports from campus security authorities within the institution.
- Request crime statistics from local law enforcement in the jurisdiction where the institution is located.
- Submit crime and fire statistics to the Department of Education via a Web-based data collection.
- Have missing-student notification procedures to aid in determining if a student is missing, and in notifying law enforcement personnel. Disclose your policy and procedures in the annual security report.
- Publish an annual security report containing campus security policy disclosures and crime statistics for the previous three years.
- Publish an annual fire-safety report containing policy disclosures and fire statistics for on-campus student housing facilities for the previous three years.

This valuable set of requirements is important for every student to be aware of. It is readily available to you and your family. You don't need to be a student to access this information about any school.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety

The following video, from the National Center for Education Statistics, gives statistical details about safety and crimes on campus. You can visit the organization's Web site to view the full related report and learn more about crime and safety in America's schools and colleges.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

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Strategies for Staying Safe on Campus and Beyond

One of the best strategies for staying safe on campus and beyond is to ask questions. Take the initiative to learn more about your college surroundings, the community culture, and safety precautions you'd be well advised to implement.[1] Below are some questions you can ask to open up important conversations about campus and community safety.

	QUESTIONS	CONCERNS[2]
1	How is the college creating a safe environment for all faculty, staff, and students?	Your concern about a safe environment on campus and in the surrounding communities is a consumer concern as much as a learner concern. As you and your college make safety a shared priority, awareness builds and safety measures expand, which creates a safer space for you to learn in. Measures can be extensive. Ask for specifics.
2	What communication procedures are in place for emergencies?	Many colleges and universities send emergency phone messages, email messages and text messages to all students, staff, faculty, administrators, board of trustees members, etc. Institutions may have sirens and alarms. Signage on campus may be used for alerts, along with other measures.

	QUESTIONS	CONCERNS[2]
3	Can you tell me about campus police and security personnel, and how they coordinate with local police?	Your campus should have a full contingent of campus police and security personnel who coordinate closely with local police as and when needed.
4	How are sexual assaults on campus handled?	Does the college handle investigations or do local authorities handle investigations? Who should you complain to if you have a problem? What confidentialities are in place?
5	How do students learn about safety on campus?	Many institutions provide students with classes that help them learn how to intervene as bystanders in altercations. Some courses give students advice about other safety measures. You can encourage your institution to offer workshops or other learning opportunities if it doesn't already offer them.
6	What measures are in place for protecting students who live off-campus?	Some schools help students find safe housing off campus. Your school might have an off-campus housing department.
7	To what degree do alcohol and drug abuse pose issues on campus? How are violations handled?	One of the best sources of information about drugs and alcohol on campus is fellow students. You can find information about violations in the annual security report.

Tips for Staying Safe

Walking, driving, traveling:

- Travel with a buddy.
- Use the campus escort service at night, especially if you are alone.
- If you live off-campus, call someone when you get home.
- Keep moving; don't linger (especially at night).
- Carry pepper spray or pepper gel.
- Keep a personal alarm (for example, on a keychain).
- If you have a car, lock it.

At home:

- Keep your windows and doors locked.
- Keep the main door to your home, hall or apartment building locked at all times.
- Don't let anyone into your dwelling that you don't know.

On campus:

- Keep a close eye on your belongings when you're in a library.
- Get a locking device for your laptop.
- Participate in a college safety program.
- Be cautious, not paranoid.

Anywhere:

- Make sure your phone is charged.
- Know the phone number for Campus Safety.
- Put emergency numbers in your cell phone.
- Carry emergency cash.
- Speak up if you notice something going on.

For a truly comprehensive list of tips for staying safe on and off campus, visit Campus Crime Prevention Personal Safety Tips from Fort Hayes State University.

Also, don't hesitate to take advantage of campus and community resources, which may include any of the following:

- Web sites, offices, organizations, and individuals with safety information
- Campus police and campus security
- Local police
- Sexual assault and relationship-violence services
- Shuttle services
- Escort services
- Counseling programs
- Mental health programs
- Substance abuse programs
- Local health care centers
- Campus abuse hotlines

The following video focuses on how to stay safe when on campus. The interviewee, David Nance, sheds light on overlooked areas and situations where students are vulnerable.

YouTube Video

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Safety Apps

One of the very best safety measures you can take at any time is to keep emergency numbers handy, either on your phone or in your wallet or backpack or a place where you can easily access them. You may also find it helpful to have a safety app on your mobile device. Consider downloading any of the following free apps.

MOBILE DEVICE SAFETY APPLICATIONS	
bsafe you	bSafe is a personal safety app designed to keep you and your friends safer 24/7. It has features for everyday safety and real emergencies. You can set up your own personal social safety network.

MOBILE DEVICE SAFETY APPLICATIONS	
	Circle of 6 U is built specifically for colleges and schools, connecting students to each other and to critical resources on specific campuses. The tool lets you choose up to 6 trusted friends to add to your circle, so that if you get into an uncomfortable or risky situation, with two taps you send your circle a pre-programmed SMS alert message indicating your exact location.
	OnWatchOnCampus: With just 2 taps, your friends and emergency first responders are alerted to your GPS location and that you need help.
	MyForce: This tool offers users instant notifications, monitoring agents, nationwide coverage and fast emergency response. When an alert is sent, the 24/7 safety agents track your whereabouts and pinpoint your exact location. They listen in and assess the details.
	React Mobile: Users can quickly send out a widespread emergency alert without having to access and unlock their phone. You choose which contacts you would like to share your location with. Then your contact list can be sent an email and a text message with a link to your GPS location. You can also send an "SOS Help Me" message to an unlimited number of buddies.
	Watch Over Me: This tool turns your mobile device into emergency tool with just a shake, even if your phone is locked. The shake turns on your phone's alarm and video camera, and sends an alert to your emergency contacts.

Resources for Learning About Safety in College

Your personal safety both on- and off-campus, and the safety of your family and friends, is a treasure. The more you know about safety, perhaps the more safe you can be and the more safe you can help others be. Here are many resources to help you learn more about safety.

- The Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool (click on Get data for one institution/campus)
- Frequently asked questions about the Best Colleges rankings and crime reports
- The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting and HandbookQuestions@ed.gov

- Suggested Resources regarding campus sexual assault training and prevention efforts
- Emergency Management for Higher Education (EMHE) grant program
- Action Guide for Emergency Management at Institutions of Higher Education
- College Drinking Prevention
- Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets for student considering traveling abroad

Sexual Assaults

- Not Alone: for students and universities re sexual assault on campus
- SAFER (Students Active For Ending Rape)
- How to research and discuss sexual assault on college campuses
- National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs: working to prevent and respond to violence against members of the LGBTQ community
- RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)
- 1in6: for men who have been victims of sexual abuse and assault
- Clery Center Help for Victims
- Referrals for Sexual Assault and Rape by State
- Culture of Respect: immediate help and legal aid for students, friends and family members who have been victims of on-campus sexual assault
- Joyful Heart Foundation: helping sexual violence survivors reclaim their lives
- Male Survivor
- National Alliance to End Sexual Violence
- National Center for Victims of Crime
- National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center
- Stalking Resource Center
- VRLC (Victim Rights Law Center)

Activity: Personal Security

Objective

- Describe strategies for staying safe on campus and elsewhere

Directions

- Make a list of 3–5 campus safety issues you're personally concerned about. This might include anything from worrying about parking lot security and car break-ins to date rape or hate crime.
- Visit your college Web site, and search for safety and security information that's relevant to your concerns. Record the name and contact information for each resource you find and any procedures you learn about. For example, if you're worried about your backpack or computer getting stolen while you're at school, find out what should you do if it happens. Who should you call, and what might you need to provide? If you come across useful prevention measures (e.g., "record the serial number of your computer somewhere else, so you'll have it for the theft report"), write those down, too.
- For the assignment, use the information you found to create your own Safety Directory, as below.

Safety Issue	Resource	Phone Number	Address/Web Site	Important Information

- *Make sure the information is also stored somewhere in your computer and phone so you can find and use it later. (Add it to your contacts, for instance.)*
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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Contributors and Attributions

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2. Boyington, Briana. "10 Questions Every Parent, Student Should Ask About Campus Safety." *U.S. News and World Report Education*. 9 Sept 2014. Web. 22 Feb 2016. ↩

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6.3: HEALTH

6.3.1: Nutrition

6.3.2: Exercise

6.3.3: Sleep

6.3.4: Stress

6.3.5: Words of Wisdom- Failure Is Not an Option

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6.3.1: Nutrition

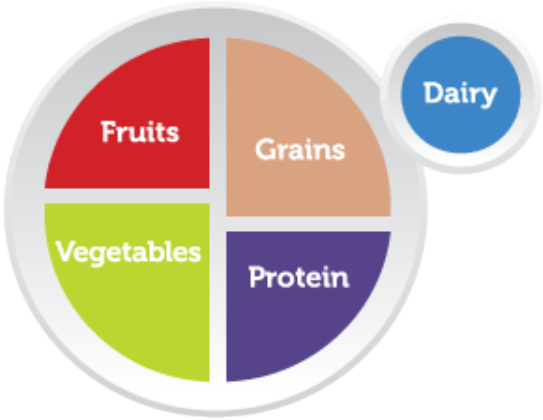
"A sound body nurtures a sound mind."

– Plato

A diet is anything that you consume on a regular basis. If you drink Diet Coke for breakfast every day, that's part of your diet. When people talk about "going on a diet," they usually mean changing their existing dietary habits in order to lose weight or change their body shape. All people are on a diet because everyone eats! Having a *healthy diet* means making food choices that contribute to short- and long-term health. It means getting the right amounts of nutrient-rich foods and avoiding foods that contain excessive amounts of less healthy foods. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future.

Developing healthy eating habits doesn't require you to sign up for a gimmicky health-food diet or lifestyle: you don't have to become vegan, gluten-free, "paleo," or go on regular juice fasts. The simplest way to create a healthy eating style is by learning to make wise food choices that you can enjoy, one small step at a time. See the ChooseMyPlate website for more guidelines. Additionally, the following current USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines replace the old "food pyramid."

USDA Healthy Eating Guidelines



Make half your plate fruits and vegetables: Focus on whole fruits, and vary your veggies

- Choose whole fruits—fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in 100% juice.
- Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks, or for a dessert.
- Try adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables to salads, side dishes, and recipes.
- Choose a variety of colorful veggies prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sautéed, roasted, or raw.

Make half your grains whole grains

- Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list—try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread, and brown rice.
- Limit grain desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies, and pastries.

Vary your protein routine

- Mix up your protein foods to include a variety—seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.
- Try main dishes made with beans and seafood, like tuna salad or bean chili.

Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt

- Choose fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soy milk) to cut back on your saturated fat.
- Replace sour cream, cream, and regular cheese in recipes and dishes with low-fat yogurt, milk, and cheese.

Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars

- Eating fewer calories from foods high in saturated fat and added sugars can help you manage your calories and prevent obesity. Most of us eat too many foods that are high in saturated fat and added sugar.
- Eating foods with less sodium can reduce your risk of high blood pressure.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to compare foods and drinks. Limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.
- Use vegetable oils instead of butter, and choose oil-based sauces and dips instead of those with butter, cream, or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Eat the right amount

- Eat the right amount of calories for you based on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Visit the USDA SuperTracker, which can help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
- Building a healthier eating style can help you avoid obesity and reduce your risk of diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Cornell University found that the average adult eats 92% of whatever he or she puts on their plate. One of the challenges is that portion sizes have drastically increased over the last 50 years.[1]

Healthy Eating in College

College offers many temptations for students trying to create or maintain healthy eating habits. You may be on your own for the first time, and you're free to eat whatever you want, whenever you want. Cafeterias, all-you-can-eat dining facilities, vending machines, and easy access to food twenty-four hours a day make it tempting to overeat or choose foods loaded with calories, saturated fat, sugar, and salt. You may not be in the habit of shopping or cooking for yourself yet, and, when you find yourself short on time or money, it may seem easier to fuel yourself on sugary, caffeinated drinks and meals at the nearest fast-food place. Also, maybe you played basketball or volleyball in high school, but now you don't seem to be getting much exercise.

On top of that, it's common for people to overeat (or not eat enough) when they feel anxious, lonely, sad, stressed, or bored, and college students are no exception. It's incredibly important, though, to develop healthy ways of coping and relaxing that don't involve reaching for food, drink, or other substances. It's also important to eat regular healthy meals to keep up your energy.

Activity: Assess Your Snacking Habits

Objective

- Recognize the temptations not to eat well in a college setting

Directions

- Keep a daily snack journal for one week: Write down the types and amounts of snack foods and beverages you consume between meals each day. Record the time of day and note *where* you eat/drink each item.
- At the end of the week, review your journal. Do you notice any unhealthy snacks or empty-calorie drinks? Are there any patterns? Are there times of day when you're especially prone to choosing unhealthy snacks/drinks? Are there particular places where you tend to reach for junk food?
- In a short, reflective essay (1–2 pages long), describe what you observed about your snacking habits during the week. Identify any habits you'd like to change, and explain why. Describe several strategies you could use to break bad habits and replace unhealthy snacks with healthier ones. Explain why you think these strategies will be effective.
- Follow your instructor's instructions for submitting assignments.

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Adaptions: Removed images, video, relocated learning objectives, removed KidsHealthorg. paragraph and footnote.

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1. Brian Wansink and Katherine Abowd Johnson, "The Clean Plate Club: About 92% of Self-Served Food is Eaten," *International Journal of Obesity*, 39 (2015):371–374. ↵

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6.3.2: Exercise

"Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle: when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."

– Dan Montano

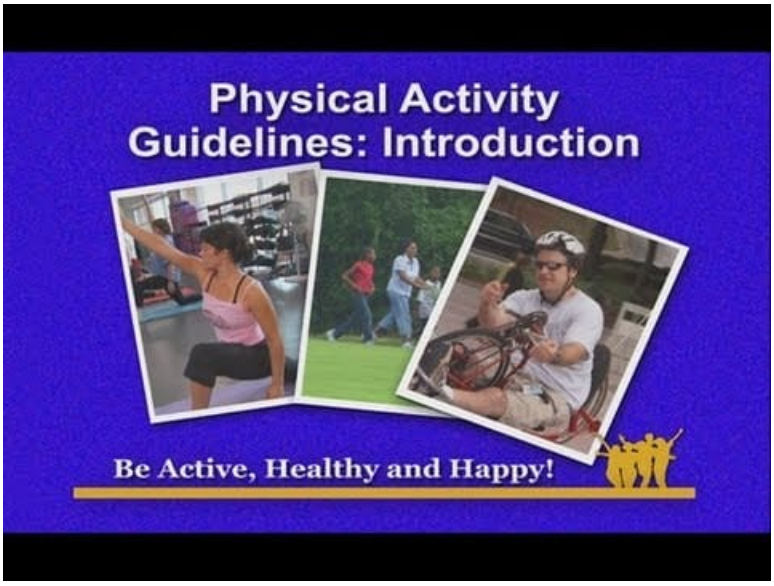
Regular Exercise: Health for Life

The importance of getting regular exercise is probably nothing new to you. The health benefits are well known and established: Regular physical activity can produce long-term health benefits by reducing your risk of many health problems, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and it can also increase your chances of living longer, help you control your weight, and even help you sleep better.

As a busy college student, you may be thinking, *I know this, but I don't have time! I have classes and work and a full life!* What you may not know is that—precisely because you have such a demanding, possibly stressful schedule—now is the perfect time to make exercise a regular part of your life. Getting into an effective exercise routine now will not only make it easier to build healthy habits that you can take with you into your life after college, but it can actually help you be a more successful student, too. As you'll see in the section on brain health, below, exercise is a powerful tool for improving one's mental health and memory—both of which are especially important when you're in school.

The good news is that most people can improve their health and quality of life through a modest increase in daily activity. You don't have to join a gym, spend a lot of money, or even do the same activity every time—just going for a walk or choosing to take the stairs (instead of the elevator) can make a difference. The following video describes how much activity you need.

Video: *Physical Activity Guidelines – Introduction*



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://press.rebus.community/blueprint1/?p=89

Fight or Flight

Our bodies have an automatic "fight or flight" reaction when we perceive a threat. Fighting or running is physical exercise and the result is metabolizing our excessive stress hormones and bringing our bodies and minds back to a more relaxed state. Even

though we do not suffer from the same threats cavemen and cavewomen incurred many years ago, we still perceive threats and we still suffer from stress. Exercise has many physical and mental benefits in addition to lowering stress.

Regular physical activity is one of the best things you can do to be healthy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, its benefits include: controlling weight, reducing risk of cardiovascular disease, reducing risk for type two diabetes, reducing risk of cancer, strengthening bones and muscles, improving mental health and mood, increasing chances of living longer[1]. One assignment I give my students is to have them record all food and drinks consumed in one week, along with keeping records of how much exercise and how many hours of sleep take place. Some students know exactly what they are putting into their body and how they are treating it. But most are surprised at how little one or more of these important aspects are sufficient. Try it. Think of it as an opportunity to see what you actually put into your body, how much exercise and rest you give it.

Author's Story

I had not prepared for an astronomy final exam. The night before the exam, I stayed up all night cramming, and regurgitated information I had learned onto the test. Immediately after the exam, I ordered a large pepperoni pizza, ate the whole thing in one sitting, and then slept for 15 hours. Regardless of the exam result, this example represents what not to do. In the long run, human bodies cannot do things like that without consequence. With the lifestyle I live now, being married, parenting kids and working full-time, there is no way that I could have done that and been able to function well with my responsibilities the next day. In addition, it was not healthy for my body.

After a class I was speaking with a student about diet and nutrition and our conversation led to a discussion on the contrast of what some students give their children to eat versus what they eat themselves. It reminded me of the 5-2-1-0 graphic my children recognize at their pediatrician visits. It stands for (each day) 5 or more fruits or vegetables, 2 hours or less recreational screen time, 1 hour or more of physical activity, 0 sugary drinks (more water). Of course, it is designed for kids. But many students would do well for themselves to keep the 5-2-1-0 recommendation in mind[2].

Our bodies are more prone to getting sick if they are not well taken care of. Getting sick in the middle of an academic term can have devastating effects on the academic performance.

A much better way to go (as I painfully learned) is to make a schedule, stick to it, prepare and review periodically, get adequate sleep, eat well, and be on an exercise plan.

For optimal concentration levels, work performance and test scores, proper nutrition and adequate sleep have a large effect. My personal opinion is that exercise helps clear the mind, which is so important in our current generations' overwhelming bombardment of information around us.

Physical Fitness and Types of Exercise

Physical fitness is a state of well-being that gives you sufficient energy to perform daily physical activities without getting overly tired or winded. It also means being in good enough shape to handle unexpected emergencies involving physical demands—that is, if someone said, "Run for your life!" or you had to rush over and prevent a child from falling, you'd be able to do it.

There are many forms of exercise—dancing, rock climbing, walking, jogging, yoga, bike riding, you name it—that can help you become physically fit. The major types are described below.

Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise increases your heart rate, works your muscles, and raises your breathing rate. For most people, it's best to aim for a total of about thirty minutes a day, four or five days a week. If you haven't been very active recently, you can start out with five or ten minutes a day and work up to more time each week. Or, split up your activity for the day: try a brisk ten-minute walk after each meal. If you are trying to lose weight, you may want to exercise more than thirty minutes a day. The following are some examples of aerobic exercise:

- A brisk walk (outside or inside on a treadmill)
- Dancing
- A low-impact aerobics class
- Swimming or water aerobic exercises

- Ice-skating or roller-skating
- Playing tennis
- Riding a stationary bicycle indoors

Strength Training

Strength training, done several times a week, helps build strong bones and muscles and makes everyday chores like carrying heavy backpacks (or grocery bags) easier. When you have more muscle mass, you burn more calories, even at rest. Here are some ways to do it:

- Join a class to do strength training with weights, elastic bands, or plastic tubes (if your college has a gym, take advantage of it!)
- Lift light weights at home

Flexibility Exercises

Flexibility exercises, also called stretching, help keep your joints flexible and reduce your risk of injury during other activities. Gentle stretching for 5 to 10 minutes helps your body warm up and get ready for aerobic activities such as walking or swimming. Check to see if your college offers yoga, stretching, and/or pilates classes, and give one a try.

Being Active Throughout the Day

In addition to formal exercise, there are many opportunities to be active throughout the day. Being active helps burns calories. The more you move around, the more energy you will have. The following strategies can help you increase your activity level:

- Walk instead of drive whenever possible
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Work in the garden, rake leaves, or do some housecleaning every day
- Park at the far end of the campus lot and walk to class

Benefits of Exercise and Physical Fitness

Longevity

Exercise, even after age fifty, can add healthy, active years to one's life. Studies continue to show that it's never too late to start exercising and that even small improvements in physical fitness can significantly lower the risk of death. Simply walking regularly can prolong your life.

Moderately fit people—even if they smoke or have high blood pressure—have a lower mortality rate than the least fit. Resistance training is important because it's the only form of exercise that can slow and even reverse the decline of muscle mass, bone density, and strength. Adding workouts that focus on speed and agility can be especially protective for older people. Flexibility exercises help reduce the stiffness and loss of balance that accompanies aging.

Diabetes

Diabetes, particularly type 2, is reaching epidemic proportions throughout the world as more and more cultures adopt Western-style diets (which tend to be high in sugar and fat). Aerobic exercise is proving to have significant and particular benefits for people with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes; it increases sensitivity to insulin, lowers blood pressure, improves cholesterol levels, and decreases body fat. In fact, studies show that people who engage in regular, moderate aerobic exercise (e.g., brisk walking, biking) lower their risk for diabetes even if they do not lose weight. Anyone on insulin or who has complications from diabetes should get advice from a physician before embarking on a workout program.

Brain: Mood, Memory, Creativity

In addition to keeping your heart healthy, helping with weight loss, and helping you live longer, regular exercise can also improve your mood and help keep depression and anxiety at bay. The following video explains why and challenges you to give it a try:

Video: *Exercise and the Brain*

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

If you still aren't persuaded, check out this slightly longer but excellent Tedx Talk, which describes how aerobic exercise can improve your cognitive functioning, memory, and creativity:

Video: *Exercise and the Brain*, Wendy Suzuki, TEDx Orlando 2001

YouTube Video

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Activity: Develop an Exercise Program

Objective

- Plan a regular exercise program that works for you.

Directions

- Sometimes getting started is the hardest part of being physically active. The important thing is to find activities you like to do, so you'll stick with them. Watch the following video, which can help you understand how much activity you need to do on a regular basis and how you can get going on a sensible routine. The video includes personal stories from people—even busy people like you—who have discovered what works for them.

- List 3 physical activities that you enjoy doing or would like to try doing on a regular basis.
- Identify any special requirements or equipment you need before doing them (for example, gym membership, running shoes, etc.).
- Set a realistic, weekly exercise time goal for yourself (150 minutes or more per week is ideal, but start with what you can really do).
- Using a digital or printed calendar, plan and label the days of the week, times, and places that you plan to exercise. Specify the activity or activities that you intend to do. (For example: Monday, 6–7 a.m., 30 min on stationary bike, college gym; Wednesday, 2–3 p.m., 60 min speed-walking with Maya, Riverside Park; Saturday, 1–2 p.m, lift weights, college gym.)
- Track your progress for one week, recording the amount of time you actually exercised. If you engaged in any unplanned

physical activities (say you ended up riding your bike to school instead of taking the bus), include those, too.
- Write about your experience in a short journal entry (1–2 pages) and reflect on what you learned:
  - What kinds of exercise did you engage in, and which did you enjoy the most?
  - What was your weekly time goal? Did you meet it?
  - What worked or didn't work?
  - What might you need to change in order to make exercise a regular habit?
- Follow your instructor's instructions for submitting assignments.

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Adaptions: Removed image. Relocated learning objectives.

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1. "Physical Activity and Health," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018, http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/health/index.html. ↩
2. "Is your child at risk for obesity?," CACM Health Center,www.camc.org/52110. ↩

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6.3.3: Sleep

"Fatigue makes cowards of us all."

– Vince Lombardi

The Benefits of Slumber

We have so many demands on our time—school, jobs, family, errands, not to mention finding some time to relax. To fit everything in, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. Like exercise and a healthy diet, it's vital to your well-being.

Of course, sleep helps you feel rested each day. But while you're sleeping, your brain and body don't just shut down. Internal organs and processes are hard at work throughout the night. Sleep can help you "lock in" everything you're studying and trying to remember.

"Sleep services all aspects of our body in one way or another: molecular, energy balance, as well as intellectual function, alertness and mood," says Dr. Merrill Mitler, a sleep expert and neuroscientist at the National Institute of Health (NIH).

When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes, and focus better. "The fact is, when we look at well-rested people, they're operating at a different level than people trying to get by on one or two hours less nightly sleep," says Mitler.

"Loss of sleep impairs your higher levels of reasoning, problem-solving, and attention to detail," Mitler explains. Tired people tend to be less productive at work and school. They're at a much higher risk for traffic accidents. Lack of sleep also influences your mood, which can affect how you interact with others. A sleep deficit over time can even put you at greater risk for developing depression.

But sleep isn't just essential for the brain. "Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies," says Dr. Michael Twery, a sleep expert at NIH. "It affects growth and stress hormones, our immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure and cardiovascular health."

Research shows that lack of sleep increases the risk for obesity, heart disease, and infections. Throughout the night, your heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure rise and fall, a process that may be important for cardiovascular health. Your body releases hormones during sleep that help repair cells and control the body's use of energy. These hormone changes can affect your body weight.

"Ongoing research shows a lack of sleep can produce diabetic-like conditions in otherwise healthy people," says Mitler.

Recent studies also reveal that sleep can affect the efficiency of vaccinations. Twery described research showing that well-rested people who received the flu vaccine developed stronger protection against the illness.

A good night's sleep consists of four to five sleep cycles. Each cycle includes periods of deep sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, when we dream. "As the night goes on, the portion of that cycle that is in REM sleep increases. It turns out that this pattern of cycling and progression is critical to the biology of sleep," Twery says.

Sleep can be disrupted by many things. Stimulants such as caffeine or certain medications can keep you up. Distractions such as electronics—especially the light from TVs, cell phones, tablets and e-readers—can prevent you from falling asleep.

