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Preface

Our primary goal in writing COLLEGE SUCCESS is to help you succeed in college.

According to Department of Education data, 30 percent of college freshmen leave school in their first year and as many as 50 percent never graduate. COLLEGE SUCCESS is designed to help change that.

COLLEGE SUCCESS has a student-friendly format arranged to help you develop the essential skills and provide the information you need to succeed in college. This is not a textbook full of theory and extensive detail that merely DISCUSSES student success; rather, this is a how-to manual for succeeding in college. The book provides realistic, practical guidance ranging from study skills to personal health, from test taking to managing time and money. Furthermore, COLLEGE SUCCESS is accessible—information is presented concisely and as simply as possible.

COLLEGE SUCCESS has the following features to help you achieve your goals: Each chapter asks you to evaluate yourself because success starts with recognizing your strengths and weaknesses, your hopes and desires, and your own personal, individual realities. You’ll develop your own goals based on these self-assessments, determining what success in college really means for you as an individual. Throughout the book, you will find numerous interactive activities created to help you improve your skills. To assist you with this, the material is presented in easily digestible “chunks” of information so you can begin applying it immediately in your own life—and get the most out of your college education.

COLLEGE SUCCESS was developed in partnership with Career Management, LLC, whose cofounders developed SuccessHawk® (http://www.successhawk.com)—interactive online job search software, designed to help you achieve your ultimate goal of landing a great job.

Welcome aboard!
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What Causes Stress?

What’s Wrong with Stress?

Unhealthy Responses to Stress

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Coping with Stress

Get Some Exercise

Get More Sleep

Manage Your Money

Adjust Your Attitude

Learn a Relaxation Technique

Get Counseling

Tips for Success: Stress

JOURNAL ENTRY

KEY TAKEAWAYS

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

6.2 Emotional Health and Happiness

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

EMOTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Problematic Emotions

Anxiety

Loneliness
CHAPTER 1: INTERACTING WITH INSTRUCTORS AND CLASSES

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Assess your present knowledge and attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I talk with my college instructors outside of class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I participate in class discussions, ask questions in class, and volunteer to answer questions posed by my instructors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I go to all my classes except when prevented by illness or an emergency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I prepare for classes and make an active effort to pay attention and get the most from class lectures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In lecture classes, I read other materials, check for phone messages or e-mail, and talk with friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I don't sign up for classes when I hear other students say the instructor is boring or difficult.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I talk to my instructors in their offices only if I have a problem with a specific assignment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I write effective, professional e-mails to my instructors when appropriate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I am comfortable giving presentations in class and know how to prepare successfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When assigned to work with a group to give a presentation, I take the lead and help ensure everyone works together well in his or her specific roles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your interactions with your instructors and other students at this time?

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, [http://www.saylor.org/books](http://www.saylor.org/books)
Not very effective | Very successful
---|---
1 | 6
2 | 7
3 | 8
4 | 9
5 | 10

In the following list, circle the three most important areas in which you think you can improve:

- Attending classes
- Networking and studying with other students
- Going to classes fully prepared
- Interacting with instructors through e-mail and telephone calls
- Paying attention in lecture classes
- Resolving a problem with an instructor
- Asking questions in class
- Interacting with the instructor and students in an online course
- Answering questions in class
- Giving presentations in front of the class
- Participating in class discussions
- Creating and using visual aids in a presentation
- Speaking with instructors outside of class
- Working with a student group to give a presentation

Are there other areas also in which you can improve how you interact with instructors and other students to get the most out of your college education? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

**HOW TO GET THERE**

Here’s what we’ll work on in this chapter:

- Understanding why it is so important to interact well with your instructors and participate in class
- Understanding why it is essential to attend classes and actively engage in the learning process
- Preparing for and being comfortable participating in class
- Discovering the best communication practices for asking and answering questions in class
- Staying active in lecture classes to increase your learning
- Adapting your learning style when an instructor has a different teaching style
- Building a relationship with an instructor outside of class and finding a mentor
- Writing professional e-mails to instructors and others
• Interacting with the instructor of an online course and coping with its difficult issues
• Preparing for and delivering a successful class presentation
• Working with other students on a group presentation

INTERACTING WITH THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Throughout this text you have been reading about how success in college depends on your active participation in the learning process. Much of what you get out of your education is what you yourself put into it. This chapter considers how to engage in the learning process through interactions with your instructors and other students. Students who actively interact with others in the educational experience are much more successful than passive students who do not.

Yet relatively few college students consistently interact with their instructors and other students in class. Typically, only five to seven students in a class, regardless of the class's size, do most of the participating. Why is that? If you're just too shy, you can learn to feel comfortable participating.

Interacting with instructors and participating in class discussions with other students is among the most important steps you can take to make sure you're successful in college. The real essence of a college education is not just absorption of knowledge and information but learning a way of thinking that involves actively responding to the ideas of others. Employers seek graduates who have learned how to think critically about situations and ideas, to solve new problems, and to apply traditional knowledge in new circumstances. And these characteristics come from active participation in the learning process.

DIFFERENCES FROM HIGH SCHOOL

To understand why interaction is so important in college, let's look again at some of the typical differences between high school and college instructors:

• Many college classes focus more on how one thinks about a subject than on information about the subject. While instructors in some large lecture classes may still present information to students, as you take more classes in your major and other smaller classes, you'll find that simply giving back facts or information on tests or in assigned papers means much less. You really are expected to develop your own ideas and communicate them well. Doing that successfully usually requires talking with others, testing out your thoughts against those of others, responding to instructors' questions, and other interactions.

• Instructors are usually very actively involved in their fields. While high school teachers often are most interested in TEACHING, college instructors are often more interested in their own fields. They may be passionate about their subject and want you to be as well. They can become excited when a student asks a question that shows some deeper understanding of something in the field.
• **College instructors give YOU the responsibility for learning.** Many high school teachers monitor their students’ progress and reach out if they see a student not doing well. In college, however, students are considered adults in charge of their own learning. Miss some classes, turn in a paper late, do poorly on an exam—and you will get a low grade, but the instructor likely won’t come looking for you to offer help. But if YOU ask questions when you don’t understand and actively seek out your instructor during office hours to more fully discuss your ideas for a paper, then the instructor will likely give you the help you need.

• **Academic freedom is very important in college.** High school instructors generally are given a set curriculum and have little freedom to choose what—or how—to teach. College instructors have academic freedom, however, allowing them to teach controversial topics and express their own ideas—and they may expect you to partake in this freedom as well. They have more respect for students who engage in the subject and demonstrate their thinking skills through participation in the class.
1.1 WHY ATTEND CLASSES AT ALL?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe reasons why it is important to attend classes.
2. Know what to do if you must miss a class.
3. Explain the benefits of participating in class for both students and instructors.

Among the student freedoms in college is the choice not to attend classes. Most college instructors do not “grade” attendance, and some college students soon develop an attitude that if you can get class notes from someone else, or watch a podcast of a lecture, there’s no reason to go to every class at all. What’s wrong with that?

It is in fact true that you don’t have to attend every single class of every course to get a good grade. But thinking only in terms of grades and how much one can get away with is a dangerous attitude toward college education. The real issue is whether you’re trying to get the most out of your education. Let’s compare students with different attitudes toward their classes:

Carla wants to get through college, and she knows she needs the degree to get a decent job, but she’s just not that into it. She’s never thought of herself as a good student, and that hasn’t changed much in college. She has trouble paying attention in those big lecture classes, which mostly seem pretty boring. She’s pretty sure she can pass all her courses, however, as long as she takes the time to study before tests. It doesn’t bother her to skip classes when she’s studying for a test in a different class or finishing a reading assignment she didn’t get around to earlier. She does make it through her freshman year with a passing grade in every class, even those she didn’t go to very often. Then she fails the midterm exam in her first sophomore class. Depressed, she skips the next couple classes, then feels guilty and goes to the next. It’s even harder to stay awake because now she has no idea what they’re talking about. It’s too late to drop the course, and even a hard night of studying before the final isn’t enough to pass the course. In two other classes, she just barely passes. She has no idea what classes to take next term and is starting to think that maybe she’ll drop out for now.

Karen wants to have a good time in college and still do well enough to get a good job in business afterward. Her sorority keeps a file of class notes for her big lecture classes, and from talking to others and reviewing these notes, she’s discovered she can skip almost half of those big classes and still get a B or C on the tests. She stays focused on her grades, and because she has a good memory, she’s able to maintain OK grades. She doesn’t worry about talking to her instructors outside of class because she can always find out what she needs from another student. In her sophomore year, she has a quick conversation with her academic advisor and chooses her major. Those classes are smaller, and she goes to most of them, but she feels she’s pretty much figured out how it works and can usually still get the grade. In her senior year, she starts working on her résumé and asks other students in her major which instructors write the best letters of recommendation. She’s sure her college degree will land her a good job.

Alicia enjoys her classes, even when she has to get up early after working or studying late the night before. She sometimes gets so excited by something she learns in class that she rushes up to the instructor after class to ask a question. In class discussions, she’s not usually the first to speak out, but by the time another student has given an opinion, she’s had time to organize her thoughts and enjoys arguing her ideas. Nearing the end of her sophomore year and unsure of what to major in given her many interests, she talks things over with one of her favorite instructors, whom she has gotten to know through office visits. The instructor gives her some insights into careers in that field and helps her explore her interests. She takes two...
more courses with this instructor over the next year, and she's comfortable in her senior year going to him to ask for a job reference. When she does, she's surprised and thrilled when he urges her to apply for a high-level paid internship with a company in the field—that happens to be run by a friend of his.

Think about the differences in the attitudes of these three students and how they approach their classes. One's attitude toward learning, toward going to class, and toward the whole college experience is a huge factor in how successful a student will be. Make it your goal to attend every class—don't even think about not going. Going to class is the first step in engaging in your education by interacting with the instructor and other students. Here are some reasons why it’s important to attend every class:

- Miss a class and you'll miss SOMETHING, even if you never know it. Even if a friend gives you notes for the class, they cannot contain EVERYTHING said or shown by the instructor or written on the board for emphasis or questioned or commented on by other students. What you miss might affect your grade or your enthusiasm for the course. Why go to college at all if you’re not going to GO to college?

- While some students may say that you don’t have to go to every class to do well on a test, that is very often a myth. Do you want to take that risk?

- Your final grade often reflects how you think about course concepts, and you will think more often and more clearly when engaged in class discussions and hearing the comments of other students. You can’t get this by borrowing class notes from a friend.

- Research shows there is a correlation between absences from class and lower grades. It may be that missing classes causes lower grades or that students with lower grades miss more classes. Either way, missing classes and lower grades can be intertwined in a downward spiral of achievement.

- Your instructor will note your absences—even in a large class. In addition to making a poor impression, you reduce your opportunities for future interactions. You might not ask a question the next class because of the potential embarrassment of the instructor saying that was covered in the last class, which you apparently missed. Nothing is more insulting to an instructor than when you skip a class and then show up to ask, “Did I miss anything important?”

- You might be tempted to skip a class because the instructor is “boring,” but it’s more likely that you found the class boring because you weren’t very attentive or didn’t appreciate how the instructor was teaching.

- You paid a lot of money for your tuition. Get your money’s worth!

Attending the first day of class is especially critical. There you’ll get the syllabus and other handouts, learn the instructor’s policies and preferences for how the class will function, and often take notes in an opening lecture.

**IF YOU MUST MISS A CLASS...**

- If you know that you will miss a class, take steps in advance. Tell your instructor and ask if he or she teaches another section of the course that you might attend instead. Ask about any handouts or special announcements.

- Ask another student whose judgment you trust if you can copy his or her notes. Then talk to them after you’ve read their notes to go over things that may be unclear to you.
• It may not be necessary to see your instructor after missing a lecture class, and no instructor wants to give you fifty minutes of office time to repeat what was said in class. But if you are having difficulty after the NEXT class because of something you missed earlier, stop and see your instructor and ask what you can do to get caught up. But remember the worst thing you can say to an instructor: “I missed class—did you talk about anything important?”

THE VALUE OF INTERACTION IN CLASS

As noted earlier, there are many good reasons to attend every class. But it’s not enough just to BE there—you need to interact with the instructor and other students to enjoy a full educational experience:

• Participating in class discussions is a good way to start meeting other students with whom you share an interest. You may form a study group, borrow class notes if you miss a class, or team up with other students on a group project. You may meet students with whom you form a lasting relationship, developing your network of contacts for other benefits in the future, such as learning about internships or jobs.

• Asking the instructor questions, answering the instructor’s questions in class, and responding to other students’ comments is a good way to make an impression on your instructor. The instructor will remember you as an engaged student—and this matters if you later need extra help or even a potential mentor.

• Paying close attention and thinking critically about what an instructor is saying can dramatically improve your enjoyment of the class. You’ll notice things you’d miss if you’re feeling bored and may discover your instructor is much more interesting than you first thought.

• Students actively engaged in their class learn more and thus get better grades. When you speak out in class and answer the instructor's questions, you are more likely to remember the discussion.

ARE PODCASTS AND RECORDINGS AN EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE TO ATTENDING CLASS?

Why not just listen to a recording of the lecture—or a video podcast, if available—instead of going to class? After all, you hear and perhaps see the lecture just as if you were there, and you can sleep late and “go” to this class whenever it’s convenient for you. What could be wrong with that?

This issue has received considerable discussion in recent years because many colleges and universities began videotaping class lectures and making them available for students online or in podcasts. There was a lot of debate about whether students would stop coming to class and simply watch the podcasts instead. In fact, some students do cut class, as some always have, but most students use podcasts and recordings as a way to review material they do not feel they grasp completely. A video podcast doesn’t offer the opportunity to ask questions or participate, and even if you pay close attention to watching a video, it’s still a passive experience from which you’re likely to learn much less.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The benefits of attending every class include not missing important material, thinking more clearly about course topics, developing a better relationship with the instructor, and being better prepared for tests.

- When possible, prepare in advance for missing a class by speaking with your instructor and arranging to borrow and discuss someone’s notes.

- Students benefit in many ways from class interaction, including more actively engaging in learning, developing a network with other students, and forming a relationship with the instructor.

- Podcasts, lecture recordings, and similar learning methods can supplement lectures but cannot replace all the benefits of attending class in person.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. Why is it more important to interact with your instructors in college than it was in high school?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. Give an example of something important you may miss in a class from which you are absent—even if you read a friend’s notes and hear a recording of the lecture.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. List at least three potential benefits of forming a network with other students.

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

4. What can you do as a student to be more engaged during a lecture if you are finding it boring?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
1.2 PARTICIPATING IN CLASS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how to set yourself up for successful participation in class.
2. List guidelines for effectively asking and answering questions in class.
3. Describe how to interact successfully with an instructor in a large lecture class.
4. Explain strategies for effective learning if your learning style is different from your instructor’s teaching style.

We’ve already discussed the many benefits of participating in class as a form of actively engaging in learning. Not everyone naturally feels comfortable participating. Following some general guidelines makes it easier.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING IN CLASSES

Smaller classes generally favor discussion, but often instructors in large lecture classes also make some room for participation. A concern or fear about speaking in public is one of the most common fears. If you feel afraid to speak out in class, take comfort from the fact that many others do as well—and that anyone can learn how to speak in class without much difficulty.

Class participation is actually an impromptu, informal type of public speaking, and the same principles will get you through both: preparing and communicating.

• Set yourself up for success by coming to class fully prepared. Complete reading assignments. Review your notes on the reading and previous class to get yourself in the right mind-set. If there is something you don’t understand well, start formulating your question now.

• Sit in the front with a good view of the instructor, board or screen, and other visual aids. In a lecture hall, this will help you hear better, pay better attention, and make a good impression on the instructor. Don’t sit with friends—socializing isn’t what you’re there for.

• Remember that your body language communicates as much as anything you say. Sit up and look alert, with a pleasant expression on your face, and make good eye contact with the instructor. Show some enthusiasm.

• Pay attention to the instructor’s body language, which can communicate much more than just his or her words. How the instructor moves and gestures, and the looks on his or her face, will add meaning to the words—and will also cue you when it’s a good time to ask a question or stay silent.

• Take good notes, but don’t write obsessively—and never page through your textbook (or browse on a laptop). Don’t eat or play with your cell phone. Except when writing brief notes, keep your eyes on the instructor.

• Follow class protocol for making comments and asking questions. In a small class, the instructor may encourage students to ask questions at any time, while in some large lecture classes the instructor may ask for questions at the end of the lecture. In this case, jot your questions in your notes so that you don’t forget them later.

• Don’t say or ask anything just to try to impress your instructor. Most instructors have been teaching long enough to immediately recognize insincere flattery—and the impression this makes is just the opposite of what you want.
Pay attention to the instructor’s thinking style. Does this instructor emphasize theory more than facts, wide perspectives over specific ideas, abstractions more than concrete experience? Take a cue from your instructor’s approach and try to think in similar terms when participating in class.

It’s fine to disagree with your instructor when you ask or answer a question. Many instructors invite challenges. Before speaking up, however, be sure you can explain why you disagree and give supporting evidence or reasons. Be respectful.

Pay attention to your communication style. Use standard English when you ask or answer a question, not slang. Avoid sarcasm and joking around. Be assertive when you participate in class, showing confidence in your ideas while being respectful of the ideas of others. But avoid an aggressive style that attacks the ideas of others or is strongly emotional.

When your instructor asks a question to the class:

- Raise your hand and make eye contact, but don’t call out or wave your hand all around trying to catch his or her attention.
- Before speaking, take a moment to gather your thoughts and take a deep breath. Don’t just blurt it out—speak calmly and clearly.

When your instructor asks you a question directly:

- Be honest and admit it if you don’t know the answer or are not sure. Don’t try to fake it or make excuses. With a question that involves a reasoned opinion more than a fact, it’s fine to explain why you haven’t decided yet, such as when weighing two opposing ideas or actions; your comment may stimulate further discussion.
- Organize your thoughts to give a sufficient answer. Instructors seldom want a yes or no answer. Give your answer and provide reasons or evidence in support.

When you want to ask the instructor a question:

- Don’t ever feel a question is “stupid.” If you have been paying attention in class and have done the reading and you still don’t understand something, you have every right to ask.
- Ask at the appropriate time. Don’t interrupt the instructor or jump ahead and ask a question about something the instructor may be starting to explain. Wait for a natural pause and a good moment to ask. On the other hand, unless the instructor asks students to hold all question until the end of class, don’t let too much time go by, or you may forget the question or its relevance to the topic.
- Don’t ask just because you weren’t paying attention. If you drift off during the first half of class and then realize in the second half that you don’t really understand what the instructor is talking about now, don’t ask a question about something that was already covered.
- Don’t ask a question that is really a complaint. You may be thinking, “Why would so-and-so believe that? That’s just crazy!” Take a moment to think about what you might gain from asking the question. It’s better to say, “I’m having some difficulty understanding what so-and-so is saying here. What evidence did he use to argue for that position?”
- Avoid dominating a discussion. It may be appropriate in some cases to make a follow-up comment after the instructor answers your question, but don’t try to turn the class into a one-on-one conversation between you and the instructor.
LECTURE HALL CLASSES

While opportunities are fewer for student discussions in large lecture classes, participation is still important. The instructor almost always provides an opportunity to ask questions. Because time is limited, be ready with your question or comment when the opportunity arises—and don’t be shy about raising your hand first.

Being prepared is especially important in lecture classes. Have assigned readings done before class and review your notes. If you have a genuine question about something in the reading, ask about it. Jot down the question in your notes and be ready to ask if the lecture doesn’t clear it up for you.

Being prepared before asking a question also includes listening carefully to the lecture. You don’t want to ask a question whose answer was already given by the instructor in the lecture. Take a moment to organize your thoughts and choose your words carefully. Be as specific as you can. Don’t say something like, “I don’t understand the big deal about whether the earth revolves around the sun or the sun around the earth. So what?” Instead, you might ask, “When they discovered that the earth revolves around the sun, was that such a disturbing idea because people were upset to realize that maybe they weren’t the center of the universe?” The first question suggests you haven’t thought much about the topic, while the second shows that you are beginning to grasp the issue and want to understand it more fully.

Following are some additional guidelines for asking good questions:

• Ask a question or two early in the term, even on the first day of class. Once the instructor has “noticed” you as a class participant, you are more likely to be recognized again when you have a question. You won’t be lost in the crowd.
• Speak deliberately and professionally, not as you might when talking with a friend. Use standard English rather than slang.
• If you’re very shy about public speaking or worried you’ll say the wrong thing, write down your question before asking. Rehearse it in your mind.
• When you have the opportunity to ask questions in class, it’s better to ask right away rather than saving a question for after class. If you really find it difficult to speak up in a large class, this is an acceptable way to ask your question and participate. A private conversation with an instructor may also be more appropriate if the question involves a paper or other project you are working on for the course.

A note on technology in the lecture hall. Colleges are increasingly incorporating new technology in lecture halls. For example, each student in the lecture hall may have an electronic “clicker” with which the instructor can gain instant feedback on questions in class. Or the classroom may have wireless Internet and students are encouraged to use their laptops to communicate with the instructor in “real time” during the lecture. In these cases, the most important thing is to take it seriously, even if you have anonymity. Most students appreciate the ability to give feedback and ask questions through such technology, but some abuse their anonymity by sending irrelevant, disruptive, or insulting messages.
Students have many different learning styles. Understanding your learning style(s) can help you study more effectively. Most instructors tend to develop their own teaching style, however, and you will encounter different teaching styles in different courses.

When the instructor’s teaching style matches your learning style, you are usually more attentive in class and may seem to learn better. But what happens if your instructor has a style very different from your own? Let’s say, for example, that your instructor primarily lectures, speaks rapidly, and seldom uses visuals. This instructor also talks mostly on the level of large abstract ideas and almost never gives examples. Let’s say that you, in contrast, are more a visual learner, that you learn more effectively with visual aids and visualizing concrete examples of ideas. Therefore, perhaps you are having some difficulty paying attention in class and following the lectures. What can you do?

- Capitalize on your learning strengths. In this example, you could use a visual style of note taking, such as concept maps, while listening to the lecture. If the instructor does not give examples for abstract ideas in the lecture, see if YOU can supply examples in your own thoughts as you listen.

- Form a study group with other students. A variety of students will likely involve a variety of learning styles, and when going over course material with other students, such as when studying for a test, you can gain what they have learned through their styles while you contribute what you have learned through yours.

- Use ancillary study materials. Many textbooks point students to online resource centers or include a computer CD that offers additional learning materials. Such ancillary materials usually offer an opportunity to review course material in ways that may better fit your learning style.

- Communicate with your instructor to bridge the gap between his or her teaching style and your learning style. If the instructor is speaking in abstractions and general ideas you don’t understand, ask the instructor for an example.

- You can also communicate with the instructor privately during office hours. For example, you can explain that you are having difficulty understanding lectures because so many things are said so fast.

- Finally, take heart that a mismatch between a student’s learning style and an instructor’s teaching style is not correlated with lower grades.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

• To prepare for class participation, come to class ready, sit in front, and pay attention to the instructor's words and body language.
• Use good communication techniques when asking or answering questions in class.
• Take advantage of all opportunities to interact with your instructors, even in large lecture classes.
• If your learning style does not match the instructor's teaching style, adapt your learning and study with other students to stay actively engaged.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. For each of the following statements about class participation, circle T for true or F for false:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To avoid having to answer a question in class when you don't know the answer, sit in the back row and avoid making eye contact with the instructor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If you haven't finished a reading assignment before coming to a lecture class, bring the book along and try to complete the reading during the lecture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Although it is OK to disagree with something in your textbook, never disagree with something the instructor says in a lecture.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If you are asked a question but don't know the answer, it's best to be honest and admit it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Before raising your hand to ask a question, take a moment to consider whether maybe it's a stupid question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Because you don't want your instructor to form a poor impression of you, wait a week or two into the term before starting to ask questions in class.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>If you're shy, it's best never to speak up in class at all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If you are struggling with a class during the first two weeks of the term, it's always best to drop the class immediately because the situation won't improve.</td>
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2. List two things you can do if you are having difficulty understanding what your instructor is talking about.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
1.3 COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTORS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe additional benefits for interacting with your instructor beyond the value for that particular course.
2. List guidelines for successfully communicating individually with an instructor, such as doing so during office hours.
3. Write e-mail messages to instructors and others that are polite, professional, and effective.
4. Know how to graciously resolve a problem, such as a grade dispute, with an instructor.
5. Understand the value of having a mentor and how interactions with instructors, your academic advisor, and others may lead to a mentoring relationship.
6. Explain what is needed to succeed in an online course and how to interact with an online instructor.

