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1st Year - Study Skills

Lesson 1: Studying Habits and Setting

The first thing that university students should know is that '*studying is a skill*'. The principle believe is that the development of this skill is closely related to the development of other skills that make good studying habits mainly: *time management, location, self discipline, concentration, memorization, organization, willingness, motivation and readiness*. Once known and improved effectively, these skills will make studying run smoothly and comfortably.

1. Building Good Studying Habits

Some practical tips are recommended in what follows in order to help students build good study habits and develop university study skills:

- ✓ **Time Management:** Plan your time schedule for study including breaks for relaxation and rest especially during examinations.
- ✓ **Appropriate Location:** find a quiet place to study where you feel comfortable enough without being bothered or destructed.
- ✓ **Self-discipline:** Try to be disciplined in your studies by given priority to subjects that need more time and energy without neglecting less effort demanding subjects in your English studies.
- ✓ **Concentration:** Your interest in what you are studying shapes greatly the degree of your focus and attention. A key for concentration is your interest in studying.
- ✓ **Memorization:** This is very helpful in matters that need rote learning and not understanding such as fixed dates, grammar and phonetic rules...But practice instead of rote learning remains more efficient for good scores.

- ✓ **Organization:** This should be applied in all the steps you step in your studies without any hesitation and organization in your studies will train you for a better professional career.
- ✓ **Motivation:** Put your desire for success as a priority and you will be highly motivated to study by achieving an advanced level.
- ✓ **Readiness:** If you are not ready enough to venture in studying by being physically and psychologically ready to challenge constrains and remedy your weaknesses you will never build good study habits.

Task1: With reference to your daily studying habits, answer the following questions. Discuss the answers with your classmates (it is preferable to use the U shape).

1. Am I really motivated to study this year? Why?
2. What are my outside university study routines? Are they really effective?
3. Why do I feel dis-comfortable/ comfortable being in one class or another? Is it to do with my teachers, the subject taught or myself?
4. To what degree am 'I self disciplined in my English studies?
5. Is my reluctance due to studying habits or location problems, living in the campus? Where do I feel better preparing my lectures home or in the campus, alone or in pairs?
6. Am 'I giving myself enough/real time to study? Why?
7. To what extent am 'I concentrated in my studies? What makes me more concentrated in class? Why?

Task 2: Think of possible tips to help some EFL university students develop positive/good studying habits by answering their questions using strong arguments.

1. I guess I'm a good student, but I usually forget to do class assignment given by many teachers?
2. How can I stop feeling bored during some lectures?
3. How can I be less anxious when I do not understand a lecture or part of it?
4. How can I focus when answering a question with many ideas struggling in my mind all simultaneously?
5. How can I get more interested in my studies?

6. How can I find more time to study with concentration?
7. I studied for long time but I actually forget everything, is there anything I can do to avoid this?
8. Does the place of study really matter in my success or failure?

Task 3: Essential is to know that you are different from your classmates. You may share the same age, expectations and interests but you are different in the way you think and study. The image below illustrates types of students with respect to their learning styles and preferences. Figure out which style of learning works best for you. This will help you better determine how, where and when to study. List some good studying habits that might help students share the same learning style.

THE 7 STYLES OF LEARNING

VISUAL (SPATIAL):

You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.

- Use images, pictures, color and other visual media to help you learn
- Use color, layout, and spatial organization in your associations, and use many 'visual words' in your assertions.
- Use mind maps
- Replace words with pictures, and use color to highlight major and minor links

SOLITARY (INTRAPERSONAL):

You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

- You prefer to learn alone using self-study
- Align your goals and objectives with personal beliefs and values
- Create a personal interest in your topics
- When you associate and visualize, highlight what you would be thinking and feeling at the time
- You drive yourself by the way you see yourself internally
- Modeling is a powerful technique for you
- Be creative with role-playing
- Your thoughts have a large influence on your performance and often safety

AURAL (AUDITORY-MUSICAL):

You prefer using sound and music.

- Use sound, rhyme, and music in your learning
- Use sound recordings to provide a background and help you get into visualizations
- When creating mnemonics or acrostics, make the most of rhythm and rhyme, or set them to a jingle or part of a song
- If you have some particular music or song that makes you want to 'take on the world,' play it back and anchor your emotions and state.

SOCIAL (INTERPERSONAL):

You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.

- Aim to work with others as much as possible
- Role-playing is a technique that works well with others, whether its one on one or with a group of people
- Work on some of your associations and visualizations with other people
- Try sharing your key assertions with others
- Working in groups to practice behaviors or procedures help you understand how to deal with variations

VERBAL (LINGUISTIC):

You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.