Fatigue

In 1989, 11 million gallons of oil were spilled when the Exxon Valdez ran aground. "The National Transportation Safety Board investigation attributed the accident to the fact that [Third Mate Gregory] Cousins, [filling in for the captain], had been awake for 18 hours prior to taking the helm of the Valdez, failed to 'properly maneuver the vessel because of the fatigue and excessive workload.' Given what science can tell us about the deleterious effects of sleep deprivation on decision-making, alertness and

coordination, a case can be made that had Cousins simply lain down for a brief sleep, one of the greatest environmental catastrophes in recent memory – and $2.5 billion cost for cleanup – might've been averted."[1]

"Fatigue has been cited as at least a contributing factor in many of the worst disasters in recent history – the Union Carbide chemical explosion that killed thousands of people in Bhopal, India, and the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl, to name just two."[2]

Dr. Sara Mednick is a sleep researcher at UC Riverside. Dr. Mednick's Ted Talk entitled, "Give it Up for the Down State – Sleep: Sarah Mednick at TEDxUCRSalon," is a resource for more information.

Video: *Give it up for the down state – sleep*, Sara Mednick, TEDxUCR Salon

YouTube Video

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Dr. Mednick's "Authors@Google: Sara Mednick" video on is a longer lecture on sleep.

Video: *Take a Nap! Change Your Life*, Sara Mednick Authors@Google 2007

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It's difficult to do anything well when we're tired. Studying is difficult, concentration is difficult, writing is difficult and taking an exam is difficult. It's much more efficient to get adequate rest and study, write, think and perform when we are rested.

This is a link to an article of a National Public Radio interview with Charles Czeisler, the director of the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School. This article, an interview with Czeisler and Scott Huettel, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience at Duke University links media with sleep interruption. These articles chronicle the benefits of getting adequate sleep and consequences of not getting adequate sleep along with questions and answers from the sleep specialists. It's easy for me to say that you will perform better in your studies if you are getting enough sleep, but here is some proof from experts on the value of sleep.

How Much Sleep Do We Need?

The amount of sleep each person needs depends on many factors, including age, and getting a full night of *quality* sleep is important. Infants generally require about sixteen hours a day, while teenagers need about nine hours on average. For most adults, seven to eight hours a night appears to be the best amount of sleep. The amount of sleep a person needs also increases if he or she has been deprived of sleep in previous days. Getting too little sleep creates a "sleep debt," which is a lot like being overdrawn at a bank. Eventually, your body will demand that the debt be repaid. We don't seem to adapt to getting less sleep than we need;

while we may get used to a sleep-depriving schedule, our judgment, reaction time, and other functions are still impaired. If you're a student, that means that sleep-deprivation may prevent you from studying, learning, and performing as well as you can.

People tend to sleep more lightly and for shorter time spans as they get older, although they generally need about the same amount of sleep as they needed in early adulthood. Experts say that if you feel drowsy during the day, even during boring activities, you haven't had enough sleep. If you routinely fall asleep within five minutes of lying down, you probably have severe sleep deprivation, possibly even a sleep disorder. "Microsleeps," or very brief episodes of sleep in an otherwise awake person, are another mark of sleep deprivation. In many cases, people are not aware that they are experiencing microsleeps. The widespread practice of "burning the candle at both ends" in western industrialized societies has created so much sleep deprivation that what is really abnormal sleepiness is now almost the norm.

Many studies make it clear that sleep deprivation is dangerous. Sleep-deprived people who are tested by using a driving simulator or by performing a hand-eye coordination task perform as badly as or worse than those who are intoxicated. Sleep deprivation also magnifies alcohol's effects on the body, so a fatigued person who drinks will become much more impaired than someone who is well rested. Driver fatigue is responsible for an estimated 100,000 motor vehicle accidents and 1,500 deaths each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Since drowsiness is the brain's last step before falling asleep, driving while drowsy can—and often does—lead to disaster. Caffeine and other stimulants cannot overcome the effects of severe sleep deprivation. The National Sleep Foundation says that if you have trouble keeping your eyes focused, if you can't stop yawning, or if you can't remember driving the last few miles, you are probably too drowsy to drive safely.

Activity: Assess Your Sleep Habits

Objective

- Examine your current sleep habits.

Directions

- Take a few minutes to review and assess your own sleep habits. Are you getting enough?

Check the appropriate boxes:	Usually	Sometimes	Never
I get 7–8 hours of sleep at night.			
I feel sleepy or have trouble focusing during the day.			
I take a nap when I feel drowsy or need more sleep.			
I fall asleep or have trouble staying awake in class.			
I fall asleep while studying.			
I stay up all night to study for exams or write papers.			

- Track how much sleep you get each night during a one-week period.
- At the end of the week, write a short journal entry (1–2 pages) in which you reflect on your current sleep habits: How many hours of sleep do you think you need every night to function at your best? How can you tell? On an average, how many hours of sleep did you get on weeknights? On average, how many hours of sleep did you get on weekend nights?
- How would you rank the importance of sleep compared with studying, working, spending time with friends/family, and other activities? What things get in the way of your consistently getting enough sleep?
- What changes can you make to your schedule and/or routines that might improve your sleep habits?
- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

Falling Asleep and Getting a Good Night's Rest

Many people, especially those who feel stressed, anxious, or overworked, have a hard time falling asleep and/or staying asleep, and this can shorten the amount of time and the quality of sleep when it actually comes. The following tips can help you get to sleep, stay asleep, and wake up feeling well rested:

- **Set a schedule**: Go to bed at a set time each night and get up at the same time each morning. Disrupting this schedule may lead to insomnia. “Sleeping in” on weekends also makes it harder to wake up early on Monday morning because it resets your sleep cycles for a later awakening.
- **Exercise**: Try to exercise 20 to 30 minutes a day. Daily exercise often helps people sleep, although a workout soon before bedtime may interfere with sleep. For maximum benefit, try to get your exercise about 5 to 6 hours before going to bed.
- **Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed**: Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, which acts as a stimulant and keeps people awake. Sources of caffeine include coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs, and some pain relievers. Smokers tend to sleep very lightly and often wake up in the early morning due to nicotine withdrawal. Alcohol robs people of deep sleep and REM sleep and keeps them in the lighter stages of sleep.
- **Relax before bed**: A warm bath, reading, or another relaxing routine can make it easier to fall sleep. It’s also a good idea to put away books, homework, and screens (computer and phone) at least 30 minutes before bed. You can train yourself to associate certain restful activities with sleep and make them part of your bedtime ritual.
- **Sleep until sunlight**: If possible, wake up with the sun, or use very bright lights in the morning. Sunlight helps the body’s internal biological clock reset itself each day. Sleep experts recommend exposure to an hour of morning sunlight for people having problems falling asleep.
- **Don’t lie in bed awake**: If you can’t get to sleep, don’t just lie in bed. Do something else, like reading or listening to music, until you feel tired. (Avoid digital screens, though: watching TV, and being on the computer or a smartphone are too stimulating and will actually make you more awake.) The anxiety of being unable to fall asleep can actually contribute to insomnia.
- **Control your room temperature**: Maintain a comfortable temperature in the bedroom. Extreme temperatures may disrupt sleep or prevent you from falling asleep.
- **Screen out noise and light**: Sleep with earplugs and use an eye pillow to drown out any bright lights and noise of loud roommates, etc.
- **See a doctor if your sleeping problem continues**: If you have trouble falling asleep night after night, or if you always feel tired the next day, then you may have a sleep disorder and should see a physician. Your primary care physician may be able to help you; if not, you can probably find a sleep specialist at a major hospital near you. Most sleep disorders can be treated effectively, so you can finally get that good night’s sleep you need.

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Adaptions: Images removed. Relocated learning objectives.

1. Sarah Mednick and Mark Ehrman, *Take a Nap! Change Your Life* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2006), 10. ↵
2. Mednick and Ehrman, *Take a Nap! Change Your Life*, 12. ↵

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6.3.4: Stress

Causes of Stress

As a student, you're probably plenty familiar with the experience of stress—a condition characterized by symptoms of physical or emotional tension. What you may not know is that it's a natural response of the mind and body to a situation in which a person feels threatened or anxious. Stress can be positive (e.g., preparing for a wedding) or negative (e.g., dealing with a natural disaster).

Stress can hit you when you least expect it—before a test, after losing a job, or during conflict in a relationship. If you're a college student, it may feel like stress is a persistent fact of life. While everyone experiences stress at times, a prolonged bout of it can affect your health and ability to cope with life. That's why social support and self-care are important. They can help you see your problems in perspective... and the stressful feelings ease up.

Sometimes stress can be good. For instance, it can help you develop skills needed to manage potentially challenging or threatening situations in life. However, stress can be harmful when it is severe enough to make you feel overwhelmed and out of control.

Strong emotions like fear, sadness, or other symptoms of depression are normal, as long as they are temporary and don't interfere with daily activities. If these emotions last too long or cause other problems, it's a different story.

Signs and Effects of Stress

Physical or emotional tension are often signs of stress. They can be reactions to a situation that causes you to feel threatened or anxious. The following are all common symptoms of stress:

- Disbelief and shock
- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being numb to one's feelings
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of appetite (or increased appetite)
- Nightmares and recurring thoughts about the event
- Anger
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness and other symptoms of depression
- Feeling powerless
- Crying
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
- Trouble concentrating

It's not only unpleasant to live with the tension and symptoms of ongoing stress; it's actually harmful to your body, too. Chronic stress can impair your immune system and disrupt almost all of your body's processes, leading to increased risk of numerous health problems, including the following:[1]

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways of coping with the stressors in your life.

Ways of Managing Stress

The best strategy for managing stress is by taking care of yourself in the following ways:

- **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** They may seem to be a temporary fix to feel better, but in the long run they can create more problems and add to your stress—instead of taking it away.
- **Manage your time.** Work on prioritizing and scheduling your commitments. This will help you feel in better control of your life, which, in turn, will mean less stress.
- **Find support.** Seek help from a friend, family member, partner, counselor, doctor, or clergy person. Having a sympathetic listening ear and talking about your problems and stress really can lighten the burden.
- **Connect socially.** When you feel stressed, it's easy to isolate yourself. Try to resist this impulse and stay connected. Make time to enjoy being with classmates, friends, and family; try to schedule study breaks that you can take with other people.
- **Slow down and cut out distractions for a while**. Take a break from your phone, email, and social media.
- **Take care of your health.**
  - Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
  - Exercise regularly
  - Get plenty of sleep
  - Try a relaxation technique, such as meditation or yoga, or treat yourself to a massage
  - Maintain a normal routine

The following video features a progressive muscle relaxation meditation for you to try. There are many many others available on YouTube and elsewhere.

Video: *Progressive Muscle Relaxation Meditation*

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

If the self-care techniques listed above aren't enough and stress is seriously interfering with your studies or life, don't be afraid to get help. The student health center and college counselors are both good resources.

Activity: Reduce Your Stress Level

Objective

- List healthy ways of managing stress that fit your current lifestyle.

Directions

- Identify at least three things you currently do to cope with stress that aren't working or aren't good for you.
- Identify healthy replacements for each of them, and write yourself a "stress-relief prescription" that you plan to follow for one week. Try to include one stress management technique to use every day. At the end of the week, respond to the following prompts in a short, reflective essay (1–2 pages): Which ineffective or unhealthy coping strategies did you set out to change and why? Which stress-relief techniques did you try during the week? Were any of them new for you? Which ones were most effective? How much do you think stress affects you in your current life at college? Do you feel like you have it under control or not? If not, what else might you do to reduce your stress level?

- Follow your instructor's guidelines for submitting assignments.

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Adaptions: Removed quote and images, relocated learning objectives.

1. "Chronic Stress Puts Your Health at Risk," Mayo Clinic, 2016, accessed April 27, 2018, http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-li...s/art-20046037. ↵

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6.3.5: Words of Wisdom- Failure Is Not an Option

Nathan Wallace

In the movie Apollo 13, Ed Harris portrays NASA flight director Gene Kranz as he successfully guides the crew of a damaged spacecraft to safety. In a famous scene during which Kranz and his staff are attempting to overcome some extremely daunting challenges, Harris shouts, “Failure is not an option!” This singular statement perfectly articulated the determination of Kranz to bring the Apollo astronauts back to Earth.

This “failure is not an option” credo was perfect for the life and death situation that NASA was facing. Failure meant that the astronauts on Apollo 13 would never come home, and that outcome was unacceptable. Attending college, on the other hand, shouldn’t be a life or death experience, though it sometimes might feel like one. Failure, though never the intended outcome, can and sometimes does happen. Sometimes failure manifests itself in election results for a student government post, in a test score, or even in a final grade.

Throughout my life I have had many failures. In high school I drove my parents and teachers crazy because of my lack of academic achievement. I even managed to get an F- in Spanish on my report card. When I told my mom that it was a typo she responded, “So you didn’t get an F?” “No,” I said, “I definitely earned the F, but there’s no such thing as an F-.” To this day I’m not so sure that my reply was accurate. I might have earned that minus after all.

My failures in high school led to only one acceptance from of all the colleges I applied to attend. Furthermore, I was not accepted to the school’s main campus, but to their branch campus. During my first semester there my effort wasn’t much better than in high school, but since my parents were now paying for my education I did enough work to avoid academic probation. It wasn’t until my second semester that I found my niche as a Religious Studies major and started getting good grades, moved to the main campus, and eventually graduated with honors.

Since graduating from college, my career path has taken me into higher education as a Student Affairs administrator. This career has exposed me to many great theories regarding student success, and many of them gave me insight into my own college experience. But it was Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck who appeared to be thinking of me when she wrote the following about fixed mindsets in the introduction to her book titled *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*:

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone—the fixed mindset—creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character—well, then you’d better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn’t do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics. (Dweck, 2006)

This statement was a revelation to me. I finally understood my problem throughout high school and even in college. I earned good grades because I liked Religious Studies but never really challenged myself inside or outside of the classroom. My problem was that I had a fixed mindset about academic success. I believed that a person is either smart or they’re not, and nothing could be done to significantly change that. I also believed that I was one of the fortunate ones to be “gifted” with an abundance of intelligence.

One might think that having confidence in your intelligence is a whole lot better than thinking that you’re stupid, but the result was the same. My fixed mindset was holding me back because it led to a paralyzing fear of failure. Since as far back as I could remember, my family, friends, and teachers were always telling me how smart I was, and I believed them. But that belief was a double-edged sword. High school and college offered many occasions when self-confidence in my inherent intelligence could be threatened. If I fail on this test or in this course it means that I’m not the smart person I thought I was. If I fail, my family and friends will find out that they were wrong about me.

However, there was a way to avoid all of the risks of academic rigor. I could just not try. If I didn’t try I would get bad marks on my report card, but those wouldn’t be true indicators of my intelligence. By not putting forth any effort, my intelligence would never be disproven. I would always be able to say to myself and others that, “I could do the work and be a straight A student, but I’m just not interested.” Looking back on this time in my life, it is clear to me that this wasn’t a conscious decision to save face. It was fear, not logic, which was guiding my behavior.

After reading *Mindset* I have made a conscious effort to identify and thwart any remaining fixed mindset thoughts that I continue

to hold. Dweck's book acts as a manual for rooting out fixed mindset thoughts, because she explains that the idea of fixed mindsets is only half of her mindset theory. There is another kind of mindset, and she calls it growth mindset. Dweck writes that, "This growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts" (Dweck, 2006). Dweck goes on to explain that we can choose to have a growth mindset about any type of ability, whether it's math, art, athletics, or any other skill that one wishes to cultivate.

I put this theory to the test not long after reading the book. A few years ago I attended a meeting only to find out that it wasn't any ordinary meeting. During this meeting we would be brainstorming solutions to a specific problem. This was going to be a true brainstorming session, led by a facilitator trained in the science of soliciting uninhibited ideas from an audience. As soon as I heard the word *brainstorming* I froze. I have always hated brainstorming. I'm the type of person that likes to think things through two or three times before expressing an opinion. My fear of failing at this task in front of my coworkers paralyzed my mind. I couldn't think.

That's when it hit me. This was fixed mindset thinking. My belief in my brainstorming inadequacies was preventing me from even trying. So I flipped this thinking on its head and decided the best way to improve my brainstorming abilities was to clear my mind and start firing out ideas. I gave it a shot, and though the ideas didn't come out at the prolific rate of some of my colleagues, I had never before had such a positive outcome and experience while brainstorming. Through this experience I found that I really could choose to have a growth mindset, and that this choice produces a greater chance of success. With a greater chance of success comes a smaller chance of failure.

Nevertheless, when it comes to academic success and success in all phases of life, failure is always an option. Though it can be painful, failure can lead to great learning and progress when a specific failure is analyzed through the lens of a growth mindset. By focusing more on effort than on outcomes anyone can learn and grow, regardless of their skill level. Therefore, to make the most of their time in college, students must seek out challenges that will stretch their abilities. These challenges can take many forms and they can occur in a variety of settings, both inside and outside of the classroom. When seeking out challenges there is always the possibility of agonizing defeat, but out of that defeat can be the seeds of great success in the future.

Reference

C. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).

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7: CAREER EXPLORATION

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7.1: PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

7.1.1: Prelude to Planning for Your Future

7.1.2: Why Worry about a Career While I'm in College?

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7.1.4: Where Can You Go from Here?

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7.1.1: Prelude to Planning for Your Future

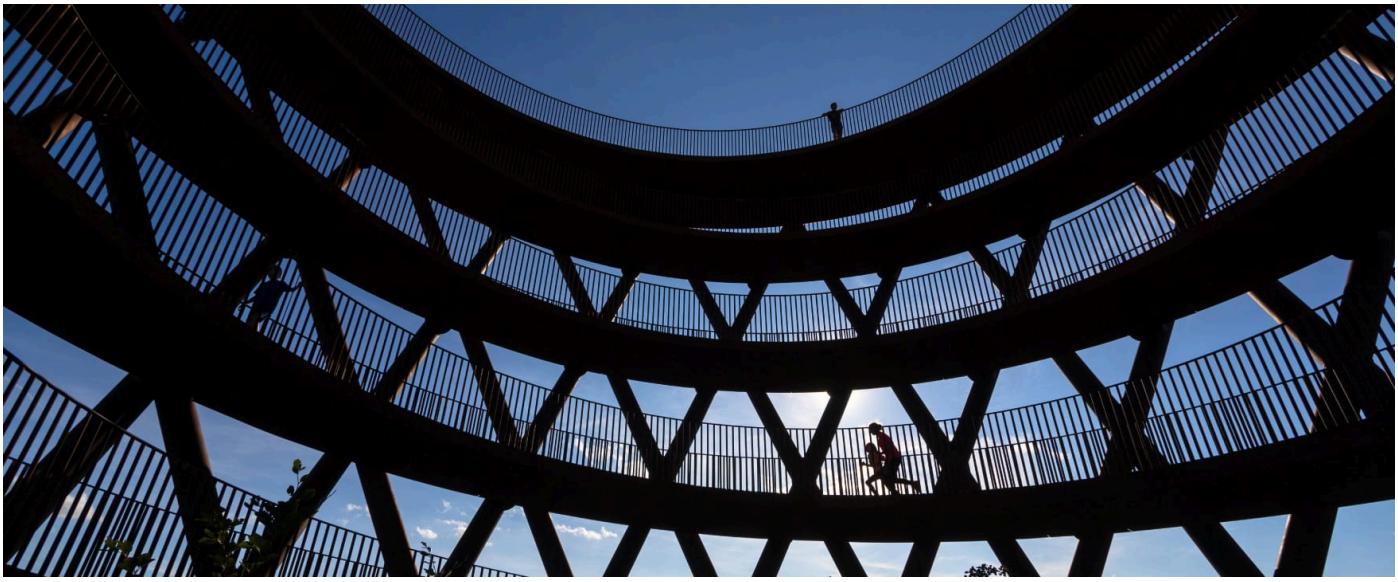


Figure 7.1.1.1: Credit: Stig Nygaard / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY)

Student Survey

How ready are you to plan your career? Take this quick survey to figure it out, ranking questions on a scale of 1–4, 1 meaning "least like me" and 4 meaning "most like me."

1. I am feeling certain about my major (or my ability to choose a major soon).
2. I know what kinds of jobs I can get with my major.
3. I have a good idea of what I need to do in each year of college to achieve career success as I graduate.
4. I am aware of what resources are on campus to help me create a career plan.

You can also take the Chapter 12 survey anonymously online.

STUDENT PROFILE

"A lesson I have learned throughout my college career is that changing majors is okay. Fresh out of high school, I always wanted to be an FBI agent. I wanted to be in those forensic shows—like *Criminal Minds*—that we all see on TV. So I decided to go to college and major in criminal justice with an emphasis in forensic science. When I started to take criminal justice classes, I noticed that my passion and determination were focused on something else: helping others and changing people's lives so they do not have to struggle as much as I did. I quickly decided to talk to a career counselor and let him know that I wanted to change majors. We discussed the long-term plans and where I would see myself in the future. I changed my major to a related one, sociology. And with that, I want to be a counselor, as I want to help others achieve their goals."

—Carlos Espinosa

About This Chapter

In earlier chapters of this book (1, 3, 4), you learned more about setting the foundation for college and career success by gaining a deeper understanding of why you are attending college, how to set goals and priorities, and how to begin your academic and life planning. By the time you complete this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- Learn what a career is and how it applies to you.

- Identify resources on campus that can help you explore careers and develop a plan.
- Increase your self-awareness relative to your career aspirations, and map productive steps forward.

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7.1.2: Why Worry about a Career While I'm in College?

Questions to Consider:

- What should I consider when choosing a career?
- How do I separate career myths from reality?

CAREER (noun)

Definition of career (Entry 1 of 2)

1: a profession for which one trains and which is undertaken as a permanent calling

a *career* in medicine

—often used before another noun

a *career* diplomat

2: a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life

Washington's *career* as a soldier[1]

Throughout your life, you've probably heard about getting a "good job" after you graduate. Everyone might define that differently. Many people say a good job is one where you can make a lot of money, but is that true? And is that true for you?

Consider the definition of "career" above. Does it seem exciting? Are there parts that sound intimidating? How can you navigate both parts of the responsibility of having a career? Many people believe that just because they have had a job, they know how to have a career. Getting a job is a single transaction. Crafting a career takes more strategy and time.

What Is the Difference Between a Job and a Career?

A universal definition of a job is "work that you do in exchange for money." It can also be a particular role or title. Going back to our definition of career above, a career is something for which we train, something that we intend to do permanently—which in actuality means long-term and over time, not necessarily for the rest of your life. It is a field or area in which we have achievement. It occurs progressively and usually consecutively. Here is how some current college students have defined "career":

- "A career is long-term; you do it until you can't anymore."
- "Something you love . . . a dream job."
- "What you plan and strive for while you work."
- "When you are more invested in the activities of the job than just getting a paycheck."[2]

Shira

When Shira was in college, she had a *job* at a local ice-cream stand. She made very good money in the summertime, so she could work less during the school year. She also learned a lot about customer service and working with her coworkers as a team. Shira eventually took on more responsibility as a supervisor, creating work schedules and interviewing prospective new employees. She really enjoyed this part of her *job* because she liked tasks involving helping people do well at work. Her boss, customers, and coworkers told her she was good at it. Unbeknownst to her at the time, this was the beginning of Shira's *career* in human resources.

How did this happen? As she took classes in psychology and business, Shira saw her courses in organizational psychology and management as applicable to her work. She enjoyed learning about how people interact in the workplace. She learned about human resources, which is typically defined as the department of a business or organization that deals with the hiring, administration, and training of people. She wanted to learn even more, so she got an internship in the human resources

department of a bank before she graduated and loved it.

After getting her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology, Shira got her first career-oriented job, as a recruiting specialist at a health insurance company. After about two years of working diligently, Shira got promoted to a job as a human resource generalist, with responsibility for recruiting strategy and process; recruiting specialists now report to her. In addition to working full-time, Shira also is active in her local chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management and will begin studying to take the national certification exams offered through this organization, giving her a highly sought-after professional credential. Within 5 to 10 years, Shira hopes to become a human resources director.



Figure 7.1.2.2: (Credit: University of Essex / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0)

Shira's career path is a straightforward one. She learned a lot about herself early in her college career. She got some experience and studied academic subjects she was interested in. Shira was nervous and uncertain at times, but she remained positive and adjusted her course as needed. She worked hard and made plans to be sure she could get a "good job."

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

1. What is your most significant concern about starting your career after college?
   a. I didn't choose the right major
   b. I won't have enough experience or knowledge to get a good job
   c. I might have to compromise my interests or goals
   d. Something about my career path, my past, or my decisions will impact my ability to be hired.
2. With what do you feel you need the most help in preparing for your career?
   a. Choosing the best major/pathway
   b. Gaining experience that will lead to success
   c. Standing out from others with similar majors or experience
   d. Writing a resume/profile and/or building a portfolio

You can also take the anonymous What Students Say surveys to add your voice to this textbook. Your responses will be included in updates.

Students offered their views on these questions, and the results are displayed in the graphs below.

What is your most significant concern about starting your career after college?