So far we've been looking at class participation and general interaction with both instructors and other students in class. In addition to this, students gain very specific benefits from communicating directly with their instructors. Learn best practices for communicating with your instructors during office hours and through e-mail.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS OF TALKING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTORS

College students are sometimes surprised to discover that instructors like students and enjoy getting to know them. After all, they want to feel they're doing something more meaningful than talking to an empty room. 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 see you during their office hours or to talk a few minutes after class.

This chapter has repeatedly emphasized how active participation in learning is a key to student success. In addition, talking with your instructors often leads to benefits beyond simply doing well in that class.

- Talking with instructors helps you feel more comfortable in college and more connected to the campus. Students who talk to their instructors are less likely to become disillusioned and drop out.
- Talking with instructors is a valuable way to learn about an academic field or a career. 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 need a reference or 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 in the future when you need one.
- Because instructors are often well connected within their field, they may know of a job, internship, or research possibility you otherwise may not learn about. An instructor who knows you is a valuable part of your network. Networking is very important for future job searches and other opportunities. In fact, most jobs are found through networking, not through classified ads or online job postings.
- Think about what it truly means to be “educated”: how one thinks, understands society and the world, and responds to problems and new situations. Much of this learning occurs outside the classroom. Talking with your highly educated 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, they deserve your 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 you should respect your instructors, you shouldn't fear them. As you get to know them better, you'll learn their personalities and find appropriate ways to communicate. Here are some guidelines for getting along with and communicating with your instructors:

• Prepare before going to the instructor's office. 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.

• Don’t forget to introduce yourself. Especially near the beginning of the term, don’t assume your instructor has learned everyone’s names 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 sit on committees, do research and other professional work, and have personal lives. Don’t show up two minutes before the end of an office hour and expect the instructor to stay late to talk with you.

• Realize that the instructor will recognize you from class—even in a large lecture hall. If you spent a lecture class joking around with friends in the back row, don’t think you can show up during office hours to find out what you missed while you weren’t paying attention.

• Don’t try to fool an instructor. Insincere praise or making excuses for not doing an assignment won’t make it in college. Nor is it a good idea to show you’re “too cool” to take all this seriously—another attitude sure to turn off an instructor. To earn your instructor’s respect, come to class prepared, do the work, participate genuinely 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 a couple hours making PowerPoint slides and preparing a class lecture on something you find very stimulating and exciting. Standing in front of a full room, you are gratified to see faces smiling and heads nodding as 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 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 criticism in a professional way, without taking it personally or complaining.

• Use your best communication skills. Learn the difference between assertive communication and passive or aggressive communication.
PART-TIME AND RETURNING STUDENTS

Students who are working and who have their own families and other responsibilities may have special issues interacting with instructors. Sometimes an older student feels a little out of place and may even feel “the system” is designed for younger students; this attitude can lead to a hesitation to participate in class or see an instructor during office hours.

But participation and communication with instructors is very important for all students—and may be even more important for “nontraditional” students. Getting to know your instructors is particularly crucial for feeling at home in college. Instructors enjoy talking with older and other nontraditional students—even when, as sometimes happens, a student is older than the instructor. Nontraditional students are often highly motivated and eager to learn. If you can’t make the instructor’s office hours because of your work schedule, ask for an appointment at a different time—your needs will be respected.

Part-time students, especially in community colleges where they may be taking evening courses, often have greater difficulty meeting with instructors. In addition, many part-time students taking evening and weekend classes are taught by part-time faculty who, like them, may be on campus only small amounts of time. Yet it is just as critical for part-time students to engage in the learning process and have a sense of belonging on campus. With effort, you can usually find a way to talk with your instructors. Don’t hesitate to ask for an appointment at another time or to meet with your instructor over a cup of coffee after class before driving home. Assert yourself: You are in college for reasons just as good as those of other students, and you have the same rights. Avoid the temptation to give up or feel defeated; talk with your instructor to arrange a time to meet, and make the most of your time interacting together. Use e-mail to communicate when you need to and contact your instructor when you have any question you can’t raise in person.

E-MAIL BEST PRACTICES

Just as e-mail has become a primary form of communication in business and society, e-mail has a growing role in education and has become an important and valuable means of communicating with instructors. Virtually all younger college students have grown up using e-mail and have a computer or computer access in college, although some have developed poor habits from using e-mail principally with friends in the past. Some older college students may not yet understand the importance of e-mail and other computer skills in college; if you are not now using e-mail, it’s time to learn how (see “Getting Started with E-mail”). Especially when it is difficult to see an instructor in person during office hours, e-mail can be an effective form of communication and interaction with instructors. E-mail is also an increasingly effective way to collaborate with other students on group projects or while studying with other students.

GETTING STARTED WITH E-MAIL

- If you don’t have your own computer, find out where on-campus computers are available for student use, such as at the library or student center.
- You can set up a free Web-based e-mail account at Google, Yahoo! or other sites. These allow you to send and receive e-mail from any computer that is connected to the Internet.
- If you don’t have enough computer experience to know how to do this, ask a friend for help getting started or check at your library or student services office for a publication explaining how e-mail works.
- Once you have your account set up, give your e-mail address to instructors who request it and to other students with whom you study or maintain contact. E-mail is a good way to contact another student if you miss a class.
• Once you begin using e-mail, remember to check it regularly for messages. Most people view e-mail like a telephone message and expect you to respond fairly soon.
• Be sure to use good e-mail etiquette when writing to instructors.

If your instructor gives you his or her e-mail addresses, use e-mail rather than the telephone for non-urgent matters. Using e-mail respects other people’s time, allowing them to answer at a time of their choosing, rather than being interrupted by a telephone call.

But e-mail is a written form of communication that is different from telephone voice messages and text messages. Students who text with friends have often adopted shortcuts, such as not spelling out full words, ignoring capitalization and punctuation, and not bothering with grammar or full sentence constructions. This is inappropriate in an e-mail message to an instructor, who expects a more professional quality of writing. Most instructors expect your communications to be in full sentences with correctly spelled words and reasonable grammar. Follow these guidelines:

• Use a professional e-mail name. If you have a funny name you use with friends, create a different account with a professional name you use with instructors, work supervisors, and others.
• Use the subject line to label your message effectively at a glance. “May I make an appointment?” says something; “In your office?” doesn’t.
• Address e-mail messages as you do a letter, beginning “Dear Professor ____.” Include your full name if it’s not easily recognizable in your e-mail account.
• Get to your point quickly and concisely. Don’t make the reader scroll down a long e-mail to see what it is you want to say.
• Because e-mail is a written communication, it does not express emotion the way a voice message does. Don’t attempt to be funny, ironic, or sarcastic. Write as you would in a paper for class. In a large lecture class or an online course, your e-mail voice may be the primary way your instructor knows you, and emotionally charged messages can be confusing or give a poor impression.
• Don’t use capital letters to emphasize. All caps look like SHOUTING.
• Avoid abbreviations, nonstandard spelling, slang, and emoticons like smiley faces. These do not convey a professional tone.
• Don’t make demands or state expectations such as “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 paper late.”
• When you reply to a message, leave the original message within yours. Your reader may need to recall what he or she said in the original message.
• Be polite. End the message with a “Thank you” or something similar.
• Proofread your message before sending it.
• With any important message to a work supervisor or instructor, 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 sent messages too quickly without thinking.
RESOLVING A PROBLEM WITH AN INSTRUCTOR

The most common issue students feel with an instructor involves receiving a grade lower than they think they deserve—especially new students not yet used to the higher standards of college. It’s depressing to get a low grade, but it’s not the end of the world. Don’t 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. Review the earlier chapters on studying habits, time management, and taking tests.

If you genuinely believe you deserved 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 patiently explaining their standards for grading. Most instructors seldom change grades. Yet it can still be worthwhile to talk with the instructor because of what you will learn from the experience.

Follow these guidelines to talk about a grade or resolve any other problem or disagreement with an instructor:

• First go over the requirements for the paper or test and the instructor’s comments. Be sure you actually have a reason for discussing the grade—not just that you didn’t do well. Be prepared with specific points you want to go over.

• Make an appointment with your instructor during office hours or another time. Don’t try to talk about this before or after class or with e-mail or the telephone.

• 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 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 simply getting the grade.
TIPS FOR SUCCESS: TALKING WITH INSTRUCTORS

- When you have a question, ask it sooner rather than later.
- Be prepared and plan your questions and comments in advance.
- Be respectful but personable and communicate professionally.
- Be open minded and ready to learn. Avoid whining and complaining.
- There is no such thing as a “stupid question.”

CONTROLLING ANGER OVER GRADES

If you’re going to talk with an instructor about your grade or any other problem, control any anger you may be feeling. The GPS LifePlan project of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System offers some insights into this process:

- Being upset about a grade is good because it shows you care and that you have passion about your education. But anger prevents clear thinking, so rein it in first.
- Since anger involves bodily reactions, physical actions can help you control anger: try some deep breathing first.
- Try putting yourself in your instructor's shoes and seeing the situation from their point of view. Try to understand how grading is not a personal issue of “liking” you—that they are really doing something for your educational benefit.
- It’s not your life that’s being graded. Things outside your control can result in not doing well on a test or assignment, but the instructor can grade only on what you actually did on that test or assignment—not what you COULD HAVE DONE or ARE CAPABLE OF DOING. Understanding this can help you accept what happened and not take a grade personally.

FINDING A MENTOR

A mentor is someone who is usually older and more experienced than you who becomes your trusted guide, advisor, and role model. A mentor is someone you may want to be like in your future career or profession—someone you look up to and whose advice and guidance you respect.

Finding a mentor can be one of the most fulfilling aspects of college. As a student, you think about many things and make many decisions, large and small, almost daily: What do you want to do in the future? How can you best balance your studies with your job? What should you major in? Should you take this course or that one? What should you do if you feel like you’re failing a course? Where should you put your priorities as you prepare for a future career? How can you be a better student? The questions go on and on. We talk about things like this with our friends and often family members, but often they don’t have the same experience or background to help us as a mentor can.

Most important, a mentor is someone who is willing to help you, to talk with you about decisions you face, to support you when things become difficult, and to guide you when you’re feeling lost. A mentor can become a valuable part of your future network but also can help you in the here and now.

Many different people can become mentors: other students, family members, people you know through work, your boss. As a college student, however, your best mentor likely is someone involved in education: your advisor, a more experienced student,
or an instructor. Finding a mentor is another reason to develop good relationships with your instructors, starting with class participation and communication outside of class.

A mentor is not like a good friend, exactly—you’re not going to invite your instructor to a movie—but it does involve a form of friendship. Nor is a mentor a formal relationship: you don’t ask an instructor to become your mentor. The mentor relationship is more informal and develops slowly, often without actively looking for a mentor. Here’s an example of how one student “found” a mentor:

As a freshman taking several classes, Miguel particularly liked and admired one of his instructors, Professor Canton. Miguel spoke up more in Canton’s class and talked with him sometimes during office hours. When it was time to register for the next term, Miguel saw that Canton was teaching another course he was interested in, so he asked him about that course one day during office hours. Miguel was pleased when Professor Canton said he’d like to have him in his class next term.

By the end of his first year of college, Miguel seemed to know Canton better than any of his other instructors and felt very comfortable talking with him outside of class. One day after talking about a reading assignment, Miguel said he was enjoying this class so much that he was thinking about majoring in this subject and asked Professor Canton what he thought about it. Canton suggested that he take a few more classes before making a decision, and he invited Miguel to sit in on a seminar of upper-level students he was holding.

In his second year, Miguel’s interests turned in another direction as he began to think about his future job possibilities, but by then he felt comfortable enough talking with Canton that he occasionally stopped by the professor’s office even though he was not taking a class with him. Sometimes he was surprised how much Professor Canton knew about other departments and other faculty, and Canton often shared insights about other courses he might be interested in that his advisor had not directed him to. When Miguel learned about a summer internship in his field and was considering applying, Canton not only volunteered to write him a letter of recommendation but even offered to help Miguel with the essay part of the application if he wanted.

Some colleges have more formal mentoring programs, and you should become involved in one if you have this opportunity, but often a mentoring relationship occurs informally as you get to know an instructor or another person over time. In your first year, you don’t go searching frantically for a mentor, but you should begin interacting with your instructors and other students in ways that may lead, over time, to developing that kind of relationship.

Similarly, your academic advisor or a college counselor might become a mentor for you if you share interests and you look up to that person as a role model and trusted guide. Your advisor is so important for your college success that if you feel you are not getting along well, you should ask the advising department to switch you to a different advisor. Take the time to build a good relationship with your advisor, the same as with instructors—following the same guidelines in this chapter for communication and interaction.
RELATING TO AN INSTRUCTOR OF AN ONLINE COURSE

Online courses have grown tremendously in recent years, and most colleges now have at least some online courses. While online learning once focused on students at a distance from campus, now many students enrolled in regular classes also take some courses online. Online courses have a number of practical benefits but also pose special issues, primarily related to how students interact with other students and the instructor.

Some online courses do involve “face time” or live audio connections with the instructor and other students, via Webcasts or Webinars, but many are self-paced and asynchronous, meaning that you experience the course on your own time and communicate with others via messages back and forth rather than communicating in real time. All online courses include opportunities for interacting with the instructor, typically through e-mail or a bulletin board where you may see comments and questions from other students as well.

Many educators argue that online courses can involve MORE interaction between students and the instructor than in a large lecture class, not less. But two important differences affect how that interaction occurs and how successful it is for engaging students in learning. Most communication is written, with no or limited opportunity to ask questions face to face or during office hours, and students must take the initiative to interact beyond the requirements of online assignments.

Many students enjoy online courses, in part for the practical benefit of scheduling your own time. Some students who are reluctant to speak in class communicate more easily in writing. But other students may have less confidence in their writing skills or may never initiate interaction at all and end up feeling lost. Depending on your learning style, an online course may feel natural to you (if you learn well independently and through language skills) or more difficult (if you are a more visual or kinesthetic learner). Online courses have higher drop-out and failure rates due to some students feeling isolated and unmotivated.

Success in an online course requires commitment and motivation. Follow these guidelines:

- **Make sure you have the technology.** If you're not comfortable reading and writing on a computer, don't rush into an online course. If you have limited access to a computer or high-speed Internet connection, or have to arrange your schedule to use a computer elsewhere, you may have difficulty with the course.

- **Accept that you'll have to motivate yourself and take responsibility for your learning.** It's actually harder for some people to sit down at the computer on their own than to show up at a set time. Be sure you have enough time in your week for all course activities and try to schedule regular times online and for assignments. Evaluate the course requirements carefully before signing up.

- **Work on your writing skills.** If you are not comfortable writing, you may want to defer taking online courses until you have had more experience with college-level writing. When communicating with the instructor of an online course, follow the guidelines for effective e-mail outlined earlier.

- **Use critical thinking skills.** Most online courses involve assignments requiring problem solving and critical thinking. It's not as simple as watching video lectures and taking multiple-choice tests. You need to actively engage with the course material.

- **Take the initiative to ask questions and seek help.** Remember, your instructor can't see you to know if you're confused or feeling frustrated understanding a lecture or reading. You must take the first step to communicate your questions.
• **Be patient.** When you ask a question or seek help with an assignment, you have to wait for a reply from your instructor. You may need to continue with a reading or writing assignment before you receive a reply. If the instructor is online at scheduled times for direct contact, take advantage of those times for immediate feedback and answers.

• **Use any opportunity to interact with other students in the course.** If you can interact with other students online, do it. Ask questions of other students and monitor their communications. If you know another person taking the same course, try to synchronize your schedules so that you can study together and talk over assignments. Students who feel they are part of a learning community always do better than those who feel isolated and on their own.

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**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Additional benefits of getting to know and networking with instructors include receiving references and academic advice.
- Interacting with college instructors contributes to the growth and intellectual maturity that are part of what it means to be “educated.”
- Prepare in advance before meeting with an instructor and communicate respectfully, honestly, and sincerely. Your efforts will be repaid.
- It is especially important for part-time and nontraditional students to make the effort to interact with instructors.
- Follow accepted guidelines for professional use of e-mail with instructors.
- It is worthwhile speaking with an instructor when you disagree about a grade because of what you will learn in this interaction.
- Finding a mentor can be one of the most fulfilling experiences in college. Getting to know your instructors may be the first step toward finding a mentor.
- Online courses involve special issues for effective learning, but you must make the effort to interact with the instructor and other students in a way that encourages your success.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. Name three benefits you might gain from talking with an instructor weeks or months after the course has ended.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. What should you do before going to see your instructor during office hours?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. For each of the following statements, circle T for true or F for false:

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4. Write an appropriate opening for an e-mail to an instructor.

__________________________________________________________________

5. Think for a few minutes about all the past instructors you have had. Would you like to get to know any one of them better, perhaps as a mentor? What personality traits does this person have that would make him or her your ideal mentor? (If no instructor you have met so far is your idea of a perfect mentor, write down the traits you hope to find in an instructor in the future.)

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
1.4 PUBLIC SPEAKING AND CLASS PRESENTATIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Know how to overcome nervousness and anxiety associated with public speaking and giving class presentations.
2. Effectively use the six-step process to prepare for and deliver a class presentation.
3. Create effective visual aids for use in class presentations.
4. Work with a group to successfully plan and deliver a class presentation.

Public speaking—giving an oral presentation before a class or another group of people—is a special form of interaction common in education. You will likely be asked to give a presentation in one of your classes at some point, and your future career may also involve public speaking. It's important to develop skills for this form of communication.

Public speaking is like participating in class—sharing your thoughts, ideas, and questions with others in the group. In other ways, however, public speaking is very different. You stand in front of the class to speak, rather than from your usual seat—and for most students, that changes the psychology of the situation. You also have time outside of class to prepare your presentation, allowing you to plan it carefully—and, for many, giving more time to worry about it and experience even more anxiety!

OVERCOMING ANXIETY

Although a few people seem to be natural public speakers, most of us feel some stage fright or anxiety about having to speak to a group, at least at first. This is completely normal. We feel like everyone is staring at us and seeing our every flaw, and we're sure we'll forget what we want to say or mess up. Take comfort from knowing that almost everyone else is dreading giving class presentations the same as you are! But you can learn to overcome your anxiety and prepare in a way that not only safely gets you through the experience but also leads to success in your presentation. The following are proven strategies for overcoming anxiety when speaking in public:

- **Understand anxiety.** Since stage fright is normal, don't try to deny that you're feeling anxious. A little anxiety can help motivate you to prepare and do your best. Accept this aspect of the process and work to overcome it. Anxiety is usually worst just before you begin and but eases up once you've begun.

- **Understand that your audience actually wants you to succeed.** They're not looking for faults or hoping you'll fail. Other students and your instructors are on your side, not your enemy. They likely won't even see your anxiety.

- **Reduce anxiety by preparing and practicing.** The next section discusses the preparation process in more detail. The more fully you prepare and the more often you have practice, the more your anxiety will go away.

- **Focus on what you're saying, not how you're saying it.** Keep in mind that you have ideas to share, and this is what your classmates and instructors are interested in. Don't obsess about speaking, but focus on the content of your presentation. Think, for example, of how easily you share your ideas with a friend or family member, as you naturally speak your mind. The same can work with public speaking if you focus on the ideas themselves.

- **Develop self-confidence.** As you prepare, you will make notes you can refer to during the presentation. You're not going to forget what you want to say. The more you practice, the more confident you'll become.
GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTATIONS

Preparing and delivering a presentation in class (or in business or other settings) is a process very similar to the learning process discussed in other chapters. The process breaks down into these six basic steps:

1. Analyze your audience and goals
2. Plan, research, and organize your content
3. Draft and revise the presentation
4. Prepare speaking notes
5. Practice the presentation
6. Deliver the presentation

STEP 1: ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE AND GOALS

Who will see and hear your presentation—and why? Obviously, other students and the instructor. But you still need to think about what they already know, and don’t know, about your topic. If your topic relates to subject matter in class lectures and readings, consider what background information they already have and be careful not to give a boring recap of things they already know. It may be important, however, to show how your specific topic fits in with subjects that have been discussed already in class, especially in the beginning of your presentation, but be sure to focus on your new topic.

New terms and concepts may become familiar to you while doing your research and preparation, but remember to define and explain them to other students. Consider how much explanation or examples will be needed for your audience to grasp your points. If your topic involves anything controversial or may provoke emotion, consider your audience’s attitudes and choose your words carefully. Thinking about your audience will help you find ways to get their attention and keep them interested.

Be sure you are clear about the goals for the presentation. Are you primarily presenting new information or arguing for a position? Are you giving an overview or a detailed report? Review the assignment and talk with the instructor if you’re unsure. Your goals guide everything in the presentation: what you say, how much you say, what order you say it in, what visual aids you use, whether you use humor or personal examples, and so forth.

STEP 2: PLAN, RESEARCH, AND ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT

Starting with the assignment and your goals, brainstorm your topic. Jot notes on specific topics that seem important. Often you’ll do reading or research to gather more information. Take notes as you would with any reading. As you research the topic at this stage, don’t worry at first about how much content you are gathering. It’s better to know too much and then pick out the most important things to say than to rush ahead to drafting the presentation and then realize you don’t have enough material.

Organizing a presentation is similar to organizing topics in a class paper and uses the same principles. Introduce your topic and state your main idea (thesis), go into more detail about specific ideas, and conclude your presentation. Look for a logical order for the specifics in the middle. Some topics work best in chronological (time) order or with a compare-and-contrast organization. If your goal is to persuade the audience, build up to the strongest reason. Put similar ideas together and add transitions between different ideas.
While researching your topic and outlining your main points, think about visual aids that may help the presentation. Also start thinking about how much time you have for the presentation, but don't limit yourself yet in the outline stage.

**STEP 3: DRAFT AND REVISE THE PRESENTATION**

Unless required by the assignment, you don't need to actually write out the presentation in full sentences and paragraphs. How much you write depends on your own learning and speaking style. Some students speak well from brief phrases written in an outline, while other students find it easier to write sentences out completely. There's nothing wrong with writing the presentation out fully like a script if that helps you be sure you will say what you intend to—just so you don't actually get up and read from the script.

You can't know for sure how long a presentation will last until you rehearse it later, but you can estimate the time while drafting it. On the average, it takes two to three minutes to speak what can be written on a standard double-spaced page—but with visual aids, pauses, and audience interaction, it may take longer. While this is only a rough guide, you can start out thinking of a ten-minute presentation as the equivalent of a three to four-page paper.

Never wait until the last minute to draft your presentation. Arrange your time to prepare the first draft and then come back to it a day or two later to ask these questions:

- Am I going on too long about minor points? Could the audience get bored?
- Do I have good explanations and reasons for my main points? Do I need more data or better examples? Where would visual aids be most effective?
- Am I using the best words for this topic and this audience? Should I be more or less informal in the way I talk?
- Does it all hold together and flow well from one point to the next? Do I need a better introduction or transition when I shift from one idea to another?

**VISUAL AIDS IN PRESENTATIONS**

Except for very short informal presentations, most presentations gain from visuals—and visual aids are often expected. If encouraged or allowed to include visuals in your presentation, plan to do so. Consider all possible types:

- Charts or graphs
- Maps
- Photos or other images
- Video clips
- Handouts (only when necessary—they can be distracting)

Use the available technology, whether it's an overhead projector, PowerPoint slides, a flip chart, or posters. (Talk to your instructor about resources and software for designing your visuals.) Follow these guidelines:

- Design your visuals carefully. Here are some basic rules:
- Use a simple, neutral background. A light-colored background with text in a dark color works best for words; a dark background used like matting works best for photos.
- Minimize the amount of text in visuals—more than eight words per slide is usually too much. Avoid simply presenting word outlines of what you are saying. Make sure text is large enough for the audience to read.
- Don't use more than two pictures in a slide, and use two only to make a direct comparison. Montages are hard to focus on and distract the viewer from what you're saying. Use images only when they support your presentation; don't use clip art just as decoration.
• Don’t put a table of numbers in a visual aid. If you need to illustrate numerical data, use a graph. (Microsoft Excel can make them for you easily.)
• Don’t use sound effects. Use a very brief recording only if directly related to your main points.
• Don’t use visual special effects such as dissolves, spins, box-outs, or other transitions. They are distracting. Use animation sparingly and only if it helps make a point.
• Don’t use so many visuals or move through them so quickly that the audience gives all its attention to them rather than to you.
• Practice your presentation using your visual aids, because they affect your timing.
• Explain visuals when needed but not when they’re obvious.
• Keep your eyes on your audience, only briefly glancing at visuals to stay in synch with them.
• Don’t hand out a printout of your visuals. Your audience should keep their eyes on you instead of fiddling around with paper.

