



How to Do Well in School

A STUDY HELP FOR LEARNERS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

School is an important part of your life. It helps you to decide what you will be doing in the future and learning how to learn well puts you in a good place for life skills. There are many ways to improve your grades so that you do really well at school. Whether you're a failing learner and you really want higher grades, or a learner struggling to understand the school work, or simply wanting to move from getting lower marks into the higher marks, this simple guide will be helpful for you.

Part 1

Equipping yourself properly

1 Have your necessary materials all the time. Always be prepared for sudden note-taking by having pencils/pens/erasers/and other stationary ready. If not, you will waste time and you may miss some important information.

2 Be organized. Being organized helps you work better, relax and be ready to find time and hand in work on time. There are plenty of ways to be organized and it is best that you find the way that works best for you. The important thing is to be able to find what you need easily like information and your notes. Set up a way as soon as possible, including things like a good computer filing system, a good paper filing system, a desk-clearing policy (at least weekly) and a neat arrangement for your textbooks and writing books.

Make use of highlighters, bright tags and other items to label and highlight your organized items. Colour coding works extremely well for lots of people.

3. Keep a calendar. Choose one that can fit in your book or your portfolio so that you can easily turn to it and find it when you need to use it. In this calendar, write down all your tests and assessments, and extra classes, write those down too. Also make notes of study sessions or time you plan to spend doing homework. This

keeps you aware of upcoming tests and other events, so you can study and prepare for them properly.

Part 2

Goal-setting

1 Set long-term or short term goals. Even if you don't know what you want to do when you grow up or what college or university you want to go to, your goal can be just to give yourself as many opportunities as possible.

2 Keep your attendance up. Your attendance is important at school. If you don't go to school, your marks will drop fast because you will have gaps in your learning that are difficult to fill. If you have an illness or something else stopping you from attending school, ask a parent, guardian to talk to your teachers about doing catch-up work from home.

Part 3

Learning skill

1 Write down notes. Notes will help you remember work in your head and will also be an important study tools before a test. Be sure to write down everything important that the teacher goes over. If it helps, ask for a print out of the notes beforehand so you can take notes on what the teacher is saying, not just copy down what is on the board. If the teachers write something on the board and they underline it, it means it's important or it will be in future tests.

2 Make sure to answer / ask at least one question per class. This will show your teacher that you're interested in being involved in the lesson in class. But more than that, it also forces you to pay enough attention to be able to ask or answer questions. As a result, you'll do much better in tests and quizzes. Asking questions is a skill that you will always need in your life, and ensures that you can keep check on the ideas that you will find in your life.

- When you pick a question to answer in class, make sure you know the answer and the question is not too easy. Don't worry about asking too many questions; it's the teacher's job to help you.
- Being involved in class is important for getting good marks. Putting up your hand once or twice in class is good for you, especially if you remember that "**there is no such thing as a stupid question**" when it comes to learning in class. Many times your class - mates will wanting to know the same thing but they are afraid to ask it!
- **SO DON'T BE AFRAID. ASK SO THAT YOU LEARN.**

3 **Listen actively.** Don't just ask questions or talk. Learn to listen attentively too.

Eighty percent of the questions you find on any test were explained in class. The key to many understandings of the work given is often through listening to the teacher's explanations.

Part 4

Homework and revision

1 **Revise and study at home.** Do this in a quiet place with no interruptions and other things that may disturb you like the TV or radio. If the computer is in your room, take it out or go to another room. Don't study with the radio on!

- Make a time table. Making a timetable could help you save time for self-study and revision as well as keeping you on track on what you're doing and what to do next.
- Rewrite your notes. Yes this may sound boring and take up time, but it's been proven to help you remember more of what you wrote down. It also helps you to understand work better that you might have had in the class.

2 **Put effort into your homework.** Homework is a way of improving outside of the classroom. If you're having problems with doing homework, talk to your teachers and parents to come up with a home timetable.

3 **Take breaks now and then.** Instead of a lot of work or different things all at once, put aside some time to do homework. When that is over, take a 20-30 minute break to keep your mind from getting tired. When that time is up, go back to doing all the homework for that day.