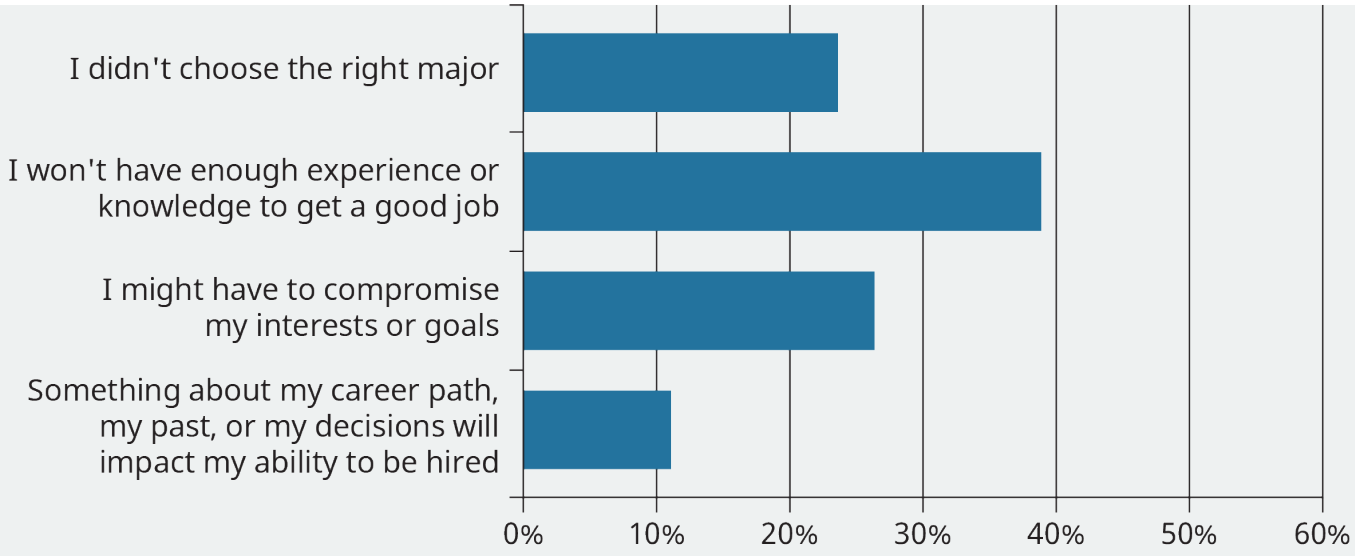


Figure 7.1.2.3

With what do you feel you need the most help in preparing for your career?

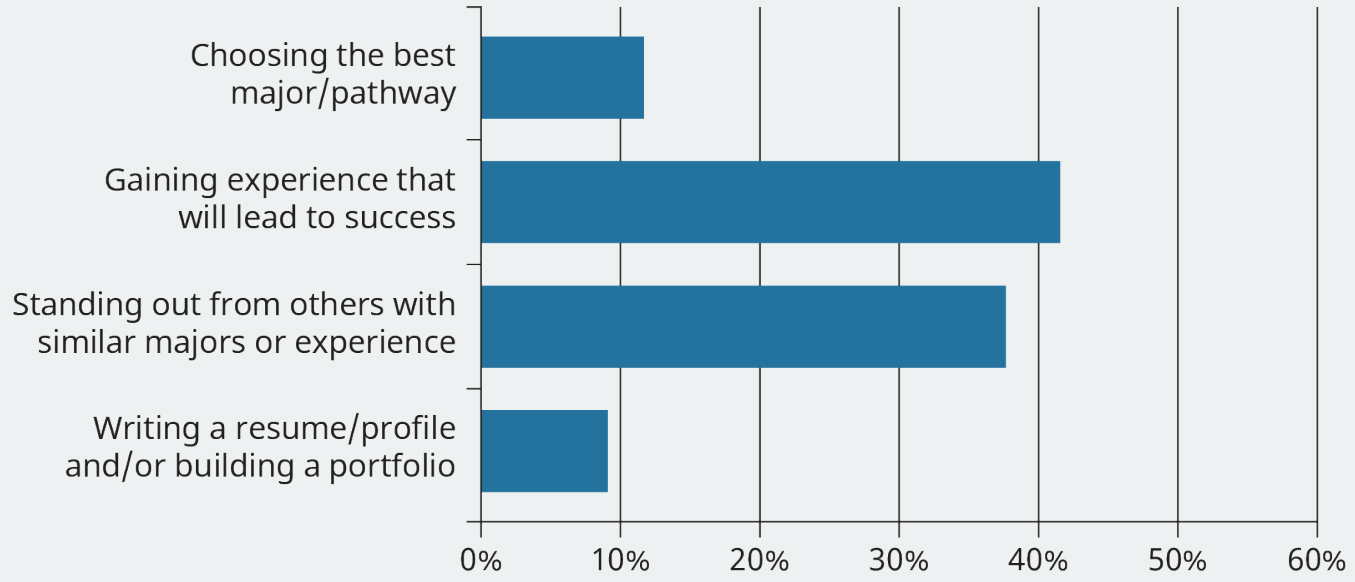


Figure 7.1.2.4

Career Myths and Realities

Because you are a student, many people will want to give you advice as you make your way through college. Older family members like to talk about how things were when they were in and graduated from college. Your parents might have very definite ideas about what you should major in and the best way to get a job (or perhaps they don't know at all, and you wish they did). Your friends, particularly those already in college, might tell you what their experience is, but maybe yours will be very different. Then there are all kinds of things you hear about in the news as to whether there are jobs out there. The economy can be very confusing at times. The stock market is up, then down. Government statistics tell us that the unemployment rate is lower than ever before, but many people say it is still very difficult to get a job. Students have seen their parents or grandparents get laid off, then hear that there is a new company in town that will hire thousands of people. Any and all of these things can be true, and all at the same time. So what does that mean for college students looking to begin their careers?

MYTH #1: "Because I am getting a college degree, I will have no problem getting hired and making a lot of money."

REALITY: As you learned in chapters 1 and 10, your chances of making more money over the course of your lifetime are greater when you have a college degree. However, employers expect more than just a diploma. They also expect that you did well in your studies and engaged in activities and experiences that demonstrate you can put learning into context in a work setting. Internships, practicums, service learning, community-based research, part-time or summer jobs, and more prove to employers that you are capable and eager to begin your career.

MYTH #2: "There is one perfect job for me" or "I will be happy if I find the right career."

REALITY: Finding the right career is not like waving a magic wand or a ticket to living your best Instagram life all of the time. There are jobs and careers for which you might be well-suited based on a combination of features and attributes. The better you know yourself, the better you can make a good match. Additionally, those features and attributes change over time, and by learning good career planning skills, you can adapt easily.

MYTH #3: "I can't get a good job with (fill in the name of a major)."

REALITY: There are some majors that traditionally result in jobs that earn more than others do. These are usually because the education for these occupations is often rigorous, and both training for and working in the occupation require a high level of skill and knowledge, even over time (engineering, computer science, accounting). However, anybody can get a "good" job with their major. The key is to understand what knowledge, skills, and abilities are required for the jobs you would like and to take action to make sure you have them. People who have a problem getting employment in their field after college may not have fully understood the requirements for being hired, they may have been unable to make the sacrifices necessary for that to happen, or they may have had unrealistic expectations.

MYTH #4: "I should base my major on 'hot' careers that will pay well."

REALITY: Just because a major or career field is "hot" doesn't mean that you will enjoy it or even be any good at it. Better to choose a career based on your interests, abilities, values, and personality. Additionally, which careers and fields are popular and well-paying can change quickly based on supply of candidates and economic situations. Thus, those who choose a hot field must be eager to learn new skills to keep up with the evolution of such a career.

MYTH #5: "It is too late to change my career."

REALITY: It is almost *never* "too late" to make a career change. There are millions of people who have made career changes, some by going to college in their 30s, 40s, 50s, or even older. In many cases, the best time to make a change is when you are older, because you have more to offer employers, have gained different experiences, and have become more settled in your personal life. Many college students find they are well-positioned to make the most of their college studies when they are more mature.

MYTH #6: "No one will hire me because I am 'just a student'; I won't be able to compete with people with more experience."

REALITY: Employers often like to hire recent graduates or people who are early in their careers because their learning is fresh, and they know how to learn new material and adapt quickly. Additionally, many employers believe that hiring new graduates allows them to train people the way that they would like. New graduates of all ages show persistence and flexibility by having earned a college degree and shown willingness to start something new.

MYTH #7: "I should be passionate about my work. If not, I am doing something wrong. "

REALITY: "Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life" and "Do what you love and the money will follow" are terrible advice. No one loves their work every minute of every day, and passion is a very high standard to meet. There are many things about which we might be passionate that would make for jobs that are completely unsuitable for us. What most people who are happy with their work have in common are that they can do it well; it has some impact on people, organizations, information, or things; and they find satisfaction in it. It is often through discovering this that passion for one's work follows.

MYTH #8: "My career path should follow a neat, straight line."

REALITY: For almost everyone, a career path is more like a winding road than a straight highway. Recall the story of Shira building a career off of her summer job, and know that Shira's experience is one path of many. Not everyone has a clear idea of how to find a job that fulfills an interest and then how to move from that job to a career. It is not always so straightforward. For example, there is great value in choosing a major in the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, or humanities, but sometimes these fields do not obviously transfer to a career. Yet with the right guidance, practice, and commitment, these majors provide many routes to

a fulfilling career and life. Based on information, experiences, and skills you gather along the way, you will find that you need and want to adapt and adjust. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to get into a career.

MYTH #9: “There are not many jobs out there with good pay and benefits, so why bother looking?”

REALITY: The way in which we work has changed in the last twenty years. There are many more flexible work arrangements available. The “gig economy” refers to jobs that are independent of being an employee and are often time-limited. These positions give people multiple options for generating personal income and are good options for a “side hustle.” At the present time, the job market is also considered to be a “job seeker’s market,” meaning employers are having difficulty finding candidates for their openings. Every day, thousands of people get jobs that advance their status.

ACTIVITY

Consider the various events or conversations you’ve experienced in the past few years that have led you toward a career goal. Have any of the myths or their counterparts listed above impacted your choices? Are you called to reconsider any previous decisions? Why or why not? Are there additional preconceptions you might have that could potentially block you from moving forward with your ideal plans?

What Should I Be?

Have you ever heard statements like these?

- “You are so good at math . . . you should be an accountant.”
- “Your best grades have always been in art, but it isn’t really practical to become an artist.”
- “You like kids so much! You should be a teacher!”

Many people tend to first think of careers based on images they see in society or the media. Prestigious and high-visibility occupations are what many young people aspire to when they are young. How many of you first wanted to be a doctor, firefighter, entertainer, professional athlete, or teacher? As we grow up and get to know the world better, we are exposed to a greater universe of jobs. However, young people in middle and high school also tend to look at careers based on the subjects they are good at (or not good at) in school. These self-perceptions and interests can last long into adulthood. But education and the work world can be extremely different environments with different purposes and expectations. The realities of jobs and careers we choose are vastly more complex than the courses we like or don’t and whether we perform well in them in high school. Though we may have some images for “what we are” and “who we should be,” there are also many different options, and the choices can be overwhelming. How do we ensure that we make career decisions that are productive for us?

Footnotes

- https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/career
- Canisius College Student Interviews, Buffalo, NY, September 2019

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7.1.3: Your Map to Success- The Career Planning Cycle

Questions to Consider:

- What steps should I take to learn about my best opportunities?
- What can I do to prepare for my career while in college?
- What experiences and resources can help me in my search?

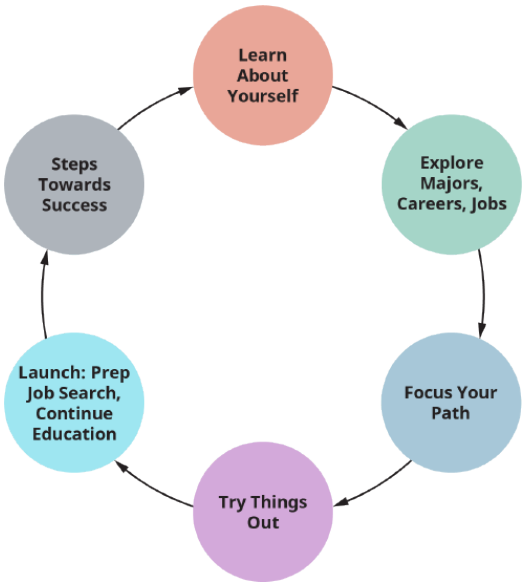


Figure 7.1.3.5: You can use the Career Planning Cycle to consider and reconsider your approach and progress in choosing and moving toward a career. (Credit: Based on work by Lisa August.)

The Career Planning Cycle helps us apply some concrete steps to figuring out where we might fit into the work world. If you follow the steps, you will learn about who you truly are, and can be, as a working professional. You will discover important knowledge about the work world. You will gain more information to help you make solid career decisions. You will get experience that will increase your qualifications. You will be more prepared to reach your professional goals. And the good news is that colleges and universities are set up nicely to help you utilize this process.

Learn About Yourself

To understand what type of work suits us and to be able to convey that to others to get hired, we must become experts in knowing who we are. Gaining **self-knowledge** is a lifelong process, and college is the perfect time to gain and adapt this fundamental information. Following are some of the types of information that we should have about ourselves:

- **Interests:** Things that we like and want to know more about. These often take the form of ideas, information, knowledge, and topics.
- **Skills/Aptitudes**: Things that we either do well or can do well. These can be natural or learned and are usually skills—things we can demonstrate in some way. Some of our skills are “hard” skills, which are specific to jobs and/or tasks. Others are “soft” skills, which are personality traits and/or interpersonal skills that accompany us from position to position.
- **Values:** Things that we believe in. Frequently, these are conditions and principles.
- **Personality:** Things that combine to make each of us distinctive. Often, this shows in the way we present ourselves to the world. Aspects of personality are customarily described as qualities, features, thoughts, and behaviors.

In addition to knowing the things we can and like to do, we must also know how well we do them. What are our strengths? When employers hire us, they hire us to do something, to contribute to their organization in some way. We get paid for what we know, what we can do, and how well or deeply we can demonstrate these things. Think of these as your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs). As working people, we can each think of ourselves as carrying a “tool kit.” In our tool kit are the KSAs that we bring to

each job. As we gain experience, we learn how best to use our tools. We gain more tools and use some more often than others, but all the tools we gather during our career stay with us in some form.

ACTIVITY

Consider the top KSAs you currently have in your tool kit. Consider at least one in each category that you would like to develop while you're in college.

Because you're expected to spend your time in college focusing on what you learn in your classes, it might seem like a lot of extra work to also develop your career identity. Actually, the ideal time to learn about who you are as a worker and a professional is while you are so focused on learning and personal development, which lends itself to growth in all forms. College helps us acquire and develop our KSAs daily through our coursework and experiences. What might be some ways you can purposefully and consciously learn about yourself? How might you get more information about who you are? And how might you learn about what that means for your career? Awareness of the need to develop your career identity and your vocational worth is the first step. Next, undertaking a process that is mindful and systematic can help guide you through. This process will help you look at yourself and the work world in a different way. You will do some of this in this course. Then, during your studies, some of your professors and advisors may integrate career development into the curriculum, either formally or informally. Perhaps most significantly, the career center at your school is an essential place for you to visit. They have advisors, counselors, and coaches who are formally trained in facilitating the career development process.

Often, career assessment is of great assistance in increasing your self-knowledge. It is most often designed to help you gain insight more objectively. You may want to think of assessment as pulling information out of you and helping you put it together in a way that applies to your career. There are two main types of assessments: formal assessments and informal assessments.

Formal Assessments

Formal assessments are typically referred to as "career tests." There are thousands available, and many are found randomly on the Internet. While many of these can be fun, "free" and easily available instruments are usually not credible. It is important to use assessments that are developed to be reliable and valid. Look to your career center for their recommendations; their staff has often spent a good deal of time selecting instruments that they believe work best for students.

Here are some commonly used and useful assessments that you may run across:

- **Interest Assessments:** Strong Interest Inventory, Self-Directed Search, Campbell Interest and Skill Survey, Harrington-O'Shea Career Decision-Making System
- **Personality Measures:** Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, CliftonStrengths (formerly StrengthsQuest), Big Five Inventory, Keirsey Temperament Sorter, TypeFocus, DiSC
- **Career Planning Software:** SIGI 3, FOCUS 2

GET CONNECTED

If you would like to do some formal assessment on your own, either in addition to what you can get on campus or if you don't believe you have reliable access to career planning, this site developed by the U.S. Department of Labor has some career exploration materials that you may find helpful.

Informal Assessments

Often, asking questions and seeking answers can help get us information that we need. When we start working consciously on learning more about any subject, things that we never before considered may become apparent. Happily, this applies to self-knowledge as well. Some things that you can do outside of career testing to learn more about yourself can include:

Self-Reflection:

- Notice when you do something that you enjoy or that you did particularly well. What did that feel like? What about it made

you feel positive? Is it something that you'd like to do again? What was the impact that you made through our actions?
- Most people are the "go to" person for something. What do you find that people come to you for? Are you good with advice? Do you tend to be a good listener, observing first and then speaking your mind? Do people appreciate your repair skills? Are you good with numbers? What role do you play in a group?
- If you like to write or record your thoughts, consider creating a career journal that you update regularly, whether it's weekly or by semester. If writing your own thoughts is difficult, seek out guided activities that help prompt you to reflect.
- Many colleges have a career planning course that is designed to specifically lead you through the career decision-making process. Even if you are decided on your major, these courses can help you refine and plan best for your field.

Enlist Others:

- Ask people who know you to tell you what they think your strengths are. This information can come from friends, classmates, professors, advisors, family members, coaches, mentors, and others. What kinds of things have they observed you doing well? What personal qualities do you have that they value? You are not asking them to tell you what career you should be in; rather, you are looking to learn more about yourself.
- Find a mentor—such as a professor, an alumnus, an advisor, or a community leader—who shares a value with you and from whom you think you could learn new things. Perhaps they can share new ways of doing something or help you form attitudes and perceptions that you believe would be helpful.
- Get involved with one or more activities on campus that will let you use skills outside of the classroom. You will be able to learn more about how you work with a group and try new things that will add to your skill set.
- Attend activities on and off campus that will help you meet people (often alumni) who work in the professional world. Hearing their career stories will help you learn about where you might want to be. Are there qualities that you share with them that show you may be on a similar path to success? Can you envision yourself where they are?
- No one assessment can tell you exactly what career is right for you; the answers to your career questions are not in a test. The reality of career planning is that it is a discovery process that uses many methods over time to strengthen our career knowledge and belief in ourselves.

ACTIVITY

Choose one of the suggestions from the list, above, and follow through on it. Keep a log or journal of your experience with the activity and note how this might help you think about your future after college.

Explore Jobs and Careers

Many students seem to believe that the most important decision they will make in college is to choose their major. While this is an important decision, even more important is to determine the type of knowledge you would like to have, understand what you value, and learn how you can apply this in the workplace after you graduate. For example, if you know you like to help people, this is a value. If you also know that you're interested in math and/or finances, you might study to be an accountant. To combine both of these, you would gain as much knowledge as you can about financial systems and personal financial habits so that you can provide greater support and better help to your clients.

The four factors of self-knowledge (interests, skills/aptitudes, values, and personality), which manifest in your KSAs, are also the factors on which employers evaluate your suitability for their positions. They consider what you can bring to their organization that is at once in line with their organization's standards and something they need but don't have in their existing workforce.

Along with this, each job has KSAs that define it. You may think about finding a job/career as looking like the figure below.

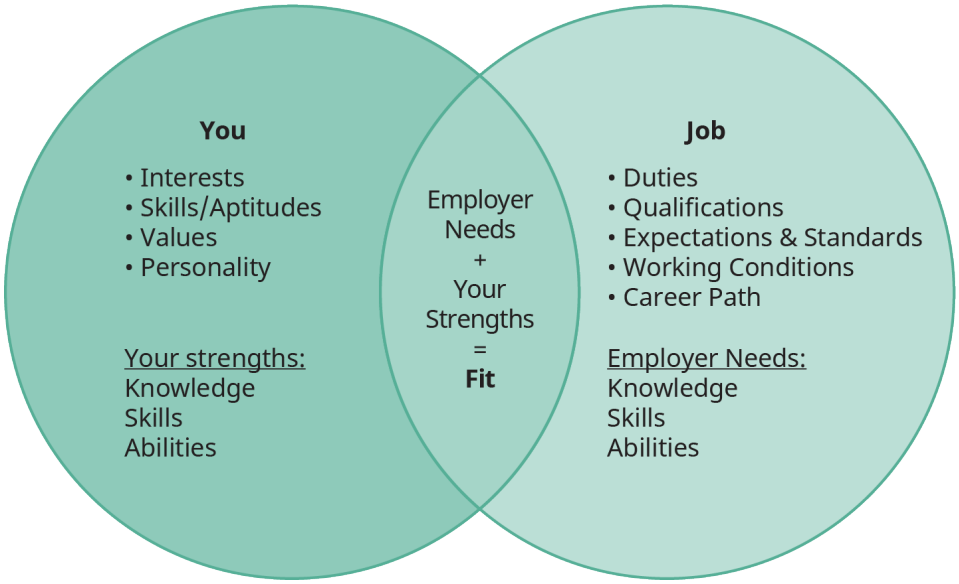


Figure 7.1.3.6: Your fit for a job lies at the intersection of your attributes and the elements of the position. When your strengths align with the employer needs, both can mutually benefit.

The importance of finding the right fit cannot be overstated. Many people don't realize that the KSAs of the person and the requirements of the job have to match in order to get hired in a given field. What is even more important, though, is that when a particular job fits your four factors of self-knowledge *and* maximizes your KSAs, you are most likely to be satisfied with your work! The "fit" works to help you not only get the job, but also enjoy the job.

So if you work to learn about yourself, what do you need to know about jobs, and how do you go about learning it? In our diagram, if you need to have self-knowledge to determine the YOU factors, then to determine the JOB factors, you need to have workplace knowledge. This involves understanding what employers in the workplace and specific jobs require. Aspects of workplace knowledge include:

- **Labor Market Information:** Economic conditions, including supply and demand of jobs; types of industries in a geographic area or market; regional sociopolitical conditions and/or geographic attributes.
- **Industry Details:** Industry characteristics; trends and opportunities for both industry and employers; standards and expectations.
- **Work Roles:** Characteristics and duties of specific jobs and work roles; knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the work; training and education required; certifications or licenses; compensation; promotion and career path; hiring process.

This "research" may sound a little dry and uninteresting at first, but consider it as a look into your future. If you are excited about what you are learning and what your career prospects are, learning about the places where you may put all of your hard work into practice should also be very exciting! Most professionals spend many hours not only performing their work but also physically being located at work. For something that is such a large part of your life, it will help you to know what you are getting into as you get closer to realizing your goals.

How Do We Gain Workplace Knowledge?

- Understand that there is a wide range of occupations and industries that fit together so that we can see how all jobs contribute to the workplace. With the use of formal career assessments, it will be easy to see where you fit in using the map below.

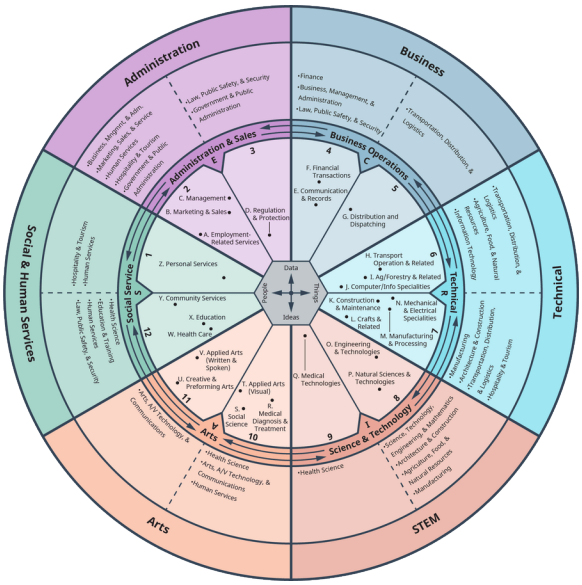


Figure 7.1.3.7: The World of Work Map demonstrates the interconnected areas of occupation and interest. You can use it to help navigate your exploration of workplace knowledge. (Credit: Based on Work by ACT.)

- Learn the “textbook” definitions of what is involved in the jobs you are considering. In Chapter 4, you used the Occupational Outlook Handbook to learn more about the requirements for occupations. Its sister site, will help show you more specific job titles.
- Read online information that is relevant to the professions you are interested in. Good sources for this include professional associations. Just “googling” information is risky. Look for professional and credible information. The Occupational Outlook Handbook has links to many of these sources. Your career center can also guide you.
- Whether you are just choosing your major or are already in a major and want to know what options it offers in terms of future work, look for this specific information. Your department may have this information; your campus career center definitely will. One very good site is What Can I Do With This Major?
- Join professional clubs on campus. Many of these organizations have guest speakers who come to meetings and talk about what their jobs are like. Often, they also sponsor field trips to different companies and organizations.
- As mentioned earlier, attend campus networking events and programs such as job fairs and recruiting information sessions so that you can talk to people who actually do the work and get their insights.

Something to keep in mind as you make choices about your major and career is that the training is not the job. What you learn in your college courses is often foundational information; it provides basic knowledge that you need for more complex concepts and tasks. For example, a second-year student who is premed has the interests and qualities that may make her a good physician, but she is struggling to pass basic chemistry. She starts to think that medical school is no longer an appropriate goal because she doesn’t enjoy chemistry. Does it make sense to abandon a suitable career path because of one 15-week course? In some ways, yes. In the case of medical school, the education is so long and intensive that if the student can’t persevere through one introductory course, she may not have the determination to complete the training. On the other hand, if you are truly dedicated to your path, don’t let one difficult course deter you.

The example above describes Shantelle. They weren’t quite sure which major to choose, and they were feeling pressure because the window for making their decision was closing. They considered their values and strengths—they love helping people and have always wanted to pursue work in medical training. As described above, Shantelle struggled in general chemistry this semester and found that they actually didn’t enjoy it at all. They’ve heard nightmare stories about organic chemistry being even harder. Simultaneously, Shantelle is taking Intro to Psychology, something they thought would be an easier course but that they enjoy even though it’s challenging. Much to their surprise, they found the scientific applications of theory in the various types of mental illness utterly fascinating. But given that their life dream was to be a physician, Shantelle was reluctant to give up on medicine because of one measly chemistry course. With the help of an advisor, Shantelle decided to postpone choosing a major for one more semester and take a course in clinical psychology. Since there are so many science courses required for premed studies, Shantelle also agreed to take another science course. Their advisor helped Shantelle realize that it was likely not a wise choice to make such an important decision based on one course experience.

Focus Your Path

When you know yourself and know what to expect from a workplace and a job, you have information to begin to make decisions. As we've discussed throughout this book, you're not attending college solely to get a job. But this is likely one of your goals, and your time in school offers a tremendous opportunity to both prepare for your career (or *careers*) and make yourself more attractive to organizations where you want to work. Successfully learning the content of your classes and earning good grades are among the most important. Beyond these priorities, you'll learn the most about yourself and your potential career path if you engage in activities that will help you make decisions. Simply sitting back and thinking about the decision doesn't always help you take action.