STEP 4: PREPARE SPEAKING NOTES
As mentioned earlier, it’s not a good idea to read your presentation from a written page rather than deliver it. To keep your audience’s attention, it’s important to make eye contact with them and to use a normal speaking voice—and you can’t do this if you keep your eyes on a written script.

Speaking notes are a brief outline for your presentation. You might write them on index cards or sheets of paper. Include important facts and data as well as keywords for your main ideas, but don’t write too much. (If you forget things later when you start practicing, you can always add more to your outline then.) Be sure to number your cards or pages to prevent a last-minute mix-up.

Think especially about how to open and close your presentation, because these two moments have the most impact of the whole presentation. Use the opening to capture the audience’s attention, but be sure it is appropriate for your audience and the goals. Here are some possibilities for your opening:

• A striking fact or example (illustrating an issue or a problem)
• A brief interesting or humorous anecdote (historical, personal, or current event)
• A question to the audience
• An interesting quotation

Then relate the opening to your topic and your main point and move into the body of the presentation.

Your closing mirrors the opening. Transition from your last point to a brief summary that pulls your ideas together. You might end with a challenge to the audience, a strong statement about your topic, or a personal reflection on what you have been saying. Just make sure you have a final sentence planned so that you don’t end up uncomfortably fumbling around at the end (“Well, I guess that ends my presentation”).
STEP 5: PRACTICE THE PRESENTATION

Practice may be the most important step. It is also the best way to get over stage fright and gain confidence.

Practice first in an empty room where you imagine people sitting, so that you can move your eyes around the room to this “audience.” The first time through, focus on putting your outlined notes into full sentences in your natural speaking voice. Don’t read your notes aloud. Glance down at your notes only briefly and then look up immediately around the room. Practice two or three times just to find the right words to explain your points and feel more comfortable working with your notes. Time yourself, but don’t obsess over your presentation being the exact length required. If your presentation is much too long, however, adjust it now in your notes so that you don’t start memorizing things that you might accidentally still say later on even though you cut them from your notes.

Once you feel good speaking from your notes, practice to add some more polish to your delivery. You might want to record or videotape your presentation or ask a friend or roommate to watch your presentation. Pay attention to these aspects of how you speak:

- Try to speak in your natural voice, not in a monotone as if you were just reading aloud. If you will be presenting in a large room without a microphone, you will need to speak louder than usual, but still try to use a natural voice.
- In usual conversation, we speed up and slow down and vary the intensity of our words to show how we feel about what we’re saying. Practice changes in your delivery style to emphasize key points.
- Don’t keep looking at your notes. It’s fine if you use words that are different from those you wrote down—the more you rehearse without looking at your notes, the more natural sounding you will be.
- Be sure you can pronounce all new words and technical terms correctly. Practice saying them slowly and clearly to yourself until you can say them naturally.
- Don’t forget transitions. Listeners need a cue when you’re moving to a new idea. Practice phrases such as “ANOTHER important reason for this is…” or “Now let’s move on to WHY this is so….”
- Watch out for all those little “filler” words people use so often, such as “like,” “you know,” “well,” and “uh.” They’re very distracting to most audiences. Listen to or watch your tape to see if you are using these fillers or ask your friend to point it out.
- Pay attention to body language when practicing. Stand up straight and tall in every practice session so that you become used to it. Unless you have to stand at a podium to use a fixed microphone in your presentation, practice moving around while you speak; this helps keep the audience watching you. Use hand and arm gestures if they are natural for you, but don’t try to make up gestures for the presentation because they will look phony. Most important, keep your eyes moving over the audience. Practice smiling and pausing at key points.
- Finally, it’s a good idea to be ready in case of an accident. Most likely your presentation will go smoothly, you’ll stay on track with your notes, and your PowerPoint slides will work fine, but sometimes a mishap happens. Be ready to joke about it, rather than becoming flustered. If the computer fails and you lose your visuals, say something like, “Well, that’s a shame, I had some really great photos to show you!” If you drop your index cards or notes, or accidentally skip ahead in your presentation and then have to backtrack, make a joke: “Sorry about that, I was so excited to get to my next point that I’m afraid I lost control there for a moment!” Let your audience laugh with you—they’ll still be on your side, and you can defuse the incident and move on without becoming more nervous.
**STEP 6: DELIVER THE PRESENTATION**

Be sure to get enough sleep and eat a healthy breakfast. Don’t drink too much caffeine or else you’ll become hyper and nervous. Wear your favorite—and appropriate—clothing and comfortable shoes.

Remember, your audience is on your side! If you’re still nervous before your turn, take a few deep breaths. Rehearse your opening lines in your mind. Smile as you move to the front of the room, looking at your audience. You’ll see some friendly faces smiling back encouragingly. As you start the presentation, move your eyes among those giving you a warm reception—and if you see some student looking bored or doing something else, just ignore them. But don’t focus on any one person in the audience for too long, which could make them nervous or cause them to look away.

Don’t keep looking at your watch or a clock: If your rehearsal times were close to your assigned time, your presentation will be also. If you do notice that you’re running behind schedule, it may be that you’re saying too much out of nervousness. Use your notes to get back on track and keep the pace moving. But it’s better to deliver your presentation naturally and fluidly and be a bit long or short than to try to change your words and end up sounding unnatural.

At the closing, deliver your last line with confidence, sweeping your eyes over the audience. If appropriate, ask if there are any questions. When you’re done, pause, smile, say “Thank you,” and walk back to your seat.

Later on, ask other students and your instructor for comments. Be open minded—don’t just ask for praise. If you hear a suggestion for improvement, file that in your memory for next time.

**GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

You may be assigned to give a presentation in a small group. The six-step process discussed previously works for group presentations, too, although group dynamics often call for additional planning and shared responsibilities:

1. Schedule a group meeting as soon as possible to get started. Don’t let another student put things off. Explain that you’re too busy and won’t have time at the last minute.

2. Begin by analyzing your audience and your goals together as a group to make sure everyone understands the assignment the same. Discuss who should do what. While everyone should talk about what content to include, from here onward, you will take on specialized roles. One or more may begin research and gathering information. Others who are good writers may volunteer to draft the presentation, while one or more others may develop the visual aids. Those who have public speaking experience may volunteer to do all or most of the speaking (unless the assignment requires everyone to have a speaking role). You also need a team leader to keep everyone on schedule, organize meetings, and so on. The best team leader is an even-tempered student with good social skills, who can motivate everyone to cooperate.

3. Steps 2 and 3 can likely be carried out individually with assigned tasks, but group members should stay in touch. For example, the person developing the visuals should be talking to those doing the researching and drafting to see what visuals are needed and get started finding or creating them.

4. Before preparing notes in step 4, meet again to go over the content and plan for visuals. Everyone should be comfortable with the plan so far. Make final decisions about who will do each section of the presentation. Set the time for each segment. Then speakers should prepare their own speaking notes. Let someone with strong speaking skills open or close the presentation (or both), with others doing the other parts.

5. The whole group should be present for practice sessions in step 5, even if not everyone is speaking. Those not speaking should take notes and give feedback. If one student is doing most of the presenting, an alternate should be chosen in case the first choice is sick on the scheduled day. The alternate also needs to practice.

6. During the delivery, especially if using technology for visual aids, one student should manage the visuals while others do the presenting. If several students present different segments, plan the transition from one to another so that the presentation keeps flowing without pauses.
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For Class Presentations

“How to Give a Bad Talk.” A humorous look (with some very good advice) on what NOT to do when preparing for and giving a class presentation. [http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~markhill/conference-talk.html#badtalk](http://pages.cs.wisc.edu/~markhill/conference-talk.html#badtalk)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Public speaking skills are important because you will likely give presentations in class and perhaps in a future job.
- Overcome anxiety about public speaking by understanding your feelings, preparing well and practicing your delivery, and focusing on your subject.

Follow a six-step process to prepare and deliver a presentation:

1. Analyze your audience and goals
2. Plan, research, and organize your content
3. Draft and revise the presentation
4. Prepare speaking notes
5. Practice the presentation
6. Deliver the presentation and seek feedback

- Use visual aids to support a presentation, creating visuals that are relevant, attractive, and powerful.
- The success of a group presentation depends on effective group meetings, successful division of roles, and repeated group practices.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. If you have given a class presentation in the past, what worked best for you? (If you have not given a presentation yet as a student, what aspect do you think will be most difficult for you?)

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. Name the two most important things you can do to reduce anxiety about a class presentation you will have to give.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. For each of the following statements about class presentations, circle T for true or F for false:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Although you are delivering the presentation to the class, your real audience is your instructor, so you don’t need to waste time defining terms and concepts he or she already knows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Organizing a presentation or speech is similar to organizing topics in a paper you write for class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>When creating visual aids, put as many photos as you can in each PowerPoint slide to have the strongest impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>In case your memory goes blank while giving a presentation, write the full presentation out so that you can read it aloud.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. Describe how best to use body language (facial expressions, eye movements, gestures, etc.) when giving a presentation.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. If you were assigned along with three other students to give a group presentation in the class using this textbook, what would be your preferred role in the preparation stages? Your least preferred role? If you had to take your least preferred role, what single thing would you want to work hardest on to make the presentation successful?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
1.5 CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

• Actively engaging in your college education is essential for success, including attending classes, participating, and communicating with your instructors.

• Students benefit in several important ways when they participate in class and feel free to ask questions.

• Successful participation in class and interaction with your instructor begin with fully preparing for class and working on communication skills.

• Networking with instructors has additional benefits for your future and may lead to finding a helpful mentor.

• Both impromptu speaking in class and more formal class presentations help develop key skills.

• Learning to work well in a group is an element of college success.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. List as many benefits of participating in class as you can think of.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. Consider the instructors in your current classes. Which instructor have you spoken with the least (in or outside of class)?

__________________________________________________________________

Are you hesitant to speak up in this class—or to see the instructor outside of class? Why?

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

When you have a question for this instructor about an assignment or reading, which form of communication would be most appropriate?

__________________________________________________________________

3. List ways to be prepared if you have a question to ask in a large lecture class.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
4. Think ahead through to the end of your college experience. If you were to develop a mentoring relationship with one of your present instructors, what sorts of things might you talk about in the future with that instructor after the current class has ended?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. Review the six stages for preparing and giving a class presentation. Which stage(s) do you feel you personally need to pay special attention to next time you are assigned a presentation?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What specifically can you plan to do to ensure your success in those stages in your next presentation?
OUTSIDE THE BOOK

Choose your current class with the largest enrollment and decide to ask the instructor a question in the next class or during office hours. Prepare by carefully reviewing your class and reading notes and select a subject area that you do not feel confident you fully understand. Focus in on a specific topic and write down a question whose answer would help you better understand the topic. Go to class prepared to ask that question if it is relevant to the day’s discussion or lecture; if it is not relevant, visit your instructor during office hours and ask the question. If this is your first time talking with this instructor, remember to introduce yourself and explain your interest in the topic as you ask the question. Remember that your second goal is to begin establishing a relationship with this instructor.

MAKE AN ACTION LIST

Attending Class
I sometimes don't go to class because
__________________________________________________________

I'll keep myself motivated to go to every class by
__________________________________________________________

Participating in Class
I tend to participate most in this class:
__________________________________________________________

I need to make an effort to participate more in this class:
__________________________________________________________

I need to participate more because
__________________________________________________________

I will take the following steps to be ready to ask a question:
__________________________________________________________

Attending Lecture Classes
I tend to do these nonproductive things if I feel bored in a lecture:
__________________________________________________________

I will work on staying more actively engaged in lectures in these ways:
Talking with Instructors Outside of Class

I have not yet spoken to this instructor outside of class:

Within the next two weeks, I will stop by during office hours to talk about the following:

This instructor’s office hours are

Using E-mail

The following are my worst e-mail habits:

The following current instructors prefer student questions through e-mail:

I will follow these professional e-mail practices:

Speaking Publicly

I am nervous about giving class presentations because

I realize that the best way to overcome my anxiety about public speaking and succeed in class presentations is to
## WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Assess your present knowledge and attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have clear, realistic, attainable goals for the short and long term, including for my educational success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have a good sense of priorities that helps ensure I always get the important things done, including my studies, while balancing my time among school, work, and social life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have a positive attitude toward being successful in college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I know how to stay focused and motivated so I can reach my goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When setbacks occur, I work to solve the problems effectively and then move on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have a good space for studying and use my space to avoid distractions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I do not attempt to multitask when studying.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I schedule my study periods at times when I am at my best.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I use a weekly or daily planner to schedule study periods and other tasks in advance and to manage my time well.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am successful at not putting off my studying and other important activities or being distracted by other things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate how well you stay focused on your goals and use your time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need to improve</th>
<th>Very successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following list, circle the three most important areas in which you think you need to improve:

- Setting goals
- Staying focused on goals
- Keeping strong priorities
- Maintaining a positive attitude
- Staying motivated for academic work
- Solving and preventing problems
- Having an organized space for studies
- Avoiding the distractions of technology
- Preventing distractions caused by other people
- Managing time well when studying
- Overcoming a tendency to put things off
- Using a planner to schedule study periods
- Using a to-do list to ensure all tasks are done
- Finding enough time to do everything

Are there other areas in which you can improve your time management skills so that you can study effectively in the time you have, while still managing other aspects of your life? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

HOW TO GET THERE

Here’s what we’ll work on in this chapter:

- Setting and focusing on goals that are specific, realistic, and attainable
- Setting priorities for managing your time
- Adapting a positive attitude for college success and overcoming fear of failure or negativity
- Developing and practicing strategies for staying focused
- Preventing or solving problems that might threaten your success in college
- Choosing a study space and using it to your advantage for most efficient studying and avoiding distractions
• Understanding why multitasking, such as using your computer or cell phone while studying, is inefficient and actually wastes time
• Using your “time personality” to perform at your best and to plan ahead
• Using an academic planner to schedule study periods, get started on projects well in advance, and manage your time well
• Developing and practicing strategies for overcoming any tendency to procrastinate

GOALS AND TIME MANAGEMENT
Since you’re reading this now, chances are very good you’re already in college or about to start. That means you’ve already set at least one goal for yourself—to get a college education—and that you’ve been motivated to come this far. You should feel good about that, because lots of people don’t make it this far. You’re off to a great first step!
But did you know that in many colleges in the United States, almost half of first-year college students will not make it to graduation? This varies widely among different colleges. Ask your instructor if he or she knows the graduation rate at your college, or you research this topic on your own. Knowing this can be important, because peer pressure (whether to succeed or to be lax and possibly drop out later) can be an important factor in your success.
If you want to be among the students who do succeed, it’s important to accept that college is not easy for most students. But we’re not trying to scare or depress you! The evidence shows that the huge majority of those who really want to finish college can do so successfully, if they stay motivated and learn how to succeed. That’s what this book is all about. It may take some effort. Succeeding in college involves paying attention to your studies in ways you may not have had to in your former life.
The two most common reasons why students drop out are financial difficulties and falling behind in studying. While no one is guaranteed to easily find the money needed for college, there are many ways you can cut costs and make it easier to get through. This chapter looks at the other big issue: how to make sure that you succeed in your courses. The first step is to be committed to your education. You’ve been motivated to start college—now you need to keep that motivation going as you target specific goals for success in your classes. Much of this has to do with attitude. Success also requires managing your time effectively.
In fact, time management skills can make the difference between those who graduate from college and those who drop out. Time management is actually all about managing yourself: knowing what you want, deciding how to get what you want, and then efficiently and effectively getting it. That applies to fun things, too. In fact, you may want to think of the goal of this chapter as not just managing your time for studying but ensuring that even as you do well in your studies, you’re still enjoying your life while in college!

2.1 SETTING AND REACHING GOALS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Make short-, mid-, and long-term goals that are realistic and specific and commit to them.
2. Set priorities for reaching your goals as a basis for time management.
3. Develop an attitude for success.
4. Learn to use strategies for staying focused and motivated.
5. Network with other students to help ensure academic success.
6. Solve problems and overcome setbacks that threaten your goals.
Some people are goal oriented and seem to easily make decisions that lead to achieving their goals, while others seem just to “go with the flow” and accept what life gives them. While the latter may sound pleasantly relaxed, moving through life without goals may not lead anywhere at all. The fact that you’re in college now shows you already have the major goal to complete your college program.

A goal is a result we intend to reach mostly through our own actions. Things we do may move us closer to or farther away from that result. Studying moves us closer to success in a difficult course, while sleeping through the final examination may completely prevent reaching that goal. That’s fairly obvious in an extreme case, yet still a lot of college students don’t reach their goal of graduating. The problem may be a lack of commitment to the goal, but often students have conflicting goals. One way to prevent problems is to think about all your goals and priorities and to learn ways to manage your time, your studies, and your social life to best reach your goals. Consider these four students:

To help his widowed mother, Juan went to work full time after high school but now, a few years later, he’s dissatisfied with the kinds of jobs he has been able to get and has begun taking computer programming courses in the evening. He’s often tired after work, however, and his mother would like him to spend more time at home. Sometimes he cuts class to stay home and spend time with her.

In her senior year of college, Becky has just been elected president of her sorority and is excited about planning a major community service project. She knows she should be spending more time on her senior thesis, but she feels her community project may gain her contacts that can help her find a better job after graduation. Besides, the sorority project is a lot more fun, and she’s enjoying the esteem of her position. Even if she doesn’t do well on her thesis, she’s sure she’ll pass.

After an easy time in high school, James is surprised his college classes are so hard. He’s got enough time to study for his first-year courses, but he also has a lot of friends and fun things to do. Sometimes he’s surprised to look up from his computer to see it’s midnight already, and he hasn’t started reading that chapter yet. Where does the time go? When he’s stressed, however, he can’t study well, so he tells himself he’ll get up early and read the chapter before class, and then he turns back to his computer to see who’s online.

Sachito was successful in cutting back her hours at work to give her more time for her engineering classes, but it’s difficult for her to get much studying done at home. Her husband has been wonderful about taking care of their young daughter, but he can’t do everything, and lately he’s been hinting more about asking her sister to babysit so that the two of them can go out in the evening the way they used to. Lately, when she’s had to study on a weekend, he leaves with his friends, and Sachito ends up spending the day with her daughter—and not getting much studying done.

What do these very different students have in common? Each has goals that conflict in one or more ways. Each needs to develop strategies to meet their other goals without threatening their academic success. And all of them have time management issues to work through: three because they feel they don’t have enough time to do everything they want or need to do and one because even though he has enough time, he needs to learn how to manage it more effectively. For all four of them, motivation and attitude will be important as they develop strategies to achieve their goals.

It all begins with setting goals and thinking about priorities.

As you think about your own goals, think about more than just being a student. You’re also a person with individual needs and desires, hopes and dreams, plans and schemes. Your long-term goals likely include graduation and a career but may also involve social relationships with others, a romantic relationship, family, hobbies or other activities, where and how you live, and so on. While you are a student you may not be actively pursuing all your goals with the same fervor, but they remain goals and are still important in your life.
Goals also vary in terms of time. Short-term goals focus on today and the next few days and perhaps weeks. Midterm goals involve plans for this school year and the time you plan to remain in college. Long-term goals may begin with graduating college and everything you want to happen thereafter. Often your long-term goals (e.g., the kind of career you want) guide your midterm goals (getting the right education for that career), and your short-term goals (such as doing well on an exam) become steps for reaching those larger goals. Thinking about your goals in this way helps you realize how even the little things you do every day can keep you moving toward your most important long-term goals.

Write out your goals in Activity 1. You should literally WRITE them down, because the act of finding the best words to describe your goals helps you think more clearly about them. Follow these guidelines:

- **Goals should be realistic.** It’s good to dream and to challenge yourself, but your goals should relate to your personal strengths and abilities.

- **Goals should be specific.** Don’t write, “I will become a great musician”; instead, write, “I will finish my music degree and be employed in a symphony orchestra.”

- **Goals should have a time frame.** You won’t feel very motivated if your goal is vaguely “to finish college someday.” If you’re realistic and specific in your goals, you should also be able to project a time frame for reaching the goal.

- **You should really want to reach the goal.** We’re willing to work hard to reach goals we really care about, but we’re likely to give up when we encounter obstacles if we don’t feel strongly about a goal. If you’re doing something only because your parents or someone else wants you to, then it’s not your own personal goal—and you may have some more thinking to do about your life.
ACTIVITY 1: PERSONAL GOALS

Write your goals in the following blanks. Be sure to consider all areas of your life—consider EVERYTHING IMPORTANT that you want to do between this moment and old age. (While you might aim for three to eight goals in each section, remember that everyone is unique, and you may be just as passionate about just one or two goals or more than eight.)

Short-term goals (today, this week, and this month):
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Midterm goals (this year and while in college):
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__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
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Long-term goals (from college on):
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__________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________
PRIORITIES

Thinking about your goals gets you started, but it’s also important to think about priorities. We often use the word “priorities” to refer to how important something is to us. We might think, THIS is a really important goal, and THAT is less important. Try this experiment: go back to the goals you wrote in Activity 1 and see if you can rank each goal as a 1 (top priority), 2 (middle priority), or 3 (lowest priority).

It sounds easy, but do you actually feel comfortable doing that? Maybe you gave a priority 1 to passing your courses and a priority 3 to playing your guitar. So what does that mean—that you never play guitar again, or at least not while in college? Whenever you have an hour free between class and work, you have to study because that’s the higher priority? What about all your other goals—do you have to ignore everything that’s not a priority 1? And what happens when you have to choose among different goals that are both number 1 priorities?

In reality, priorities don’t work quite that way. It doesn’t make a lot of sense to try to rank goals as ALWAYS more or less important. The question of priority is really a question of what is more important AT A SPECIFIC TIME. It is important to do well in your classes, but it’s also important to have a social life and enjoy your time off from studying. You shouldn’t have to choose between the two—except AT ANY GIVEN TIME. Priorities always involve time: what is most important to do RIGHT NOW. As we’ll see later, time management is mostly a way to juggle priorities so you can meet all your goals.

When you manage your time well, you don’t have to ignore some goals completely in order to meet other goals. In other words, you don’t have to give up your life when you register for college—but you may need to work on managing your life more effectively.

But time management works only when you’re committed to your goals. Attitude and motivation are very important. If you haven’t yet developed an attitude for success, all the time management skills in the world won’t keep you focused and motivated to succeed.

AN ATTITUDE FOR SUCCESS

What’s your attitude RIGHT NOW—what started running through your mind as you saw the “An Attitude for Success” heading? Were you groaning to yourself, thinking, “No, not the attitude thing again!” Or, at the other extreme, maybe you were thinking, “This is great! Now I’m about to learn everything I need to get through college without a problem!” Those are two attitude extremes, one negative and skeptical, the other positive and hopeful. Most students are somewhere in between—but EVERYONE has an attitude of one sort or another.

Everything people do and how they do it starts with attitude. One student gets up with the alarm clock and cheerfully prepares for the day, planning to study for a couple hours between classes, go jogging later, and see a friend at dinner. Another student oversleeps after partying too late last night, decides to skip his first class, somehow gets through later classes fueled by fast food and energy drinks while dreading tomorrow’s exam, and immediately accepts a friend’s suggestion to go out tonight instead of studying. Both students could have identical situations, classes, finances, and academic preparation. There could be just one significant difference—but it’s the one that matters.

Here are some characteristics associated with a positive attitude:

- Enthusiasm for and enjoyment of daily activities
- Acceptance of responsibility for one’s actions and feeling good about success
• Generally upbeat mood and positive emotions, cheerfulness with others, and satisfaction with oneself
• Motivation to get the job done
• Flexibility to make changes when needed
• Ability to make productive, effective use of time

And here are some characteristics associated with a negative attitude:

• Frequent complaining
• Blaming others for anything that goes wrong
• Often experiencing negative emotions: anger, depression, resentment
• Lack of motivation for work or studies
• Hesitant to change or seek improvement
• Unproductive use of time, procrastination

We started this chapter talking about goals, because people’s goals and priorities have a huge effect on their attitude. Someone who really wants to succeed in college is better motivated and can develop a more positive attitude to succeed. But what if you are committed to succeeding in college but still feel kind of doubtful or worried or even down on yourself—what can you do then? Can people really change their attitude? Aren't people just “naturally” positive or negative or whatever?

While attitude is influenced by one’s personality, upbringing, and past experiences, there is no “attitude gene” that makes you one way or another. It’s not as simple as taking a pill, but attitude can be changed. If you’re committed to your goals, you can learn to adjust your attitude. The following are some things you can start doing.