4 **Start large assignments and projects early. If you have two weeks to do a project, rather than putting it off till the last three days before it's due, start**

working early. This way you can spend enough time planning, researching, and asking any questions you have about the project. The whole experience will be much less stressful, since you won't have to rush through it. You'll also have plenty of time to make the project as good as it can be, which means that you'll get better marks.

5 Take a practice test before the exam to better your understanding of what you need to study. But be careful, though, taking too many practice tests is a much less effective way to study than taking one or two practice tests with other forms of study.

6 Study during the holidays and vacation from school. If you have a test after the holidays and have not studied over the holiday period, your mind will become lazy and you will have forget a lot of things that you have learned before the holidays. Therefore you will fail the test or do badly in it.

- Get a book at your grade level for any new class subject you will be taking next term such as social sciences, and read it closely. Look at all the pictures, charts, explanations, and learn things like the short forms or abbreviations of words e.g. RSA which stands for Republic of South Africa. It is also important to read the summaries or shortened forms of chapters which give the main points.
- Treat the holidays like any weekends: Yes, you can relax and have fun, but study at least 3 times a week so you don't forget everything you have learned. Do not spend all your time over weekends on just having fun. Use some time to read, revise and study your work and notes.
- Ask your parents or friends to sit with you and go over what you have difficulty with, or that you need to memorize and recite.

Part 5

Group study

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Study with friends. Going over work or notes with your friends during free time can help keep you attentive to the work.

- Make sure that you work with people who will help you be attentive and not playful people. Any time you spend chatting or joking instead of studying is wasted time as far as the study group is concerned.
- For some people, working in a group may be hard to do because friends can distract you from your studies. Or, you may be someone who actually works better without other people around; do not see this as anything wrong, it is simply about how you like doing - for example, you may be a deep thinker who needs time and space to

understand things fully. Be aware that this does not mean you're not able to work in teams as you are more likely to be a good team worker if you understand the work properly.

Part 6

1. WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THINGS

Ask for clarifications when you don't understand things. Asking for help if you don't understand the question is the only way you're going to find out what to do. Pretending you know and making it up as you go will only cause more problems and your marks in the subjects will drop badly.

2 Learn from your mistakes. Don't see mistakes as bad things. Mistakes can help you to do better. Pay attention in class when someone like your class – mate or teacher is correcting your mistake. Mark your work carefully so that it is useful in stopping other mistakes in the future. You will learn a lot more if you use your mistakes to help you to the correct way of doing things so that you improve your results.

3 Meet with your teacher outside of class. If you do not understand work during class time, you can meet with your teacher outside of class. It will help you understand it better and will also build a strong relationship with you and your teacher.

4 Ask for help. You may also have a friend coach you, or ask your parents to hire a tutor.

Never be afraid to ask your tutor for help. They can help you with any subject, and there is no need to feel ashamed that you need help.

5 Be persistent! Don't only start well and let it fall apart. Keep your study plans working for your success. Reward yourself when you do well.

Part 7

Exam and test time

1 **Relax.** Don't become afraid over tests and exams. Start studying weeks before the exam so that you have plenty of time to ask questions when you don't understand. Studying and revising work should start happening at the beginning of the school year when the first notes or work is given to you.

Part 8

General well-being

1 **Sleep well every night.** Sleep will improve how you remember the work and help you to be attentive and awake in class, which in turn will lead to you doing better in school.

2 **Eat a healthy breakfast.** Food is energy for your brain and having food in you before school starts can help you to be attentive. If you can't get breakfast for some reason, speak to your teacher about joining the school feeding program.

3 **Join extracurricular activities.** This will allow you to make more friends, do something fun, and have a healthy mind.

- Find something that you enjoy doing to balance out the work. But don't spend too much time on it that you don't get to do your homework.

4 **Make sure you study hard to do well.** There is no need for hours on end of studying, but see how much time you have until the exam and divide the amount into equal amounts of studying each day. Remember to balance it out. Take breaks in between but don't forget to study at the right times.

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