Take Advantage of Every Resource You Can While in School

Your college has a wealth of departments, programs, and people dedicated to your success. The more you work to discover and engage with these groups, the more successfully you'll establish networks of support and build skills and knowledge for your career.

Make plans to drop by your career services or a related office early in your time in school. There, you'll learn about events you can attend, and you'll get to know some of the people there who can help you. The department may offer the formal assessments discussed earlier in this chapter, including aptitude testing, which can help you discover some of your areas of strength and give you insight into some high-potential career destinations. Career services may also have skills/interest inventories. These can help you match your attributes and ambitions with potential careers and suggest additional resources to explore.

Your college is also likely to have a resource that goes far beyond the campus itself: the alumni association. College alumni often maintain a relationship with the school and with their fellow graduates. Just by attending the same college, you have something in common with them. You chose the same place, maybe for similar reasons, and you might be having similar experiences. Often, alumni are eager to help current students by offering their professional insights and making career connections. You can find out about alumni events on your campus website, at the career center, and in the alumni department. These events can be fun and beneficial to attend, especially those involving networking opportunities. Note that specific departments or campus organizations may have their own alumni groups, whether formal or informal. Try to find former students who majored in your field or who have a job similar to the one you'd like one day. Remember, members of alumni organizations make a choice to be involved; they want to be there. It's very likely they'll be interested in offering you some help, mentoring, or even introductions to the right people.



Figure 7.1.3.8: Alumni often hold many events at colleges, some of which you can attend to build your network and learn about career paths. (Credit: University of the Fraser Valley / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Alumni may often attend events at your college, such as visiting guest speakers, art show openings, homecoming, or sporting events. You can find and talk with them there (under the right circumstances) and enjoy the event at the same time.

Networking is such a critical part of professional life that nearly every city or region has organizations and events devoted to it.

Meetups are occasions for people with shared interests, skills, and professions to gather together and talk about their experiences and insights. The events might involve a brief talk or demonstration, a discussion or question-and-answer period, and then plenty of time for mingling. You can likely find these events with a quick search. But before you go, carefully review the guidelines and limits on who can attend. Some meetups may not be open to students or others not formally employed in a field; they may also be held in bars or involve alcohol, preventing those under 21 from attending. Don't be offended by these barriers—the meetup organizers have specific goals and members to consider—but if you find one you can attend, try it out.

You can also network with people right at your college. Many of your college faculty likely have (or had) other roles and positions. A computer science professor may have worked for a tech company before moving into academia. Accounting faculty, especially certified public accountants, might take on tax work every spring. Nursing faculty likely maintain a role with a hospital or other medical office. Learn from them what the job is like and how you can better prepare for it. And don't forget to talk to adjunct instructors; they may have an entirely separate career on top of their teaching role that gives them access to a network of potential mentors and employers.

Finally, you'll likely encounter graduate students or preprofessional students, some of whom may be in the workforce or have work experience. While they themselves are still working on their education, they may have insights, connections, and ideas regarding your career.

Try Things Out

In the first two steps of the Career Planning Cycle, you gather information. You may have some ideas about jobs and careers that you may like, but you also may wonder if you will really like them. How will you know? How can you be more certain? Take an interest or a skill, and try it out in an experience. By putting it to work for you in any one of a number of different environments, you can get practice and learn more about who you are and just how much you can do. It's a great idea to try out a new skill or career field before you commit to it fully. You might find out that the field isn't right for you, but you also may find that you are heading in the right direction and want to keep pursuing it. Experiences help you become more qualified for positions. One exciting aspect of college is that there is a huge variety of learning experiences and activities in which to get involved. The following are some ways that you can try things out and get experience.

Community Involvement, Volunteering, and Clubs

You're in college to develop yourself as an individual. You'll gain personally satisfying and enriching experience by becoming more involved with your college or general community. Organizations, clubs, and charities often rely on college students because of their motivation, knowledge, and increasing maturity. The work can increase your skills and abilities, providing valuable experience that will lead to positive results.

Participate in clubs and volunteer in areas that appeal to your interests and passions. It's just as important that you enjoy them and make a difference as it is to increase career potential through networking and skill-building. But of course, it's great to do both.

Once you join a club or related organization, take the time to learn about their leadership opportunities. Most campus clubs have some type of management structure—treasurer, vice president, president, and so on. You may "move up the ranks" naturally, or you may need to apply or even run for election. Some organizations, such as a campus newspaper, radio station, or dance team, have skill-based semiprofessional or roles such as advertising manager, sound engineer, or choreographer. These opportunities may not always be available to you as freshmen, but you can take on shorter-term roles to build your skills and make a bigger impact. Managing a fundraiser, planning an event, or temporarily taking on a role while someone else is busy are all ways to engage further.

Volunteering can be an important way to access a profession and get a sense for whether you will enjoy it or not, even before you do an internship. And in certain arenas, such as politics, it might be the *only* readily accessible approach, especially if you have no prior experience. In all of these cases, you can build important skills and increase your experience working with people in your chosen field. Spend time reflecting on and recording your experiences so that you're better prepared to talk about them and utilize what you learned.

Internships and Related Experiences

Many employers value experience as much as they do education. Internships and similar fieldwork allow you to use what you've

learned and, sometimes more importantly, see how things work "in the real world." These experiences drive you to communicate with others in your field and help you understand the day-to-day challenges and opportunities of people working in similar areas. Even if the internship is not at a company or organization directly in your field of study, you'll focus on gaining transferable skills that you can apply later on.

Speaking to career or academic counselors and planning your major will help you learn about internship requirements and recommendations. You'll find out how, where, and when to apply, the level of commitment required, and any limitations or guidelines your college indicates. If you're going to receive credit for your internship or fieldwork, it must be directly related to your field of study.

When you intern, you are usually treated like you work there full-time. It's not just learning about the job; it's *doing* the job, often similarly to an entry-level employee. The level of commitment may vary by the type of internship and may be negotiable based on your schedule. Be very clear about what's required and what you can handle given your other commitments, because you want to leave a very good impression. (Internship managers are your top resource for employment references and letters of recommendation.)

Note that while internships and similar positions may seem to involve low-level work, you maintain your rights and should be treated properly. Getting coffee, organizing shelves, and copying papers are often part of the work. Your internship should be structured with duties, responsibilities, and goals for learning that are mutually agreed upon by both you and the internship site, as well as approved by an internship supervisor from your college or university. This will help ensure a positive and productive experience for both you and your internship sponsor.

Students who take internships generally report them to be worthwhile experiences. In a survey of students taken by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, approximately 75 percent of students responding to the survey said their professionalism/work ethic, teamwork/collaboration, and oral/written communication skills were "very" to "extremely" improved by their internship/coop experience, and 66 percent said the same of their critical thinking/problem-solving skills.[3]

ACTIVITY

Go to Internships.com and enter a specific keyword and location in the fields on the homepage, such as "airline" and "Bend, OR." How many opportunities came back? How many piqued your interest?

Now, try to choose a broader, less specific keyword. For example, instead of "airline," try "aviation" on the second search. If the first keyword was "physical therapy," you might try "health care" for a broader search in the same field. Did you receive more opportunities the second time? Do you see ones that aren't exactly in your field but that still seem interesting?

On sites like these, you can play with the options and filters to find a wide array of internship possibilities in related fields. In the example above, a future physical therapist who took an internship in another area of health care would certainly still learn a lot.

There are many and varied types of experiential learning opportunities that can help you learn more about different career opportunities. These are fully discussed in chapter 4. The table below provides a brief overview.

Table 12.1

Internship and Experiential Learning Terminology	
Internship	A period of work experience in a professional organization, in which participants (interns) are exposed to and perform some of the tasks of actual employees. Internships are usually a relatively high commitment, and may be paid and/or result in college credit.
Externship/Job Shadowing	Usually a briefer and lower-commitment experience than internships, in which participants are observing work activities and perhaps undertaking small projects. Unpaid and not credit-bearing.
Fieldwork	A period or trip to conduct research or participate in the "natural environment" of a discipline or profession. Fieldwork may involve visiting a work site, such as a hospital or nursing home, or being a part of a team gathering data or information.

Internship and Experiential Learning Terminology	
Apprenticeship	A defined period of on-the-job training in which the student is formally doing the job and learning specific skills. Unlike most internships, apprenticeships are usually formal requirements to attain a license or gain employment in skilled trades, and they are growing in use in health care, IT, transportation, and logistics.
Undergraduate Research	Even as an undergrad, you may find opportunities to partake in actual research in your field of study. Colleges often have strict guidelines on types and levels of participation, and you will likely need to apply. The benefits include firsthand knowledge of a core academic activity and exposure to more people in your field.
Related Employment	It may be possible to get a regular, low-level paying job directly in your field of study or in a related place of work. While it's not essential, simply being around the profession will better inform and prepare you.
Clinicals, Student Teaching, and Related Experiences	Health care, education, and other fields often have specific requirements for clinicals (learning experience in health care facilities) or student teaching. These are often components of the major and required for both graduation and licensure.
Service Learning	Students learn educational standards through tackling real-life problems in their community. Involvement could be hands-on, such as working in a homeless shelter. Students could also tackle broad issues in an indirect manner, such as by solving a local environmental problem.

Productive Downtime

Throughout this book, we've discussed all the work required for a successful and productive college experience. And in this chapter, we've outlined a wide range of extracurricular activities that are likely necessary to achieve your career goals. But as we've also made clear, balance and rest are critical for success and well-being. Everyone needs time off.

So, when you have a school break, relax. Spend time with the people who motivate and help you—family and friends—or take a trip if that's possible. If you work during school and school breaks, the decrease in your school responsibilities should help recharge your batteries.

Another way you might spend your time off from school is to find an employment and/or experiential opportunity, especially during a longer time off. Winter break may afford a weeklong volunteer opportunity or a brief externship. Summer break is particularly helpful for formal internships and other experiences.



Figure 7.1.3.9: Internships present a range of opportunities to work and learn in the authentic environment of your career or interest area. (Credit: Bureau of Land Management / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

If you do seek a summer internship or related activity, be aware that they can be very competitive. With many college students

off for the summer, they may be targeting the same opportunities as you are. Work with your academic or career advisors to start the process early and put yourself in the best position to get an internship. Consider all of the application components, including essays, portfolio items, and letters of recommendation; all of these may take time to generate. If possible, pursue multiple opportunities to increase your chances. Just be clear on the application policies, and be sure to inform them if you take another position.

Summer jobs, whether related to your field or not, may also be hard to come by without prior planning. If you go away to school and need a job at home over the summer, be sure to connect with the potential employer early. Get them the application, resume, and any certifications or recommendations with plenty of time for them to process and contact you for clarification or follow-up. Employers who regularly employ college students will likely be comfortable working via email or by phone, but ask if an in-person interview is necessary, and see if you can schedule it during a spring break or as soon as you get back from school. Even if you don't go away to school, plan and connect early. You wouldn't want all the other students to come home and take your opportunity when you've been there all along.

While you're not focused on your schoolwork, or even after you graduate, you can keep learning. Beyond the different types of degrees and certificates discussed in the Academic Pathways chapter, you'll be more prepared and more attractive to a potential employer if you demonstrate a continued thirst and effort to gain knowledge and "remain current." Find the leaders in your field and read their articles or books (your future employers may be familiar with them). Or consider more formal summer courses, short-courses, or online learning opportunities. Each profession has its own resources. For example, in the software and computing field, Thinkful offers courses and mentoring for students and professionals.

Transferable Skills

Whether or not your internship or other experiences are directly connected to your career, you should focus as much as possible on building and improving transferable skills. These are abilities and knowledge that are useful across an array of industries, job types, and roles. They can be transferred—hence the name—from where you learned them to another career or area of study.

Examples of transferable skills include communication, personnel management/leadership, teamwork, computation/quantitative literacy, information technology, research/analysis, foreign language, and so on. If you search for lists of transferable skills, you'll see that some sites only include compilations of a few very broad areas, such as communication, while others provide longer and more specific lists, such as breaking down communication into writing, verbal, and listening skills. Employers believe that transferable skills are critical to the success of their recent college graduate new hires. The top four career competencies that employers want are critical thinking/problem solving, teamwork/collaboration, professionalism/work ethic, and oral/written communication.[4] If you remember the statistics noted above, students said that all four of these skills were significantly improved through their internship experiences.

These are considered s*kills* because they are not simply traits or personality elements; they are abilities and intelligences you can develop and improve. Even if you're a great writer before starting an internship, you may need to learn how to write in a more professional manner—becoming more succinct, learning the executive summary, conforming to templates, and so on. Once you establish that skill, you can not only mention it on a resume or interview, but also discuss the *process* by which you improved, demonstrating your adaptability and eagerness to learn.

Not everyone can land an internship or perform fieldwork. Perhaps you need to work nearly full-time while in school. If so, focus on developing transferable skills in that environment. Take on new challenges in areas where you don't have experience. For example, if you work in retail, ask your manager if you can help with inventory or bookkeeping (building quantitative literacy skills). If you're a waiter, help the catering manager plan a party or order food (building organizational skills). Remember, extending yourself in this way is not simply a means to enhance your resume. By taking on these new challenges, you'll see a side of the business you hadn't before and learn things that you can apply in other situations.

Whether or not it's required as a part of your internship or other experience, be sure to reflect on your time there—what you did, what you learned, where you excelled, where you didn't excel. Maintaining a journal of some sort will enable you to share your experiences and employ your transferable skills in your college courses and other activities. Jot down some anecdotes, events, and tasks you performed. Any materials or documents you produced can go into your portfolio, and the record of your experience will serve you well while searching for a job. Consider that it is customary to be asked during a job interview to share a personal strength and a weakness. Sharing a strength is often more expected and, thus, easier to plan for. While it may seem reasonable to say that your weakness is that you're always late, it's better to provide a weakness within the context of work experience. For example, if you have had a part-time job where one of your colleagues was always slacking off and putting the load on others, you may have felt frustrated and even expressed your anger. Rather than view this as a negative, consider the positive benefit and

craft this into a solid answer to the likely interview question. For example, “I have found that I’m rather impatient with colleagues who take shortcuts to a solution and don’t really apply themselves. My weakness is impatience. However, rather than call it out in a negative way, I share my observation as constructive feedback and let it go. My colleague can take it or leave it, but I’m not carrying it with me.” If you wrote about this experience around the time that it occurred, it will be easier to shape into a thoughtful response later. Continuing to work on your transferable skills will allow you to improve them and make a better impression on faculty, advisors, and potential employers.

What to Do to Get Ready

Being prepared to find a job means putting evidence of your KSAs together in a way that employers will understand. It is one thing to say you can do something; it is another to show that you can. The following are things that you will want to compile as a part of your college career.

Resumes and Profiles: The College Version

You may already have a resume or a similar profile (such as LinkedIn), or you may be thinking about developing one. Usually, these resources are not required for early college studies, but you may need them for internships, work-study, or other opportunities. When it comes to an online profile, something that is a public resource, be very considerate and intentional when developing it.

Resume

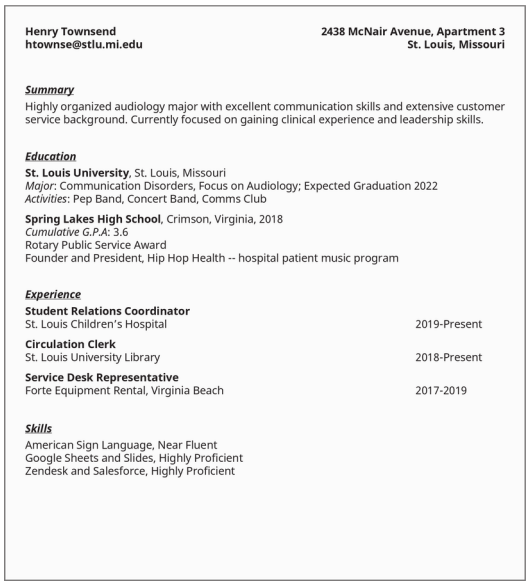
A resume is a summary of your education, experience, and other accomplishments. It is not simply a list of what you’ve done; it’s a showcase that presents the best you have to offer for a specific role. While most resumes have a relatively similar look and feel, there are some variations in the approach. Especially when developing your first résumé or applying in a new area, you should seek help from resources such as career counselors and others with knowledge of the field. Websites can be very helpful, but be sure to run your résume by others to make sure it fits the format and contains no mistakes.

A resume is a one-page summary (two, if you are a more experienced person) that generally includes the following information:

- Name and contact information
- Objective and/or summary
- Education—all degrees and relevant certifications or licenses
  - While in college, you *may* list coursework *closely related* to the job to which you’re applying.
- Work or work-related experience—usually in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent and working backward. (Some resumes are organized by subject/skills rather than chronologically.[5])
- Career-related/academic awards or similar accomplishments
- Specific work-related skills

While you’re in college, especially if you went into college directly after high school, you may not have formal degrees or significant work experience to share. That’s okay. Tailor the résumé to the position for which you’re applying, and include high school academic, extracurricular, and community-based experience . These show your ability to make a positive contribution and are a good indicator of your work ethic. Later on in this chapter, we’ll discuss internships and other programs through which you can gain experience, all of which can be listed on your resume. Again, professionals and counselors can help you with this.

If you have significant experience outside of college, you should include it if it’s relatively recent, relates to the position, and/or includes transferable skills (discussed above) that can be used in the role for which you’re applying. Military service or similar experience should nearly always be included. If you had a long career with one company quite some time ago, you can summarize that in one resume entry, indicating the total years worked and the final role achieved. These are judgment calls, and again you can seek guidance from experts.



Henry Townsend
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2438 McNair Avenue, Apartment 3
St. Louis, Missouri

Summary

Highly organized audiology major with excellent communication skills and extensive customer service background. Currently focused on gaining clinical experience and leadership skills.

Education

St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri
Major: Communication Disorders, Focus on Audiology; Expected Graduation 2022
Activities: Pep Band, Concert Band, Comms Club

Spring Lakes High School, Crimson, Virginia, 2018
Cumulative G.P.A: 3.6
Rotary Public Service Award
Founder and President, Hip Hop Health -- hospital patient music program

Experience

Student Relations Coordinator
St. Louis Children's Hospital 2019-Present

Circulation Clerk
St. Louis University Library 2018-Present

Service Desk Representative
Forte Equipment Rental, Virginia Beach 2017-2019

Skills

American Sign Language, Near Fluent
Google Sheets and Slides, Highly Proficient
Zendesk and Salesforce, Highly Proficient

Figure 7.1.3.10: Resumes summarize your accomplishments, education, skills, and experience.

Digital Profiles

An online profile is a nearly standard component of professional job seeking and networking. LinkedIn is a networking website used by people from nearly every profession. It combines elements of résumés and portfolios with social media. Users can view, connect, communicate, post events and articles, comment, and recommend others. Employers can recruit, post jobs, and process applications. Alternatives include Jobcase, AngelList, Hired, and Nexxt. These varying sites work in similar ways, with some unique features or practices.

Some professions or industries have specific LinkedIn groups or subnetworks. Other professions or industries may have their own networking sites, to be used instead of or in addition to LinkedIn. Industry, for example, is a networking site specifically for culinary and hospitality workers.

As a college student, it might be a great idea to have a LinkedIn or related profile. It can help you make connections in a prospective field, and provide access to publications and posts on topics that interest you. Before you join and develop a public professional profile, however, keep the following in mind:

- **Be professional.** Write up your profile information, any summary, and job/education experience separately, check for spelling and other errors, and have someone review *before* posting. Be sure to be completely honest and accurate.
- **Your profile isn't a contest.** As a college student, you may only have two or three items to include on your profile. That's okay. Overly long LinkedIn profiles—like overly long resumes—aren't effective anyway, and a college student's can be brief.
- **Add relevant experience and information as you attain it.** Post internships, summer jobs, awards, or work-study experiences as you attain them. Don't list *every* club or organization you're in if it doesn't pertain to the professional field, but include some, especially if you become head of a club or hold a competitive position, such as president or member of a performance group or sports team.
- **Don't "overconnect."** As you meet and work with people relevant to your career, it is appropriate to connect with them through LinkedIn by adding a personal note on the invite message. But don't send connection invites to people with whom you have no relationship, or to too many people overall. Even alumni from your own school might be reluctant to connect with you unless you know them relatively well.
- **Professional networking is not the same as social media.** While LinkedIn has a very strong social media component, users are often annoyed by too much nonprofessional sharing (such as vacation/child pictures); aggressive commenting or arguing via comments is also frowned upon. As a student, you probably shouldn't be commenting or posting too much at all. Use LinkedIn as a place to observe and learn. And in terms of your profile itself, keep it professional, not personal.
- **LinkedIn is not a replacement for a real resume.**

There's no need to rush to build and post an online professional profile—certainly not in your freshman year. But when the time is right, it can be a useful resource for you and future employers.

Social Media and Online Activity Never Go Away

While thinking about LinkedIn and other networks, it's a good time to remember that future employers, educational institutions, internship coordinators, and anyone else who may hire or develop a relationship with you can see most of what you've posted or done online. Companies are well within their rights to dig through your social media pages, and those of your friends or groups you're part of, to learn about you. Tasteless posts, inappropriate memes, harassment, pictures or videos of high-risk behavior, and even aggressive and mean comments are all problematic. They may convince a potential employer that you're not right for their organization. Be careful of who and what you retweet, like, and share. It's all traceable, and it can all have consequences.

For other activities on social media, such as strong political views, activism, or opinions on controversial topics, you should use your judgment. Most strong organizations will not be dissuaded from working with you because you're passionate about something within the realm of civility, but any posts or descriptions that seem insensitive to groups of people can be taken as a reason not to hire you. While you have freedom of speech with regard to the government, that freedom does not extend to private companies' decisions on whether to hire you. Even public institutions, such as universities and government agencies, can reject you for unlawful activity (including threats or harassment) revealed online; they can also reject you if you frequently post opinions that conflict with the expectations of both your employer and the people/organizations they serve.

With those cautions in mind, it's important to remember that anything on your social media or professional network profiles related to federally protected aspects of your identity—race, national origin, color, disability, veteran status, parental/pregnancy status, religion, gender, age, or genetic information (including family medical history)—cannot be held against you in hiring decisions.

Building Your Portfolio

Future employers or educational institutions may want to see the work you've done during school. Also, you may need to recall projects or papers you wrote to remember details about your studies. Your portfolio can be one of your most important resources.

Portfolio components vary according to field. Business students should save projects, simulations, case studies, and any mock companies or competitions they worked on. Occupational therapy students may have patient thank-you letters, summaries of volunteer activity, and completed patient paperwork (identities removed). Education majors will likely have lesson plans, student teaching materials, sample projects they created, and papers or research related to their specialization.

Other items to include a portfolio:

- Evidence of any workshops or special classes you attended. Include a certificate, registration letter, or something else indicating you attended/completed it.
- Evidence of volunteer work, including a write-up of your experience and how it impacted you.
- *Related* experience and work products from your time prior to college.
- Materials associated with *career-related* talks, performances, debates, or competitions that you delivered or took part in.
- Products, projects, or experiences developed in internships, fieldwork, clinicals, or other experiences (see below).
- Evidence of "universal" workplace skills such as computer abilities or communication, or specialized abilities such as computation/number crunching.

A portfolio is neither a scrapbook nor an Instagram story. No need to fill it with pictures of your college experience unless those pictures directly relate to your career. If you're studying theology and ran a religious camp, include a picture. If you're studying theology and worked in a food store, leave it out.

Certain disciplines, such as graphic design, music, computer science, and other technologies, may have more specific portfolio requirements and desired styles. You'll likely learn about that in the course of your studies, but be sure to proactively inquire about these needs or seek examples. Early in your college career, you should be most focused on gathering components for your portfolio, not formalizing it for display or sharing.

Preparing to Network

Throughout this chapter, we have discussed how important relationships are to your career development. It can sometimes be a little intimidating to meet new people in the professional environment. But with preparation and understanding, these encounters can be not only helpful, but also rewarding. Here are some ideas to consider when meeting new people who can be helpful to your

career:

- **Be yourself.** You're your own best asset. If you're comfortable with who you are and where you come from, others will be, too.
- **Remember, you're in college and they know it.** Don't try to impress everyone with what you *know*; alumni or faculty know more. Instead, talk about what you're *learning*—your favorite class, the project you're most proud of, or even the ones by which you've been most challenged.
- **Be polite, not too casual.** If your goal is to become a professional, look and sound the part.
- **Listen.**
- **Think of some questions ahead of time.** Don't aim for difficult questions or anything too personal, but asking people how they got into their career, with whom they studied in college, what their job is like, and similar questions will both start conversations and provide you with meaningful insight.
- **Don't stress.** Remember, if alumni, even highly successful ones, are speaking to you, it's usually because they want to. An encounter over finger food or a brief meetup in the Rad Tech department office isn't going to make or break your job prospects.
- **If appropriate and timely, ask if you can keep in touch.** Be prepared with a polished email address and phone number. For example, if your current address is "fortnitefan@gmail.com," consider creating a second account that's more professional.
- **Say thank you.** No need to go on and on, but thank them for any advice they give or simply for taking the time to talk with you

> **While you're in college, don't try to impress everyone with what you *know*. Instead, talk about what you're *learning*.**

Making Your Case through the Words of Others: Letters of Recommendation

Whether you go on to graduate school or directly into the workforce (or both at the same time), decision makers will want to learn more about you. Your grades, interviews, test scores, and other performance data will tell them a lot. But sometimes they'll want to hear from others.

Letters of recommendation are often a standard component of convincing people you're the right person to join their organization. Some positions or institutions require a certain quantity of letters and may have specific guidance on who should write them. Other companies will accept them as additional evidence that you're a great candidate. Either way, gathering such letters or having a few people whom you can ask for them will put you in a better position. Note that internships, especially competitive ones, may also require letters of recommendation.



Figure 7.1.3.11: When you ask someone to write you a letter of recommendation, be prepared to share information about your goals, your accomplishments, and why you are asking the person in particular. Don't assume that they know which strengths or experience of yours to highlight. (Credit: US Embassy Jerusalem / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Whom to ask for a letter? They're usually written by instructors, department chairs, club advisors, managers, coaches, and

others with whom you've had a good relationship. Maybe it's someone who taught two or three of your courses, or someone you helped in a volunteer or work-study capacity.