BE MORE UPBEAT WITH YOURSELF

We all have conversations with ourselves. I might do badly on a test, and I start thinking things like, “I’m just not smart enough” or “That teacher is so hard no one could pass that test.” The problem when we talk to ourselves this way is that we listen—and we start believing what we’re hearing. Think about what you’ve been saying to yourself since your first day at college. Have you been negative or making excuses, maybe because you’re afraid of not succeeding? You ARE smart enough or you wouldn’t be here. Even if you did poorly on a test, you can turn that around into a more positive attitude by taking responsibility. “OK, I goofed off too much when I should have been studying. I learned my lesson—now it’s time to buckle down and study for the next test. I’m going to ace this one!” Hear yourself saying that enough and guess what—you soon find out you CAN succeed even in your hardest classes.

CHOOSE WHOM YOU SPEND TIME WITH

We all know negative and positive people. Sometimes it’s fun to hang out with someone with a negative attitude, especially if their sarcasm is funny. And if we’ve just failed a test, we might enjoy being with someone else who also blames the instructor or “the system” for whatever goes wrong. As they say, misery loves company. But often being with negative people is one of the surest ways to stay negative yourself. You not only hear your own self-talk making excuses and blaming others and putting
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yourself down, but you hear other people saying it, too. After a while you’re convinced it’s true. You’ve developed a negative attitude that sets you up for failure.

College offers a great opportunity to make new friends. Friendships and other social relationships are important to all humans—and maybe to college students most of all, because of the stresses of college and the changes you’re likely experiencing. Later chapters in this book have some tips for making new friends and getting actively involved in campus life, if you’re not already there. Most important, try to choose friends with a positive attitude. It’s simply more fun to be with people who are upbeat and enjoying life, people whom you respect—and who, like you, are committed to their studies and are motivated. A positive attitude can really be contagious.

OVERCOME RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

While it’s true that most people are more comfortable when their situation is not always changing, many kinds of change are good and should be welcomed. College is a big change from high school or working. Accepting that reality helps you be more positive about the differences. Sure, you have to study more, and the classes are harder. You may be working more and have less time for your personal life. But dwelling on those differences only reinforces a negative attitude. Look instead at the positive changes: the exciting and interesting people you’re meeting, the education you’re getting that will lead to a bright future, and the mental challenges and stimulation you’re feeling every day.

The first step may be simply to see yourself succeeding in your new life. Visualize yourself as a student taking control, enjoying classes, studying effectively, getting good grades. This book will help you do that in many ways. It all begins with the right attitude.

OVERCOME FEARS

One of the most common fears of college students is a fear of failure—of not being able to make the grade. We all know that life is not all roses and that we’re not going to succeed at everything we try. Everyone experiences some sort of failure at some time—and everyone has fears. The question is what you do about it.

Again, think about your goals. You’ve enrolled in college for good reasons, and you’ve already shown your commitment by coming this far. If you still have any fear of failure, turn it around and use it in a positive way. If you’re afraid you may not do well on an upcoming exam, don’t mope around—sit down and schedule times to start studying well ahead of time. It’s mostly a matter of attitude adjustment.

STAY FOCUSED AND MOTIVATED

Okay, you’ve got a positive attitude. But you’ve got a lot of reading for classes to do tonight, a test tomorrow, and a paper due the next day. Maybe you’re a little bored with one of your reading assignments. Maybe you’d rather play a computer game. Uh oh—now what? Attitude can change at almost any moment. One minute you’re enthusiastically starting a class project, and then maybe a friend drops by and suddenly all you want to do is close the books and relax a while, hang out with friends.

One of the characteristics of successful people is accepting that life is full of interruptions and change—and planning for it. Staying focused does not mean you become a boring person who does nothing but go to class and study all the time. You just need to make a plan.

Planning ahead is the single best way to stay focused and motivated to reach your goals. Don’t wait until the night before an exam. If you know you have a major exam in five days, start by reviewing the material and deciding how many hours of study
you need. Then schedule those hours spread out over the next few days—at times when you are most alert and least likely to be distracted. Allow time for other activities, too, to reward yourself for successful studying. Then when the exam comes, you’re relaxed, you know the material, you’re in a good mood and confident, and you do well.

Planning is mostly a matter of managing your time well, as we’ll see later. Here are some other tips for staying focused and motivated:

• If you’re not feeling motivated, think about the results of your goals, not just the goals themselves. If just thinking about finishing college doesn’t sound all that exciting, then think instead about the great, high-paying career that comes afterward and the things you can do with that income.

• Say it aloud—to yourself or a friend with a positive attitude: “I’m going to study now for another hour before I take a break—and I’m getting an A on that test tomorrow!” It’s amazing how saying something aloud puts commitment in it and affirms that it can be true.

• Remember your successes, even small successes. As you begin a project or approach studying for a test, think about your past success on a different project or test. Remember how good it feels to succeed. Know you can succeed again.

• Focus on the here and now. For some people, looking ahead to goals, or to anything else, may lead to daydreaming that keeps them from focusing on what they need to do right now. Don’t worry about what you’re doing tomorrow or next week or month. If your mind keeps drifting off, however, you may need to reward or even trick yourself to focus on the here and now. For example, if you can’t stop thinking about the snack you’re going to have when you finish studying in a couple hours, change the plan. Tell yourself you’ll take a break in twenty minutes if you really need it—but only if you really work well first.

• If you just can’t focus in on what you should be doing because the task seems too big and daunting, break the task into smaller, manageable pieces. Don’t start out thinking, “I need to study the next four hours,” but think, “I’ll spend the next thirty minutes going through my class notes from the last three weeks and figure out what topics I need to spend more time on.” It’s a lot easier to stay focused when you’re sitting down for thirty minutes at a time.

• Never, ever multitask while studying! You may think that you can monitor e-mail and send text messages while studying, but in reality, these other activities lower the quality of your studying.

• Imitate successful people. Does a friend always seem better able to stick with studying or work until they get it done? What are they doing that you’re not? We all learn from observing others, and we can speed up that process by deliberately using the same strategies we see working with others. VISUALIZE YOURSELF studying in the same way and getting that same high grade on the test or paper.

• Separate yourself from unsuccessful people. This is the flip side of imitating successful people. If a roommate or a friend is always putting off things until the last minute or is distracted with other interests and activities, tell yourself how different you are. When you hear other students complaining about how hard a class is or bragging about not studying or attending class, visualize yourself as not being like them at all.

• Reward yourself when you complete a significant task—but only when you are done. Some people seem able to stay focused only when there’s a reward waiting.

• While some people work harder for the reward, others are motivated more by the price of failing. While some people are almost paralyzed by anxiety, others are moved by their fear to achieve their best.

• Get the important things done first. We’ll talk about managing your academic planner and to-do lists later in the chapter, but for now, to stay focused and motivated, concentrate on the things that matter most. You’re about to sit down to read a chapter in a book you’re not much enjoying, and you suddenly notice some clothing piled up on a chair. “I really should clean up this place,” you think. “And I’d better get my laundry done before I run out of things to wear.” Don’t try to fool yourself into feeling you’re accomplishing something by doing laundry rather than studying. Stay focused!
NETWORK FOR SUCCESS

Making friends with people with positive attitudes not only helps you maintain a positive attitude yourself, but it gets you started networking with other students in ways that will help you succeed.

Did you study alone or with friends in high school? Because college classes are typically much more challenging, many college students discover they do better, and find it much more enjoyable, if they study with other students taking same course. This might mean organizing a study group or just getting together with a friend to review material before a test. It’s good to start thinking right away about networking with other students in your classes.

If you consider yourself an independent person and prefer studying and doing projects on your own rather than with others, think for a minute about how most people function in their careers and professions, what the business world is like. Most work today is done by teams or individuals working together in a collaborative way. Very few jobs involve a person always being and working alone. The more you learn to study and work with other students now, the more skills you are mastering for a successful career.

Studying with other students has immediate benefits. You can quiz each other to help ensure that everyone understands the course material; if you’re not clear about something, someone else can help teach it to you. You can read and respond to each other’s writing and other work. You can divide up the work in group projects. And through it all, you can often have more fun than if you were doing it on your own.

Studying together is also a great way to start networking—a topic we’ll discuss more in coming chapters. Networking has many potential benefits for your future. College students who feel they are part of a network on campus are more motivated and more successful in college.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: STAYING MOTIVATED

- Keep your eye on your long-term goals while working toward immediate goals.
- Keep your priorities straight—but also save some time for fun.
- Work on keeping your attitude positive.
- Keep the company of positive people; imitate successful people.
- Don’t let past habits drag you down.
- Plan ahead to avoid last-minute pressures.
- Focus on your successes.
- Break large projects down into smaller tasks or stages.
- Reward yourself for completing significant tasks.
- Avoid multitasking.
- Network with other students; form a study group.
PROBLEM SOLVING: WHEN SETBACKS HAPPEN

Even when you have clear goals and are motivated and focused to achieve them, problems sometimes happen. Accept that they WILL happen, since inevitably they do for everyone. The difference between those who succeed by solving the problem and moving on and those who get frustrated and give up is partly attitude and partly experience—and knowing how to cope when a problem occurs.

Lots of different kinds of setbacks may happen while you're in college—just as to everyone in life. Here are a few examples:

- A financial crisis
- An illness or injury
- A crisis involving family members or loved ones
- Stress related to frequently feeling you don't have enough time
- Stress related to relationship problems

Some things happen that we cannot prevent—such as some kinds of illness, losing one's job because of a business slowdown, or crises involving family members. But many other kinds of problems can be prevented or made less likely to occur. You can take steps to stay healthy, as you'll learn in Chapter 6 "Taking Control of Your Health". You can take control of your finances and avoid most financial problems common among college students, as you'll learn in Chapter. You can learn how to build successful social relationships and get along better with your instructors, with other students, and in personal relationships.

You can learn time management techniques to ensure you use your time effectively for studying. Most of the chapters in this book also provide study tips and guidelines to help you do well in your classes with effective reading, note-taking, test-taking, and writing skills for classes. PREVENTING the problems that typically keep college students from succeeding is much of what this book is all about.

Not all problems can be avoided. Illness or a financial problem can significantly set one back—especially when you're on a tight schedule and budget. Other problems, such as a social or relationship issue or an academic problem in a certain class, may be more complex and not easily prevented. What then?

First, work to resolve the immediate problem:

1. Stay motivated and focused. Don't let frustration, anxiety, or other negative emotions make the problem worse than it already is.

2. Analyze the problem to consider all possible solutions. An unexpected financial setback doesn't automatically mean you have to drop out of school—not when alternatives such as student loans, less expensive living arrangements, or other possible solutions may be available. Failing a midterm exam doesn't automatically mean you're going to fail the course—not when you make the effort to determine what went wrong, work with your instructor and others on an improved study plan, and use better strategies to prepare for the next test.

3. Seek help when you need to. None of us gets through life alone, and it's not a sign of weakness to see your academic advisor or a college counselor if you have a problem.

4. When you've developed a plan for resolving the problem, work to follow through. If it will take a while before the problem is completely solved, track your progress in smaller steps so that you can see you really are succeeding. Every day will move you one step closer to putting it behind you.
After you've solved a problem, be sure to avoid it again in the future:

1. Be honest with yourself: how did you contribute to the problem? Sometimes it’s obvious: a student who drank heavily at a party the night before a big test failed the exam because he was so hung over he couldn’t think straight. Sometimes the source of the problem is not as obvious but may become clearer the more you think about it. Another student did a lot of partying during the term but studied all day before the big test and was well rested and clearheaded at test time but still did poorly; he may not yet have learned good study skills. Another student has frequent colds and other mild illnesses that keep him from doing his best: how much better would he feel if he ate well, got plenty of exercise, and slept enough every night? If you don’t honestly explore the factors that led to the problem, it’s more likely to happen again.

2. Take responsibility for your life and your role in what happens to you. Earlier we talked about people with negative attitudes, who are always blaming others, fate, or “the system” for their problems. It’s no coincidence that they keep on having problems. Unless you WANT to keep having problems, don’t keep blaming others.

3. Taking responsibility doesn’t mean being down on yourself. Failing at something doesn’t mean YOU are a failure. We all fail at something, sometime. Adjust your attitude so you’re ready to get back on track and feel happy that you’ll never make that mistake again!

4. Make a plan. You might still have a problem on that next big test if you don’t make an effective study plan and stick to it. You may need to change your behavior in some way, such as learning time management strategies. (Read on!)

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Goals should be realistic, specific, and time oriented, and you must be committed to them.
- Setting priorities helps keep you focused on your goals but doesn’t determine how you use your time at all times.
- Attitude is often the major reason students succeed or fail in college. Everyone can work on developing a more positive, motivating attitude.
- Planning, the essence of time management, is necessary to stay focused and continue moving toward your goals.
- Networking with other students helps you stay motivated as well as making studying more effective.
- Since problems and setbacks are inevitable, knowing how to solve problems is important for reaching goals. With a good attitude, most common student problems can be prevented.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. Which of the following goal statements is written in a way that shows the person has carefully considered what he or she wants to achieve?
   
   a. I will do better in my math course.
   b. I will earn at least a B on my next English paper.
   c. I will study more this term.

   List ways in which a negative attitude can prevent students from being successful in college.
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   Think about your friends in college or other students you have observed in one of your classes. Choose one who usually seems positive and upbeat and one who sometimes or frequently shows a negative attitude about college. Visualize both their faces—side by side—as if you are talking to both of them. Now imagine yourself sitting down to study with one of them for a final exam. Describe how you would imagine that study session going.
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   Look back at the four students described at the beginning of the chapter. Each of them is experiencing some sort of problem that could interrupt their progress toward their goals. Think about each student and write down a solution for each problem that you would try to work out, if you were that person.
   
   For Juan:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   For Becky:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   For James:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   For Sachito:
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

   List a few things you can do if you’re having trouble getting motivated to sit down to study.
   
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
2.2 ORGANIZING YOUR SPACE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize the importance of organizing your space to your best advantage for studying.
2. Avoid distractions in the space where you are studying.
3. Understand the myth of multitasking and prevent distractions from your personal technology.

Now that you’ve worked up an attitude for success and are feeling motivated, it’s time to get organized. You need to organize both your space and your time.

Space is important for many reasons—some obvious, some less so. People’s moods, attitudes, and levels of work productivity change in different spaces. Learning to use space to your own advantage helps get you off to a good start in your studies. Here are a few of the ways space matters:

- **Everyone needs his or her own space.** This may seem simple, but everyone needs some physical area, regardless of size, that is really his or her own—even if it’s only a small part of a shared space. Within your own space, you generally feel more secure and in control.

- **Physical space reinforces habits.** For example, using your bed primarily for sleeping makes it easier to fall asleep there than elsewhere and also makes it not a good place to try to stay awake and alert for studying.

- **Different places create different moods.** While this may seem obvious, students don’t always use places to their best advantage. One place may be bright and full of energy, with happy students passing through and enjoying themselves—a place that puts you in a good mood. But that may actually make it more difficult to concentrate on your studying. Yet the opposite—a totally quiet, austere place devoid of color and sound and pleasant decorations—can be just as unproductive if it makes you associate studying with something unpleasant. Everyone needs to discover what space works best for himself or herself—and then let that space reinforce good study habits.

USE SPACE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE AND TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Begin by analyzing your needs, preferences, and past problems with places for studying. Where do you usually study? What are the best things about that place for studying? What distractions are most likely to occur there?

The goal is to find, or create, the best place for studying, and then to use it regularly so that studying there becomes a good habit.

- **Choose a place you can associate with studying.** Make sure it’s not a place already associated with other activities (eating, watching television, sleeping, etc.). Over time, the more often you study in this space, the stronger will be its association with studying, so that eventually you’ll be completely focused as soon as you reach that place and begin.

- **Your study area should be available whenever you need it.** If you want to use your home, apartment, or dorm room but you never know if another person may be there and possibly distract you, then it’s probably better to look for another place, such as a study lounge or an area in the library. Look for locations open at the hours when you may be studying. You may also need two study spaces—one in or near where you live, another on campus. Maybe you study best at home but have an hour free between two classes, and the library is too far away to use for only an hour? Look for a convenient empty classroom.
• Your study space should meet your study needs. An open desk or table surface usually works best for writing, and you’ll tire quickly if you try to write notes sitting in an easy chair (which might also make you sleepy). You need good light for reading, to avoid tiring from eyestrain. If you use a laptop for writing notes or reading and researching, you need a power outlet so you don’t have to stop when your battery runs out.

• Your study space should meet your psychological needs. Some students may need total silence with absolutely no visual distractions; they may find a perfect study carrel hidden away on the fifth floor in the library. Other students may be unable to concentrate for long without looking up from reading and momentarily letting their eyes move over a pleasant scene. Some students may find it easier to stay motivated when surrounded by other students also studying; they may find an open space in the library or a study lounge with many tables spread out over an area. Experiment to find the setting that works best for you—and remember that the more often you use THIS SAME SPACE, the more comfortable and effective your studying will become.

• You may need the support of others to maintain your study space. Students living at home, whether with a spouse and children or with their parents, often need the support of family members to maintain an effective study space. The kitchen table probably isn’t best if others pass by frequently. Be creative, if necessary, and set up a card table in a quiet corner of your bedroom or elsewhere to avoid interruptions. Put a “do not disturb” sign on your door.

• Keep your space organized and free of distractions. You want to prevent sudden impulses to neaten up the area (when you should be studying), do laundry, wash dishes, and so on. Unplug a nearby telephone, turn off your cell phone, and use your computer only as needed for studying. If your e-mail or message program pops up a notice every time an e-mail or message arrives, turn off your Wi-Fi or detach the network cable to prevent those intrusions.

• Plan for breaks. Everyone needs to take a break occasionally when studying. Think about the space you’re in and how to use it when you need a break. If in your home, stop and do a few exercises to get your blood flowing. If in the library, take a walk up a couple flights of stairs and around the stacks before returning to your study area.

• Prepare for human interruptions. Even if you hide in the library to study, there’s a chance a friend may happen by. At home with family members or in a dorm room or common space, the odds increase greatly. Have a plan ready in case someone pops in and asks you to join them in some fun activity. Know when you plan to finish your studying so that you can make a plan for later—or for tomorrow at a set time.

THE DISTRACTIONS OF TECHNOLOGY

Multitasking is the term commonly used for being engaged in two or more different activities at the same time, usually referring to activities using devices such as cell phones, smartphones, computers, and so on. Many people claim to be able to do as many as four or five things simultaneously, such as writing an e-mail while responding to an instant message (IM) and reading a tweet, all while watching a video on their computer monitor or talking on the phone. Many people who have grown up with computers consider this kind of multitasking a normal way to get things done, including studying. Even people in business sometimes speak of multitasking as an essential component of today’s fast-paced world.

It is true that SOME things can be attended to while you’re doing something else, such as checking e-mail while you watch television news—but only when none of those things demands your full attention. You can concentrate 80 percent on the e-mail, for example, while 20 percent of your attention is listening for something on the news that catches your attention. Then
you turn to the television for a minute, watch that segment, and go back to the e-mail. But you’re not actually watching the television AT THE SAME TIME you’re composing the e-mail—you’re rapidly going back and forth. In reality, the mind can focus only on one thing at any given moment. Even things that don’t require much thinking are severely impacted by multitasking, such as driving while talking on a cell phone or texting. An astonishing number of people end up in the emergency room from just trying to walk down the sidewalk while texting, so common is it now to walk into a pole or parked car while multitasking!

“Okay,” you might be thinking, “why should it matter if I write my paper first and then answer e-mails or do them back and forth at the same time?” It actually takes you longer to do two or more things at the same time than if you do them separately—at least with anything that you actually have to focus on, such as studying. That’s true because each time you go back to studying after looking away to a message or tweet, it takes time for your mind to shift gears to get back to where you were. Every time your attention shifts, add up some more “downtime”—and pretty soon it’s evident that multitasking is costing you a lot more time than you think. And that’s assuming that your mind DOES fully shift back to where you were every time, without losing your train of thought or forgetting an important detail. It doesn’t always.

The other problem with multitasking is the effect it can have on the attention span—and even on how the brain works. Scientists have shown that in people who constantly shift their attention from one thing to another in short bursts, the brain forms patterns that make it more difficult to keep sustained attention on any one thing. So when you really do need to concentrate for a while on one thing, such as when studying for a big test, it becomes more difficult to do even if you’re not multitasking at that time. It’s as if your mind makes a habit of wandering from one thing to another and then can’t stop. So stay away from multitasking whenever you have something important to do, like studying. If it’s already a habit for you, don’t let it become worse. Manipulate your study space to prevent the temptations altogether. Turn your computer off—or shut down e-mail and messaging programs if you need the computer for studying. Turn your cell phone off—if you just tell yourself not to answer it but still glance at it each time to see who sent or left a message, you’re still losing your studying momentum and have to start over again. For those who are really addicted to technology (you know who you are!), go to the library and don’t take your laptop or cell phone.

In the later section in this chapter on scheduling your study periods, we recommend scheduling breaks as well, usually for a few minutes every hour. If you’re really hooked on checking for messages, plan to do that at scheduled times.

What about listening to music while studying? Some don’t consider that multitasking, and many students say they can listen to music without it affecting their studying. Studies are inconclusive about the positive or negative effects of music on people’s ability to concentrate, probably because so many different factors are involved. But there’s a huge difference between listening to your favorite CD and spontaneously singing along with some of the songs and enjoying soft background music that enhances your study space the same way as good lighting and pleasant décor. Some people can study better with low-volume instrumental music that relaxes them and does not intrude on their thinking, while others can concentrate only in silence. And some are so used to being immersed in music and the sounds of life that they find TOTAL silence more distracting—such people can often study well in places where people are moving around. The key thing is to be honest with yourself: if you’re ACTIVELY listening to music while you’re studying, then you’re likely not studying as well as you could be. It will take you longer and lead to less successful results.
FAMILY AND ROOMMATE ISSUES

Sometimes going to the library or elsewhere is not practical for studying, and you have to find a way to cope in a shared space.

Part of the solution is time management. Agree with others on certain times that will be reserved for studying; agree to keep the place quiet, not to have guests visiting, and to prevent other distractions. These arrangements can be made with a roommate, spouse, and older children. If there are younger children in your household and you have child-care responsibility, it’s usually more complicated. You may have to schedule your studying during their nap time or find quiet activities for them to enjoy while you study. Try to spend some time with your kids before you study, so they don’t feel like you’re ignoring them. (More tips are offered later in this chapter.)

The key is to plan ahead. You don’t want to find yourself, the night before an exam, in a place that offers no space for studying.

Finally, accept that sometimes you’ll just have to say no. If your roommate or a friend often tries to engage you in conversation or suggests doing something else when you need to study, just say no. Learn to be firm but polite as you explain that you just REALLY have to get your work done first. Students who live at home may also have to learn how to say no to parents or family members—just be sure to explain the importance of the studying you need to do! Remember, you can’t be everything to everyone all the time.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Where you study can have a huge impact on the effectiveness of your study efforts. Choose and organize your space to your advantage.
- How you control your study space can help you prevent distractions, especially those caused by other people or your personal technology.
- Attempting to multitask while studying diminishes the quality of your study time and results in a loss of time.
- Control your study space to prevent or manage potential interruptions from family members or roommates.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. For each of the following statements, circle T for true or F for false:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Your bed is usually a good place to study if you can keep the room quiet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>To study well, use the most drab, boring place you can find.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>An empty classroom can be a good place to get some studying done if you happen to have an hour free between classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>To maintain a clear focus while studying, limit the time you spend checking for e-mail and text messages to every ten minutes or so. Put your cell phone on vibrate mode and keep it in your pocket where you can more easily ignore it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>It’s OK to have the television or radio on while you study as long as you don’t give it your full attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>The key to avoiding interruptions and distractions from family members or roommates is to plan ahead for when and where you’ll study.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Class discussion exercise: Share stories about distractions caused by roommates and others that you and other students have experienced. Brainstorm together how to handle similar situations next time they arise.
2.3 ORGANIZING YOUR TIME

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discover your time personality and know where your time goes.
2. Understand the basic principles of time management and planning.
3. Learn and practice time management strategies to help ensure your academic success.
4. Know how to combat procrastination when it threatens to prevent getting your academic work done.
5. Use a calendar planner and daily to-do list to plan ahead for study tasks and manage your time effectively.
6. Learn effective time management techniques for students who work, students with family, and student athletes.