- Try the techniques that involve speaking and writing
- Make the most of the word-based techniques such as assertions and scripting
- Record your scripts using a tape or digital audio recorder (such as an MP3 player), and use it later for reviews
- When you read content aloud, make it dramatic and varied
- Try working with others and using role-playing to learn verbal exchanges such as negotiations, sales or radio calls

PHYSICAL (KINESTHETIC)

You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.

- Focus on the sensations you would expect in each scenario
- For assertions and scripting, describe the physical feelings of your actions.
- Use physical objects as much as possible
- Keep in mind as well that writing and drawing diagrams are physical activities
- Use role-playing, either singularly or with someone else, to practice skills and behaviors

LOGICAL (MATHEMATICAL)

You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.

- Aim to understand the reasons behind your content and skills
- Create and use lists by extracting key points from your material
- Remember association often works well when it is illogical and irrational
- Highlight your ability to pick up systems and procedures easily
- Systems thinking helps you understand the bigger picture
- You may find it challenging to change existing behaviors or habits
- If you often focus from analysis paralysis, write 'Do It Now' in big letters on some signs or post-it notes



Sources:
<http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>

bluemango
LEARNING SYSTEMS
www.bluemangolearning.com

(Available at <https://www.developgoodhabits.com/good-study-routine>).

Lesson 2: Place of Study

In order to study efficiently, you need to have a place that is always, and only, used for studying. Yorkey (1970:03)

Whoever you are; a good or a weak student you need to have your personal corner where to study. Before deciding about your place of studying think twice bearing in mind that it should offer you 'PLACE: Peace, Learning, Attention, Comfort, Efficiency'.

➤ Tips for an Ideal and Comfortable Study Location

If used seriously, the following tips will help you decide about your place of study:

- Find a place to study that fits your specific personality preferences and learning style (you may be the kind of students who like quiet places, free from interruptions or the ones who study better listening to music and noise in the background)
- Make sure you are not suffering from any kind of physical discomfort in the chosen place of your study to avoid serious physical problems that may appear after and also in order not to lose time thinking of or changing your place.
- Make available all the materials and supplies you need for particular study assignment to avoid moving.
- Poor lighting in a perfect place does not work all the time.
- Keep in mind that there is no one perfect place to study, but there are conditions that shape effective studying. Wherever you study in the classroom, in the library, in your bedroom, in the coffee shop, just remember that your choice of the place is one important skill in your study.
- Make of your place of study a good example to be imitated by others.
- Bridge gaps between your place and time of study.

Task 1: Analyze your actual place of study by listing essentials about it (the notes below may help you) then judge if it is really efficient for studying or not. Suggest necessary changes you will make for future improvements in your place of study.

My personal desk is comfortable, ordered and clean.

I have a practical bright lamp placed on my desk.

All my study materials are ordered on my desk.

My desk is placed in a corner in my personal room.

My desk is equipped with a computer and internet.

The room atmosphere is very comfortable and far from any destruction.

All what I need to study is available in my room.

Task 2: Describe your actual place of study stating the things you like and want to keep in it and the things you judge negative and you want to change. If you do not have a fixed place of study for the moment, state the different elements you will consider and the ones you will avoid when selecting your place of study.(Answers to Task1 may help you).

Lesson 3: Time of Study

One of the wisest but most difficult rules of studying is to set a definite schedule and then follow it...If you are really interested in studying well, try to follow the rule: Plan your work and work your plan. Yorkey (1970:03)

Time is the only approach which if intelligently considered and seriously managed (respected) will pave your way to success. Think of time as an impulse for university learning: 'TIME: Time Is My Energy'.

➤ Tips to Better Manage your Time of Study

The following tips can be of great help for students who face study time problems:

- Always remember that time management is your first challenge and a priority at the university.
- Use time wisely by identifying your goals and priorities in studying in relation to your time, this includes time for reading, writing papers, doing projects, and for test preparation...
- Plan for breaks in your time schedule (leisure time).
- Benefit from studying night and day without putting too much pressure on yourself.

The following key factors suggested by Allan (2010:22-24) are useful tips for becoming an effective time manager:

➤ Key Factors in Managing your Time

- Good time management is about being able to identify what you need to do and then to set priorities. When you are thinking about time management you need to consider activities such as:
 - Attendance at lectures and seminars

- Independent study
- Time for accessing resources and materials, for example, information searching, visiting the library
- Paid employment or voluntary work
- Sports and social activities
- Personal and family time.

✓ **Identifying Goals**

- The first step is to identify short-term and long-term goal.