Just by taking the time to write the letter, a faculty member is sending a message: "The person about whom I'm writing impressed me." So the first step is to make a good impression on the person you're asking to write a letter. You may do this in many ways. Getting a good grade in the class is important, but a faculty member may be more impressed by your perseverance, improvement over time, or creativity in meeting challenges.

How to ask? Be straightforward and direct. The appeal is best made in person, but be prepared for the person you're asking to ask for some time to make the decision. People who get frequent requests may have a policy or even a form to fill out. They may ask you to provide more information about yourself so that they can write an original letter. If they do so, be thorough but prompt—you don't want to keep them waiting. *And if you have a deadline, tell them.*

When to ask? If you encounter a faculty member early in your college career who you think would be the best person to write a letter for you, ask them what they think toward the end of your course or soon after. They may feel it's too early or not specific enough to simply hand you a general letter at that time. If so, ask if you can come back when you are applying to internships, jobs, or grad schools.

If you wait until you're applying or you're about to graduate, you may have a more specific subject or reason for a letter. Be sure to tell the writer where you're applying and what type of career you're going into, so they can tailor the recommendation to that area.

Thank-you notes. They wrote you a letter, so you should write them one in return. A brief and personal thank-you note is appropriate and necessary.

Steps to Success

> **"Things change—circumstances change. Learn to adapt. Adjust your efforts and yourself to what is presented to you so you can respond accordingly. Never see change as a threat—do not get intimidated by it. Change can be an opportunity to learn, to grow, to evolve, and to become a better person."**
>
> **—Rodolfo Costa**[6]

Preparing for Change and Being Open to Opportunities

Earlier in this text, we discussed managing change, adapting to the unexpected, and handling setbacks. These are critical skills that, while difficult during the process, ultimately build a better—and more employable—you. While you can't prepare for every obstacle or surprise, you can be certain that you'll encounter them.

You may go through all of college, and even high school, with one job in mind. You may apply early to a specific program, successfully complete all the requirements, and set yourself on a certain career path. And then something may change.



Figure 7.1.3.12: Career fairs are important before (and sometimes after) you graduate, both to explore opportunities and to make actual connections that can lead to a position. Be prepared before you go—with your resume, portfolio, a plan, and questions to ask. Focus on the best opportunities, but be very open to learning about industries or companies you may not have considered. (Credit: COD Newsroom / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

As described above, changes in your interests or goals are a natural part of developing your career; they're nothing to be ashamed of. Most college students change majors several times. Even once they graduate, many people find themselves enjoying careers they didn't envision. Ask the people around you, and many will share stories about how they took a meandering or circuitous path to their profession. Some people end up in jobs or companies that they didn't know existed when they started school.

What's most important is that you build on your successes and failures, consider all your experiences, and pursue your purpose and overarching personal goals. For example, if you want to become a police officer but cannot complete all of the degree requirements on time, taking a job as a security officer or even an unrelated job in the meantime might lead to a great deal of satisfaction and set you on a different path. If, after that, you still want to pursue law enforcement, you can build it into your plan—managing your priorities, gaining the required experience and credentials, and applying for jobs closer to your chosen career.

This early in your college experience, you shouldn't be too worried about how to conduct job interviews or explain employment gaps or changing directions. However, you may need or want to explain the thinking behind your future plans to academic advisors, internship managers, your peers, and your family. You should feel free to do so openly, but you'll probably be better prepared if you revisit some of the ideas discussed earlier in this chapter. Consider how a shift in your plans, whether slight or significant, reflects who you are now and who you hope to be in the future. Knowing yourself as an emerging and new professional by discovering and developing your interests, skills, values, personality, and strengths is something that everyone should do on an ongoing basis throughout their lives. Explore job opportunities or career paths available to people in your new major or discipline area. Think about whether you need to handle any financial impacts, such as paying for additional education or delaying employment.

Employers, for their part, are often unfazed by changes or even mistakes. Remember, when they ask about your greatest weakness or failure, they want to hear something genuine. Just like the alumni you meet or the faculty you're asking for recommendations, interviewers may be more impressed by how and what you've *learned* rather than how you followed a preplanned path. Remember, most jobs are a continuous thread of situations to think through, information to analyze, and problems to solve. Your ability to solve your own problems, and reflect and discuss them later, will show that you're ready to do the same for an employer.

Footnotes

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7.1.4: Where Can You Go from Here?

Hopefully you've noticed that we've ended each chapter of this book with a subsection called "Where Do You Go from Here?" In many of those cases, the story or reflection was aimed at giving you some ideas about how you could apply the topics and skills from that chapter to college and your career. Now we're at the last chapter, and the question is even more personal and a little different: Where *can* you go? Where do you want to go? And, perhaps more importantly, why?

The provided ideas and methods regarding choosing your career are proven winners. Learning about yourself, whether through simple reflection or formal analysis, is important to find your place. But consider the importance and reality of change and your openness to it. Regardless of your major, you will embark on a job and a career that will change many times over the course of your life. You'll likely change responsibilities, roles, companies, and even industries. Even if you join a company one week after graduation and stay with it until you retire, the job and the company won't remain the same. The world moves far too quickly for that, which is a good thing. All of those changes are opportunities to improve yourself and get closer to the "why" of your work: your purpose.

Your purpose is the answer to all types of questions that people may ask you. "Do you like your job?" "How did you get into that?" "Is it worth it?" But more importantly, your purpose is the answer to all types of questions that you should ask *yourself*. If you keep asking yourself those questions and give yourself time to answer, you'll have the best understanding of not only what you want to do, but why.

You may find out that no single job or career is going to fulfill your purpose. If your foremost goal—your ideal—is being a good parent, your job might simply be the financial means to help accomplish that. If you want to eradicate poverty, you may do that through a job plus volunteer work plus a management position at a foundation.

Don't think, however, that you can't fulfill your purpose within your career. It may take a few tries and restarts, but you can make a widespread impact in a number of ways. Furthermore, if you're having trouble entering a career-oriented purpose through the "front door," your skills and abilities might get you in through the side door. For example, if your purpose is to help eradicate racial and socioeconomic differences in America, you can work toward that in dozens of ways. At first it may seem that being a social worker, political activist, civil rights lawyer, or educator is the primary entryway—the front door. But what if none of these work out for you? What if you don't fit any of these molds, but you're the best salesperson most people have ever met? Every sales job you've taken, you've blown past your goal and earned top awards and bonuses. You've come so far that giving up your career would be financially devastating. So how can you use your skills and experience toward your purpose? Well, you could volunteer to use your sales skills to raise money or convince lawmakers to change things. Or you could get a job where you're selling products or services that help people in the exact situations you are trying to improve. You could sell low-cost telecommunication systems to towns and school systems so that residents have better access to the Internet, helping them learn and stay connected. You could sell building safety systems to keep people secure. You could sell educational technology, financial services, or even low-cost solar paneling to improve the lives and independence of people in impoverished areas. Your work would be similar to what you've done your whole life, but you would feel personally fulfilled and connected to a purpose.

In psychology, advertising, education, and other disciplines, researchers and professionals use a concept called Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In essence, it's a progression that starts with satisfying our most basic, physical needs (food, shelter) and moves through our more social and societal needs (cooperation, belonging) to our highest needs—feeling fulfilled and complete. (This brief description oversimplifies a rather detailed theory.)

Given this base introduction, consider how Maslow's theory applies to your future. At the bottom, your most basic needs are fulfilled by a job. It pays the bills, keeps you secure, and puts food on your table. At the next level is your career. Your career is more consistent; you invest more in it and probably are more heavily rewarded. In your career, you'll likely build up relationships over time, both professional and personal, creating a sense of community and belonging. Some people will come to associate you with your career, and you may feel partly defined by it. But it likely won't fulfill you all on its own.

At the highest level, the level that allows you to become more fulfilled and complete, is your purpose. That's the piece you strive for, the piece that helps you navigate your path. It's what you may see yourself still moving toward in a later part of your life. It's what you most want or even need to accomplish.

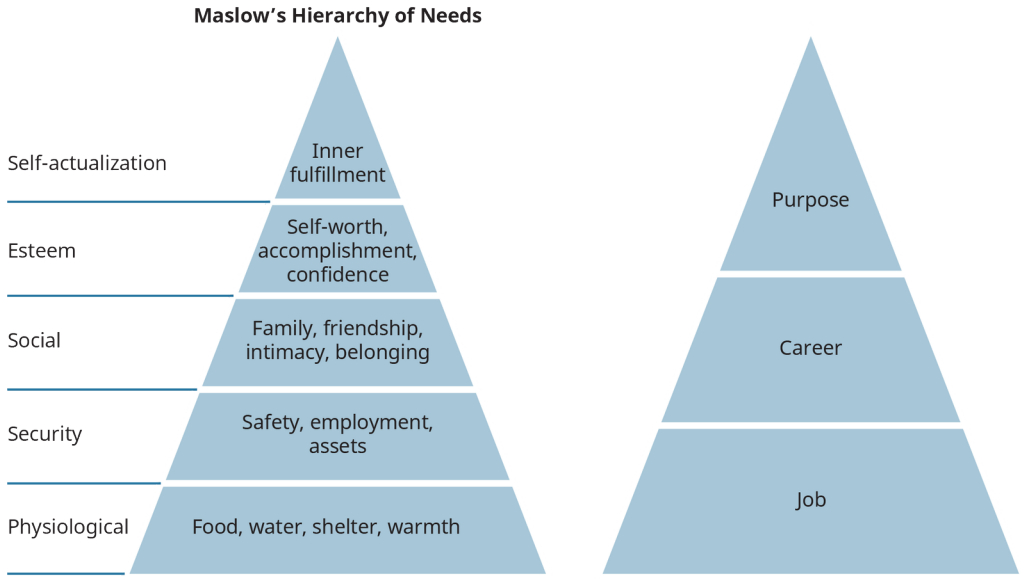


Figure 7.1.4.13: This adapted version of Maslow's hierarchy aligns different aspect of your pathway with the different levels and type of needs we have as humans.

Just as you'll likely have more than one job and even more than one career, you will have more than one purpose. You will even have them at the same time. You can be 100 percent driven to be the best possible therapist and 100 percent driven to be the best possible older sibling, all while being 100 percent driven to continually deepen your knowledge of yoga. Your time and your focus will be split between them, but they will still each fulfill you. As you get older and gain experiences, both positive and negative, your priorities may change. But you'll be successful as long as you adhere to the principles we've discussed and the qualities, values, and abilities you've identified in yourself. College offers you the opportunity to keep asking yourself the best, most challenging questions, all while you have many people dedicated to helping you find the answers. Those answers may surprise you, but the important thing is to keep asking and keep learning.

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7.2: CAREER EXPLORATION

7.2.1: The Big Picture
7.2.2: Career Paths
7.2.3: College Majors
7.2.4: Professional Skill Building
7.2.5: Career Development
7.2.6: Networking
7.2.7: Résumés and Cover Letters
7.2.8: Interviewing

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7.2.1: The Big Picture



Stay focused, go after your dreams, and keep moving toward your goals. —L L Cool J, musician

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify your motivations for attending college
- Correlate your short-term goals with longer-range ambitions
- Define college ready and career ready
- Describe how your longer-term goals might evolve, relative to your deepening experiences

College and Career: Key Connections

Think back to the time when you first began to contemplate college. Do you remember specific thoughts? Were you excited about the idea? What began to draw you into the web of college life? What compels you to be here now?

In this topic on career and college readiness, we examine key connections between your motivations to be in college and your ultimate success in achieving your goals. We also examine how your college experience prepares you for a specific career, as well as for attaining general skills that you can apply to multiple pursuits.

Activity: Motivations for Attending College

Objectives

- Review some of the many motivations students have for entering college.
- Identify your personal motivations as pathways to achieving goals.

Directions

- Review the table below, which lists various motivations cited by other students.
- Identify your main motivations, and rank your top five.

- Reflect on your selections in terms of how they connect with short-term and long-term plans for the future.

Understanding your motivations is essential to helping you not only prioritize your plans for the future but also gain inspiration about directions you may not have yet charted. Ultimately, your motivations for being in college align you with roadways to fulfilling your goals and ambitions.

MY TOP FIVE	MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTENDING COLLEGE
	Gain more qualifications in my field
	Increase my earning potential; make more money
	Challenge myself
	Show others that I can succeed
	Start an independent life
	Satisfy my curiosity
	Have fun
	Change my career
	Do what my parents were not able to do
	Find a better lifestyle
	Build my confidence
	Expand my social contacts; bond with new friends
	Improve my network of business associates
	Gain exposure to a wide array of topics
	Attend campus events
	Make my family happy
	Fulfill my dreams
	Take classes at home or work or anywhere
	Take advantage of campus resources like the library and gym
	Join a sports team
	Join campus organizations
	Spend my time during retirement
	Have continued support via alumni programs
	Learn to study and work on my own
	Gain access to professors
	Link up with people who already excel in the ways I aspire to
	Get sports spirit
	Gain more access to entertainment like theater and bands
	Be more productive in life
	Explore myself
	Become well versed in many subjects
	Dig deeper into learning than I did in high school
	Expand my knowledge of the world

MY TOP FIVE	MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTENDING COLLEGE
	Others?

In the following essay excerpted from *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*, former State University of New York (SUNY) student Jamie Edwards reflects on her motivations for being in college and how they affected her college direction and ultimately her career. The rest of this essay appears at the end of this page.

Learn What You Don't Want, Part 1

For a long time, my plan had always been to be a kindergarten teacher. But when I began my undergraduate degree I fell into that ever-growing pool of college students who changed their major three times before graduation. I was swayed by family members, my peers, and the economy, but I eventually realized that I was investing my education in the wrong areas for the wrong reasons. It shouldn't just be about salaries and job security. I needed to find that personal attachment.

At eighteen, it's hard to see your entire life spread out before you. College may feel like a free-for-all at times, but the reality is that it's one of the most defining times of our lives. It should never be squandered. I started to imagine my life beyond college—what I found important and the type of lifestyle I wanted in the end. I started thinking about the classes that I was actually interested in—the ones that I looked forward to each week and arrived early to just so I could get a seat up front.

> A turning point for me was when I took the advice of a campus mentor and enrolled in a career exploration course. I learned more about myself in that class than I had in my entire three years at college prior to taking it. It showed me that my passion was something I had always thought about but never thought about as a career. . . . Through this realization and my participation in my career exploration class, I saw a viable future in the Higher Education Administration field.
>
> —Jamie Edwards, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

Am I College and Career Ready?

Knowing what you truly want to gain from your college experience is the first step toward achieving it. But reaching your goals doesn't necessarily mean you are college and career ready.

What does it mean to be ready for college and a career? In general, you are a college- and career-ready student if you have gained the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors to achieve at least one of the following:

- Earn a certificate or degree in college
- Participate in career training
- Enter the workplace and succeed

For instance, if you are studying for a skilled trade license in college, or perhaps pursuing a bachelor of arts degree, you are college-ready if you have the reading, writing, mathematics, social, and thinking skills to qualify for and succeed in the academic program of your choice.

Similarly, you are a career-ready student if you have the necessary knowledge and technical skills needed to be employed in your desired field. For example, if you are a community college student ready to be a nurse, you possess the knowledge and skill needed to secure an entry-level nursing position, and you also possess required licensing.

Ultimately, college and career readiness demands students know more than just content, but demonstrate that they know how to learn and build upon that content to solve problems. They must develop versatile communication skills, work collaboratively and work competitively in a school or work environment. Ensuring that you possess both the academic and technical know-how necessary for a career beyond the classroom is a great step toward succeeding on whatever path you choose. —Washington, DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education

College and Career Readiness in Your State

So where are you on the readiness scale? You can find out how your state measures your readiness. Visit the Interactive State

Map at the College and Career Readiness and Success Center of the American Institutes for Research Web site. The map leads you to definitions of college and career readiness for your state. It also provides metrics to measure readiness. And it provides information about programs and structures to help you and educators. You can compare states across one or more categories.

Student Voices on Being College and Career Ready

In the following video, a number of high school students and recent graduates reflect on college and career readiness and their futures. As you view the video, be thinking about how your short-term goals can connect with longer-range ambitions. You might also reflect on how your deepening experiences in college can lead to achieving your longer-term goals. After all, each new experience in your life builds upon the last. You may never truly "arrive" at a destination if indeed your life is an ongoing journey.

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

The Marriage of College and Career

The oldest institution of higher learning in the United States is widely acknowledged to be Harvard University. It was established in 1636 with the aim of providing instruction in arts and sciences to qualify students for employment. In the 1779 Constitution of Massachusetts submitted by Samuel Adams, John Adams, and James Bowdoin to the full Massachusetts Convention, the following language was used:

Art. I.—Whereas our wise and pious ancestors, so early as the year one thousand six hundred and thirty six, laid the foundation of Harvard-College, in which University many persons of great eminence have, by the blessing of GOD, been initiated in those arts and sciences, which qualified them for public employments, both in Church and State . . .

Is "public employment" preparation still the goal of higher education institutions today? Indeed, it is certainly one of the many goals! College is also an opportunity for students to grow personally and intellectually. In fact, in a 2011 Pew Research Center survey, Americans were split on their perceptions of the main purpose of a college education:

- 47 percent of those surveyed said the purpose of college is to teach work-related skills.
- 39 percent said it is to help a student grow personally and intellectually.
- 12 percent said the time spent at college should be dedicated to both pursuits—teaching work-related skills and helping students grow personally and intellectually.

These statistics are understandable in light of the great reach and scope of higher education institutions. Today, there are some 5,300 colleges and universities in the United States, offering every manner of education and training to students.

What do employers think about the value of a college education? What skills do employers seek in their workforce? In 2014, Hart Research Associates conducted a survey on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. The survey revealed that the majority of employers believe that having field-specific knowledge as well as a broad range of knowledge and skills is important for recent college graduates to achieve long-term career success.

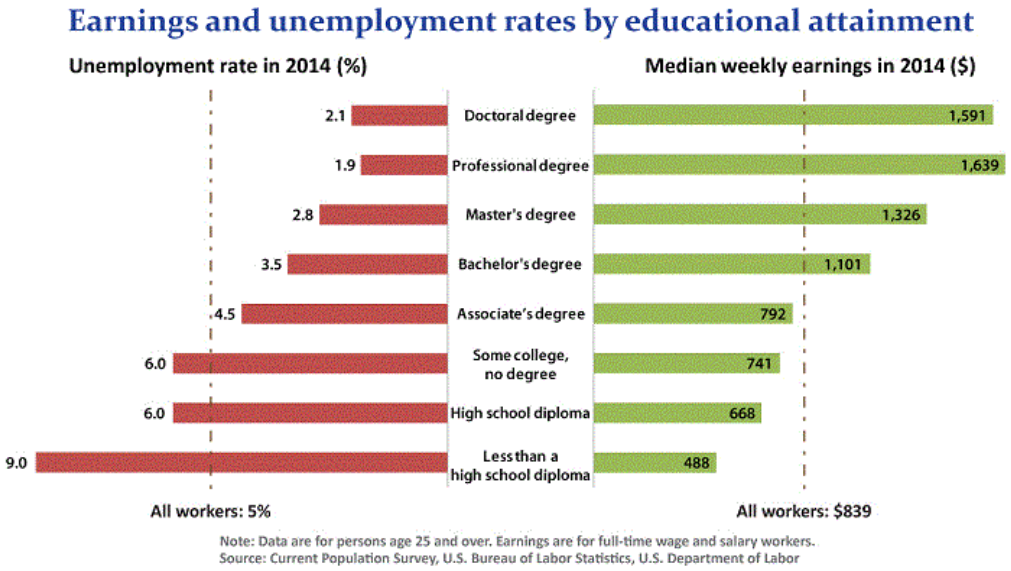
Employers also said that when they hire, they place the greatest value on skills and knowledge that cut across all majors. The learning outcomes they rate as most important include written and oral communication skills, teamwork skills, ethical decision-making, critical thinking, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings.[1]

Employment Rates and Salaries

Consider, too, the following statistics on employment rates and salaries for college graduates. College does make a big difference!

- The average college graduate earns about 75 percent more than a non-college graduate over a typical, forty-year working lifetime. (U.S. Census Bureau)[2]
- In 2014, young adults ages 20 to 24 with a bachelor's degree or higher had a higher employment rate (88.1 percent) than young adults with just some college (75.0 percent). (NCES)
- The employment rate for young adults with just some college (63.7 percent) was higher than the rate for those who had completed high school. (NCES)
- The employment rate for those who completed high school (46.6 percent) was higher than the employment rate for young adults who had not finished high school. (NCES)
- Employment rates were generally higher for males than females at each level of educational attainment in 2014. (NCES)[3]
- Over the course of a forty-year working life, the typical college graduate earns an estimated $550,000 more than the typical high school graduate. (PEW)
- The median gap in annual earnings between a high school and college graduate as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010 is $19,550. (PEW)[4]

Perhaps most important, an overwhelming majority of college graduates—86 percent—say that college has been a good investment for them personally. (PEW)



Differences in Earnings between States

You may wish to use this Earnings and Educational Attainment (2011) interactive table to see how earnings for college graduates vs. high school–only graduates in your state compare with those in other states.

All in all, college imparts a wide and deep range of benefits. The short video *Why College,* below, shows that with a college degree you are more likely to

- Have a higher salary
- Have and keep a job
- Get a pension plan
- Be satisfied with your job
- Feel your job is important
- Have health insurance

YouTube Video

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Summary

Success in college can be measured in many ways: through your own sense of what is important to you; through your family's sense of what is important to your collective group; through your institution's standards of excellence; through the standards established by your state and country; through your employer's perceptions about what is needed in the workplace; and in many respects through your own unfolding goals, dreams, and ambitions.

How are you striving to achieve your goals? And how will you measure your success along the way?

Below is the second part of Jamie Edwards's essay (former student at State University of New York). Her advice is to make connections between the "now" of college experience and future career possibilities. She thinks that the more informed you are about your career options through real-life conversations and experiences, the better prepared you will be for your future—and the more confident you will be in your career decisions.

Learn What You Don't Want, Part 2

From where I sit now—my former personal and professional struggles in tow—I offer up some pieces of advice that were crucial to getting me where I am today. Whether you're an undecided major who is looking for guidance or a student with a clearly defined career path, I suggest the following:

1. Find a mentor—For me, everything began there. Without my mentor, I wouldn't have done any of the other items I'm about to suggest. Finding the right mentor is crucial. Look for someone who can complement your personality (typically someone who's the opposite of you). My advice would be to look beyond your direct supervisor for mentorship. It's important to create an open forum with your mentor, because there may be a conflict of interest as you discuss work issues and other job opportunities. Potential mentors to consider are an instructor on campus, your academic advisor, a professional currently working in your prospective field, someone you admire in your community, or anyone in your network of friends or family that you feel comfortable discussing your future goals with.

2. Enroll in a Career Exploration/Planning course, or something similar—Even if you do not see the effects of this course immediately (such as dramatically changing your major), you will notice the impact down the road. Making educated career choices and learning job readiness skills will always pay off in the end. Through my career exploration class, I learned how to relate my personality and values to potential career fields. These self-assessments changed my entire thought process, and I see that influence daily. Beyond changing the way you think, the knowledge you gain about effective job search strategies is invaluable. Learning how to write purposeful résumés and cover letters, finding the right approach to the interview process, and recognizing your strengths and weaknesses are just a few of the benefits you can gain from these type of courses.

3. Complete a Job Shadow and/or Informational Interview—No amount of online research is going to give you the same experience as seeing a job at the front line. In a job shadow or an informational interview, you're able to explore options with no commitment and see how your in-class experience can carry over to a real world setting. Additionally, you're expanding your professional network by having that personal involvement. You never know how the connections you make might benefit you in the future. My only regret about job shadowing in college is that I didn't do it sooner.

4. Do an Internship—A main source of frustration for recent grads is the inability to secure an entry-level position without experience. "How do I get a job to gain experience when I can't get a job without experience?" This is how: do an internship or two! Most colleges even have a course where you can obtain credit for doing it! Not only will you earn credits towards graduation, but you'll gain the necessary experience to put on your résumé and discuss in future interviews. Having completed four internships throughout my college career, I can't say they were all great. However, I don't regret a single one.

The first one showed me the type of field I didn't want to work in. The second confirmed that I was heading in the right direction with my career. My third and fourth internships introduced me to completely different areas of higher education which broadened my knowledge and narrowed my search simultaneously.

My takeaway is that sometimes you have to learn what you don't want in order to find out what you do want. The more informed you are about career options through real-life conversations and experiences, the better prepared you will be for your future and the more confident you will be in your career decisions. Always explore your options because even if you learn you hate it, at least you're one step close to finding what you love.

—Jamie Edwards, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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7.2.2: Career Paths



The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. –Steve Jobs, cofounder and CEO of Apple

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Differentiate between "job" and "career"
- Explain the five-step process for choosing a career, which includes aligning your personal interests and skills with appropriate fields
- Identify sources for learning more about specific careers

Pursuing Your Professional Interests

One of the most widely known and successful American entrepreneurs of all time is Steve Jobs. He is best known as the cofounder, chairman, and chief executive officer of Apple, Inc. He also cofounded Pixar Animation Studios, and he was a member of the board of directors of the Walt Disney Company. Four hundred eighty-four inventions bear Jobs's name.

From early on in his life, Jobs was interested in electronics. When he was thirteen, for instance, he worked at the Hewlett Packard factory, which developed hardware and software components. Jobs later reflected on how he landed this job when he called Mr. Hewlett to ask for parts for an electronics project: "[Hewlett] didn't know me at all, but he ended up giving me some parts and he got me a job that summer working at Hewlett-Packard on the line, assembling frequency counters . . . well, assembling may be too strong. I was putting in screws. It didn't matter; I was in heaven."

Jobs's electronics and computing career quickly unfolded as he pursued his passion for creating and promoting computing products. At age nineteen, he was a technician for Atari, a leading electronics, gaming and home-computer corporation. By twenty-one, he and his two partners had formed Apple, Inc. At thirty-four, he was named "Entrepreneur of the Decade" by *Inc.* magazine. And at fifty-two, he was inducted into the California Hall of Fame by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

All in all, Jobs was relentless about pursuing his interests and passions. The products he and his associates developed have transformed modern culture, including the iMac, iTunes, Apple Stores, the iPod, the iTunes Store, the iPhone, the App Store, the iPad, the Mac OS, and the Mac OS X.