This is the most important part of this chapter. When you know what you want to do, why not just sit down and get it done? Time management isn’t actually difficult, but you do need to learn how to do it well.

TIME AND YOUR PERSONALITY

People’s attitudes toward time vary widely. One person seems to be always rushing around but actually gets less done than another person who seems unconcerned about time and calmly goes about the day. Since there are so many different “time personalities,” it’s important to realize how you approach time. Start by trying to figure out how you spend your time during a typical week, using Activity 2.
ACTIVITY 2: WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

See if you can account for a week’s worth of time. For each of the activity categories listed, make your best estimate of how many hours you spend in a week. (For categories that are about the same every day, just estimate for one day and multiply by seven for that line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of activity</th>
<th>Number of hours per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
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<td>Eating (including preparing food)</td>
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<td>Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.)</td>
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<td>Working (employment)</td>
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<td>Volunteer service or internship</td>
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<td>Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending class</td>
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<td>Studying, reading, and researching (outside of class)</td>
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<td>Transportation to work or school</td>
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<td>Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.)</td>
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<td>Time with friends (include television, video games, etc.)</td>
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<td>Attending events (movies, parties, etc.)</td>
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<td>Time alone (include television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.)</td>
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<td>Exercise or sports activities</td>
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<td>Talking on phone, e-mail, Facebook, etc.</td>
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<td>Other—specify: ___________________________</td>
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Now use your calculator to total your estimated hours. Is your number larger or smaller than 168, the total number of hours in a week? If your estimate is higher, go back through your list and adjust numbers to be more realistic. But if your estimated hours total fewer than 168, don’t just go back and add more time in certain categories. Instead, ponder this question: WHERE DOES THE TIME GO? We’ll come back to this question.

Think about your time analysis in Activity 2. People who estimate too high often feel they don’t have enough time. They may have time anxiety and often feel frustrated. People at the other extreme, who often can’t account for how they use all their time, may have a more relaxed attitude. They may not actually have any more free time, but they may be wasting more time than they want to admit with less important things. Yet they still may complain about how much time they spend studying, as if there’s a shortage of time.

People also differ in how they respond to schedule changes. Some go with the flow and accept changes easily, while others function well only when following a planned schedule and may become upset if that schedule changes. If you do not react well
to an unexpected disruption in your schedule, plan extra time for catching up if something throws you off. This is all part of understanding your time personality.

Another aspect of your time personality involves time of day. If you need to concentrate, such as when writing a class paper, are you more alert and focused in the morning, afternoon, or evening? Do you concentrate best when you look forward to a relaxing activity later on, or do you study better when you've finished all other activities? Do you function well if you get up early—or stay up late—to accomplish a task? How does that affect the rest of your day or the next day? Understanding this will help you better plan your study periods.

While you may not be able to change your “time personality,” you can learn to manage your time more successfully. The key is to be realistic. How accurate is the number of hours you wrote down in Activity 2? The best way to know how you spend your time is to record what you do all day in a time log, every day for a week, and then add that up. Make copies of the time log in Figure 2.1 "Daily Time Log“ and carry it with you. Every so often, fill in what you have been doing. Do this for a week before adding up the times; then enter the total hours in the categories in Activity 2. You might be surprised that you spend a lot more time than you thought just hanging out with friends—or surfing the Web or playing around with Facebook or any of the many other things people do. You might find that you study well early in the morning even though you thought you are a night person, or vice versa. You might learn how long you can continue at a specific task before needing a break.
### Figure 2.1 Daily Time Log

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If you have work and family responsibilities, you may already know where many of your hours go. Although we all wish we had “more time,” the important thing is what we do with the time we have. Time management strategies can help us better use the time we do have by creating a schedule that works for our own time personality.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management for successful college studying involves these factors:

- Determining how much time you need to spend studying
- Knowing how much time you actually have for studying and increasing that time if needed
- Being aware of the times of day you are at your best and most focused
- Using effective long- and short-term study strategies
- Scheduling study activities in realistic segments
- Using a system to plan ahead and set priorities
- Staying motivated to follow your plan and avoid procrastination

For every hour in the classroom, college students should spend, on average, about two hours on that class, counting reading, studying, writing papers, and so on. If you’re a full-time student with fifteen hours a week in class, then you need another thirty hours for rest of your academic work. That forty-five hours is about the same as a typical full-time job. If you work part time, time management skills are even more essential. These skills are still more important for part-time college students who work full time and commute or have a family. To succeed in college, virtually everyone has to develop effective strategies for dealing with time.

Look back at the number of hours you wrote in Activity 2 for a week of studying. Do you have two hours of study time for every hour in class? Many students begin college not knowing this much time is needed, so don't be surprised if you underestimated this number of hours. Remember this is just an average amount of study time—you may need more or less for your own courses. To be safe, and to help ensure your success, add another five to ten hours a week for studying.

To reserve this study time, you may need to adjust how much time you spend in other activities. Activity 3 will help you figure out what your typical week should look like.
ACTIVITY 3: WHERE SHOULD YOUR TIME GO?

Plan for the ideal use of a week’s worth of time. Fill in your hours in this order:

1. Hours attending class
2. Study hours (2 times the number of class hours plus 5 or more hours extra)
3. Work, internships, and fixed volunteer time
4. Fixed life activities (sleeping, eating, hygiene, chores, transportation, etc.)

   Now subtotal your hours so far and subtract that number from 168. How many hours are left? ___________. Then portion out the remaining hours for “discretionary activities” (things you don’t have to do for school, work, or a healthy life).

5. Discretionary activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of activity</th>
<th>Number of hours per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Studying, reading, and researching (outside of class)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working (employment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer service or internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating (including preparing food)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation to work or school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal:

Discretionary activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of activity</th>
<th>Number of hours per week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time with friends (include television, video games, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attending events (movies, parties, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time alone (include television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise or sports activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading for fun or other interests done alone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking on phone, e-mail, Facebook, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other—specify: ___________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other—specify: ___________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, [http://www.saylor.org/books](http://www.saylor.org/books)
Note: If you find you have almost no time left for discretionary activities, you may be overestimating how much time you need for eating, errands, and the like. Use the time log in Figure 3.1 "Daily Time Log" to determine if you really have to spend that much time on those things.

Activity 3 shows most college students that they do actually have plenty of time for their studies without losing sleep or giving up their social life. But you may have less time for discretionary activities than in the past. SOMETHING, SOMEWHERE HAS TO GIVE. That’s part of time management—and why it’s important to keep your goals and priorities in mind. The other part is to learn how to use the hours you do have as effectively as possible, especially the study hours. For example, if you’re a typical college freshman who plans to study for three hours in an evening but then procrastinates, gets caught up in a conversation, loses time to checking e-mail and text messages, and listens to loud music while reading a textbook, then maybe you actually spent four hours “studying” but got only two hours of actual work done. So you end up behind and feeling like you’re still studying way too much. The goal of time management is to actually get three hours of studying done in three hours and have time for your life as well.

Special note for students who work. You may have almost NO discretionary time at all left in Activity 3 after all your “must-do” activities. If so, you may have overextended yourself—a situation that inevitably will lead to problems. You can’t sleep two hours less every night for the whole school year, for example, without becoming ill or unable to concentrate well on work and school. It is better to recognize this situation now rather than set yourself up for a very difficult term and possible failure. If you cannot cut the number of hours for work or other obligations, see your academic advisor right away. It is better to take fewer classes and succeed than to take more classes than you have time for and risk failure.

TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Following are some strategies you can begin using immediately to make the most of your time:

• **Prepare to be successful.** When planning ahead for studying, think yourself into the right mood. Focus on the positive. “When I get these chapters read tonight, I’ll be ahead in studying for the next test, and I’ll also have plenty of time tomorrow to do X.” VISUALIZE yourself studying well!

• **Use your best—and most appropriate—time of day.** Different tasks require different mental skills. Some kinds of studying you may be able to start first thing in the morning as you wake, while others need your most alert moments at another time.

• **Break up large projects into small pieces.** Whether it’s writing a paper for class, studying for a final exam, or reading a long assignment or full book, students often feel daunted at the beginning of a large project. It’s easier to get going if you break it up into stages that you schedule at separate times—and then begin with the first section that requires only an hour or two.

• **Do the most important studying first.** When two or more things require your attention, do the more crucial one first. If something happens and you can’t complete everything, you’ll suffer less if the most crucial work is done.

• **If you have trouble getting started, do an easier task first.** Like large tasks, complex or difficult ones can be daunting. If you can’t get going, switch to an easier task you can accomplish quickly. That will give you momentum, and often you feel more confident tackling the difficult task after being successful in the first one.

• **If you’re feeling overwhelmed and stressed because you have too much to do, revisit your time planner.** Sometimes it’s hard to get started if you keep thinking about other things you need to get done. Review your schedule for the next few days and make sure everything important is scheduled, then relax and concentrate on the task at hand.
• **If you’re really floundering, talk to someone.** Maybe you just don’t understand what you should be doing. Talk with your instructor or another student in the class to get back on track.

• **Take a break.** We all need breaks to help us concentrate without becoming fatigued and burned out. As a general rule, a short break every hour or so is effective in helping recharge your study energy. Get up and move around to get your blood flowing, clear your thoughts, and work off stress.

• **Use unscheduled times to work ahead.** You’ve scheduled that hundred pages of reading for later today, but you have the textbook with you as you’re waiting for the bus. Start reading now, or flip through the chapter to get a sense of what you’ll be reading later. Either way, you’ll save time later. You may be amazed how much studying you can get done during downtimes throughout the day.

• **Keep your momentum.** Prevent distractions, such as multitasking, that will only slow you down. Check for messages, for example, only at scheduled break times.

• **Reward yourself.** It’s not easy to sit still for hours of studying. When you successfully complete the task, you should feel good and deserve a small reward. A healthy snack, a quick video game session, or social activity can help you feel even better about your successful use of time.

• **Just say no.** Always tell others nearby when you’re studying, to reduce the chances of being interrupted. Still, interruptions happen, and if you are in a situation where you are frequently interrupted by a family member, spouse, roommate, or friend, it helps to have your “no” prepared in advance: “No, IDEALLY have to be ready for this test” or “That’s a great idea, but let’s do it tomorrow—I JUST CAN’T today.” You shouldn’t feel bad about saying no—especially if you told that person in advance that you needed to study.

• **Have a life.** Never schedule your day or week so full of work and study that you have no time at all for yourself, your family and friends, and your larger life.

• **Use a calendar planner and daily to-do list.** We’ll look at these time management tools in the next section.

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**BATTLING PROCRASTINATION**

Procrastination is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. This can happen to anyone at any time. It’s like a voice inside your head keeps coming up with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other than studying: “I really ought to get this room cleaned up before I study” or “I can study anytime, but tonight’s the only chance I have to do X.” That voice is also very good at rationalizing: “I really don’t need to read that chapter now; I’ll have plenty of time tomorrow at lunch....”

Procrastination is very powerful. Some people battle it daily, others only occasionally. Most college students procrastinate often, and about half say they need help avoiding procrastination. Procrastination can threaten one’s ability to do well on an assignment or test.

People procrastinate for different reasons. Some people are too relaxed in their priorities, seldom worry, and easily put off responsibilities. Others worry constantly, and that stress keeps them from focusing on the task at hand. Some procrastinate because they fear failure; others procrastinate because they fear success or are so perfectionistic that they don’t want to let themselves down. Some are dreamers. Many different factors are involved, and there are different styles of procrastinating. Just as there are different causes, there are different possible solutions for procrastination. Different strategies work for different people. The time management strategies described earlier can help you avoid procrastination. Because this is a psychological issue, some additional psychological strategies can also help:
• Since procrastination is usually a habit, accept that and work on breaking it as you would any other bad habit: one day at a time. Know that every time you overcome feelings of procrastination, the habit becomes weaker—and eventually you’ll have a new habit of being able to start studying right away.

• Schedule times for studying using a daily or weekly planner. Carry it with you and look at it often. Just being aware of the time and what you need to do today can help you get organized and stay on track.

• If you keep thinking of something else you might forget to do later (making you feel like you “must” do it now), write yourself a note about it for later and get it out of your mind.

• Counter a negative with a positive. If you’re procrastinating because you’re not looking forward to a certain task, try to think of the positive future results of doing the work.

• Counter a negative with a worse negative. If thinking about the positive results of completing the task doesn’t motivate you to get started, think about what could happen if you keep procrastinating. You’ll have to study tomorrow instead of doing something fun you had planned. Or you could fail the test. Some people can jolt themselves right out of procrastination.

• On the other hand, fear causes procrastination in some people—so don’t dwell on the thought of failing. If you’re studying for a test, and you’re so afraid of failing it that you can’t focus on studying and you start procrastinating, try to put things in perspective. Even if it’s your most difficult class and you don’t understand EVERYTHING about the topic, that doesn’t mean you’ll fail, even if you may not receive an A or a B.

• Study with a motivated friend. Form a study group with other students who are motivated and won’t procrastinate along with you. You’ll learn good habits from them while getting the work done now.

• Keep a study journal. At least once a day write an entry about how you have used your time and whether you succeeded with your schedule for the day. If not, identify what factors kept you from doing your work. (Use the form at the end of this chapter.) This journal will help you see your own habits and distractions so that you can avoid things that lead to procrastination.

• Get help. If you really can’t stay on track with your study schedule, or if you’re always putting things off until the last minute, see a college counselor. They have lots of experience with this common student problem and can help you find ways to overcome this habit.

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**CALENDAR PLANNERS AND TO-DO LISTS**

Calendar planners and to-do lists are effective ways to organize your time. Many types of academic planners are commercially available (check your college bookstore), or you can make your own. Some people like a page for each day, and some like a week at a time. Some use computer calendars and planners. Almost any system will work well if you use it consistently.

Some college students think they don’t need to actually write down their schedule and daily to-do lists. They’ve always kept it in their head before, so why write it down in a planner now? Some first-year students were talking about this one day in a study group, and one bragged that she had never had to write down her calendar because she never forgot dates. Another student reminded her how she’d forgotten a preregistration date and missed taking a course she really wanted because the class was full by the time she went online to register. “Well,” she said, “except for that time, I never forget anything!” Of course, none of us ever forgets anything—until we do.

Calendars and planners help you look ahead and write in important dates and deadlines so you don’t forget. But it’s just as important to use the planner to schedule YOUR OWN TIME, not just deadlines. For example, you’ll learn later that the most effective way to study for an exam is to study in several short periods over several days. You can easily do this by choosing
time slots in your weekly planner over several days that you will commit to studying for this test. You don’t need to fill every time slot, or to schedule every single thing that you do, but the more carefully and consistently you use your planner, the more successfully will you manage your time.

But a planner cannot contain every single thing that may occur in a day. We’d go crazy if we tried to schedule every telephone call, every e-mail, every bill to pay, every trip to the grocery store. For these items, we use a to-do list, which may be kept on a separate page in the planner.

Check the example of a weekly planner form in Figure 2.2 "Weekly Planner". (You can copy this page and use it to begin your schedule planning. By using this first, you will find out whether these time slots are big enough for you or whether you’d prefer a separate planner page for each day.) Fill in this planner form for next week. First write in all your class meeting times; your work or volunteer schedule; and your usual hours for sleep, family activities, and any other activities at fixed times. Don’t forget time needed for transportation, meals, and so on. Your first goal is to find all the blocks of “free time” that are left over. Remember that this is an academic planner. Don’t try to schedule in everything in your life—this is to plan ahead to use your study time most effectively.

Next, check the syllabus for each of your courses and write important dates in the planner. If your planner has pages for the whole term, write in all exams and deadlines. Use red ink or a highlighter for these key dates. Write them in the hour slot for the class when the test occurs or when the paper is due, for example. (If you don’t yet have a planner large enough for the whole term, use Figure and write any deadlines for your second week in the margin to the right. You need to know what’s coming NEXT week to help schedule how you’re studying THIS week.)
Remember that for every hour spent in class, plan an average of two hours studying outside of class. These are the time periods you now want to schedule in your planner. These times change from week to week, with one course requiring more time in one week because of a paper due at the end of the week and a different course requiring more the next week because of a major exam. Make sure you block out enough hours in the week to accomplish what you need to do. As you choose your study times, consider what times of day you are at your best and what times you prefer to use for social or other activities.

![Weekly Planner](image)

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, [http://www.saylor.org/books](http://www.saylor.org/books)
Don’t try to micromanage your schedule. Don’t try to estimate exactly how many minutes you’ll need two weeks from today to read a given chapter in a given textbook. Instead, just choose the blocks of time you will use for your studies. Don’t yet write in the exact study activity—just reserve the block. Next, look at the major deadlines for projects and exams that you wrote in earlier. Estimate how much time you may need for each and work backward on the schedule from the due date. For example, You have a short paper due on Friday. You determine that you’ll spend ten hours total on it, from initial brainstorming and planning through to drafting and revising. Since you have other things also going on that week, you want to get an early start; you might choose to block an hour a week ahead on Saturday morning, to brainstorm your topic, and jot some preliminary notes. Monday evening is a good time to spend two hours on the next step or prewriting activities. Since you have a lot of time open Tuesday afternoon, you decide that’s the best time to reserve to write the first draft; you block out three or four hours. You make a note on the schedule to leave time open that afternoon to see your instructor during office hours in case you have any questions on the paper; if not, you’ll finish the draft or start revising. Thursday, you schedule a last block of time to revise and polish the final draft due tomorrow.

If you’re surprised by this amount of planning, you may be the kind of student who used to think, “The paper’s due Friday—I have enough time Thursday afternoon, so I’ll write it then.” What’s wrong with that? First, college work is more demanding than many first-year students realize, and the instructor expects higher-quality work than you can churn out quickly without revising. Second, if you are tired on Thursday because you didn’t sleep well Wednesday night, you may be much less productive than you hoped—and without a time buffer, you’re forced to turn in a paper that is not your best work.

Figure 2.3 “Example of a Student’s Weekly Planner Page with Class Times and Important Study Sessions” shows what one student’s schedule looks like for a week. This is intended only to show you one way to block out time—you’ll quickly find a way that works best for you.
Here are some more tips for successful schedule planning:

- Studying is often most effective immediately after a class meeting. If your schedule allows, block out appropriate study time after class periods.
- Be realistic about time when you make your schedule. If your class runs to four o’clock and it takes you twenty minutes to wrap things up and reach your study location, don’t figure you’ll have a full hour of study between four o’clock and five o’clock.
- Don’t overdo it. Few people can study four or five hours nonstop, and scheduling extended time periods like that may just set you up for failure.
• Schedule social events that occur at set times, but just leave holes in the schedule for other activities. Enjoy those open times and recharge your energies!

• Try to schedule some time for exercise at least three days a week.

• Plan to use your time between classes wisely. If three days a week you have the same hour free between two classes, what should you do with those three hours? Maybe you need to eat, walk across campus, or run an errand. But say you have an average forty minutes free at that time on each day. Instead of just frittering the time away, use it to review your notes from the previous class or for the coming class or to read a short assignment. Over the whole term, that forty minutes three times a week adds up to a lot of study time.

• If a study activity is taking longer than you had scheduled, look ahead and adjust your weekly planner to prevent the stress of feeling behind.

• If you maintain your schedule on your computer or smartphone, it’s still a good idea to print and carry it with you. Don’t risk losing valuable study time if you’re away from the device.

• If you’re not paying close attention to everything in your planner, use a colored highlighter to mark the times blocked out for really important things.

• When following your schedule, pay attention to starting and stopping times. If you planned to start your test review at four o’clock after an hour of reading for a different class, don’t let the reading run long and take time away from studying for the test.

**YOUR DAILY TO-DO LIST**

People use to-do lists in different ways, and you should find what works best for you. As with your planner, consistent use of your to-do list will make it an effective habit.

Some people prefer not to carry their planner everywhere but instead copy the key information for the day onto a to-do list. Using this approach, your daily to-do list starts out with your key scheduled activities and then adds other things you hope to do today.

Some people use their to-do list only for things not on their planner, such as short errands, phone calls or e-mail, and the like. This still includes important things—but they’re not scheduled out for specific times.

Although we call it a daily list, the to-do list can also include things you may not get to today but don’t want to forget about.

Keeping these things on the list, even if they’re a low priority, helps ensure that eventually you’ll get to it.

Start every day with a fresh to-do list written in a special small notebook or on a clean page in your planner. Check your planner for key activities for the day and check yesterday’s list for items remaining.

Some items won’t require much time, but other activities such as assignments will. Include a time estimate for these so that later you can do them when you have enough free time. If you finish lunch and have twenty-five minutes left before your next class, what things on the list can you do now and check off?

Finally, use some system to prioritize things on your list. Some students use a 1, 2, 3 or A, B, C rating system for importance. Others simply highlight or circle items that are critical to get done today. Figure 2.4 “Examples of Two Different Students’ To-Do Lists” shows two different to-do lists—each very different but each effective for the student using it.
Figure 2.4 Examples of Two Different Students’ To-Do Lists

Use whatever format works best for you to prioritize or highlight the most important activities.

Here are some more tips for effectively using your daily to-do list:

- Be specific: “Read history chapter 2 (30 pages)” — not “History homework.”
- Put important things high on your list where you’ll see them every time you check the list.
- Make your list at the same time every day so that it becomes a habit.
- Don’t make your list overwhelming. If you added EVERYTHING you eventually need to do, you could end up with so many things on the list that you’d never read through them all. If you worry you might forget something, write it in the margin of your planner’s page a week or two away.
- USE your list. Lists often include little things that may take only a few minutes to do, so check your list any time during the day you have a moment free.
- Cross out or check off things after you’ve done them — doing this becomes rewarding.
- Don’t use your to-do list to procrastinate. Don’t pull it out to find something else you just “have” to do instead of studying!
TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR STUDENTS WHO WORK

If you’re both working and taking classes, you seldom have large blocks of free time. Avoid temptations to stay up very late studying, for losing sleep can lead to a downward spiral in performance at both work and school. Instead, try to follow these guidelines:

- If possible, adjust your work or sleep hours so that you don’t spend your most productive times at work. If your job offers flex time, arrange your schedule to be free to study at times when you perform best.

- Try to arrange your class and work schedules to minimize commuting time. If you are a part-time student taking two classes, taking classes back-to-back two or three days a week uses less time than spreading them out over four or five days. Working four ten-hour days rather than five eight-hour days reduces time lost to travel, getting ready for work, and so on.

- If you can’t arrange an effective schedule for classes and work, consider online courses that allow you to do most of the work on your own time.

- Use your daily and weekly planner conscientiously. Any time you have thirty minutes or more free, schedule a study activity.

- Consider your “body clock” when you schedule activities. Plan easier tasks for those times when you’re often fatigued and reserve alert times for more demanding tasks.

- Look for any "hidden" time potentials. Maybe you prefer the thirty-minute drive to work over a forty-five-minute train ride. But if you can read on the train, that’s a gain of ninety minutes every day at the cost of thirty minutes longer travel time. An hour a day can make a huge difference in your studies.

- Can you do quick study tasks during slow times at work? Take your class notes with you and use even five minutes of free time wisely.

- Remember your long-term goals. You need to work, but you also want to finish your college program. If you have the opportunity to volunteer for some overtime, consider whether it’s really worth it. Sure, the extra money would help, but could the extra time put you at risk for not doing well in your classes?

- Be as organized on the job as you are academically. Use your planner and to-do list for work matters, too. The better organized you are at work, the less stress you’ll feel—and the more successful you’ll be as a student also.

- If you have a family as well as a job, your time is even more limited. In addition to the previous tips, try some of the strategies that follow.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH FAMILY

Living with family members often introduces additional time stresses. You may have family obligations that require careful time management. Use all the strategies described earlier, including family time in your daily plans the same as you would hours spent at work. Don’t assume that you’ll be “free” every hour you’re home, because family events or a family member’s need for your assistance may occur at unexpected times. Schedule your important academic work well ahead and in blocks of time you control. See also the earlier suggestions for controlling your space: you may need to use the library or another space to ensure you are not interrupted or distracted during important study times.

Students with their own families are likely to feel time pressures. After all, you can’t just tell your partner or kids that you’ll see them in a couple years when you’re not so busy with job and college! In addition to all the planning and study strategies
discussed so far, you also need to manage your family relationships and time spent with family. While there’s no magical solution for making more hours in the day, even with this added time pressure there are ways to balance your life well:

- Talk everything over with your family. If you’re going back to school, your family members may not have realized changes will occur. Don’t let them be shocked by sudden household changes. Keep communication lines open so that your partner and children feel they’re together with you in this new adventure. Eventually you will need their support.