✓ **Getting Organized**

- Buy and use a diary or wall planner – whichever you prefer
- Keep a to-do list – daily, weekly, for the semester
- Organize your study space
- Make sure you have the right equipment and stationery
- Set up and organize simple filing systems
- Invest time in learning how to use a computer
- Invest time in learning how to access and use information sources
- Identify useful support and help services within

the University.

✓ **Sort out Key Documents and Information**

- Make sure you have your module handbooks
- Identify key dates, including examination dates or submission dates for assignments; make a note in your diary of all such dates, or put them all onto your wall planner

✓ **Produce a Work Schedule**

- Many people find it helpful to work backwards from key dates and to work out a schedule of study times.

✓ **Keep up-to-date**

- Check your University email address, notice board on a regular basis for any changes to teaching timetable, assessment submission dates... etc.

Task 1: Use Allan (2010) suggested tips to better manage your time of study mentioned above and be selective to re-order them according to your own priority in studying one subject or another. Justify your choice. You may add other practical tips.

Task 2: Use the blank schedule. Fill in your exact study time for assigned university activities, extensive research and project works as well as your leisure everyday activities such as sports, housework or meetings with friends, actualities...etc. Compare your real study time with your non-study time for better improvements in your time schedule in future days.

Study Time Schedule

		Study Time				Leisure Time			
Activities Days	Assigned class works	General revisions	Extensive reading	Research and project works	Spots	Meeting friends	House works	Actualities (diverse)	
Saturday									
Sunday									
Monday									
Tuesday									
Wednesday									
Thursday									
Friday									

Task 3: According to your study preferences (day or night study preferences), use information illustrated in the image below and convince your friends of your preference.

Studying at Night **VS** Daytime Studying

1. Silence and Tranquility
2. Empty Libraries
3. No Distractions
4. Creativity



1. More Energy
2. Natural Cycle of Nature
3. Engage in your Community
4. Study with Friends

examtime.com
Transform your Potential

(Available at <https://www.goconqr.com/en/examtime/blog/best-time-to-study>).

Task 4: Prepare a special time schedule for exam revisions and compare it with the one of your classmates. Consider seriously points of similarity and work on points of difference for a more practical schedule.

Lesson 4: Learning More Vocabulary

Perhaps the greatest tools we can give students for succeeding, not only in their education but more generally in life, is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills for using those words. Pikulski and Templeton (2004:01)

Vocabulary learning and language development are two interrelated entities; a student with poor vocabulary is certainly a poor language user. Well grounded in theory is that vocabulary is not learnt by single exposure, students need multiple exposure with words in various contexts to build strong vocabulary. Here are some means by which university students can acquire and learn the majority of the foreign language vocabulary and therefore improve their language learning.

1. Word Stems

A student's vocabulary will reflect his experience of the language... Obviously, the more a student hears, speaks, reads and writes English, the more opportunity he has to increase his vocabulary. Yorkey (1970: 45-46)

Learning words starts from knowing about words' formation, i.e. Grammar of the words. Things such as '*stem*', '*suffix*' and '*prefix*' are fundamental elements in words' learning.

Task 1: Fill in the table by using all what you know about words' formation 'Stem', 'Prefix', 'Suffix'.

<i>Words' stems</i>	<i>Meanings</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Graph		
	Emotions	
Bio		
	Books	
Soph		
	Diverse	

Anthro		
	Different	
Homo		
	Words	
Manu		
	Earth	
Dict		
	Time	
Socio		

Task 2: Guess the meaning of each of the following words. Write a short sentence in which you use the word correctly.

1. *A bibliophile*
2. *A philologist*
3. *A lexicographer*
4. *Cosmology*
5. *Garbology*
6. *Morphology*
7. *Ethnography*
8. *Pedagogy*
9. *Archaeology*
10. *Graphology*

Lesson 5: Guessing Meaning from Context

The overall influence of context on vocabulary learning is large because the volume of reading students typically do allows for a great accumulation of encounters with unknown words and, ultimately, learning of substantial numbers of words. Nagy *et al* (1985) cited in Beck &McKeown(1991: 801)

Encounter with a word in many contexts helps the students better memorize the word and its meaning and develops their abilities for guessing unknown words. Correct guessing of words' meanings from contexts builds students' self-confidence, sight and working vocabulary.

Task 1: Read the texts presented below as a first step, then guess the meaning of the underlined words without using any aid (forget about your dictionary). Try in a second step to use the same words in different contexts keeping the same meaning.