Perhaps Steve Jobs never had a job he didn't love. But he always had a career: pioneering the personal computer revolution.

This story of Steve Jobs's professional pursuits illustrates a dream, a goal, and an ambition that many college students share: to be successful in earning money and finding personal satisfaction in employment.

In this section, we explore strategies that can help you chart your professional path and also attain ample reward. We begin by comparing and contrasting jobs and careers. We then look at how to match up your personal characteristics with a specific field or fields. We conclude by detailing a process for actually choosing your career. Throughout, you will find resources for learning more about this vast topic of planning for employment.

Job vs. Career

What is the difference between a job and a career? Do you plan to use college to help you seek one or the other?

There is no right or wrong answer, because motivations for being in college are so varied and different for each student. But you can take maximum advantage of your time in college if you develop a clear plan for what you want to accomplish. The table below shows some differences between a job and a career.

	JOB	CAREER
Definitions	A job refers to the work a person performs for a living. It can also refer to a specific task done as part of the routine of one's occupation. A person can begin a job by becoming an employee, or by volunteering, for example, by starting a business or becoming a parent.	A career is an occupation (or series of jobs) that you undertake for a significant period of time in your life—perhaps five or ten years, or more. A career typically provides you with opportunities to advance your skills and positions.
Requirements	A job you accept with an employer does not necessarily require special education or training. Sometimes you can get needed learning "on the job."	A career usually requires special learning—perhaps certification or a specific degree.
Risk-Taking	A job may be considered a safe and stable means to get income. But jobs can also quickly change; security can come and go.	A career can also have risk. In today's world, employees need to continually learn new skills and to adapt to changes in order to stay employed. Starting your own business can have risks. Many people thrive on risk-taking, though, and may achieve higher gains. It all depends on your definition of success.
Duration	The duration of a job may range from an hour (in the case of odd jobs, for example,) to a lifetime. Generally a "job" is shorter-term.	A career is typically a long-term pursuit.
Income	Jobs that are not career oriented may not pay as well as career-oriented positions. Jobs often pay an hourly wage.	Career-oriented jobs generally offer an annual salary versus a wage. Career-oriented jobs may also offer appealing benefits, like health insurance and retirement.
Satisfaction and contributing to society	Many jobs are important to society, but some may not bring high levels of personal satisfaction.	Careers allow you to invest time and energy in honing your crafts and experiencing personal satisfaction. Career pursuits may include making contributions to society.

In summary, a job lets you enjoy at least a minimal level of financial security, and it requires you to show up and do what is required of you. In exchange, you get paid.

A career, on the other hand, is more of a means of achieving personal fulfillment through the jobs you hold. In a career, your jobs tend to follow a sequence that leads to increasing mastery, professional development, and personal and financial satisfaction. A career requires planning, knowledge, and skills, too. If it is to be a fulfilling career, it requires that you bring into play your full set of analytical, critical, and creative thinking skills. You will be called upon in a career to make informed decisions that will affect your life in both the short term and the long term.

The following video gives explicit, textbook-style distinctions between the terms *job*, *work*, and *career*. You may especially appreciate this video if English is a second language for you or if you are a first-generation college student.

YouTube Video

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The next video takes a different look at jobs and careers. The speaker discusses the more affective, emotional aspects of pursuing a career. His emphasis is on the importance of being passionate about your work.

YouTube Video

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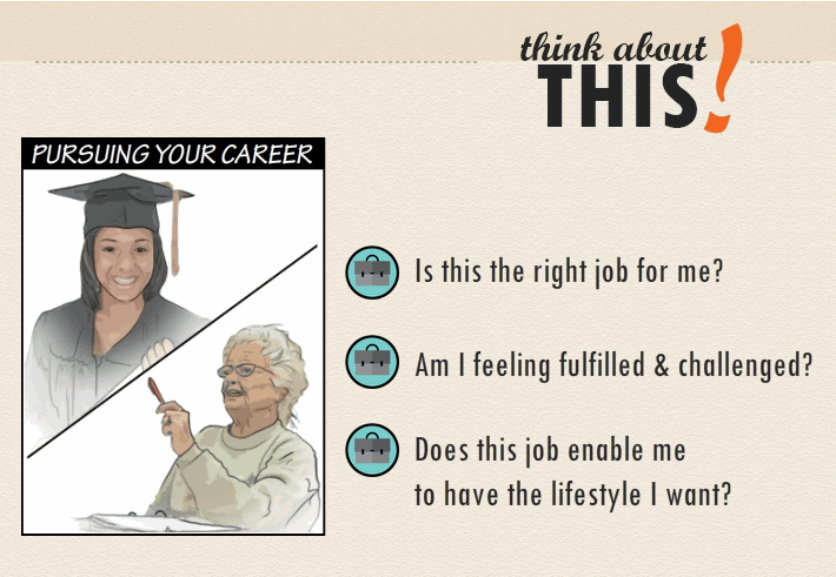
Whether you pursue individual jobs or an extended career or both, your time with your employers will always comprise your individual journey. May your journey be as enjoyable and fulfilling as possible!

The Five-Step Process for Choosing Your Career

As your thoughts about career expand, keep in mind that over the course of your life, you will probably spend a lot of time at work—thousands of hours, in fact. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average workday is about 8.7 hours long, and this means that if you work 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year, for 35 years, you will spend a total of 76,125 hours of your life at work. These numbers should convince you that it's pretty important to enjoy your career!

If you do pursue a career, you'll find yourself making many decisions about it. Is this the right job for me? you may ask. Am I feeling fulfilled and challenged? Does this job enable me to have the lifestyle I desire? It's important to consider these questions now, whether you're just graduating from high school or college, or you're returning to school after working for a while.

Choosing a career—any career—is a unique process for everyone, and for many people the task is daunting. There are so many different occupations to choose from. How do you navigate this complex world of work?



The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office has identified a five-step decision process that will make your career path a little easier to find. Below are the steps:

1. Get to know yourself
2. Get to know your field
3. Prioritize your "deal makers" and rule out your "deal breakers"
4. Make a preliminary career decision and create a plan of action
5. Go out and achieve your career goal

Step 1: Get to Know Yourself



Get to know yourself and the things you're truly passionate about.

- Gather information about your career-related interests and values
- Think about what skills and abilities come naturally to you and which ones you want to develop
- Consider your personality type and how it you want it to play out in your role at work

The following video has some good ideas for ways of matching your personality and skills with a career. You can download a transcript of the video here.

YouTube Video

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This next video looks at the connection between childhood interests and career options. Several successful entrepreneurs and employees share stories about how they turned childhood interests into careers that suited them well. Learn how listening to your inner child can help you find the right career.

YouTube Video

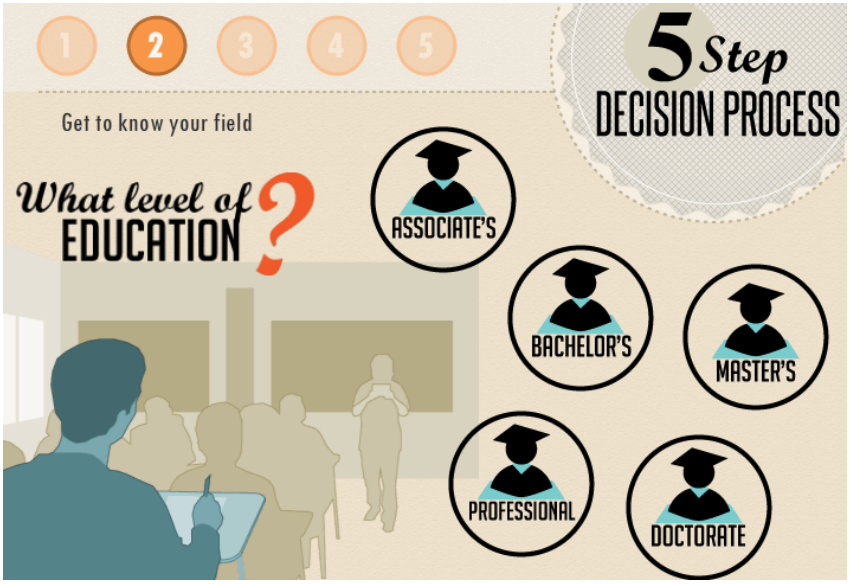
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Before moving on to step 2, you may wish to review the online surveys in the Personal Identity module, especially the Student Interest Survey for Career Clusters, which is available in both English and Spanish. Yet another survey is the Career Assessment Test. All can help you align career interests with personal qualities, traits, life values, skills, activities, and ambitions.

Ultimately, your knowledge of yourself is the root of all good decision-making and will guide you in productive directions.

Step 2: Get to Know Your Field



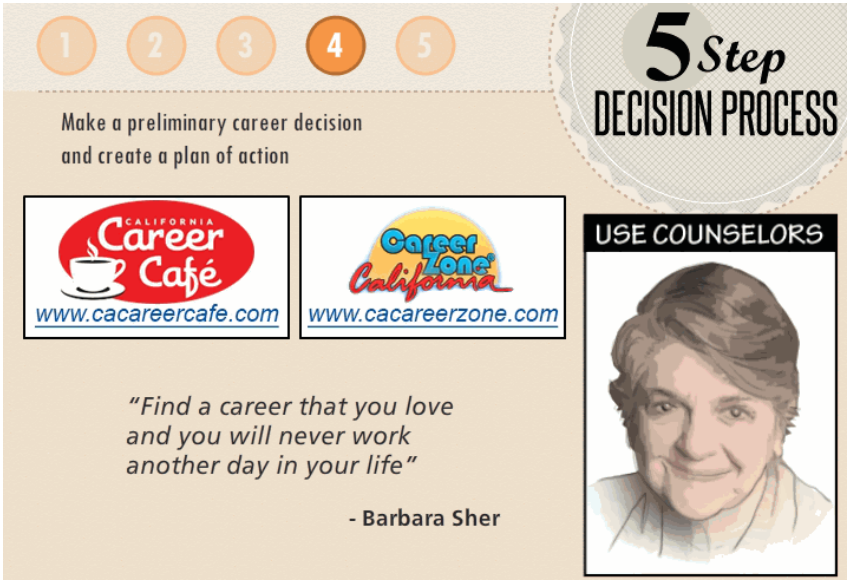
Get to know your field. You'll want to investigate the career paths available to you. One of the handiest starting points and "filters" is to decide the level of education you want to attain before starting your first or your next job. Do you want to earn an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate or professional degree?

Step 3: Prioritize Your Deal Makers



Prioritize your deal makers and rule out your deal breakers. Educational requirements aren't the only criteria that you will want to consider. Do you want to work outside or in an office? In the country or a city? In a big or small organization? For public organization or a private company? What type of industry is interesting to you? What role do you see yourself playing in the organization?

Step 4: Make a Preliminary Career Decision



Make a preliminary career decision and create a plan of action. Now that you have an idea of who you are and where you might find a satisfying career, how do you start taking action to get there? Some people talk to family, friends, or instructors in their chosen disciplines. Others have mentors in their lives with whom to discuss this decision. Your college has career counselors and academic advisers who can help you with both career decision-making and the educational planning process. But be advised: You'll get the most from sessions with your counselor if you have done some work on your own.

Get started by using the Career Café or the Career Zone. Barbara Sher, speaker, career/lifestyle coach, and best-selling author, once wrote, "Find a career that you love and you will never work another day in your life."

Step 5: Go out and Achieve Your Career Goal



Go out and achieve your career goal! Now it's time to take concrete steps toward achieving your educational and career goals. This may be as simple as creating a preliminary educational plan for next semester or a comprehensive educational plan that maps out the degree you are currently working toward. You may also want to look for internships, part-time work, or volunteer opportunities that help you test and confirm you preliminary career choice. Your college counselor can help you with this step, as well.

Your work experiences and life circumstances will undoubtedly change throughout the course of your professional life, so you may need to go back and reassess where you are on this path in the future. But no matter if you feel like you were born knowing what you want to do professionally, or you feel totally unsure about what the future holds for you, remember that with careful consideration, resolve, and strategic thought, you can find a career that feels rewarding.

This isn't necessarily an easy process, but you'll find that your goals so much more tangible once you've set a preliminary career goal. Don't forget: There is always support for you. Ask for any help you need!

Activity: Take the CAREERLINK Inventory

Objectives

- Formally assess your aptitudes, interests, temperaments, physical capacities, preferred working conditions and career preparation time using the CareerLink Inventory instrument.

Directions

- Access the CAREERLINK Inventory, add your name, and then click on the "Aptitudes" frog icon to begin the inventory. The CAREERLINK Inventory is designed to match the way you see yourself—your interests, aptitudes, temperaments, physical capacities, preferred working conditions, and desired length of preparation for employment–with available career information from the United States Department of Labor. The information you provide about yourself will produce a career profile showing to what extent your self-identified characteristics and preferences match those considered significant in 80 career clusters.
- Your responses to the items contained in this inventory should reflect your honest self-judgments in order to provide you with meaningful career information. If you are unsure about a particular response, please answer as accurately as possible.
- When you complete the inventory, review your personalized Career Inventory Results.
- Write a 750-word reflection discussing the results of the inventory. Use the guidelines, below, to guide you.

To help you develop your reflections, you may want to consider the following:

- What were your highest career-area clusters?
- Review the work performed, worker requirements, sample occupations, related clusters, and response summary (this will make sense to you once you complete the inventory). Do the results of the inventory surprise you?
- Do you believe the Careerlink Inventory produced accurate or inaccurate suggestions for you?
- Did you learn anything new about your career interests?
- What insights from the inventory results might you apply to your life?
- Follow your instructor's directions for submitting this assignment.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the average worker currently holds ten different jobs before age forty. This number is projected to grow. A prediction from Forrester Research is that today's youngest workers will hold twelve to fifteen jobs in their lifetime.

What jobs are in store for you? Will your work be part of a fulfilling career? What exciting prospects are on your horizon?

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7.2.3: College Majors



You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go. —Dr. Seuss, children's author

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- List key strategies for selecting a college major
- Identify the relationship between college majors and career paths (both why they matter and why they don't)
- Identify sources for learning more about specific majors and related careers

Your Major

In the United States and Canada, your academic major—simply called "your major"—is the academic discipline you commit to as an undergraduate student. It's an area you specialize in, such as accounting, chemistry, criminology, archeology, digital arts, or dance. In United States colleges and universities, roughly 2,000 majors are offered. And within each major is a host of core courses and electives. When you successfully complete the required courses in your major, you qualify for a degree.

Where did the term major come from? In 1877, it first appeared in a Johns Hopkins University catalogue. That major required only two years of study. Later, in 1910, Abbott Lawrence Lowell introduced the academic major system to Harvard University during his time as president there. This major required students to complete courses in a specialized discipline and also in other subjects. Variations of this system are now the norm in higher education institutions in the U.S. and Canada.

Why is your major important? It's important because it's a defining and organizing feature of your undergraduate degree. Ultimately, your major should provide you with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and/or behaviors you need to fulfill your college goals and objectives.

In this section we look at how to select your major and how your college major may correlate with a career. Does your major matter to your career? What happens if you change your major? Does changing your major mean you must change your career? Read on to find out!

How to Select Your College Major

Selecting your major is one of the most exciting tasks (and, to some students, perhaps one of the most nerve-wracking tasks) you are asked to perform in college. So many decisions are tied to it. But if you have good guidance, patience, and enthusiasm, the process is easier. Two videos, below, present lighthearted looks undertaking this task. In the first one, the following five tips are discussed:

1. Seek inspiration
2. Consider everything
3. Identify talents and interests
4. Explore available resources
5. In-depth career exploration

https://youtu.be/8I_Qw2NfSq0

The next video shares nine tips:

1. Narrow your choices by deciding what you don't like.
2. Explore careers that might interest you. Ask questions.
3. Use your school's resources.
4. Ask your teacher, counselor, and family about your strengths.
5. 60 percent of students change their majors.
6. Your major isn't going to define your life. But choosing one that interests you will make your college experience much more rewarding.
7. Go on informational interviews with people in careers that interest you.
8. There's no pressure to decide now.
9. Take new classes and discover your interests.

YouTube Video

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Does Your College Major Matter to Your Career?

There are few topics about college that create more controversy than "Does your major really matter to your career?" Many people think it does; others think it's not so important. Who is right? And who gets to weigh in? Also, how do you measure whether something "matters"—by salary, happiness, personal satisfaction?

It may be difficult to say for sure whether your major truly matters to your career. One's college major and ultimate career are not necessarily correlated. Consider the following "factoids":

- 50–70 percent of college students change their major at least once during their time in college.
- Most majors lead to a wide variety of opportunities rather than to one specific career, although some majors do indeed lead to specific careers.
- Many students say that the skills they gain in college will be useful on the job no matter what they major in.
- Only half of graduating seniors accept a job directly related to their major.
- Career planning for most undergraduates focuses on developing general, transferrable skills like speaking, writing, critical thinking, computer literacy, problem-solving, and team building, because these are skills that employers want.
- College graduates often cite the following four factors as being critical to their job and career choices: personal satisfaction, enjoyment, opportunity to use skills and abilities, and personal development.
- Within ten years of graduation, most people work in careers that aren't directly related to their majors.

- Many or most jobs that exist today will be very different five years from now.

It's also important to talk about financial considerations in choosing a major.

- Any major you choose will likely benefit you because college graduates earn roughly $1 million more than high school graduates, on average, over an entire career.
- STEM jobs, though—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—can lead to the thirty highest paying jobs. So if you major in any of these areas, you may be more likely to earn a higher salary.
- Even though humanities and social sciences students may earn less money right after college, they may earn more by the time they reach their peak salary than students who had STEM majors.
- Students who major in the humanities and social science are also more likely to get advanced degrees, which increases annual salary by nearly $20,000 at peak salary.

So where will you stand with regard to these statistics? Is it possible to have a good marriage between your major, your skills, job satisfaction, job security, and earnings?

Here to share a personal story about selecting your college major and finding the right career fit is Marc Luber, host of Careers Out There. Enjoy his insights, which he sums up with, "Focus on what makes you tick, and run with it."

YouTube Video

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The best guidance on choosing a major and connecting it with a career may be to get good academic and career advice and select a major that reflects your greatest interests. If you don't like law or medicine but you major in it because of a certain salary expectation, you may later find yourself in an unrelated job that brings you greater satisfaction—even if the salary is lower. If this is the case, will it make more sense, looking back, to spend your time and tuition dollars studying a subject you especially enjoy?

Every student who pursues a college degree and a subsequent career may tell a different story about the impact of their major on their professional directions. In the following excerpt from *Foundations of College Success: Words of Wisdom*, writer and former SUNY student Kristen Mruk reflects on the choices she made and how they turned out.

The Student Experience

What I Would Like To Do

I thought I knew exactly what I wanted to do when I started college, but that changed three times by the time I graduated. Initially I started as an International Business major but ended up receiving a degree in Communication and continued on to graduate school. My greatest advice to you is to embrace feelings of uncertainty (if you have them) with regard to your academic, career, or life goals. Stop into the Career Services office on your campus to identify what it is that you really want to do when you graduate or to confirm your affinity to a career path. Make an appointment to see a counselor if you need to vent or get a new perspective. Do an internship in your field; this can give you a first-hand impression of what your life might look like in that role.

When I chose International Business, I did not do so as an informed student. I enjoyed and excelled in my business courses in high school and I had hopes of traveling the world, so International Business seemed to fit the bill. Little did I know, the major required a lot of accounting and economics which, as it turned out, were not my forte. Thinking this is what I wanted, I wasted time pursuing a major I didn't enjoy and academic courses I struggled through.

So I took a different approach. I began speaking to the professionals around me that had jobs that appealed to me: Student Unions/Activities, Leadership, Orientation, Alumni, etc. I found out I could have a similar career, and I would enjoy the required

studies along the way. Making that discovery provided direction and purpose in my major and extracurricular activities. I felt like everything was falling into place.

What I Actually Do

I would like to . . . ask you to consider why you are in college. Why did you choose your institution? Have you declared a major yet? Why or why not? What are your plans post-graduation? By frequently reflecting in this way, you can assess whether or not your behaviors, affiliations, and activities align with your goals.

What you actually do with your student experience is completely up to you. You are the only person who can dictate your collegiate fate. Remind yourself of the reasons why you are in college and make sure your time is spent on achieving your goals. There are resources and people on your campus available to help you. You have the control—use it wisely.

—Kristen Mruk, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

Resources

Success doesn't come to you . . . you go to it. —Dr. Marva Collins, civil rights activist and educator

This quote really sets the stage for the journey you're on. Your journey may be a straight line that connects the dots between today and your future, or it may resemble a twisted road with curves, bumps, hurdles, and alternate routes.

To help you navigate your pathway to career success, take advantage of all the resources available to you. Your college, your community, and the wider body of higher-education institutions and organizations have many tools to help you with career development. Be sure to take advantage of the following resources:

- **College course catalog**: Course catalogs are typically rich with information that can spark ideas and inspiration for your major and your career.
- **Faculty and academic advisers at your college**: Many college professors are also practitioners in their fields, and can share insights with you about related professions.
- **Fellow students and graduating seniors**: Many of your classmates, especially those who share your major, may have had experiences that can inform and enlighten you—for instance, an internship with an employer or a job interview with someone who could be contacted for more information.
- **Students who have graduated**: Most colleges and universities have active alumni programs with networking resources that can help you make important decisions.
- **Your family and social communities**: Contact friends and family members who can weigh in with their thoughts and experience.
- **A career center**: Professionals in career centers have a wealth of information to share with you—they're also very good at listening and can act as a sounding board for you to try out your ideas.

Many organizations have free materials that can provide guidance, such as the ones in the table, below:

	WEB SITE	DESCRIPTION
1	List of College Majors (MyMajors)	A list of more than 1,800 college majors—major pages include description, courses, careers, salary, related majors and colleges offering major
2	Take the College Major Profile Quiz (About.com)	Quiz is designed to help students think about college majors, personality traits, and how they may fit within different areas of study
3	Choosing a College Major Worksheet (Quint Careers)	A six-step process to finding a college major

	WEB SITE	DESCRIPTION
4	Common Mistakes Students Make in Choosing a Major (Wayne State University)	Lists common misperceptions about choosing a major and explains how these misperceptions can cloud future plans
5	Best college majors for your career 2015-2016 (Yahoo.com)	Explore a detailed list of the top ten majors that give students the greatest potential for success in the workplace, good incomes, and ample job opportunities
6	Explore Careers (BigFuture/The College Board)	Explore careers by selecting “Show me majors that match my interests,” “Show me new career ideas,” and “Show me how others made their choices”
7	The College Major: What It Is and How To Choose One (BigFuture/The College Board)	When to choose a major, how to choose a major, “you can change your mind,” majors and graduate school, and majors and professions

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7.2.4: Professional Skill Building



Every artist was first an amateur. —Ralph Waldo Emerson, author

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- List specific skills that will be necessary for your career path
- List transferable skills that will be valuable for any career path
- Explain how to acquire necessary skills, both in and out of class, for your career goals

If you lived and worked in colonial times in the United States, what skills would you need to be gainfully employed? What kind of person would your employer want you to be? And how different would your skills and aptitudes be then, compared to today?

Many industries that developed during the 1600s–1700s, such as health care, publishing, manufacturing, construction, finance, and farming, are still with us today. And the professional abilities, aptitudes, and values required in those industries are many of the same ones employers seek today.

For example, in the health care field then, just like today, employers looked for professionals with scientific acumen, active listening skills, a service orientation, oral comprehension abilities, and teamwork skills. And in the financial field then, just like today, employers looked for economics and accounting skills, mathematical reasoning skills, clerical and administrative skills, and deductive reasoning.

Why is it that with the passage of time and all the changes in the work world, some skills remain unchanged (or little changed)?

The answer might lie in the fact there are are two main types of skills that employers look for: hard skills and soft skills.

- **Hard skills** are concrete or objective abilities that you learn and perhaps have mastered. They are skills you can easily quantify, like using a computer, speaking a foreign language, or operating a machine. You might earn a certificate, a college degree, or other credentials that attest to your hard-skill competencies. Obviously, because of changes in technology, the hard skills required by industries today are vastly different from those required centuries ago.
- Soft skills, on the other hand, are subjective skills that have changed very little over time. Such skills might pertain to the way you relate to people, or the way you think, or the ways in which you behave—for example, listening attentively, working well in groups, and speaking clearly. Soft skills are sometimes also called “transferable skills” because you can easily transfer them from job to job or profession to profession without much training. Indeed, if you had a time machine, you could probably

transfer your soft skills from one time period to another!

What Employers Want in an Employee

Employers want individuals who have the necessary hard and soft skills to do the job well and adapt to changes in the workplace. Soft skills may be especially in demand today because employers are generally equipped to train new employees in a hard skill—by training them to use new computer software, for instance—but it's much more difficult to teach an employee a soft skill such as developing rapport with coworkers or knowing how to manage conflict. An employer might rather hire an inexperienced worker who can pay close attention to details than an experienced worker who might cause problems on a work team.

In this section, we look at ways of identifying and building particular hard and soft skills that will be necessary for your career path. We also explain how to use your time and resources wisely to acquire critical skills for your career goals.

Specific Skills Necessary for Your Career Path

A skill is something you can do, say, or think right now. It's what an employer expects you to bring to the workplace to improve the overall operations of the organization.

The table below lists four resources to help you determine which concrete skills are needed for all kinds of professions. You can even discover where you might gain some of the skills and which courses you might take.

Spend some time reviewing each resource. You will find many interesting and exciting options. When you're finished, you may decide that there are so many interesting professions in the world that it's difficult to choose just one. This is a good problem to have!

	RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
1	Career Aptitude Test (Rasmussen College)	This test helps you match your skills to a particular career that's right for you. Use a sliding scale to indicate your level of skill in the following skill areas: artistic, interpersonal, communication, managerial, mathematics, mechanical, and science. Press the Update Results button and receive a customized list customized of career suggestions tailored to you, based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. You can filter by salary, expected growth, and education.
2	Skills Profiler (Career OneStop from the U.S. Department of Labor)	Use the Skills Profiler to create a list of your skills, and match your skills to job types that use those skills. Plan to spend about 20 minutes completing your profile. You can start with a job type to find skills you need for a current or future job. Or if you are not sure what kind of job is right for you, start by rating your own skills to find a job type match. When your skills profile is complete, you can print it or save it.