- Work to enjoy your time together, whatever you’re doing. You may not have as much time together as previously, but cherish the time you do have—even if it’s washing dishes together or cleaning house. If you’ve been studying for two hours and need a break, spend the next ten minutes with family instead of checking e-mail or watching television. Ultimately, the important thing is BEING TOGETHER, not going out to movies or dinners or the special things you used to do when you had more time. Look forward to being with family and appreciate every moment you are together, and they will share your attitude.

- Combine activities to get the most out of time. Don’t let your children watch television or play video games off by themselves while you’re cooking dinner, or you may find you have only twenty minutes family time together while eating. Instead, bring the family together in the kitchen and give everyone something to do. You can have a lot of fun together and share the day’s experiences, and you won’t feel so bad then if you have to go off and study by yourself.

- Share the load. Even children who are very young can help with household chores to give you more time. Attitude is everything: try to make it fun, the whole family pulling together—not something they “have” to do and may resent, just because Mom or Dad went back to school. (Remember, your kids will reach college age someday, and you want them to have a good attitude about college.) As they get older, they can do their own laundry, cook meals, and get themselves off to school, and older teens can run errands and do the grocery shopping. They will gain in the process by becoming more responsible and independent.

- Schedule your study time based on family activities. If you face interruptions from young children in the early evening, use that time for something simple like reviewing class notes. When you need more quiet time for concentrated reading, wait until they’ve gone to bed.

- Be creative with child care. Usually options are available, possibly involving extended family members, sitters, older siblings, cooperative child care with other adult students, as well as child-care centers. After a certain age, you can take your child along to campus when you attend an evening course, if there is somewhere the child can quietly read. At home, let your child have a friend over to play with. Network with other older students and learn what has worked for them. Explore all possibilities to ensure you have time to meet your college goals. And don’t feel guilty: “day care babies” grow up just as healthy psychologically as those raised in the home full time.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

Student athletes often face unique time pressures because of the amount of time required for training, practice, and competition. During some parts of the year, athletics may involve as many hours as a full-time job. The athletic schedule can be grueling, involving weekend travel and intensive blocks of time. You can be exhausted after workouts or competitions, affecting how well you can concentrate on studies thereafter. Students on athletic scholarships often feel their sport is their most important reason for being in college, and this priority can affect their attitudes toward studying. For all of these reasons, student athletes face special time management challenges. Here are some tips for succeeding in both your sport and academics:
• Realize that even if your sport is more important to you, you risk everything if you don’t also succeed in your academics. Failing one class in your first year won’t get you kicked out, but you’ll have to make up that class—and you’ll end up spending more time on the subject than if you’d studied more to pass it the first time.

• It’s critical to plan ahead. If you have a big test or a paper due the Monday after a big weekend game, start early. Use your weekly planner to plan well in advance, making it a goal, for example, to have the paper done by Friday—instead of thinking you can magically get it done Sunday night after victory celebrations. Working ahead will also free your mind to focus better on your sport.

• Accept that you have two priorities—your sport and your classes—and that both come before your social life. That’s just how it is—what you have accepted in your choice to be a college athlete. If it helps, think of your classes as your job; you have to “go to study” the same as others “go to work.”

• Use your planner to take advantage of any downtime you have during the day between classes and at lunch. Other students may seem to have the luxury of studying during much of the afternoon when you’re at practice, and maybe they can get away with hanging out between classes, but you don’t have that time available, at least not during the season. You need to use all the time you can find to keep up with your studying.

• Stay on top of your courses. If you allow yourself to start slipping behind, maybe telling yourself you’ll have more time later on to catch up, just the opposite will happen. Once you get behind, you’ll lose momentum and find it more difficult to understand what’s going on the class. Eventually the stress will affect your athletic performance also.

• Get help when you need it. Many athletic departments offer tutoring services or referrals for extra help. But don’t wait until you’re at risk for failing a class before seeking help. A tutor won’t take your test or write your paper for you—they can only help you focus in to use your time productively in your studies. You still have to want to succeed.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

• People “use” time very differently. To develop strategies for managing your time, discover your time personality and observe how much time you spend in different activities in the course of a week.

• Plan your schedule with two hours of study time for each hour in class. Use your most alert times of day, break up large tasks into smaller pieces and stages, take breaks to help you stay focused, avoid distractions, and reward yourself for successful accomplishments.

• Procrastination has many different causes for different people but is a problem for most students. Different techniques can help you battle procrastination so you can get the job done.

• Use a weekly calendar planner to block out study times and plan well ahead for examinations and key assignments to achieve success in school.

• Use a daily to-do list along with your weekly planner to avoid overlooking even smaller tasks and to make the most of your time throughout the day.

• Students who work, live with family, or are athletes often face significant time pressures and must make a special effort to stay organized and plan ahead for efficient studying.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. What time(s) of day are you at your most alert? _________________________
   What time(s) of day are you at your least alert? _________________________

2. What category of DISCRETIONARY activity (not sleeping, working, studying, etc.) represents your largest use of time? _________________________
   Can you reduce the time you spend in that activity if you need more time for your coursework? _________________________

3. For each of the following statements about time management, circle T for true or F for false:

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4. Without looking at your planner, to-do list, or anything else in writing, quickly write a list of everything you need to do in the next few days. Then look through your planner, to-do list, and any other class notes for anything you missed. What might you have forgotten or delayed if you weren’t keeping a planner and to-do list?
5. Without looking at your weekly or daily schedule, think about your typical week and the times you have free when not in class, working, studying, eating, socializing, and so on. List at least three “downtimes” when you don’t usually study that you can use for coursework when necessary.

_________________________________________
_________________________________________
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2.4 CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

- It’s important to have short-, mid-, and long-term goals that are specific, realistic, time oriented, and attainable. Goals help you set priorities and remain motivated and committed to your college success.

- Attitude is the largest factor determining success in college. Work to stay positive and surround yourself with positive people, and you’ll find you are motivated to carry out the activities that will help you succeed in your courses.

- Planning ahead, and then following your plan, is the essence of time management. Organize both your space and your time to develop the best study habits. Learning strategies to stay on track, avoid distractions of people and technology, and to prevent procrastination will pay off not only in college but also in your career thereafter.

- Plan your use of time based on your “time personality” after assessing how you typically use your free time. Then use an academic weekly and daily planner to schedule blocks of time most efficiently. Start well ahead of deadlines to prevent last-minute stresses and problems completing your work.

- Because many college students have significant time commitments with work, family, athletics, or other activities, time management techniques are among the most important skills you can learn to help ensure your success.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Describe the characteristics of well-written goals.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. List at least four or five things you can do to develop a positive attitude.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. What have you personally found helps motivate you to sit down and start studying?

__________________________________________________________________

4. Describe the most important characteristics of an effective study space.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
5. How can you prepare for unplanned interruptions while studying?

__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

6. After you have analyzed how you typically spend time and have blocked out study periods for the week, you may still have difficulty using that study time well. List additional time management strategies that can help you make the most of the time that you do have.

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7. If you find yourself procrastinating, what can you do to get back on track?

__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  

8. What can go wrong if you try to micromanage every minute of the day?

__________________________________________________________________

What should you do, instead?

__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

9. Realizing that any action repeated consistently and frequently will soon become a habit, what should you do with your academic planner every day and every week to establish a strong habit that will help ensure your success in all your college courses to come?

__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________
OUTSIDE THE BOOK

Make seven copies of the “Study Journal” page following. Near the end of the day, every day for the next week, spend a few minutes reviewing your day and writing answers to those questions. At the end of the week, review what you have written and summarize what you observe about your study tendencies by answering these questions:

1. Did you usually get as much, more, or less schoolwork done as you had scheduled for the day?

________________________________________________________________________

If you got less done, was the problem due to scheduling more time than you actually had, or not making effective use of the scheduled blocks of time?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. List the steps you will follow to make your scheduling process work better next week.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. What other things did you do repeatedly during the week when you should have been studying?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. What were the most common distractions (people or other interruptions) during the week when you were studying?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. List ways you can control your study space to avoid these activities and prevent these distractions next week.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. Do you see a pattern in the activities you least enjoyed and had difficulty getting started on?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. Review Chapter 2 “Staying Motivated, Organized, and On Track™” for specific strategies to use to stay focused and motivated. Make a list here of five or more things you will do differently next week if studying becomes difficult or less enjoyable.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
### Study Journal for Date: __________

**a.** My daily planner had scheduled _____ hours of academic time today (not counting time in class). It turned out that I actually spent about _____ hours on my studies.

At some times I was scheduled to study or do academic work, I was doing this instead:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

**b.** The academic time I most enjoyed today was doing ____________

__________________________________________________________________
I enjoyed this most because ________________________________

**c.** The academic time I least most enjoyed today was doing ____________

__________________________________________________________________
I enjoyed this least because ________________________________

**d.** I had the most difficulty getting started on this study activity:

__________________________________________________________________
Why?

__________________________________________________________________

**e.** I did my studying and other academic work in these places:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

**f.** During the time I was studying, I was interrupted by these people:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Other interruptions included the following (phone calls, e-mail, etc.):

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
MAKE AN ACTION LIST

**Goals**
I have not yet set realistic, specific, and time-oriented goals for the following:

In the coming weeks and months, I will think about and clarify these goals:

**Planning Ahead**
Too often in the past, I have not started early enough on these kinds of school assignments and studying:

To ensure I successfully plan ahead to complete all work on time in the future, I will do the following:

**Attitude**
I have most difficulty maintaining a positive attitude at the following times:

I can do the following things to "adjust" my attitude at these times to help ensure my success:

**Focus and Motivation**
When I'm not feeling motivated to work on my studies, I often do these things instead:

I will try to use these strategies to keep motivated and focused on my studies in the future:

**Study Space**
I have the following problems with the places where I usually study now:

I will make the following changes in my study space (or I will try these new places) to help prevent distractions:
Time Management
I often feel I don't have enough time for my college work for the following reasons:

I will start using these techniques to make sure I use my available time well:
CHAPTER 3: IT’S CRITICAL

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand what critical thinking is and why it’s important.
2. Identify logical pitfalls.
3. Discover assumptions and biases.
4. Practice problem solving and decision making.
5. Know the power of questions.
6. Evaluate information (on and off the Internet).

AMERICANS HAVE ACCESS TO...

- 1 million NEW books each year
- 5,500 magazines
- 10,500 radio stations
- 65,000 iPhone apps
- 1,000,000,000,000 Web pages

In today’s environment, it is not so critical to “know” a great deal of information. The list above indicates how much information we can easily access. In fact, the abundance of information might be the greater challenge. Your success will depend on what you can do with the information, not just on what you know. How we filter and use that abundance of data is the reason critical thinking has become so important today.

Critical thinking is the ability to discover the value of an idea, a set of beliefs, a claim, or an argument. It requires you to use logic and reasoning to evaluate evidence or information to make a decision or reach a conclusion. Critical thinking is

- a foundation for effective communication,
- the principal skill used in effective decision making,
- at the core of creating new knowledge,
- a way to uncover bias and prejudices.

Critical thinking is a part of everyday life, too. Decisions you make can have a lasting impact on your life, and these decisions benefit from critical thinking. Did you ever decide to quit smoking or to lose weight? Were you successful? How did you decide to attend the college you are in? Was that the right choice for you? In any of these cases, could you have made a better decision if you had better or more information?
3.1 THE CRITICAL THINKING PROCESS

The critical thinking process is really nothing more than asking the right questions to understand a problem or issue and then gathering the data you need to complete the decision or take sides on an issue.

What is the problem or issue I am considering really about? Understanding this is key to successful critical thinking. What is the objective? A position? A decision? Are you deciding what candidate in an election will do a better overall job, or are you looking to strengthen the political support for a particular cause? Are you really against a recommendation from your dad, or are you using the issue to establish your independence?

Do you understand the terms related to the issue? Are you in agreement with the proponent’s definitions? For example, if you are evaluating a quotation on the health-care system for use in a paper, your objective might be to decide to use the quotation or not, but before you can make that decision you need to understand what the writer is really saying. If a term like “family” is used, for example, does it mean direct relations or extended family?

What are my options? What are choices that are available to you (if you are making a decision), or what are the “sides” (in the case of a position) you might choose to agree with? What are their differences? What are the likely consequences of each option? In making a decision, it might be helpful to ask yourself, “What is the worst thing that might happen in each scenario?”

Examining different points of view is very important; there may be dozens of alternative viewpoints to a particular issue—and the validity of each can change depending on circumstances. A position that is popular or politically correct today may not have been a year ago, and there is no guarantee it will be right in the future. Likewise, a solution to a personal problem that was successful for your roommate may not apply to you. Remember also that sometimes the best option might be a combination of the options you identify initially.

What do I know about each option? First, make sure you have all the information about each option. Do you have all the information to support each of your likely options? What is still missing? Where can you get the information you need? Keep an open mind and don’t dismiss supporting information on any position before you evaluate it carefully.

How good is my information? Now it’s time to evaluate the quality of the support of each option or point of view. Evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of each piece of supporting evidence. Are all the relevant facts presented? Are some facts presented in misleading ways? Are enough examples presented to support the premise? Consider the source of the supporting information. Who is the expert presenting the facts? That “expert” may have a vested interest in the position. Consider that bias, more for understanding the point of view than for rejecting it. Consider your own opinions (especially when working with emotional issues); are your emotional ties to a point of view getting in your way of clear thinking (your own biases)? If you really like a particular car model, are you giving the financial implications of buying that car a fair consideration? Are there any errors or fallacies in your logic? (See Table 3.1 “Fallacies and How to Avoid Them”.)

Fallacies are defects in logic that weaken arguments. You should learn to identify them in your own thinking so you can strengthen your positions, as well as in the arguments of others when evaluating their strength.
### Table 3.1 Fallacies and How to Avoid Them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fallacy</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>How to Avoid It in Your Own Thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalizations</td>
<td>Making assumptions about a whole group of people based on an inadequate sample.</td>
<td>Engineering students are nerds. My economics class is boring, and my friend says her economic class is boring, too—therefore all economics classes are boring.</td>
<td>What kind of sample are you using? Is it large enough to support the conclusions? You may want to increase your sample size or draw a more modest conclusion by using the word “some” or “many.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Cause</td>
<td>Drawing improper conclusions through sequencing. If A comes before B, then A causes B.</td>
<td>I studied biology last term, and this term I’m taking organic chem, which is very confusing. Biology makes chemistry confusing.</td>
<td>When making causal statements, be sure you can explain the process through which A causes B beyond their mere sequence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalizations</td>
<td>Also known by their Latin names (AD HOMINEM, or “against the man,” and TU QUOQUE, or “you too”). Inserting personalities inappropriately into an argument. Common in political arguments.</td>
<td>AGAINST THE MAN: I won’t support Senator Smith’s education bill. He’s had a mistress and marital problems.</td>
<td>Focus on the merits and supporting data of an argument, not on the personality or behavior of the people making the arguments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone Does It</td>
<td>Also known by its Latin name (AD POPULUM, or “against many”). Justifying an issue based solely on the number of people involved.</td>
<td>YOU TOO: A parent explains the evidence of the risks of binge drinking. The child rejects the arguments, saying, “When you were my age, you drank too.” It’s healthy to drink only soda; millions of American kids do.</td>
<td>The popular position is not always the right one. Be wary of arguments that rely exclusively on one set of numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing to Authority</td>
<td>Using an endorsement from someone as a primary reason for supporting a point of view.</td>
<td>We should oppose higher taxes; Curt Schilling does. Pitcher Curt Schilling may be a credible authority on baseball, but is he an authority on taxes?</td>
<td>Quoting authorities is a valuable tool to build an argument; make sure the authorities you quote are truly subject matter experts on the issue you are discussing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Analogy</td>
<td>Using irrelevant similarities in two objects to draw a conclusion.</td>
<td>Cars and motorcycles are both driven at high speeds on the highway. Car drivers aren’t required to wear helmets, so motorcycle riders shouldn’t have to either.</td>
<td>You can draw an analogy between just about any two objects or ideas. If you are using an analogy, make sure you identify the properties relevant to the argument you are making and see if both share those properties. (In the example, the motorcycle does not provide protection to the rider, but the car does. Equating the two vehicles based on traveling speed is not relevant to the argument.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Dichotomy</td>
<td>Setting up a situation in which it looks like there are only two possible options. If one option is discredited, the other must be accepted.</td>
<td>The classic example here is “America, love it or leave it.”</td>
<td>Examine your own thinking. Are there really only two options? Look for the third option. If you were asked to develop a compromise between the two positions, what would it look like? What would its strengths and weaknesses be?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will need to use critical thinking throughout your college years and beyond. Here are some common critical thinking situations and the kinds of questions you should ask to apply critical thinking. Note that critical thinking is central to themes covered in detail throughout this book.
• **Personal choices.** Examples include “What should I major in?” and “Should I buy a new car?” What do you know about each of your options? What is the quality of that information? Where can you get more (reliable) information? How do those options relate to your financial and emotional needs? What are the pros and cons of each option? Are you open to the points of view of others who may be involved?

• **Reading, listening, note taking, and studying.** What are the core messages of the instructor or author? Why are they important? How do these messages relate to one another or differ?

• **Research papers.** What evidence do you need to support your thesis? What sources are available for that evidence? Are they reliable sources? Are there any fallacies in your argument?

• **Essay questions on exams.** What is the professor really asking you to do? What do you know about the question? What is your personal belief about the question? What are the beliefs or biases of the professor or quoted authors? What are the arguments against your point of view? What are the most important pieces of evidence you should offer to support your answer?

---

**TIPS FOR CRITICAL THINKING**

• Consider all points of view; seriously consider more than two (look for grey areas).

• Keep an open mind.

• Answer three questions about your supporting data:

  1. Is it enough support?
  2. Is it the right support?
  3. Is it credible?

• Look for evidence that contradicts your point of view. Pretend to disagree with the position you are supporting. What parts of your argument are weak? Do you have the supporting facts to overcome that evidence?

• Create a set of criteria you will use to evaluate the strength of information you want to use to support your argument. Ask questions like these:

  1. What is the source of this information?
  2. Is the author well respected in the field?
  3. When was this information developed? Is that important? Why?
  4. Does the author or publisher have an agenda for publishing the information? How does that agenda affect the credibility of the information?

Create a table on which you list your main points, then for each one, list the evidence you have to support it. This method will help you visually identify where you have weak evidence and what points actually lack evidence.

Be willing to admit that you lack information to support a point of view or make a decision. Ask questions or do some focused research to get what you still need.

Make sure that your assumptions and points of view are supported by facts, not opinions.
Learn what types of fallacies you use habitually, and then be on the lookout for them. Writers will often rely on certain types of arguments as a matter of habit. Review some of your old papers to identify which fallacies you need to avoid.

Question your characterizations of others. Are those authorities truly competent in the area you are considering? Are you attacking the opponents of your point of view rather than attacking their arguments?

Be careful of broad generalizations. Claims that use absolute words like “all,” “none,” “always,” “never,” “no one,” and “everyone” require much more proof than claims that use words like “most,” “some,” “often,” “rarely,” “sometimes,” and so on.

WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
One of the most consistent uses for critical thinking in your college work is in considering the value of research material and deciding how to use it. The Internet gives you access to an almost unlimited amount of data, and you must choose what to use carefully. Following are some guidelines.

1. Look at the URL, the Web address. It can give you important information about the reliability and intentions of the site. Start with the page publisher. Have you heard of this source before? If so, would you consider it a reliable source for the kind of material you are about to read? Now consider the domain type in the URL, which follows the period after the publisher: “.com” and “.biz” are used by commercial enterprises, “.org” is normally used by nonprofit organizations, and “.edu” is reserved for educational institutions. None of these is necessarily bad or good, but they may give you a sense behind the motivation for publishing this material. Are you dealing with a company or the Web site of an individual—and how might that affect the quality of the information on that site?

2. What can you learn from poking around with navigation tabs or buttons, and what do they tell you about the objective of the Web site? Look for a tab labeled “About Us” or “Biography.”

3. Consider what others are saying about the site. Does the author offer references, reviews, or quotations about the material? What do they say? Check the blogosphere to see what other people think of the author or Web site.

4. Trust your own impressions about the material. Is the information consistent with what you already know?

5. Ask yourself why the Web site was written. (To inform? To provide data or facts? To sell something? To promote a cause? To parody?) Based on what you learned, ask yourself if the information from this Web site is reliable for your needs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Critical thinking is evaluating the strength of your arguments, data, and information.

- Three questions to ask about the support for an argument or position:
  1. Is it enough support?
  2. Is it the right support?
  3. Is it credible?

- Weaknesses in arguments are most commonly logical fallacies. Recognizing them will help evaluate the strength of an argument effectively.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

Figure 3.2 Crossword: Full of Fallacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fallacy is an error in ________________.</td>
<td>2. Appealing to ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Also known as the “you too” fallacy</td>
<td>5. Ad ________________; everybody does it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. False ________________; a fallacy based on the order of events</td>
<td>7. To draw conclusions based on a small sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A tendency or inclination which prevents fair consideration of a point of view</td>
<td>9. False ________________; a fallacy on forced choice between only two options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Weak ________________; irrelevant comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 SEARCHING FOR “AHA!”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Use creative thinking: the competitive advantage in the twenty-first century.
2. Understand the difference between creative thinking and free-form thinking.
3. Practice guidelines for creating ideas.
4. Use rules and directions to create effectively.
5. Understand group creativity: how to conduct effective brainstorming.

*America still has the right stuff to thrive. We still have the most creative, diverse, innovative culture and open society—in a world where the ability to imagine and generate new ideas with speed and to implement them through global collaboration is the most important competitive advantage.*

-Thomas Friedman [1]

Let’s face it: many jobs are subject to outsourcing. The more menial or mechanical the job, the greater the likelihood that there will be someone overseas ready to do the job for a lot less pay. But generating new ideas, fostering innovation, and developing processes or plans to implement them are something that cannot be easily farmed out, and these are strengths of the American collegiate education. Businesses want problem solvers, not just doers. Developing your creative thinking skills will position you for lifelong success in whatever career you choose.

Creative thinking is the ability to look at things from a new perspective, to come up with fresh solutions to problems. It is a deliberate process that allows you to think in ways that improve the likelihood of generating new ideas or thoughts.

Let’s start by killing a couple of myths:

- **Creativity is an inherited skill.** Creativity is not something people are born with but is a skill that is developed over time with consistent practice. It can be argued that people you think were “born” creative because their parents were creative, too, are creative simply because they have been practicing creative thinking since childhood, stimulated by their parents’ questions and discussions.

- **Creativity is free-form thinking.** While you may want to free yourself from all preconceived notions, there is a recognizable structure to creative thinking. Rules and requirements do not limit creative thinking—they provide the scaffolding on which truly creative solutions can be built. Free-form thinking often lacks direction or an objective; creative thinking is aimed at producing a defined outcome or solution.

Creative thinking involves coming up with new or original ideas; it is the process of seeing the same things others see but seeing them differently. You use skills such as examining associations and relationships, flexibility, elaboration, modification, imagery, and metaphorical thinking. In the process, you will stimulate your curiosity, come up with new approaches to things, and have fun!
TIPS FOR CREATIVE THINKING

- **Feed your curiosity.** Read. Read books, newspapers, magazines, blogs—anything at any time. When surfing the Web, follow links just to see where they will take you. Go to the theatre or movies. Attend lectures. Creative people make a habit of gathering information, because they never know when they might put it to good use. Creativity is often as much about rearranging known ideas as it is about creating a completely new concept. The more “known ideas” you have been exposed to, the more options you’ll have for combining them into new concepts.

- **Develop your flexibility** by looking for a second right answer. Throughout school we have been conditioned to come up with the right answer; the reality is that there is often more than one “right” answer. Examine all the possibilities. Look at the items in Figure 4.3. Which is different from all the others?

  *Figure 4.3*

  a. Apple  
  b. Olives  
  c. Board  
  d. Clams

If you chose C, you’re right; you can’t eat a board. Maybe you chose D; that’s right, too—clams are the only animal on the chart. B is right, as it’s the only item you can make oil from, and A can also be right; it’s the only red item. Each option can be right depending on your point of view. Life is full of multiple answers, and if we go along with only the first most obvious answer, we are in danger of losing the context for our ideas. The value of an idea can only be determined by comparing it with another. Multiple ideas will also help you generate new approaches by combining elements from a variety of “right” answers. In fact, the greatest danger to creative thinking is to have only one idea. Always ask yourself, “What’s the OTHER right answer?”