Text 1:

It was three o'clock in the morning .She walked across the garden towards the house. The grass was wet with early morning dew. She looked into the darkness in front of her. Although she couldn't see or hear anything, she sensed that there was something, or somebody, there. Terrified, she crouched down behind a group of shrubs (her father's favouriterhododendrons), making herself as small as possible, her knees under her chin. She waited. The suspense was intolerable. Sweat ran down her face and she wiped her forehead with the sleeve of her coat. Now she could hear a noise, coming nearer and nearer. She felt something cold and humid against her hand-the cold, damp nose of a dog. She leapt into her air in surprise. The dog jumped too and then fled in terror across the garden and out into the road. It creaked as she opened it and she stopped, hoping that no one had heard the noise. Then, putting one foot carefully in front of the other and waiting after each step to listen, she went along the hall towards the stairs. Suddenly a light went on and her mother stood there, glowering at her- her eyes fierce and menacing, "Well, young lady", she said, "and where have you been till three o'clock in the morning?"

(In Gibbs et al, (1978).Imagine your English .p. 17).

Text 2:

As I walked down the empty street, I felt sure someone was trailing me, but when I looked behind me, I couldn't see anyone following me. The silence was complete-not the smallest movement, not the

slightest noise. I walked on. Then somebody touched my shoulder. I spun round, turning so fast that my glasses fell off. "Grab his arms!" a voice shouted, and my arms were suddenly seized by violent hands. "Let's strangle him", said the same voice. "Death by constriction!" Someone else giggled, laughing like a silly child at a secret joke. They put something round my neck-a scarf, I think, made of nylon or some similar material, and pulled it tight. I struggled, fighting as hard as I could to free myself. I used my feet and kicked one of my attackers hard on the ankle. "Ouch! He kicked me!" exclaimed the man, his voice full of surprise and indignation. Then we heard a car and my attackers, sensing danger, disappeared as quickly as they had come. I found my glasses and walked slowly home. Above my shirt collar, the scarf had left a ring of black and blue flesh, and for days this dark circle round my neck was a painful souvenir of those horrifying moments.

(In Gibbset al, (1978).Imagine your English .p. 25).

Text3:

I love the summer! There is nothing better than having an extended break from studying and a multitude of possibilities awaiting! During the summer I might work a bit, I will read a lot, and I will definitely try to travel. Travelling is undeniably an enriching past time, what with so many places in the world to explore, so many beaches to relax on and sights to see. However, vacations can be tough. There is so much to consider, such as time, cost, transport, destination etc. Unfortunately it is not possible for us to just pop to every appealing country and surround ourselves in the beauty and culture it has to offer, although I wish it were! That is why this year I will be treating myself to a staycation. But what exactly is a staycation?

As you can probably guess, the word 'staycation' mixes the verb 'stay' and the noun 'vacation'. This contemporary noun refers to a holiday spent in your hometown or your home country. A staycation might involve spending a few days in a different part of the country or even going on a few day-trips to places close to where you live. For example, whilst on my staycation here in the UK I will be exploring the south west region. Even though I live here, there are still so many fascinating places I am yet to discover. There is so much of the region's history on offer, so many museums and monuments, great places to find food and go shopping, beautiful, scenic sights, a whole host of summer activities and landmarks ...basically everything I look for when discovering a new place! These are the places tourists journey to see. Plus, I am only a short train or bus ride away from it all.

The staycation is popular because of the many benefits it offers. Normally, it is cheaper than a vacation as you don't need to stay in hotels, fly or even travel very far. This is great as most of the time people go on holiday with their parents, siblings, other family members or friends. This can be very expensive for the people paying for the holiday. Secondly, they are a great way of discovering new places which were right under your nose! Also, the more people who staycation in their home country, the more tourism, therefore more money and job opportunities available to local businesses.

So next time you think of amazing places you want to visit, start by thinking of what is on your own doorstep. You will probably be pleasantly surprised!

(By Regans (2014). Available at Learn English Teens <http://learnenglishteens.org/magazine/lifearound-world/staycations>).

Task 2: Guess the meaning(s) of each idiom in the list below. Suggest everyday situations in which you may use some of these idioms.

- a. She was like a cat on hot bricks*
- b. She's at the end of her tether*
- c. She's holding the fort*
- d. She can't make ends meet*
- e. She's black and blue all over*
- f. She's on the dole*
- g. She's got green fingers*
- h. She's been taken for a ride*
- i. She let the car out of the bag*
- j. She's a chip off the old block.*
- k. The gift of the gab*
- l. A jack of all trades*
- m. A storm in a teacup*
- n. A drop in the ocean*
- o. A shot in the dark*
- p. Teething troubles*
- q. The rat race*
- r. A flash in the pan*
- s. A fly on the ointment*
- t. The life and soul of the party*
- u. A stone's throw.*