	RESOURCE	DESCRIPTION
3	O*Net OnLine	This U.S. government website helps job seekers answer two of their toughest questions: “What jobs can I get with my skills and training?” and “What skills and training do I need to get this job?” Browse groups of similar occupations to explore careers. Choose from industry, field of work, science area, and more. Focus on occupations that use a specific tool or software. Explore occupations that need your skills. Connect to a wealth of O*NET data. Enter a code or title from another classification to find the related O*NET-SOC occupation.
4	Suggested Courses to Develop Skills that Prospective Employers Want (Psych Web)	If you are trying to strengthen particular skills, certain courses may be helpful. The list at this site is based on courses offered on many campuses and some of the skills the courses emphasize.

Transferable Skills for Any Career Path

Transferable (soft) skills may be used in multiple professions. They include, but are by no means limited to, skills listed below:

- Dependable and punctual (showing up on time, ready to work, not being a liability)
- Self-motivated
- Enthusiastic
- Committed
- Willing to learn (lifelong learner)
- Able to accept constructive criticism
- A good problem solver
- Strong in customer service skills
- Adaptable (willing to change and take on new challenges)
- A team player
- Positive attitude
- Strong communication skills
- Good in essential work skills (following instructions, possessing critical thinking skills, knowing limits)
- Ethical
- Safety conscious
- Honest
- Strong in time management

These skills are transferrable because they are positive attributes that are invaluable in practically any kind of work. They also do not require much training from an employer—you have them already and take them with you wherever you go. Soft skills are a big part of your “total me” package.

So, identify the soft skills that show you off the best, and identify the ones that prospective employers are looking for. By comparing both sets, you can more directly gear your job search to your strongest professional qualities.

10 Top Skills You Need to Get a Job When You Graduate

The following video summarizes the ten top skills that the Target corporation believes will get you a job when you graduate. You can read a transcript of the video here.

YouTube Video

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How to Find a New Job–Transferable Job Skills

If you are an international student, or perhaps English is your second language, the following video may especially appeal to you. It covers similar information to the *10 Top Skills* video above. Discover how to find a new job more easily by learning how to identify and describe your transferable job skills in English.

YouTube Video

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For more extensive exploration, visit this checklist of transferable skills from Community Employment Services in Woodstock, Ontario.

Activity: Assess Your Soft Skills

Objectives

- Review the transferable skills listed in the self-assessment exercises developed by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).
- Analyze your strengths and areas in which you need to improve individual essential skills.

Instructions

- Read each statement in Section 1 of any transferable skills pertinent to a profession you are interested in.
- Place a checkmark in the column that best describes how well you can complete that task. Think about your work and life experiences as you consider each task.
- Review your responses for each task. If you have checked five or more in the “Somewhat” and/or “No” columns, you may want to consider upgrading your oral communication skills.
- Complete Section 2 to identify your training needs.

Self Assessments

- Oral Communication Self-Assessment
- Computer Use Self-Assessment
- Writing Self-Assessment
- Reading Self-Assessment
- Document Use Self-Assessment
- Numeracy Self-Assessment

- Continuous Learning Self-Assessment
- Working with Others Self-Assessment
- Thinking Self-Assessment

Acquiring Necessary Skills (both in and out of class) for Your Career Goals

"Lifelong learning" is a buzz phrase in the twentieth-first century because we are awash in new technology and information all the time, and those who know *how to learn*, continuously, are in the best position to keep up and take advantage of these changes. Think of all the information resources around you: colleges and universities, libraries, the Internet, videos, games, books, films—the list goes on.

With these resources at your disposal, how can you best position yourself for lifelong learning and a strong, viable career? Which hard and soft skills are most important? What are employers really looking for?

The following list was inspired by the remarks of Mark Atwood, director of open-source engagement at Hewlett-Packard Enterprise. It contains excellent practical advice.

- Learn how to write clearly. After you've written something, have people edit it. Then rewrite it, taking into account the feedback you received. Write all the time.
- Learn how to speak. Speak clearly on the phone and at a table. For public speaking, try Toastmasters. "Meet and speak. Speak and write."
- Be reachable. Publish your email so that people can contact you. Don't worry about spam.
- Learn about computers and computing, even if you aren't gearing for a career in information technology. Learn something entirely new every six to twelve months.
- Build relationships within your community. Use tools like Meetup.com and search for clubs at local schools, libraries, and centers. Then, seek out remote people around the country and world. Learn about them and their projects first by searching the Internet.
- Attend conferences and events. This is a great way to network with people and meet them face-to-face.
- Find a project and get involved. Start reading questions and answers, then start answering questions.
- Collaborate with people all over the world.
- Keep your LinkedIn profile and social media profiles up-to-date. Be findable.
- Keep learning. Skills will often beat smarts. Be sure to schedule time for learning and having fun!

Just Get Involved

After you've networked with enough people and built up your reputation, your peers can connect you with job openings that may be a good fit for your skills. The video, below, from Monash University in Australia offers the following tips:

1. Get involved in part-time work
2. Get involved in extracurricular activities
3. Get involved with employment and career development

"Just Get involved. There are so many opportunities and open doors for you."

YouTube Video

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Transferrable

We close this professional skill-building topic by sharing an essay by Vicki L. Brown, from *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*. Her message is this: “Do not let your college degree define who you are but rather, let the knowledge and skills you’ve acquired define who you are.”

Transferrable

I was supposed to be a teacher. Growing up, I had a classroom in the basement. I had a chalkboard, chalk, desks, textbooks, homework assignments, pens, pencils, paper—you name it, I had it! My brother and sister called me “Miss Brown.” All I ever wanted to be was an elementary school teacher—until I went to college.

As an elementary education major in college, I participated in a variety of classes—classes on literacy, math and science, philosophies of teaching, child development theory, principles of education, foundations of classroom behavior, and a whole list of others. We learned how to write a lesson plan, manage a classroom, how to set up a classroom, and much, much more.

In addition to my studies, I got involved in campus life. I joined the swimming and diving team, participated in campus activities, and joined clubs. I served as a captain of the swimming and diving team, became an Orientation Leader and a Resident Assistant, and completely immersed myself in the college experience. It was through these co-curricular activities that I was introduced to the world of higher education and a potentially new career choice for myself.

Through my academic and co-curricular activities, I gained valuable knowledge from all those I came in contact with—my peers, professors, Residence Hall Directors, and many college administrators. They encouraged me to explore what it was that I really wanted to do with my life. The more I got involved in my college experience, the more I learned about myself: what I’m good at, what I’m not good at, what I wanted to, and what I didn’t want to do.

As I started to sort through my options, I continued my studies, receiving both a bachelor’s degree and a master’s degree in elementary education. While attending graduate school, I also worked as a Graduate Residence Hall Director. It was during that time when I finally made the decision to pursue a career in higher education administration/student affairs administration and leave my plans of being an elementary school teacher behind.

The decision wasn’t as difficult as one might think. When some listen to my story, I often hear, “You’ve wasted all that time and money . . .” But, the truth is I gained valuable, lifelong skills from the people I met, the classes I took, the jobs I’ve had, and the activities I involved myself in. Each and every skill you acquire is transferable. This is perhaps the best lesson I’ve ever learned in college.

The countless lesson plans I had to write for my education classes and student teaching have helped me prepare practice plans as the head coach for the men’s and women’s swimming and diving team. The skills I learned while planning programs and activities for my residents as a Resident Assistant, Hall Director, and Area Coordinator have helped me plan campus events as the Director of Student Activities in the Center for Student Leadership & Involvement. The classroom management techniques I learned in college have helped me to manage my office, staff, team, committees, etc. The communication and development theories I’ve learned have taught me how to have meaningful conversations with others and how best to meet their needs.

Each and every skill you learn throughout your academic, personal, and professional career are valuable and transferable. Do not let your college degree define who you are but rather, let the knowledge and skills you’ve acquired define who you are.

—Vicki L. Brown, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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7.2.5: Career Development



Desire! That's the one secret of every man's career. —Johnny Carson, entertainer

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe the stages of career development, and identify the stage you're currently in
- Identify career development resources in your school, community, and beyond

Career Development

See if you can remember a time in your childhood when you noticed somebody doing professional work. Maybe a nurse or doctor, dressed in a lab coat, was listening to your heartbeat. Maybe a worker at a construction site, decked in a hard hat, was operating noisy machinery. Maybe a cashier at the checkout line in a grocery store was busily scanning bar codes. Each day in your young life you could have seen a hundred people doing various jobs. Surely some of the experiences drew your interest and appealed to your imagination.

If you can recall any such times, those are moments from the beginning stage of your career development.

What exactly is career development? It's a lifelong process in which we become aware of, interested in, knowledgeable about, and skilled in a career. It's a key part of human development as our identity forms and our life unfolds.

Stages of Career Development

There are five main stages of career development. Each stage correlates with attitudes, behaviors, and relationships we all tend to have at that point and age. As we progress through each stage and reach the milestones identified, we prepare to move on to the next one.

Which stage of career development do you feel you are in currently? Think about each stage. What challenges are you facing now? Where are you headed?

#	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1	GROWING	This is a time in early years (4–13 years old) when you begin to have a sense about the future. You begin to realize that your participation in the world is related to being able to do certain tasks and accomplish certain goals.
2	EXPLORING	This period begins when you are a teenager, and it extends into your mid-twenties. In this stage you find that you have specific interests and aptitudes. You are aware of your inclinations to perform and learn about some subjects more than others. You may try out jobs in your community or at your school. You may begin to explore a specific career. At this stage, you have some detailed "data points" about careers, which will guide you in certain directions.
3	ESTABLISHING	This period covers your mid-twenties through mid-forties. By now you are selecting or entering a field you consider suitable, and you are exploring job opportunities that will be stabile. You are also looking for upward growth, so you may be thinking about an advanced degree.
4	MAINTAINING	This stage is typical for people in their mid-forties to mid-sixties. You may be in an upward pattern of learning new stills and staying engaged. But you might also be merely "coasting and cruising" or even feeling stagnant. You may be taking stock of what you've accomplished and where you still want to go.
5	REINVENTING	In your mid-sixties, you are likely transitioning into retirement. But retirement in our technologically advanced world can be just the beginning of a new career or pursuit—a time when you can reinvent yourself. There are many new interests to pursue, including teaching others what you've learned, volunteering, starting online businesses, consulting, etc.

Keep in mind that your career-development path is personal to you, and you may not fit neatly into the categories described above. Perhaps your socioeconomic background changes how you fit into the schema. Perhaps your physical and mental abilities affect you define the idea of a "career." And for everyone, too, there are factors of chance that can't be predicted or anticipated. You are unique, and your career path can only be developed by you.

Career Development Resources in Your College, Community, and Beyond

Career experts say that people will change careers (not to mention jobs) five to seven times in a lifetime. So your career will likely not be a straight and narrow path. Be sure to set goals and assess your interests, skills and values often. Seek opportunities for

career growth and enrichment. And take advantage of the rich set of resources available to you. Below are just a few.

Career Development Office on Campus

Whether you are a student, a graduate, or even an employer, you can obtain invaluable career development assistance at your college or university. Campus career centers can support, guide, and empower you in every step of the career development process, from initial planning to achieving lifelong career satisfaction.

Books on Career Development

Going to college is one of the best steps you can take to prepare for a career. But soon-to-be or recently graduated students are not necessarily guaranteed jobs. Staying educated about strategies for developing your career and finding new jobs will help you manage ongoing transitions. The book *The Secret to Getting a Job After College: Marketing Tactics to Turn Degrees into Dollars*, by author Larry Chiagouris, was written specifically to help recent grads increase their chances of finding a job right after college. It speaks to students in all majors and provides tips and tactics to attract the attention of an employer and successfully compete with other candidates to get the job you want.

The following video provides an introduction to the book. You can download a transcript of the video here.

YouTube Video

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Career Roadmap

You can use the Career Roadmap, from DePaul University, to evaluate where you are and where you want to be in your career/careers. It can help you decide if you want to change career paths and can guide you in searching for a new job. The road map identifies the following four cyclical steps:

1. Know yourself
2. Explore and choose options
3. Gain knowledge and experience
4. Put it all together: the job search process

Plan, Do, Check, Act

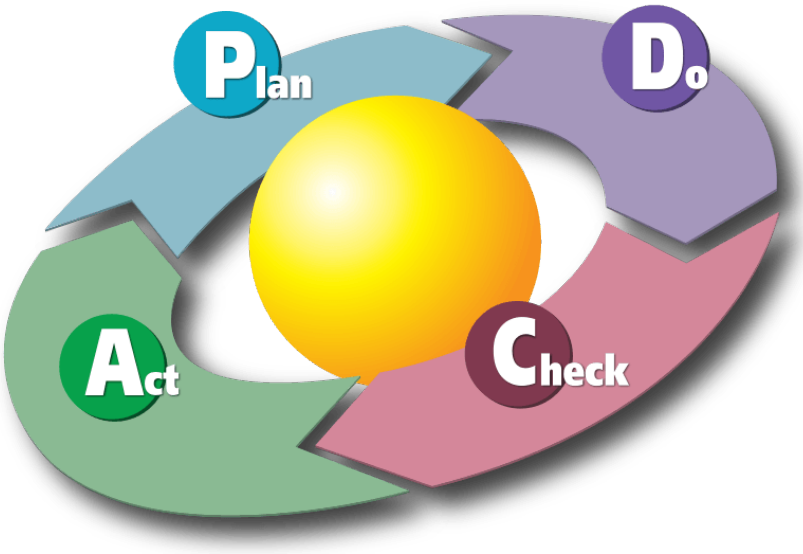


Figure 1. PDCA

PDCA (plan–do–check–act), shown in Figure 1, above, is a four-step strategy for carrying out change. You can use it to evaluate where you are in the career-development process and to identify your next steps. The strategy is typically used in the business arena as a framework for improving processes and services. But you can think of your career as a personal product you are offering or selling.

1. **PLAN**: What are your goals and objectives? What process will you use to get to your targets? You might want to plan smaller to begin with and test out possible effects. For instance, if you are thinking of getting into a certain career, you might plan to try it out first as an intern or volunteer or on a part-time basis. When you start on a small scale, you can test possible outcomes.
2. **DO**: Implement your plan. Sell your product—which is YOU and your skills, talents, energy, and enthusiasm. Collect data as you go along; you will need it for charting and analyzing in the Check and Act steps ahead.
3. **CHECK**: Look at your results so far. Are you happy with your job or wherever you are in the career-development process? How is your actual accomplishment measuring up next to your intentions and wishes? Look for where you may have deviated in your intended steps. For example, did you take a job in another city when your initial plans were for working closer to friends and family? What are the pros and cons? If you like, create a chart that shows you all the factors. With a chart, it will be easier to see trends over several PDCA cycles.
4. **ACT**: How should you act going forward? What changes in planning, doing, and checking do you want to take? The PDCA framework is an ongoing process. Keep planning, doing, checking, and acting. The goal is continuous improvement.

Internet Sites for Career Planning

Visit the Internet Sites for Career Planning Web site at the National Career Development Association's site. You will find extensive, definitive, and frequently updated information on the following topics: Online Employment; Self-Assessment; Career Development Process; Occupational Information; Employment Trends; Salary Information; Educational Information; Financial Aid Information; Apprenticeships and Other Alternative Training Opportunities; Job Search Instruction and Advice; Job Banks; Career Search Engines; Resources for Diverse Audiences; Resources and Services for Ex-Offenders; Resources and Services for Youth, Teen and Young Adults; Resources and Services the Older Client; Industry and Occupation Specific Information; Researching Employers; Social Networking Sites; Disabilities; Military.

Activity: Campus to Career

Objective

- Examine two critical questions about developing your career while still in college: How do I prepare myself for a career while I'm in college? How do I position myself to get ahead?

Instructions

- Review the Campus to Career Web site called "Top College Career Tips from Freshman to Senior Year."
- Visit the section for each year of college: Freshman Year, Sophomore Year, Junior Year, and Senior Year. You may need to return to the main page of the site to access the sophomore, junior, and senior year pages of content.
- Complete the self-check quiz below.

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7.2.6: Networking



Communication—the human connection—is the key to personal and career success. —Paul J. Meyer, motivational speaker

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define network and identify strategies for networking
- Identify sources for developing professional networks

In the context of career development, networking is the process by which people build relationships with one another for the purpose of helping one another achieve professional goals.

When you “network,” you exchange information.

- You may share business cards, résumés, cover letters, job-seeking strategies, leads about open jobs, information about companies and organizations, and information about a specific field.
- You might also share information about meet-up groups, conferences, special events, technology tools, and social media.
- You might also solicit job “headhunters,” career counselors, career centers, career coaches, an alumni association, family members, friends, acquaintances, and vendors.

Networking can occur anywhere and at any time. In fact, your network expands with each new relationship you establish. And the networking strategies you can employ are nearly limitless. With imagination and ingenuity, your networking can be highly successful.



Strategies for Networking

We live in a social world. Almost everywhere you go and anything you do professionally involves connecting with people. It stands to reason that finding a new job and advancing your career entails building relationships with these people. Truly, the most effective way to find a new job is to network, network, and network some more.

Once you acknowledge the value of networking, the challenge is figuring out how to do it. What is your first step? Whom do you contact? What do you say? How long will it take? Where do you concentrate efforts? How do you know if your investments will pay off?

For every question you may ask, a range of strategies can be used. Begin exploring your possibilities by viewing the following energizing video, *Networking Tips for College Students and Young People*, by Hank Blank. He recommends the following modern and no-nonsense strategies:

1. Hope is not a plan. You need a plan of action to achieve your networking goals.
2. Keenly focus your activities on getting a job. Use all tools available to you.
3. You need business cards. No ifs, ands, or buts.
4. Register your own domain name. Find your favorite geek to build you a landing page. Keep building your site for the rest of your life.
5. Attend networking events. Most of them offer student rates.
6. Master Linkedin because that is what human resource departments use. Post updates.
7. Think of your parents' friends as databases. Leverage their knowledge and their willingness to help you.
8. Create the world you want to live in in the future by creating it today through your networking activity. These are the times to live in a world of "this is how I can help."

YouTube Video

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See the LinkedIn for Students Web site.

International Student Series: Finding Work Using Your Networks

If you are an international student, or perhaps if English is not your native language, this video may especially appeal to you. It focuses on the importance of networking when looking for jobs and keeping an open mind. Simply talking to people can help you move from casual work to full-time employment.

YouTube Video

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. . . And More Strategies

Strategies at College

- **Get to know your professors**: Communicating with instructors is a valuable way to learn about a career and also get letters of reference if and when needed for a job. Professors can also give you leads on job openings, internships, and research possibilities. Most instructors will readily share information and insights with you. Get to know your instructors. They are a valuable part of your network.
- **Check with your college's alumni office**: You may find that some alumni are affiliated with your field of interest and can give you the "inside scoop."
- **Check with classmates**: Classmates may or may not share your major, but any of them may have leads that could help you. You could be just one conversation away from a good lead.

Strategies at Work

- **Join professional organizations**: You can meet many influential people at local and national meetings and events of professional and volunteer organizations. Learn about these organizations. See if they have membership discounts for students, or student chapters. Once you are a member, you may have access to membership lists, which can give you prospective access to many new people to network with.
- **Volunteer**: Volunteering is an excellent way to meet new people who can help you develop your career, even if the organization you are volunteering with is not in your field. Just by working alongside others and working toward common goals, you build relationships that may later serve you in unforeseen and helpful ways.
- **Get an internship**: Many organizations offer internship positions to college students. Some of these positions are paid, but often they are not. Paid or not, you gain experience relevant to your career, and you potentially make many new contacts. Check CollegeRecruiter.com for key resources.
- **Get a part-time job**: Working full-time may be your ultimate goal, but you may want to fill in some cracks or crevices by working in a part-time job. Invariably you will meet people who can feasibly help with your networking goals. And you can gain good experience along the way, which can also be noted on your résumé.
- **Join a job club**: Your career interests may be shared by many others who have organized a club, which can be online or in person. If you don't find an existing club, consider starting one.
- **Attend networking events**: There are innumerable professional networking events taking place around the world and also online. Find them listed in magazines, community calendars, newspapers, journals, and at the Web sites of companies, organizations, and associations.
- **Conduct informational interviews**: You may initiate contact with people in your chosen field who can tell you about their experiences of entering the field and thriving in it. Many Web sites have guidance on how to plan and conduct these interviews.

Strategies at Home and Beyond

- **Participate in online social media**: An explosion of career opportunity awaits you with social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and many more. You will find an extensive list of suggested sites at CareerOneStop. Keep your communication ultra-professional at these sites. Peruse magazine articles, and if you find one that's relevant to your field and it contains names of professionals, you can reach out to them to learn more and get job leads.
- **Ask family members and friends, coworkers, and acquaintances for referrals**: Do they know others who might help you? You can start with the question "Who else should I be talking to?"
- **Use business cards or networking cards**: A printed business card can be an essential tool to help your contacts remember you. Creativity can help in this regard, too. Students often design cards themselves and either hand print them or print them on a home printer.

Activity: Networking for Career Development

Objectives

- Examine five strategies for obtaining and engaging with networking contacts
- Develop relationships with new contacts to enhance your career

Instructions

- Find information about five companies or people in your field of interest, and follow them on Twitter.
- Get an account at four social media sites that you've not yet been active with that may enhance your career.
- Find names of three people who interest you (peruse magazine articles, online sites, or other resources), and write an email to them explaining your interests and any requests you may have for information.
- Sign up for newsletters from two professional organizations in a field you want to know more about.
- Find and attend one in-person or online event within a month.
- Now write about this experience at one of your social media sites.

For additional ideas and inspiration about networking for career development, watch the following video, *Hustle 101: Networking For College Students and Recent Grads*. The speaker, Emily Miethner, is a recent college graduate and the founder and president of NYCreative Interns, "dedicated to helping young creatives discover and then follow their dream careers."

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Sources for Developing Professional Networks

The bottom line with developing professional networks is to cull information from as many sources as possible and use that information in creative ways to advance your career opportunities. The strategies listed in the section above provide you with a comprehensive set of suggestions. Below is a summary of sources you can use to network your way to career success:

- Meet-up groups
- Conferences
- Special events
- Technology tools
- Social media
- Career centers

- Alumni association
- Professional organizations
- Volunteer organizations
- Internships
- Part-time job
- Job club
- Networking events
- Magazine articles
- Web sites
- Career coaches
- Headhunters
- Career counselors
- Family members
- Friends
- Coworkers
- Vendors
- College professors
- Advisers
- Classmates
- Administrators
- Coaches
- Guest speakers

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7.2.7: Résumés and Cover Letters



The most important tool you have on a résumé is language. —Jay Samit, digital media innovator

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the purpose and contents of a résumé
- Identify characteristics of an effective cover letter and résumé

A résumé is a "selfie" for business purposes. It is a written picture of who you are—it's a marketing tool, a selling tool, and a promotion of you as an ideal candidate for any job you may be interested in.

The word *résumé* comes from the French word *résumé*, which means "a summary." Leonardo da Vinci is credited with writing one of the first known résumés, although it was more of a letter that outlined his credentials for a potential employer, Ludovico Sforza. The résumé got da Vinci the job, though, and Sforza became a longtime patron of da Vinci and later commissioned him to paint *The Last Supper*. You can see the letter and read the translation at Ladders Career Advice.

Résumés and cover letters work together to represent you in the brightest light to prospective employers. With a well-composed résumé and cover letter, you stand out—which may get you an interview and then a good shot at landing a job.

In this section we discuss résumés and cover letters as key components of your career development tool kit. We explore some of the many ways you can design and develop them for the greatest impact in your job search.

Your Résumé: Purpose and Contents

Your résumé is an inventory of your education, work experience, job-related skills, accomplishments, volunteer history, internships, residencies, and/or more. It's a professional autobiography in outline form to give the person who reads it a quick, general idea of who you are. With a better idea of who your are, prospective employers can see how well you might contribute to their workplace.

As a college student or recent graduate, though, you may be unsure about what to put in your résumé, especially if you don't have much employment history. Still, employers don't expect recent grads to have significant work experience. And even with little work experience, you may still have a host of worthy accomplishments to include. It's all in how you present yourself.

The following video is an animated look at why résumés are so important. You can read a transcript of the video here.

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Elements of Your Successful Résumé

Perhaps the hardest part of writing a résumé is figuring out what format to use to organize and present your information in the most effective way. There is no correct format, per se, but most résumés follow one of the four formats below. Which format appeals to you the most?

1. **Reverse chronological résumé**: A reverse chronological résumé (sometimes also simply called a chronological résumé) lists your job experiences in reverse chronological order—that is, starting with the most recent job and working backward toward your first job. It includes starting and ending dates. Also included is a brief description of the work duties you performed for each job, and highlights of your formal education. The reverse chronological résumé may be the most common and perhaps the most conservative résumé format. It is most suitable for demonstrating a solid work history, and growth and development in your skills. It may not suit you if you are light on skills in the area you are applying to, or if you've changed employers frequently, or if you are looking for your first job. Reverse Chronological Résumé Examples
2. **Functional résumé**: A functional résumé is organized around your talents, skills, and abilities (more so than work duties and job titles, as with the reverse chronological résumé). It emphasizes specific professional capabilities, like what you have done or what you can do. Specific dates may be included but are not as important. So if you are a new graduate entering your field with little or no actual work experience, the functional résumé may be a good format for you. It can also be useful when you are seeking work in a field that differs from what you have done in the past. It's also well suited for people in unconventional careers. Functional Résumé Examples
3. **Hybrid résumé**: The hybrid résumé is a format reflecting both the functional and chronological approaches. It's also called a combination résumé. It highlights relevant skills, but it still provides information about your work experience. With a hybrid résumé, you may list your job skills as most prominent and then follow with a chronological (or reverse chronological) list of employers. This résumé format is most effective when your specific skills and job experience need to be emphasized. Hybrid Résumé Examples
4. **Video, infographic, and Web-site résumé**: Other formats you may wish to consider are the video résumé, the infographic résumé, or even a Web-site résumé. These formats may be most suitable for people in multimedia and creative careers. Certainly with the expansive use of technology today, a job seeker might at least try to create a media-enhanced résumé. But the paper-based, traditional résumé is by far the most commonly used—in fact, some human resource departments may not permit submission of any format other than paper based. Video Resume Examples; Infographic Résumé Examples; Web-Site Résumé Examples

An important note about formatting is that, initially, employers may spend only a few seconds reviewing each résumé—especially if there is a big stack of them or they seem tedious to read. That's why it's important to choose your format carefully so it will stand out and make the first cut.