- **Combine old ideas in new ways.** When King C. Gillette registered his patent for the safety razor, he built on the idea of disposable bottle caps, but his venture didn’t become profitable until he toyed with a watch spring and came up with the idea of how to manufacture inexpensive (therefore disposable) blades. Bottle caps and watch springs are far from men’s grooming materials, but Gillette’s genius was in combining those existing but unlikely ideas. Train yourself to think “out of the box.” Ask yourself questions like, “What is the most ridiculous solution I can come up with for this problem?” or “If I were transported by a time machine back to the 1930s, how would I solve this problem?” You may enjoy watching competitive design, cooking, or fashion shows (TOP CHEF, CHOPPED, PROJECT RUNWAY, etc.); they are great examples of combining old ideas to make new, functional ones.
• **Think metaphorically.** Metaphors are useful to describe complex ideas; they are also useful in making problems more familiar and in stimulating possible solutions. For example, if you were a partner in a company about to take on outside investors, you might use the pie metaphor to clarify your options (a smaller slice of a bigger pie versus a larger slice of a smaller pie). If an organization you are a part of is lacking direction, you may search for a “steady hand at the tiller,” communicating quickly that you want a consistent, nonreactionary, calm leader. Based on that ship-steering metaphor, it will be easier to see which of your potential leaders you might want to support. Your ability to work comfortably with metaphors takes practice. When faced with a problem, take time to think about metaphors to describe it, and the desired solution. Observe how metaphors are used throughout communication and think about why those metaphors are effective. Have you ever noticed that the financial business uses water-based metaphors (cash **FLOW**, **FROZEN** assets, LIQUIDITY) and that meteorologists use war terms (**FRONTS**, wind **FORCE**, storm **SURGE**)? What kinds of metaphors are used in your area of study?

• **Ask.** A creative thinker always questions the way things are: Why are we doing things this way? What were the objectives of this process and the assumptions made when we developed the process? Are they still valid? What if we changed certain aspects? What if our circumstances changed? Would we need to change the process? How? Get in the habit of asking questions—lots of questions.

---

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

• Creative thinking is a requirement for success.

• Creative thinking is a deliberate process that can be learned and practiced.

• Creative thinking involves, but is not limited to, curiosity, flexibility, looking for the second right answer, combining things in new ways, thinking metaphorically, and questioning the way things are.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. **Feed your curiosity.** List five things you will do in the next month that you have never done before (go to the ballet, visit a local museum, try Moroccan food, or watch a foreign movie). Expand your comfort “envelope.” Put them on your calendar.
   
a. ______________________________________________________
   b. ______________________________________________________
   c. ______________________________________________________
   d. ______________________________________________________
   e. ______________________________________________________

   **How many ways can you use it?** Think of as many uses for the following common items as possible. Can you name more than ten?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peanut Butter (PBJ counts as one, regardless of the flavor of jelly)</th>
<th>Paper Clips</th>
<th>Honors Level: Pen Caps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

   **A metaphor for life.** In the movie FORREST GUMP, Forrest states, “Life was like a box of chocolates; you never know what you’re gonna get.” Write your own metaphor for life and share it with your classmates.
**He has eyes in the back of his head.** What if we really had eyes in the backs of our heads? How would life be different? What would be affected? Would we walk backward? Would we get dizzy if we spun in circles? Would it be easy to put mascara on the back eyes? Generate your own questions and answers; let the creative juices flow!

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

### CHAPTER 4: LISTENING, TAKING NOTES, AND REMEMBERING

**WHERE ARE YOU NOW?**

Assess your present knowledge and attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am satisfied with my grades.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I usually feel well prepared for classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I usually understand what is going on in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I find it easy to stay focused in class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I am not shy or self-conscious about asking questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I learn from recorded lectures and podcasts.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I take useful notes in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I go to the instructor’s office when I have a question about an assignment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can successfully study for a test from the notes I have taken.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I use different note-taking methods in different classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I do not have trouble remembering facts and ideas.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO?

Think about how you answered the questions above. Be honest with yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your level of academic achievement at this time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A poor student</th>
<th>An excellent student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the following list, circle the three most important areas in which you think you can improve:

- Preparing for class
- Taking notes on your laptop
- Listening in class
- Using different systems for note taking
- Using seat selection to your advantage
- Remembering facts and figures
- Listening to podcasts
- Remembering ideas and concepts
- Asking good questions
- Choosing a memory method that's right for you
- Taking notes on paper
- Using a memory system

Are there other areas in which you can improve your academic performance? Write down other things you feel you need to work on.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

HOW TO GET THERE

Here’s what we’ll work on in this chapter:

- Setting yourself up for success by following the learning cycle
- Listening actively
- Listening in class
- Asking good questions
- Taking effective notes
- Learning the principal note-taking methods
- Modifying your note-taking methods to meet your learning style and your instructor’s approach to the material
- Understanding how your memory works
- Using your memory effectively
- Learning memory-building tips
**THIS IS NOT LIKE HIGH SCHOOL; THIS IS NOT LIKE WORK**

As you embark on your college career, you have found yourself in an environment like no other. You soon will discover the new social structure, you may be invigorated by a new freedom, and you may be daunted by the number of options you have for activities. Consider some of the differences between college classes and what you likely were used to in high school. These differences are important because they demand you change your behavior if you want to be a successful student.

*Table 4.1 Differences between High School and College Classes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In High School</th>
<th>In College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your teacher would guide you and let you know when you were falling behind.</td>
<td>You are expected to take responsibility for your academic success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your teacher would take attendance and report you when you were absent; the teacher would help you make up the material you missed.</td>
<td>Your instructor rarely takes attendance but expects you to be in class and understand the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your teacher would write assignments on the board and remind you to complete them.</td>
<td>It is up to you to read, save, and follow the course syllabus and to know what material you must read and understand and by when. Since the syllabus makes this clear, instructors will rarely remind you of assignment due dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each class would typically meet three to five times each week with minimal homework each night.</td>
<td>Each class meets less frequently but requires much more work from each student. You should generally count on doing two to three hours of studying for each hour of class. What seems like an eight-hour work day may quickly become fourteen hours or more of academic work. Take responsibility for budgeting your time and not falling behind. In college it is much harder to catch up if you do get behind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teachers are passionate about guiding their students and teaching them to learn.</td>
<td>College instructors are often more passionate about their subject matter than they are about their teaching. But you can tap into their passion for what they are talking about and guide your own learning by asking questions, seeking advice during office hours, and participating in class discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily homework assignments and unit quizzes contributed heavily to your grade. Oftentimes a teacher would offer extra credit opportunities to give students a chance to make up for lapses along the way.</td>
<td>Your grade in a course may be determined primarily by one or two exams and a long-term project or paper. A subpar performance on a single exam or paper can really drag your grades down. Identify the assignments on the syllabus and get to work on them early and consistently. Don’t put off assignments or studying for tests until the last minute! In college, extra credit is not an option to fall back on!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You were told what you should study and when. You followed a predetermined curriculum set by state and local officials. Even your parents and guidance counselors had a major say in your “elective” choices.</td>
<td>You determine what you want to learn. It is your education—not someone else’s. Find your passion and follow it! You will be a much better student if you do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1 SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Identify the roles of listening and note taking in the learning cycle.

Too many students try to get the grade just by going to class, maybe a little note taking, and then cramming through the text right before an exam they feel unprepared for. Sound familiar? This approach may have worked for you in high school where tests and quizzes were more frequent and teachers prepared study guides for you, but colleges require you to take responsibility for your learning and to be better prepared.

Most students simply have not learned how to study and don’t understand how learning works. As we discussed in, learning is actually a cycle of four steps: preparing, absorbing, capturing, and reviewing. When you get in the habit of paying attention to this cycle, it becomes relatively easy to study well. But you must use all four steps.

This chapter focuses on listening, a key skill for learning new material, and note taking, the most important skill in the capturing phase of the cycle. These skills are closely related. Good listening skills make you a better note taker, and taking good notes can help you listen better. Both are key study skills to help you do better in your classes.

Figure 4.2 The Learning Cycle

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- College is very different from high school.
- You must take personal responsibility for your learning.
- Time management is crucial.
- Learning is a cycle of four steps: preparing, absorbing, capturing, and reviewing.
4.2 ARE YOU READY FOR CLASS?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Prepare for listening in class and taking notes.
2. Use a syllabus.

A professional athlete wouldn’t take the field without warming up first. An effective student won’t go to a class without preparing for it first. To get the most out of a class, you need to get yourself in the right frame of mind. This does not take a lot of time, but it greatly increases your ability to listen actively and take good notes.

Like a good athlete, first you need to get psyched. Clearly visualize your goals. Thinking about the following questions may help:

- What do I want to get out of the class?
- What is the main idea the class will cover?
- How will today’s class help me do better in this course?

Go to class with confidence. The best way to achieve this is to start early and be sure you’ve completed any assignment the instructor gave you in the last class. Think about how today’s material will tie into what you’ve already learned. You should also review the course syllabus to see what the instructor expects to cover in the class and how it relates to what you have learned so far.

Be physically prepared, too:

- Make sure you are getting enough sleep and eating nutritious meals, including breakfast. It’s hard to focus on learning when you’re hungry.
- Make sure you have all materials you’ll need for class (paper, pens, laptop, books, etc.).
- Be punctual. Give yourself plenty of time to get into your seat and organize your space. If you are late, you’ll struggle to get into the right mind-set for listening, and you won’t feel in control of your learning as you try to catch up with the class. If you’re tardy, you also create a distraction for your classmates—and the instructor, who will take notice!
- Clear away all other distractions before the instructor starts. Remember that putting your cell phone on “vibrate” may still distract you—so turn it off, all the way off.

Now, take a deep breath, focus on the instructor, and listen and learn!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To get the most out of a class, get yourself in the right frame of mind.
- Clearly visualize your goals and approach the class with confidence.
- Be physically prepared: rested, punctual, and not distracted.
4.3 ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Listen actively in social situations and in class environments.
2. Apply strategies that make listening more effective.
3. Ask good questions.

Are you a good listener? Most of us like to think we are, but when we really think about it, we recognize that we are often only half listening. We’re distracted, thinking about other things, or formulating what we are going to say in reaction to what we are hearing before the speaker has even finished. Effective listening is one of the most important learning tools you can have in college. And it is a skill that will benefit you on the job and help your relationships with others. Listening is nothing more than purposefully focusing on what a speaker is saying with the objective of understanding.

This definition is straightforward, but there are some important concepts that deserve a closer look. “Purposefully focusing” implies that you are actively processing what the speaker is saying, not just letting the sounds of their voice register in your senses. “With the objective of understanding” means that you will learn enough about what the speaker is saying to be able to form your own thoughts about the speaker’s message. Listening is an active process, as opposed to hearing, which is passive.

You listen to others in many situations: to interact with friends, to get instructions for a task, or to learn new material. There are two general types of listening situations: where you will be able to interact freely with the speaker (everyday conversations, small discussion classes, business meetings) and where interaction is limited (lectures and Webcasts).

In interactive situations, you should apply the basic principles of active listening (see “Principles of Active Listening”). These are not hard to understand, but they are hard to implement and require practice to use them effectively.

PRINCIPLES OF ACTIVE LISTENING

1. Focus on what is being said. Give the speaker your undivided attention. Clear your mind of anything else. Don’t prejudge. You want to understand what the person is saying; you don’t need to agree with it.
2. Repeat what you just heard. Confirm with the speaker that what you heard is what he or she said.
3. Ask speaker to expand or clarify. If you are unsure you understand, ask questions; don’t assume.
4. Look for nonverbal signals as well as the words used. Nonverbal messages come from facial expressions, body positioning, arm gestures, and tone of voice. Confirm these body language messages just as you would verbal messages by saying, for example, “You seem very excited about this idea.”
5. Listen for requests. A speaker will often hide a request as a statement of a problem. If a friend says, “I hate math!” this may mean, “Can you help me figure out a solution to this problem?”

ACTIVITY: LISTENING WITH YOUR WHOLE BODY

Think of a person you consider an excellent listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what she does, not what she is saying. Describe what actions and postures she uses to show she is listening. Put this list on the left-hand side of the page.

Think of a person you consider a poor listener. Picture that person clearly in your mind. Focus on what he does, not what he is saying. Describe what actions and postures he uses to show he is not listening. Put this list on the right-hand side of the page.
Now compare these lists with your own behavior. How many of the body language signals from each side do you think you exhibit? How can you add more of the left column’s attitudes and actions to your own behaviors? How can you control those behaviors you recognize in yourself from the right column?

Listening in a classroom or lecture hall to learn can be challenging because you are limited by how—and how much—you can interact with an instructor during the class. The following strategies help make listening at lectures more effective and learning more fun.

1. **Get your mind in the right space.** Prepare yourself mentally to receive the information the speaker is presenting by following the previous prep questions and by doing your assignments (instructors build upon work presented earlier).

2. **Get yourself in the right space.** Sit toward the front of the room where you can make eye contact with the instructor easily. Most instructors read the body language of the students in the front rows to gauge how they are doing and if they are losing the class. Instructors also believe students who sit near the front of the room take their subject more seriously and are more willing to give them help when needed or to give them the benefit of the doubt when making a judgment call while assigning grades.

3. **Focus on what is being said.** Eliminate distractions. Turn your cell phone off and pack it away in your backpack. If you are using your laptop for notes, close all applications except the one that you use to take notes. Clear your mind and keep quiet. Listen for new ideas. Think like an investigative reporter: you don’t just want to accept what is being said passively—you want to question the material and be convinced that it makes sense.

4. **Look for signals.** Each instructor has a different way of telling you what is important. Some will repeat or paraphrase an idea; others will raise (or lower) their voices; still others will write related words on the board. Learn what signals your instructors tend to use and be on the lookout for them. When they use that tactic, the idea they are presenting needs to go in your notes and in your mind—and don’t be surprised if it appears on a test or quiz!

5. **Listen for what is not being said.** If an instructor doesn’t cover a subject, or covers it only minimally, this signals that that material is not as important as other ideas covered in greater length.

6. **Sort the information.** Decide what is important and what is not, what is clear and what is confusing, and what is new material and what is review. This mental organizing will help you remember the information, take better notes, and ask better questions.

7. **Take notes.** We cover taking notes in much greater detail later in this chapter, but for now think about how taking notes can help recall what your instructor said and how notes can help you organize your thoughts for asking questions.

8. **Ask questions.** Asking questions is one of the most important things you can do in class. Most obviously it allows you to clear up any doubts you may have about the material, but it also helps you take ownership of (and therefore remember) the material. Good questions often help instructors expand upon their ideas and make the material more relevant to students. Thinking through the material critically in order to prepare your questions helps you organize your new knowledge and sort it into mental categories that will help you remember it.

A note about tape-recording lectures: You may want to record a lecture to double-check what you heard in class, but it’s usually not a good idea. Depending on a recording may lead you to listen less effectively and think less actively. Additionally, many instructors do not allow students to record their lectures, so recording is usually not even an option.
DEALING WITH SPECIAL LISTENING CHALLENGES. WHAT TO DO IF...

- **Your instructor speaks too fast.** Crank up your preparation. The more you know about the subject, the more you’ll be able to pick up from the instructor. Exchange class notes with other students to fill in gaps in notes. Visit the instructor during office hours to clarify areas you may have missed. You might ask the instructor—very politely, of course—to slow down, but habits like speaking fast are hard to break!

- **Your instructor has a heavy accent.** Sit as close to the instructor as possible. Make connections between what the instructor seems to be saying and what he or she is presenting on the board or screen. Ask questions when you don’t understand. Visit the instructor during office hours; the more you speak with the instructor the more likely you will learn to understand the accent.

- **Your instructor speaks softly or mumbles.** Sit as close to the instructor as possible and try to hold eye contact as much as possible. Check with other students if they are having problems listening, too; if so, you may want to bring the issue up with the instructor. It may be that the instructor is not used to the lecture hall your class is held in and can easily make adjustments.

NOW THAT’S A GOOD QUESTION...

Are you shy about asking questions? Do you think that others in the class will ridicule you for asking a dumb question? Students sometimes feel this way because they have never been taught how to ask questions. Practice these steps, and soon you will be on your way to customizing each course to meet YOUR needs and letting the instructor know you value the course.

- **Be prepared.** Doing your assignments for a class or lecture will give you a good idea about the areas you are having trouble with and will help you frame some questions ahead of time.

- **Position yourself for success.** Sit near the front of the class. It will be easier for you to make eye contact with the instructor as you ask the question. Also, you won’t be intimidated by a class full of heads turning to stare at you as you ask your question.

- **Don’t wait.** Ask your questions as soon as the instructor has finished a thought. Being one of the first students to ask a question also will ensure that your question is given the time it deserves and won’t be cut short by the end of class.

- **In a lecture class, write your questions down.** Make sure you jot your questions down as they occur to you. Some may be answered in the course of the lecture, but if the instructor asks you to hold your questions until the end of class, you’ll be glad you have a list of the items you need the instructor to clarify or expand on.

- **Ask specific questions.** “I don’t understand” is a statement, not a question. Give the instructor guidance about what you are having trouble with. “Can you clarify the use of the formula for determining velocity?” is a better way of asking for help. If you ask your question at the end of class, give the instructor some context for your question by referring to the part of the lecture that triggered the question. For example, “Professor, you said the Union troops were emboldened by Lincoln’s leadership. Was this throughout the Civil War, or only after Gettysburg?”

- **Don’t ask questions for the sake of asking questions.** If your question is not thought out, or if it appears that you are asking the question to try to look smart, instructors will see right through you!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In all interactive learning situations, apply the basic principles of active listening.
- Focus on what is being said, confirm that you heard the right message, ask for any clarification you need, watch for nonverbal messages, and listen for requests.
- Specific strategies are helpful for listening well in a lecture hall.
- Be ready to compensate if your instructor speaks too fast, has a heavy accent that makes understanding difficult for you, or speaks too softly.
- Don’t be shy about asking questions. Asking questions is easier when you are prepared and positioned for success.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. List two things you should do before the class to prepare yourself for active listening.
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. Where should you sit in the classroom? Why?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. What are some of the ways instructors signal important material?
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

4. What are the four primary methods of note taking?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain why taking notes is important.
2. Use the four primary methods of note taking: lists, outlines, concept maps, and the Cornell method.
3. Define which methods support your learning style and the instructor’s teaching style.
4. Apply strategies to make note taking more effective.
5. Use some effective strategies if you happen to miss a class.
6. Organize your notes into effective study guides.
7. Use teacher handouts to complement your notes.
8. Determine what to do with your notes after the course is complete.

Everybody takes notes, or at least everybody claims to. But if you take a close look, many who are claiming to take notes on their laptops are actually surfing the Web, and paper notebooks are filled with doodles interrupted by a couple of random words with an asterisk next to them reminding you that “This is important!” In college, these approaches will not work. In college, your instructors expect YOU to make connections between class lectures and reading assignments; they expect YOU to create an opinion about the material presented; they expect YOU to make connections between the material and life beyond college. Your notes are your road maps for these thoughts. Do you take good notes? After learning to listen, note taking is the most important skill to ensure your success in a class.

Effective note taking is important because it
• supports your listening efforts,
• allows you to test your understanding of the material,
• helps you remember the material better when you write key ideas down,
• gives you a sense of what the instructor thinks is important,
• creates your “ultimate study guide.”

There are various forms of taking notes, and which one you choose depends on both your personal style and the instructor’s approach to the material. Each can be used in a notebook, index cards, or in a digital form on your laptop. No specific type is good for all students and all situations, so we recommend that you develop your own style, but you should also be ready to
modify it to fit the needs of a specific class or instructor. To be effective, all of these methods require you to listen actively and to think; merely jotting down words the instructor is saying will be of little use to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>When to Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lists</td>
<td>A sequential listing of ideas as they are presented. Lists may be short phrases or complete paragraphs describing ideas in more detail.</td>
<td>This method is what most students use as a fallback if they haven’t learned other methods. This method typically requires a lot of writing, and you may find that you are not keeping up with the professor. It is not easy for students to prioritize ideas in this method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlines</td>
<td>The outline method places most important ideas along the left margin, which are numbered with roman numerals. Supporting ideas to these main concepts are indented and are noted with capital letters. Under each of these ideas, further detail can be added, designated with an Arabic number, a lowercase letter, and so forth.</td>
<td>A good method to use when material presented by the instructor is well organized. Easy to use when taking notes on your computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Maps</td>
<td>When designing a concept map, place a central idea in the center of the page and then add lines and new circles in the page for new ideas. Use arrows and lines to connect the various ideas.</td>
<td>Great method to show relationships among ideas. Also good if the instructor tends to hop from one idea to another and back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell Method</td>
<td>The Cornell method uses a two-column approach. The left column takes up no more than a third of the page and is often referred to as the “cue” or “recall” column. The right column (about two-thirds of the page) is used for taking notes using any of the methods described above or a combination of them. After class or completing the reading, review your notes and write the key ideas and concepts or questions in the left column. You may also include a summary box at the bottom of the page, in which to write a summary of the class or reading in your own words.</td>
<td>The Cornell method can include any of the methods above and provides a useful format for calling out key concepts, prioritizing ideas, and organizing review work. Most colleges recommend using some form of the Cornell method.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The list method is usually not the best choice because it is focused exclusively on capturing as much of what the instructor says as possible, not on processing the information. Most students who have not learned effective study skills use this method, because it's easy to think that this is what note taking is all about. Even if you are skilled in some form of shorthand, you should probably also learn one of the other methods described here, because they are all better at helping you process and remember the material. You may want to take notes in class using the list method, but transcribe your notes to an outline or concept map method after class as a part of your review process. It is always important to review your notes as soon as possible after class and write a summary of the class in your own words.
The advantage of the outline method is that it allows you to prioritize the material. Key ideas are written to the left of the page, subordinate ideas are then indented, and details of the subordinate ideas can be indented further. To further organize your ideas, you can use the typical outlining numbering scheme (starting with roman numerals for key ideas, moving to capital letters on the first subordinate level, Arabic numbers for the next level, and lowercase letters following.) At first you may have trouble identifying when the instructor moves from one idea to another. This takes practice and experience with each instructor, so don’t give up! In the early stages you should use your syllabus to determine what key ideas the instructor plans to present. Your reading assignments before class can also give you guidance in identifying the key ideas.
If you’re using your laptop computer for taking notes, a basic word processing application (like Microsoft Word or Works) is very effective. Format your document by selecting the outline format from the format bullets menu. Use the increase or decrease indent buttons to navigate the level of importance you want to give each item. The software will take care of the numbering for you!

After class be sure to review your notes and then summarize the class in one or two short paragraphs using your own words. This summary will significantly affect your recall and will help you prepare for the next class.
THE CONCEPT MAP METHOD

This is a very graphic method of note-taking that is especially good at capturing the relationships among ideas. Concept maps harness your visual sense to understand complex material “at a glance.” They also give you the flexibility to move from one idea to another and back easily (so they are helpful if your instructor moves freely through the material).

To develop a concept map, start by using your syllabus to rank the ideas you will listen to by level of detail (from high-level or abstract ideas to detailed facts). Select an overriding idea (high level or abstract) from the instructor’s lecture and place it in a circle in the middle of the page. Then create branches off that circle to record the more detailed information, creating additional limbs as you need them. Arrange the branches with others that interrelate closely. When a new high-level idea is presented, create a new circle with its own branches. Link together circles or concepts that are related. Use arrows and symbols to capture the relationship between the ideas. For example, an arrow may be used to illustrate cause or effect, a double-pointed arrow to illustrate dependence, or a dotted arrow to illustrate impact or effect.

As with all note-taking methods, you should summarize the chart in one or two paragraphs of your own words after class.

Figure 4.6 The Concept Map Method of Note Taking
The Cornell method was developed in the 1950s by Professor Walter Pauk at Cornell University. It is recommended by most colleges because of its usefulness and flexibility. This method is simple to use for capturing notes, is helpful for defining priorities, and is a very helpful study tool.
The Cornell method follows a very specific format that consists of four boxes: a header, two columns, and a footer. The header is a small box across the top of the page. In it you write identification information like the course name and the date of the class. Underneath the header are two columns: a narrow one on the left (no more than one-third of the page) and a wide one on the right. The wide column, called the “notes” column, takes up most of the page and is used to capture your notes using any of the methods outlined earlier. The left column, known as the “cue” or “recall” column, is used to jot down main ideas, keywords, questions, clarifications, and other notes. It should be used both during the class and when reviewing your notes after class. Finally, use the box in the footer to write a summary of the class in your own words. This will help you make sense of your notes in the future and is a valuable tool to aid with recall and studying.