Résumé Contents and Structure

For many people, the process of writing a résumé is daunting. After all, you are taking a lot of information and condensing it into a very concise form that needs to be both eye-catching and easy to read. Don't be scared off, though! Developing a good résumé can be fun, rewarding, and easier than you think if you follow a few basic guidelines. In the following video, a résumé-writing expert describes some keys to success.

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Contents and Components To Include

1. **Your contact information**: name, address, phone number, professional email address
2. **A summary of your skills**: 5–10 skills you have gained in your field; you can list hard skills as well as soft skills (refer to the Professional Skill Building topic in this course)
3. **Work experience**: depending on the résumé format you choose, you may list your most recent job first; include the title of the position, employer's name, location, employment dates (beginning, ending)
4. **Volunteer experience**
5. **Education and training**: formal and informal experiences matter; include academic degrees, professional development, certificates, internships, etc.
6. **References statement** (optional): "References available upon request" is a standard phrase used on résumés, although it is often implied
7. **Other sections**: may include a job objective, a brief profile, a branding statement, a summary statement, additional accomplishments, and any other related experiences

Caution

Résumés resemble snowflakes in as much as no two are alike. Although you can benefit from giving yours a stamp of individuality, you will do well to steer clear of personal details that might elicit a negative response. It is advisable to omit any confidential information or details that could make you vulnerable to discrimination, for instance. Your résumé will likely be viewed by a number of employees in an organization, including human resource personnel, managers, administrative staff, etc. By aiming to please all reviewers, you gain maximum advantage.

- Do not mention your age, gender, height or weight.
- Do not include your social security number.
- Do not mention religious beliefs or political affiliations, unless they are relevant to the position.
- Do not include a photograph of yourself or a physical description.
- Do not mention health issues.
- Do not use first-person references. (I, me).
- Do not include wage/salary expectations.
- Do not use abbreviations.
- Proofread carefully—absolutely no spelling mistakes are acceptable.

Top Ten Tips for a Successful Résumé

1. Aim to make a résumé that's 1–2 pages long on letter-size paper.
2. Make it visually appealing.
3. Use action verbs and phrases. See Action Words and Phrases for Résumé Development.
4. Proofread carefully to eliminate any spelling, grammar, punctuation, and typographical errors.
5. Include highlights of your qualifications or skills to attract an employer's attention.
6. Craft your letter as a pitch to people in the profession you plan to work in.
7. Stand out as different, courageous.
8. Be positive and reflect only the truth.
9. Be excited and optimistic about your job prospects!

10. Keep refining and reworking your résumé; it's an ongoing project.

Remember that your résumé is your professional profile. It will hold you in the most professional and positive light, and it's designed to be a quick and easy way for a prospective employer to evaluate what you might bring to a job. When written and formatted attractively, creatively, and legibly, your résumé is what will get your foot in the door. You can be proud of your accomplishments, even if they don't seem numerous. Let your résumé reflect your personal pride and professionalism.

In the following video, *Résumé Tips for College Students From Employers*, several college graduate recruiters summarize the most important points about crafting your résumé. You can download a transcript of the video here.

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Résumé Writing Resources

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
1	Résumé Builder (from LinkedIn)	Turn your LinkedIn Profile into a great résumé in seconds. Pick a résumé template, customize the content, print and share the result.
2	The Online Resume Builder (from My Perfect resume)	The online résumé builder is easy to use. Choose your résumé design from the library of professional designs, insert prewritten examples, then download and print your new résumé.
3	Résumé Builder (from Live Career)	This site offers examples and samples, templates, tips, videos, and services for résumés, cover letters, interviews, and jobs.
4	Résumé Samples for College Students and Graduates (from About Careers)	This site offers a plethora of sample résumés for college students and graduates. Listings are by type of student and by type of job. Résumé templates are also provided.
5	JobSearch Minute Videos (from College Grad)	This site offers multiple to-the-point one-minute videos on topics such as print résumés, video résumés, cover letters, interviewing, tough interview questions, references, job fairs, and Internet job searching.

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
6	Student [Career] Services (from Employment Ontario—Community Employment Services)	—Buzzwords and Skills to Include in your résumé —Action Words and Phrases for résumé Development —Checklist of Personal Skills
7	42 Résumé Dos and Don'ts Every Job Seeker Should Know (from the muse)	A comprehensive list of résumé dos and don'ts, which includes traditional rules as well as new rules to polish your résumé.

Your Résumé: It's Like Online Dating

The following essay by Jackie Vetrano is excerpted from *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*. It's a true-to-life story comparing job hunting to online dating. The writer's "lessons learned" are meant to enlarge your awareness of your career goals as you attend college.

It's Like Online Dating

Searching for a job, especially your first job, is a lot like online dating. It begins as a time commitment, gets nerve-wracking towards the middle, but ends in success and happiness if you follow the right process.

Like many single people with access to current technology, I ventured into the world of online dating. I went for coffee with potential mates who were instant no ways, some who left me scratching my head, and a few who I found a connection with.

But hang on. We are here to talk about professional development, not my love life.

Being on the job hunt is not easy. Many spend hours preparing résumés, looking at open positions, and thinking about what career path to travel. Occasionally, it is overwhelming and intimidating, but when taken one step at a time, it can be a manageable and an exciting process.

The first step of online dating is the most important: create your dating profile. Your profile is where you put your best foot forward and show off all of your attractive qualities through visuals and text. Online daters find their most flattering photos and then season the "about me" section of their profile with captivating and descriptive words to better display who they are and why other online daters should give them a shot.

Résumés follow this same logic. Your résumé should be clean, polished, and present you in your best light for future employers. Like dating profiles, they are detailed and should paint a picture for other prospective dates (or future employers) supporting why you deserve a chance at their love—an interview.

The unspoken rules of online dating profiles are very similar to the rules for writing a résumé. Whether you like it or not, your online dating profile and résumé both serve as a first impression. Profiles and résumés that are short, filled with spelling errors, or vague are usually passed over. Unless you are a supermodel and all you need is an enticing photo, your written description is very important to display who you are.

Your résumé should capture who you are, your skill set, education, past experiences, and anything else that is relevant to the job you hope to obtain. Knowing your audience is a key factor in crafting the perfect resume. Logically, if my online dating profile presented studious and quiet personality traits, I would likely start receiving messages from potential mates who are looking for someone who is seeking those traits. By taking a similar approach while writing a résumé, you can easily determine the tone, language, and highlighted skills and experiences you should feature. The tone of your résumé is dictated by the nature of the position you hope to obtain in the future. For example, hospitality jobs or positions that require you to interact with many people on a daily basis should be warm and welcoming while analytical jobs, such as accounting or research positions, should reflect an astute attention to detail. Your choice in language follows similar logic—use appropriate terms for the position you are seeking.

Unlike online dating profiles, your résumé should include your important contact information, including email address, telephone number, and mailing address. Some advise refraining from listing a mailing address, as this could create a bias due to some organizations that are looking for a new employee who is already in the area.

Unfortunately, this bias cannot be foreseen, which means you should use your best judgment when listing your contact information. If you include this contact information on your dating profile, you may have some very interesting text messages in the morning.

—Jackie Ventrano, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

Vetrano's essay is continued ahead in the "Cover Letters" section of this page.

Activity: Create Your Résumé

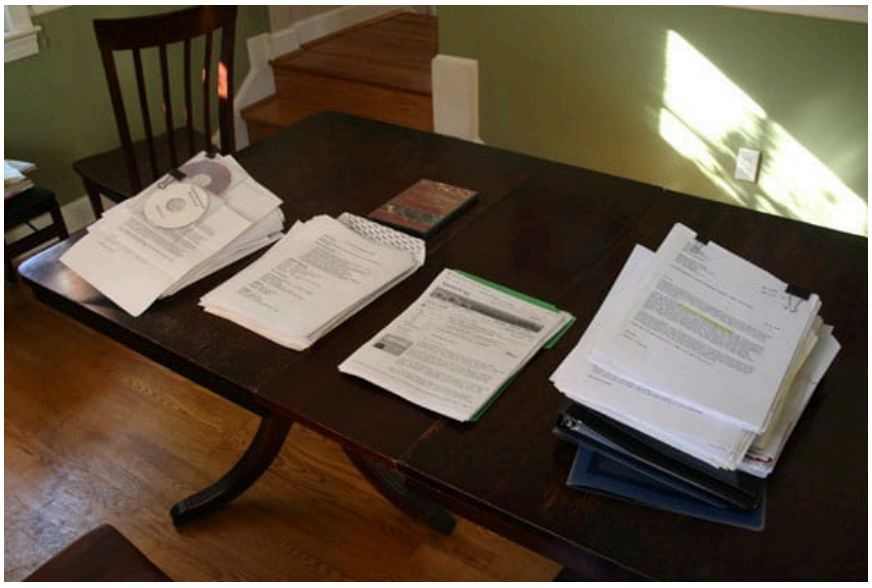
Objectives:

- Compile data reflecting your professional and educational skills and accomplishments.
- Assess the main résumé formats and select one that meets your needs.
- Create a first draft of your professional résumé.

Directions:

1. Compile all needed information for your résumé, including your contact information, a summary of your skills, your work experience and volunteer experience, education and training (including your intended degree, professional development activities, certificates, internships, etc.). Optionally you may wish to include job objective, a brief profile, a branding statement, additional accomplishments, and any other related experiences.
2. Select one of the résumé builder tools listed above in the Résumé Writing Resources table.
3. Create your résumé, following instructions at your selected site.
4. Save your document as a PDF file.
5. Follow instructions from your instructor on how to submit your work.

Your Cover Letter



Cover letters matter. When you have to go through a pile of them, they are probably more important than the résumé itself. —woodleywonderworks

What Is a Cover Letter?

A cover letter is a letter of introduction, usually 3–4 paragraphs in length, that you attach to your résumé. It's a way of introducing yourself to a potential employer and explaining why you are suited for a position. Employers may look for individualized and thoughtfully written cover letters as an initial method of screening out applicants who may who lack necessary basic skills, or who may not be sufficiently interested in the position.

Cover Letter Examples

Often an employer will request or require that a cover letter be included in the materials an applicant submits. There are also occasions when you might submit a cover letter uninvited: for example, if you are initiating an inquiry about possible work or asking someone to send you information or provide other assistance.

With each résumé you send out, always include a cover letter specifically addressing your purposes.

Characteristics of an Effective Cover Letter

Cover letters should accomplish the following:

- Get the attention of the prospective employer
- Set you apart from any possible competition
- Identify the position you are interested in
- Specify how you learned about the position or company
- Present highlights of your skills and accomplishments
- Reflect your genuine interest
- Please the eye and ear

The following video features Aimee Bateman, founder of Careercake.com, who explains how you can create an incredible cover letter. You can download a transcript of the video here.

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Cover Letter Resources

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
1	Student Cover Letter Samples (from About Careers)	This site contains sample student/recent graduate cover letters (especially for high school students and college students and graduates seeking employment) as well as cover letter templates, writing tips, formats and templates, email cover letter examples, and examples by type of applicant

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
2	How to Write Cover Letters (from CollegeGrad)	This site contains resources about the reality of cover letters, using a cover letter, the worst use of the cover letter, the testimonial cover letter technique, and a cover letter checklist
3	LinkedIn Cover Letter	This site contains articles, experts, jobs, and more: get all the professional insights you need on LinkedIn
4	Cover Letters (from the Yale Office of Career Strategy)	This site includes specifications for the cover letter framework (introductory paragraph, middle paragraph, concluding paragraph), as well as format and style

Your Cover Letter: It's Like Online Dating

The following is another excerpt from the "It's Like Online Dating" essay by Jackie Vetrano. Writing a cover letter may feel like a chore, but the payoff will be well worth it if you land the job you want!

It's Like Online Dating

Sending a Message—The Cover Letter

After searching through dozens of profiles, online daters generally find a handful of people they can picture themselves with. There's only one way to find out more about the person, and that's by sending the first message.

The challenging part of the first message I send through online dating sites is determining what to say. I've never met these people before, but I do have access to their dating profiles filled with their hobbies, hometowns, and more. This is a perfect starting point for my message, especially if we both root for the same football team or if the other person likes to run as much as I do.

Your cover letter serves as an introduction to your future employer and should complement your résumé to create a shining first impression. It is incredibly challenging to sit in front of a blank screen trying to find a good starting point, which means you should look at the job posting and organization's Web site for ideas about what to include.

Generally, these job postings provide a set of hard skills (such as proficiency with certain technology) and soft skills (such as public speaking, teamwork, or working in a flexible environment) required and desired for the posted position. This information provides you a list of what should be explained in your cover letter. Demonstrating your hard skills is a simple enough task by using examples or stating certifications, but describing your soft skills may require a little more thought. These soft skills can be exhibited by discussing specific examples of past experiences in previous jobs you've held, volunteer work, or work you've done in college classes.

After you have crafted your cover letter, you should send it to a few people you trust for their opinion and overall proofreading along with the job posting for their reference. It's obvious that your cover letter should be free of spelling and grammar errors, but these trustworthy individuals will also be able to provide helpful insight about the examples you've used to display your soft skills.

—Jackie Vetrano, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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7.2.8: Interviewing



One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation. —Arthur Ashe, champion tennis player

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Describe effective strategies to prepare for an interview
- Differentiate between different types of interview situations and identify appropriate interview techniques for each
- Analyze different question types common in interviews

If your résumé and cover letter have served their purposes well, you will be invited to participate in an interview with the company or organization you're interested in. Congratulations! It's an exciting time, and your prospects for employment are very strong if you put in the time to be well prepared.

In this section we look at how to get ready for an interview, what types of interviews you might need to engage in, and what kinds of questions you might be asked.

Preparing Effectively for a Job Interview

Review the Job Description

When you prepare for an interview, your first step will be to carefully read and reread the job posting or job description. This will help you develop a clearer idea of how you meet the skills and attributes the company seeks.

Research the Company or Organization

Researching the company will give you a wider view of what the company is looking for and how well you might fit in. Your prospective employer may ask you what you know about the company. Being prepared to answer this question shows that you took time and effort to prepare for the interview and that you have a genuine interest in the organization. It shows good care and good planning—soft skills you will surely need on the job.

Practice Answering Common Questions

Most interviewees find that practicing the interview in advance with a family member, a friend, or a colleague eases possible nerves during the actual interview. It also creates greater confidence when you walk through the interview door. In the “Interview Questions” section below, you’ll learn more about specific questions you will likely be asked and corresponding strategies for answering them.

Plan to Dress Appropriately

Interviewees are generally most properly dressed for an interview in business attire, with the goal of looking highly professional in the eyes of the interviewer. At the DePaul University Career Center and CareerSpots.com Web site, click on Interview Dress to see three videos on dressing for success in your job interview. Learn exactly what is meant by “business casual,” and see the specific types of attire appropriate for men and women.

Come Prepared

Plan to bring your résumé, cover letter, and a list of references to the interview. You may also want to bring a portfolio of representative work. Leave behind coffee, chewing gum, and any other items that could be distractions.

Be Confident

Above all, interviewees should be confident and “courageous.” By doing so you make a strong first impression. As the saying goes, “There is never a second chance to make a first impression.”

Job Interview Types and Techniques

Every interview you participate in will be unique: The people you meet with, the interview setting, and the questions you’ll be asked will all be different from interview to interview.

The various factors that characterize any given interview can contribute to the sense of adventure and excitement you feel. But it’s also can normal to feel a little nervous about what lies ahead. With so many unknowns, how can you plan to “nail the interview” no matter what comes up?

A good strategy for planning is to anticipate the type of interview you may find yourself in. There are common formats for job interviews, described in detail, below. By knowing a bit more about each type and being aware of techniques that work for each, you can plan to be on your game no matter what form your interview takes.

Screening Interviews

Screening interviews might best be characterized as “weeding-out” interviews. They ordinarily take place over the phone or in another low-stakes environment in which the interviewer has maximum control over the amount of time the interview takes. Screening interviews are generally short because they glean only basic information about you. If you are scheduled to participate in a screening interview, you might safely assume that you have some competition for the job and that the company is using this strategy to whittle down the applicant pool. With this kind of interview, your goal is to win a face-to-face interview. For this first shot, though, prepare well and challenge yourself to shine. Try to stand out from the competition and be sure to follow up with a thank-you note.

Phone or Web Conference Interviews

If you are geographically separated from your prospective employer, you may be invited to participate in a phone interview or online interview, instead of meeting face-to-face. Technology, of course, is a good way to bridge distances. The fact that you’re not there in person doesn’t make it any less important to be fully prepared, though. In fact, you may wish to be all the more “on your toes” to compensate for the distance barrier. Make sure your equipment (phone, computer, Internet connection, etc.) is fully charged and works. If you’re at home for the interview, make sure the environment is quiet and distraction-free. If the meeting is

online, make sure your video background is pleasing and neutral, like a wall hanging or even a white wall.

One-on-One Interviews

The majority of job interviews are conducted in this format—just you and a single interviewer—likely with the manager you would report to and work with. The one-on-one format gives you both a chance to see how well you connect and how well your talents, skills, and personalities mesh. You can expect to be asked questions like "Why would you be good for this job?" and "Tell me about yourself." Many interviewees prefer the one-on-one format because it allows them to spend in-depth time with the interviewer. Rapport can be built. As always, be very courteous and professional. Have handy a portfolio of your best work.

Panel Interviews

An efficient format for meeting a candidate is a panel interview, in which perhaps four to five coworkers meet at the same time with a single interviewee. The coworkers comprise the "search committee" or "search panel," which may consist of different company representatives such as human resources, management, and staff. One advantage of this format for the committee is that meeting together gives them a common experience to reflect on afterward. In a panel interview, listen carefully to questions from each panelist, and try to connect fully with each questioner. Be sure to write down names and titles, so you can send individual thank-you notes after the interview.

Serial Interviews

Serial interviews are a combination of one-on-one meetings with a group of interviewers, typically conducted as a series of meetings staggered throughout the day. Ordinarily this type of interview is for higher-level jobs, when it's important to meet at length with major stakeholders. If your interview process is designed this way, you will need to be ultraprepared, as you will be answering many in-depth questions. Stay alert.

Lunch Interviews

In some higher-level positions, candidates are taken to lunch or dinner, especially if this is a second interview (a "call back" interview). If this is you, count yourself lucky and be on your best behavior, because even if the lunch meeting is unstructured and informal, it's still an official interview. Do not order an alcoholic beverage, and use your best table manners. You are not expected to pay or even to offer to pay. But, as always, you must send a thank-you note.

Group Interviews

Group interviews are comprised of several interviewees and perhaps only one or two interviewers who may make a presentation to the assembled group. This format allows an organization to quickly prescreen candidates. It also gives candidates a chance to quickly learn about the company. As with all interview formats, you are being observed. How do you behave with your group? Do you assume a leadership role? Are you quiet but attentive? What kind of personality is the company looking for? A group interview may reveal this.

For a summary of the interview formats we've just covered (and a few additional ones), take a look at the following video, *Job Interview Guide—10 Different Types of Interviews in Today's Modern World*.

YouTube Video

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Activity: What Makes You a Great Fit?

Objectives:

- Define your ideal job.
- Identify the top three reasons why you are a great fit for this ideal job.

Directions:

- Write a paragraph describing your ideal job. Imagine that you are already in this job. What is your job title and what are you responsible for executing? What is the name of the company or organization? What is its function?
- Now identify the top three reasons why you are a great fit for this ideal job. What sets you apart from the competition? List the qualities, skills and values you have that match the job requirements. Provide examples to support your answers. Connect your values to the company's values.
- Summarize your answer.
- Submit this assignment according to directions provided by your instructor.

Interview Questions

For most job candidates, the burning question is "What will I be asked?" There's no way to anticipate every single question that may arise during an interview. It's possible that, no matter how well prepared you are, you may get a question you just didn't expect. But that's okay. Do as much preparation as you can—which will build your confidence—and trust that the answers will come.

To help you reach that point of sureness and confidence, take time to review common interview questions. Think about your answers. Make notes, if that helps. And then conduct a practice interview with a friend, a family member, or a colleague. Speak your answers out loud. Below is a list of resources that contain common interview questions and good explanations/answers you might want to adopt.

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
1	100 top job interview questions—be prepared for the interview (from Monster.com)	This site provides a comprehensive set of interview questions you might expect to be asked, categorized as basic interview questions, behavioral questions, salary questions, career development questions, and other kinds. Some of the listed questions provide comprehensive answers, too.
2	Interview Questions and Answers (from BigInterview)	This site provides text and video answers to the following questions: Tell me about yourself, describe your current position, why are you looking for a new job, what are your strengths, what is your greatest weakness, why do you want to work here, where do you see yourself in five years, why should we hire you, and do you have any questions for me?

	WEBSITE	DESCRIPTION
3	Ten Tough Interview Questions and Ten Great Answers (from CollegeGrad)	This site explores some of the most difficult questions you will face in job interviews. The more open-ended the question, the greater the variation among answers. Once you have become practiced in your interviewing skills, you will find that you can use almost any question as a launching pad for a particular topic or compelling story.

Why Should We Hire You

From the Ohio State University Fisher College of Business Career Management Office, here is a video featuring representatives from recruiting companies offering advice for answering the question "Why should we hire you?" As you watch, make mental notes about how you would answer the question in an interview for a job you really want.

YouTube Video

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In closing, below is the final excerpt from the essay "It's Like Online Dating," by Jackie Vetrano. You'll recall that the writer compares job hunting—including résumé creation and cover-letter writing—to online dating. In this last section, she concludes with a look at the job interview and compares it to a first date.

It's Like Online Dating

The First Date—The Job Interview

After what may feel like forever, you hear back from the love of your life. Congratulations! In the online dating world, you may chat about common interests (because you wrote a stunning first message), but in the world of work, you'll be asked to visit the organization for an interview.

I have been on many first dates, and whether it's in a coffee shop or over dinner, the first face-to-face meeting is tremendously important. If someone I am meeting for the first time looks like they just came from the gym or rolled out of bed, my impression instantly changes. This same theory can be directly applied to your first date with your future employer. You have worked hard on your cover letter and résumé, and you should not taint the sparkling first impression you have created with the wrong choice in dress.

What you wear to a job interview may change based on the position you have applied for, but there are a set of basic rules that everyone should follow. Similar to meeting someone on a first date for coffee, you want to be comfortable. Some interviews may take place with multiple people in an organization, meaning you will be walking to different locations, sitting down, and potentially sweating from a broken air conditioning unit. Consider these factors when choosing your outfit for your interview, and if you're concerned about being underdressed, remember to always dress a bit nicer than how you'd dress for the job itself.

There is nothing worse than sitting alone at a coffee shop waiting for a mystery date to show up. It's uncomfortable and affects my overall first impression of whom I'm about to meet. Avoid making your mystery employer annoyed and waiting for you by leaving at least ten minutes earlier than you need to, just in case you get stuck in traffic. Arrive at least ten minutes early. The interview will start out much better if you are early rather than nervous and running late. Arriving early also gives you the time to have some

coffee and review materials you may need for the interview. Coming on time to an interview or a first date shows you respect the time of the person you plan to meet.

On a first date, it is all about communication. Sometimes, there may be silences that cannot be filled or the person I have just met discloses their entire life story to me in less than an hour. If we cannot achieve a proper balance, there will not be a second date. Communicating effectively in a job interview is equally as important, especially if you want a job offer!

All of the rules of dating apply to how you should behave in a job interview. The interviewer will ask you questions, which means that you should look at them and focus on what is being asked. Your phone should be on silent (not even on vibrate), and hidden, to show that you are fully attentive and engaged in the conversation you are having. Much like having a conversation on a date, the answers to your questions should be clear and concise and stay on topic. The stories I tell on my first dates are more personal than what would be disclosed in a job interview, but the mindset is the same. You are building the impression that the organization has of you, so put your best foot forward through the comments you make.

To make that great impression, it is really important to heavily prepare and practice, even before you have an interview scheduled. By brainstorming answers to typical interview questions in a typed document or out loud, later during the interview you will easily remember the examples of your past experiences that demonstrate why you are best for the job. You can continue to update this list as you move through different jobs, finding better examples to each question to accurately describe your hard and soft skills.

This interview is as much a date for your future employer as it is for you. Come prepared with questions that you have about the company, the position, and anything else you are curious about. This is an opportunity for you to show off the research you've done on the organization and establish a better understanding of company culture, values, and work ethic. Without knowing these basics of the company or organization, what you thought was a match might only end in a tense breakup.

After your interview is over, you continue to have an opportunity to build on the positive impression that you've worked hard to form. Sending a follow up thank you note to each person you interviewed with will show your respect for the time the organization spent with you. These notes can be written and sent by mail or emailed, but either way should have a personal touch, commenting on a topic that was discussed in the interview. While sending a thank you note after a first date may sound a little strange, you might not get asked to a second interview without one!

It's Official—The Job Offer

In the online dating world, it takes a few dates to determine if two people are a match. In the corporate world, you may have a one or two interviews to build a relationship. If your impression was positive and the organization believes you're a match for the open position, you'll be offered a job.

With a job offer also comes the salary for the position. It is important to know what a reasonable salary is for the position and location, which can be answered with a bit of research. One good place to look is the Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site. At this point, it is not uncommon to discuss your salary with your future employer, but be sure to do so in a polite way.

Online dating sites provide the means for millions of people to meet future partners, and the number of people who use online dating is so large that there are sure to be disappointments along the way. I have met people who I thought were compatible with me, but they did not feel the same, and vice versa. This happens frequently while searching for a job, which can be discouraging, but should not hinder you from continuing to search! There are a great number of opportunities, and sometimes all it takes is adjusting your filters or revising your résumé and cover letter. The cliché "there's plenty of fish in the sea" may be true, but there is definitely a way for each person to start their career off.

—Jackie Vetrano, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

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