**Using Index Cards for the Cornell Method**

Some students like to use index cards to take notes. They actually lend themselves quite well to the Cornell method. Use the “back” or lined side of the card to write your notes in class. Use one card per key concept. The “front” unlined side of the card replaces the left hand “cue” column. Use it after class to write keywords, comments, or questions. When you study, the cards become flash cards with questions on one side and answers on the other. Write a summary of the class on a separate card and place it on the top of the deck as an introduction to what was covered in the class.

> I used to tape my lecture classes so I could fill in my sketchy notes afterward. Now that I’m using the Cornell system, my notes are complete and organized in much less time. And my regular five-minute reviews make learning almost painless.

> No more taping and listening twice.

> -a student at Southern Methodist University

You will have noticed that all methods end with the same step: reviewing your notes as soon as possible after class. Any review of your notes is helpful (reading them, copying them into your computer, or even recasting them using another note-taking method). But THINK! Make your review of notes a thoughtful activity, not a mindless process. When you review your notes, think about questions you still have and determine how you will get the answers. (From the next class? Studying with a friend? Looking up material in your text or on the net?) Examine how the material applies to the course; make connections with notes from other class sessions, with material in your text, and with concepts covered in class discussions. Finally, it’s fun to think about how the material in your notes applies to real life. Consider this both at the very strategic level (as in “What does this material mean to me in relation to what I want to do with my life?”) as well as at a very mundane level (as in “Is there anything cool here I can work into a conversation with my friends?”).

**Instructor Handouts**

Some instructors hand out or post their notes or their PowerPoint slides from their lectures. These handouts should NEVER be considered a substitute for taking notes in class. They are a very useful complement and will help you confirm the accuracy of your notes, but they do not involve you in the process of learning as well as your own notes do. After class, review your notes with highlighter in hand and mark keywords and ideas in your notes. This will help you write the summary of the class in your own words.
GENERAL TIPS ON NOTE TAKING

Regardless of what note-taking method you choose, there are some note-taking habits you should get into for all circumstances and all courses:

1. **Be prepared.** Make sure you have the tools you need to do the job. If you are using a notebook, be sure you have it with you and that you have enough paper. Also be sure to have your pen (as well as a spare) and perhaps a pen with different colored ink to use for emphasis. If you are taking notes on your laptop, make sure the battery is charged! Select the application that lends itself best to your style of note taking. Microsoft Word works very well for outline notes, but you might find taking notes in Excel to work best if you are working within the Cornell method. (It’s easier to align your thoughts in the cue or recall column to your notes in the right column. Just be sure you keep one idea per row!)

2. **Write on only one side of the paper.** This will allow you to integrate your reading notes with your class notes.

3. **Label, number, and date all notes at the top of each page.** This will help you keep organized.

4. **When using a laptop, position it such that you can see the instructor and white board right over your screen.** This will keep the instructor in your field of vision even if you have to glance at your screen or keyboard from time to time. Make sure your focus remains with the instructor and not on your laptop. A word of caution about laptops for note taking: use them if you are very adept at keyboarding, but remember that not all note-taking methods work well on laptops because they do not easily allow you to draw diagrams and use special notations (scientific and math formulas, for example).

5. **Don’t try to capture everything that is said.** Listen for the big ideas and write them down. Make sure you can recognize the instructor’s emphasis cues and write down all ideas and keywords the instructor emphasizes. Listen for clues like “the four causes were…” or “to sum up….”

6. **Copy anything the instructor writes on the board.** It’s likely to be important.

7. **Leave space between ideas.** This allows you to add additional notes later (e.g., notes on the answer to a question you or one of your classmates asked).

8. **Use signals and abbreviations.** Which ones you use is up to you, but be consistent so you will know exactly what you mean by “att.” when you review your notes. You may find it useful to keep a key to your abbreviations in all your notebooks.

9. **Use some method for identifying your own thoughts and questions to keep them separate from what the instructor or textbook author is saying.** Some students use different color ink; others box or underline their own thoughts. Do whatever works for you.

10. **Create a symbol to use when you fall behind or get lost in your note taking.** Jot down the symbol, leave some space, and focus on what the instructor is covering now. Later you can ask a classmate or the professor to help you fill in what you missed, or you can find it in your textbook.

11. **Review your notes as soon after class as possible (the same day is best).** THIS IS THE SECRET TO MAKING YOUR NOTES WORK! Use the recall column to call out the key ideas and organize facts. Fill in any gaps in your notes and clean up or redraw hastily drawn diagrams.

12. **Write a summary of the main ideas of the class in your own words.** This process is a great aid to recall. Be sure to include any conclusions from the lecture or discussion.
JOURNAL ENTRY

Choose one of your classes where you normally take notes. Make a conscious effort to use the Cornell method with either the outline or concept map method for taking your notes. Follow as many steps listed previously as possible. Now compare these notes with those you took in the previous class. Are your new notes more useful? What did you like about taking notes this way? What are some of the things you need to work on improving? (Remember this will get much easier with more practice.) Write your thoughts here.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT IF YOU MISS CLASS?

Clearly the best way to learn class material is to be at the class and to take your own notes. In college, regular attendance is expected. But life happens. On occasion, you may have to miss a class or lecture. When this happens, here are some strategies you can use to make up for it:

- Check with the instructor to see if there is another section of the class you can attend. Never ask the instructor “Did I miss anything important?” (Think about what that’s saying and you’ll see it’s rather insulting.)
- If the instructor posts his or her lectures as a podcast, listen to the lecture online and take notes. If the instructor uses PowerPoint slides, request a copy (or download them if posted) and review them carefully, jotting down your own notes and questions. Review your notes with a classmate who did attend.
- You may want to borrow class notes from a classmate. If you do, don’t just copy them and insert them in your notebook. They will not be very helpful. When you borrow notes from a classmate, you should photocopy them and then review them carefully and mark your copy with your own notes and questions. Use your textbook to try to fill in the gaps. Finally, schedule a study session with the person who gave you the notes to review the material and confirm your understanding.
- If none of these options is available for you, use the course syllabus to determine what was covered in the class, then write a short paper (two pages or so) on the material using the class readings and reliable online sources. See your instructor during office hours to review your key findings and to answer any questions you still may have.

KEEPING YOUR NOTES

Class is over, and you have a beautiful set of notes in your spiral notebook or saved in your laptop. You have written the summary of the class in your own words. Now what?
Start by organizing your notes. We recommend you use a three-ring binder for each of your subjects. Print your notes if you used a computer. If you used note cards, insert them in plastic photo holders for binders. Group all notes from a class or unit together in a section; this includes class notes, reading notes, and instructor handouts. You might also want to copy the instructor’s syllabus for the unit on the first page of the section.
Next, spend some time linking the information across the various notes. Use the recall column in your notes to link to related information in other notes (e.g., “See class notes date/page”).

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, http://www.saylor.org/books
If you have had a quiz or test on the unit, add it to your binder, too, but be sure to write out the correct answer for any item you missed. Link those corrections to your notes, too.

Use this opportunity to write “notes on your notes.” Review your summary to see if it still is valid in light of your notes on the reading and any handouts you may have added to your notes package.

You don’t need to become a pack rat with your notes. It is fairly safe to toss them after the end of a course except in the following cases:

1. If the course you took is a prerequisite for another course, or when the course is part of a standard progression of courses that build upon each other (this is very common in math and science courses), you should keep them as a reference and review for the follow-up course.

2. If the course may pertain to your future major, keep your notes. You may not realize it now that they may have future value when you study similar topics or even the same topics in more depth.

3. If you are very interested in the course subject and would like to get into the material through a more advanced course, independent study, or even research, keep your notes as a prep tool for further work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- After effective listening, good note taking is the most important skill for academic success.
- Choose among effective note-taking styles for what works best for you and modify it to meet the needs of a specific class or instructor.
- List notes are generally less effective and not prioritized.
- Outlines work well for taking notes on a laptop when the instructor is well organized.
- Concept map notes are good for showing the relationships among ideas.
- The Cornell method is effective for calling out key concepts and organizing notes for review.
- Instructor handouts and PowerPoint presentations help with—but do not replace the need for—personal note taking.
- If you miss a class, explore your options for replacing your missing notes.
- Keep your notes organized in a way that makes it easy to study for tests and other uses in the future.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. Name two advantages of the Cornell system over the list method of note taking.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Describe the benefits of—and potential problems with—taking class notes on a laptop.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. List at least three ways to make up for missing notes because you miss a class.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4.5 REMEMBERING COURSE MATERIALS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify what is important to remember.
2. Understand the difference between short- and long-term memory.
3. Use a variety of strategies to build your memory power.
4. Identify the four key types of mnemonic devices.
5. Use mnemonics to remember lists of information.

Up to now we have covered how to capture material in your notes. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to strategies for recording ideas and facts in your memory.

THE ROLE OF MEMORIZATION IN LEARNING

Have you ever gone into an exam you have studied for and drawn a blank on a particular question? Have you ever walked into a room only to forget for a moment why you went there? Have you ever forgotten where you left your keys? How about finding yourself in a conversation with someone whose name you can’t remember? The fact is, memory fails everyone from time to time. It is not surprising that students, with a huge amount of information they must commit to memory (not to mention frequent distractions and interruptions), are often frustrated by their memory.

Let’s start by taking some of the pressure off you. You will not be required to memorize everything your instructor says in a class—nor should you try to. There is way too much to capture. People speak at a rate of 100 to 150 words per minute. An average 50-minute lecture may contain around 7,500 words. By listening effectively and taking notes, your job is to distill the main ideas and a few keywords. THESE are the things you should choose to memorize.

In your early and high school education, memorization was a key aspect of learning. You memorized multiplication tables, the names of the states, and vocabulary words. Memorized facts ensured your success on multiple-choice questions. In college, however, most of your work is focused on understanding the material in depth. Remembering the year of the 9/11 attack (2001) is far less important than grasping the impact of that attack on American foreign policy. Understanding themes and ideas and being able to think critically about them is really the key to your success in college learning. For more on critical thinking skills. Although memorization is not the primary key to success, having a good memory is important to capture ideas in your mind, and it helps tremendously in certain subjects like sciences and foreign languages.

HOW MEMORY WORKS

Memory is the process of storing and retrieving information. Think of a computer. In many ways it is an electronic model of the human memory. A computer stores, retrieves, and processes information similarly to how the human mind does. Like the human version, there are two types of memory: short-term or active memory (RAM in the computer) and long-term or passive memory (the computer’s hard drive). As its name suggests, short-term or active memory is made up of the information we are processing at any given time. Short-term memory involves information being captured at the moment (such as listening in class) as well as from information retrieved from our passive memory for doing complex mental tasks (such as thinking critically and drawing conclusions). But short-term memory is limited and suffers from the passing of time and lack of use. We begin to forget data within thirty seconds of not using it, and interruptions (such as phone calls or distractions) require us to
rebuild the short-term memory structure—to get “back on task.” To keep information in our memory, we must either use it or place it into our long-term memory (much like saving a document on your computer).

How we save information to our long-term memory has a lot to do with our ability to retrieve it when we need it at a later date. Our mind “saves” information by creating a complex series of links to the data. The stronger the links, the easier it is to recall. You can strengthen these links by using the following strategies. You should note how closely they are tied to good listening and note-taking strategies.

- **Make a deliberate decision to remember the specific data.** “I need to remember Richard’s name” creates stronger links than just wishing you had a better memory for names.

- **Link the information to your everyday life.** Ask yourself, “Why is it important that I remember this material?”—and answer it.

- **Link the information to other information you already have “stored,”** especially the key themes of the course, and you will recall the data more easily. Ask yourself how this is related to other information you have. Look for ways to tie items together. Are they used in similar ways? Do they have similar meanings? Do they sound alike?

- **Mentally group similar individual items into “buckets.”** By doing this, you are creating links, for example, among terms to be memorized. For example, if you have to memorize a vocabulary list for a Spanish class, group the nouns together with other nouns, verbs with verbs, and so forth. Or your groupings might be sentences using the vocabulary words.

- **Use visual imagery.** Picture the concept vividly in your mind. Make those images big, bold, and colorful—even silly! Pile concepts on top of each other or around each other; exaggerate their features like a caricature; let your imagination run wild. Humor and crazy imagery can help you recall key concepts.

- **Use the information.** Studies have generally shown that we retain only 5 percent of what we hear, 10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we learn from multimedia, and 30 percent of what is demonstrated to us, but we do retain 50 percent of what we discuss, 75 percent of what we practice by doing, and 90 percent of what we teach others or use immediately in a relevant activity. Review your notes, participate in class, and study with others.

- **Break information down into manageable “chunks.”** Memorizing the ten-digit number “3141592654” seems difficult, but breaking it down into two sets of three digits and one of four digits, like a phone number—(314) 159-2654—now makes it easier to remember. (Pat yourself on the back if you recognized that series of digits: with a decimal point after the three, that’s the value of pi to ten digits. Remember your last math class?)

- **Work from general information to the specific.** People usually learn best when they get the big picture first, and then look at the details.

- **Eliminate distractions.** Every time you have to “reboot” your short-term memory, you risk losing data points. Multitasking—listening to music or chatting on Facebook while you study—will play havoc with your ability to memorize because you will need to reboot your short-term memory each time you switch mental tasks.

- **Repeat, repeat, repeat.** Hear the information; read the information; say it (yes, out loud), and say it again. The more you use or repeat the information, the stronger the links to it. The more senses you use to process the information, the stronger the memorization. Write information on index cards to make flash cards and use downtime (when waiting for the subway or during a break between classes) to review key information.

- **This is a test.** Test your memory often. Try to write down everything you know about a specific subject, from memory. Then go back and check your notes and textbook to see how you did. Practicing retrieval in this way helps ensure long-term learning of facts and concepts.

- **Location, location, location.** There is often a strong connection between information and the place where you first received that information. Associate information to learning locations for stronger memory links. Picture where you were sitting in the lecture hall as you repeat the facts in your mind.
JUST FOR FUN

Choose a specific fact from each of your classes on a given day. Now find a way of working that information into your casual conversations during the rest of the day in a way that is natural. Can you do it? What effect do you think that will have on your memory of that information?

EXERCISE YOUR MEMORY

Read the following list for about twenty seconds. After you have read it, cover it and write down all the items you remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arch</th>
<th>Pen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chowder</td>
<td>Maple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airplane</td>
<td>Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk</td>
<td>Scotty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper clip</td>
<td>Thumb drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column</td>
<td>Brownies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>Skateboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leia</td>
<td>Cedar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fries</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many were you able to recall? Most people can remember only a fraction of the items.

Now read the following list for about twenty seconds, cover it, and see how many you remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fries</th>
<th>Skateboard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chowder</td>
<td>Subway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownies</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper clip</td>
<td>Leia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pen</td>
<td>Kirk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumb drive</td>
<td>Scotty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>Column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar</td>
<td>Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple</td>
<td>Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airplane</td>
<td>Arch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did your recall improve? Why do you think you did better? Was it easier? Most people take much less time doing this version of the list and remember almost all the terms. The list is the same as the first list, but the words have now been grouped into categories. Use this grouping method to help you remember lists of mixed words or ideas.
USING MNEMONICS

What do the names of the Great Lakes, the makings of a Big Mac, and the number of days in a month have in common? They are easily remembered by using mnemonic devices. Mnemonics (pronounced neh-MA-nicks) are tricks for memorizing lists and data. They create artificial but strong links to the data, making recall easier. The most commonly used mnemonic devices are acronyms, acrostics, rhymes, and jingles.

Acronyms are words or phrases made up by using the first letter of each word in a list or phrase. Need to remember the names of the Great Lakes? Try the acronym HOMES using the first letter of each lake:

- Huron
- Ontario
- Michigan
- Erie
- Superior

To create an acronym, first write down the first letters of each term you need to memorize. Then rearrange the letters to create a word or words. You can find acronym generators online (just search for “acronym generator”) that can help you by offering options. Acronyms work best when your list of letters includes vowels as well as consonants and when the order of the terms is not important. If no vowels are available, or if the list should be learned in a particular order, try using an acrostic instead.

Acrostics are similar to acronyms in that they work off the first letter of each word in a list. But rather than using them to form a word, the letters are represented by entire words in a sentence or phrase. If you’ve studied music, you may be familiar with “Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge” to learn the names of the notes on the lines of the musical staff: E, G, B, D, F. The ridiculous and therefore memorable line “My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas” was used by many of us to remember the names of the planets (at least until Pluto was downgraded):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My</th>
<th>Mercury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Venus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educated</td>
<td>Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Mars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Us</td>
<td>Uranus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine</td>
<td>Neptune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pizzas</td>
<td>Pluto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To create an acrostic, list the first letters of the terms to be memorized in the order in which you want to learn them (like the planet names). Then create a sentence or phrase using words that start with those letters.

Rhymes are short verses used to remember data. A common example is “In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Need to remember how many days a given month has? “Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November…," and so forth. Writing rhymes is a talent that can be developed with practice. To start, keep your rhymes short and simple. Define the key information you want to remember and break it down into a series of short phrases. Look at the last words of the phrases: can you rhyme any of them? If they don’t rhyme, can you substitute or add a word to create the rhyme?
(For example, in the Columbus rhyme, "ninety-two" does not rhyme with "ocean," but adding the word "blue" completes the rhyme and creates the mnemonic.)

Jingles are phrases set to music, so that the music helps trigger your memory. Jingles are commonly used by advertisers to get you to remember their product or product features. Remember “Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun”—the original Big Mac commercial. Anytime you add rhythm to the terms you want to memorize, you are activating your auditory sense, and the more senses you use for memorization, the stronger the links to the data you are creating in your mind. To create a jingle for your data, start with a familiar tune and try to create alternate lyrics using the terms you want to memorize. Another approach you may want to try is reading your data aloud in a hip-hop or rap music style.

**CREATIVE MEMORY CHALLENGE**

Create an acrostic to remember the noble gases: helium (He), neon (Ne), argon (Ar), krypton (Kr), xenon (Xe), and the radioactive radon (Rn).

Create an acronym to remember the names of the G8 group of countries: France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada. (Hint: Sometimes it helps to substitute terms with synonyms—"America" for the United States or "England" for the United Kingdom—to get additional options.)

Create a jingle to remember the names of the Seven Dwarfs: Bashful, Doc, Dopey, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, and Sneezy.

Mnemonics are good memory aids, but they aren’t perfect. They take a lot of effort to develop, and they also take terms out of context because they don’t focus on the meaning of the words. Since they lack meaning, they can also be easily forgotten later on, although you may remember them through the course.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Understanding ideas is generally more important in college than just memorizing facts.
- To keep information in our memory, we must use it or build links with it to strengthen it in long-term memory.
- Key ways to remember information include linking it to other information already known; organizing facts in groups of information; eliminating distractions; and repeating the information by hearing, reading, and saying it aloud.
- To remember specific pieces of information, try creating a mnemonic that associates the information with an acronym or acrostic, a rhyme or a jingle.

**CHECKPOINT EXERCISE**

1. For each of the following statements, circle T for true or F for false:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

Listening

• Learning involves following a cycle of preparing, absorbing, recording, and reviewing.

• The most important difference between high school learning and college learning is that colleges expect you to take full responsibility for your learning. Many of the support mechanisms you had in high school do not exist in college.

• Listening takes place in two primary situations: where there can be open interaction with the speaker (social conversation, small group discussions, business meetings, and small classes) and where there is limited interaction with the speaker (lectures, online courses, and podcasts).

• In situations where interaction is allowed, active listening principles work well.

• In lecture situations, additional strategies are required. They include physical preparation, seating for listening, eliminating distractions, thinking critically about the material as it is presented, taking notes, and asking appropriate questions.

• Prepare for listening by completing all assignments for the class and reviewing the syllabus. Ask yourself what you expect to gain from the class and how that ties in to the rest of the course material.

• Think critically about what you are listening to. Do you agree with what the instructor is saying? How does it tie to the rest of the material in the course? What does this new material mean to you in “real” life?

Note Taking

• There are four primary ways of taking notes (lists, outlines, concept maps, and the Cornell method).

• Select the note-taking method that best serves your learning style and the instructor’s teaching style. Remember that methods may be combined for maximum effect.

• Completing assignments and reviewing the syllabus can help you define the relative importance of the ideas the instructor presents.

• Don’t expect to capture everything the instructor says. Look for keywords and central ideas.

• Anything the instructor writes on the board is likely to be important.

• Review your notes as soon as possible after the class, to annotate, correct, complete, and summarize.
Memory
- The two types of memory are short-term memory, which allows you to apply knowledge to a specific task, and long-term memory, which allows you to store and recall information.
- The brain commits information to long-term memory by creating an intricate system of links to that information. Strength, number, and variety of links all lead to better recall.
- To create strong links, start by making a conscious decision to want to commit something specific to memory. Link the information to real life and other data from the course. Group like information into “buckets” that create links among the terms you want to remember.
- Use the information. The more you use the information, the more you will activate the links in your brain.
- Eliminate distractions. Every time you are diverted from your task, you need to reboot your short-term memory, weakening the links.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Describe the four steps of active listening.
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

2. How is listening defined?
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

3. List three things you should do to prepare to listen in class.
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

4. Where should you sit in a class? Why?
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

5. What should you do with your notes soon after each class?
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

6. Why do you think the Cornell method of note taking is recommended by so many colleges?
   ____________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
7. How do short-term and long-term memory differ?

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__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

8. List three ways in which you can create links to help remember ideas.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

9. Why is multitasking dangerous to memorization?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

10. What is a mnemonic?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAKE AN ACTION LIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two things I will do improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My note taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My memory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, [http://www.saylor.org/books](http://www.saylor.org/books)
CHAPTER 5: LIVING WITH DIVERSITY

5.1 LIVING WITH DIVERSITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define diversity and explain the benefits of a diverse college campus for all students.
2. List ten or more ways in which different groups of people can have significant differences, experiences, and perspectives.
3. Explain why all college students are more successful academically in a diverse environment and list several additional benefits of diversity for all students.
4. Describe the valuable characteristics of “nontraditional” older college students.
5. Explain what students can do to foster multiculturalism and celebrate diversity on campus. For students who have few experiences with diversity in the past, outline steps that can be taken to gain cultural sensitivity and a multicultural outlook.
6. Describe how instructors help create a positive, inclusive learning environment in the classroom.

Ours is a very diverse society—and increasingly so. Already in many parts of the country, non-Hispanic whites comprise less than 50 percent of the population, and by 2020 an estimated one in three Americans will be a person of color, as will be about half of all college students. But “diversity” means much more than a variety of racial and ethnic differences. As we’ll use the term here, diversity refers to the great variety of human characteristics—ways that we are different even as we are all human and share more similarities than differences. These differences are an essential part of what enriches humanity.

We’ll look first at some of the ways that people differ and explore the benefits of diversity for our society generally and for the college experience. While we should all celebrate diversity, at the same time we need to acknowledge past issues that grew from misunderstandings of such differences and work together to bring change where needed.

WHAT DIVERSITY REALLY MEANS
Differences among people may involve where a person was born and raised, the person’s family and cultural group, factual differences in personal identity, and chosen differences in significant beliefs. Some diversity is primarily cultural (involving shared beliefs and behaviors), other diversity may be biological (race, age, gender), and some diversity is defined in personal terms (sexual orientation, religion). Diversity generally involves things that may significantly affect some people’s perceptions of others—not just any way people happen to be different. For example, having different tastes in music, movies, or books is not what we usually refer to as diversity.

When discussing diversity, it is often difficult to avoid seeming to generalize about different types of people—and such generalizations can seem similar to dangerous stereotypes. The following descriptions are meant only to suggest that individuals are different from other individuals in many possible ways and that we can all learn things from people whose ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, backgrounds, experiences, and behaviors are different from our own. This is a primary reason college admissions departments frequently seek diversity in the student body. Following are various aspects of diversity:

- **Diversity of race.** Race refers to what we generally think of as biological differences and is often defined by what some think of as skin color. Such perceptions are often at least as much social as they are biological.

- **Diversity of ethnicity.** Ethnicity is a cultural distinction that is different from race. An ethnic group is a group of people who share a common identity and a perceived cultural heritage that often involves shared ways of speaking and behaving, religion, traditions, and other traits. The term “ethnic” also refers to such a group that is a minority within the larger society. Race and ethnicity are sometimes interrelated but not automatically so.

- **Diversity of cultural background.** Culture, like ethnicity, refers to shared characteristics, language, beliefs, behaviors, and identity. We are all influenced by our culture to some extent. While ethnic groups are typically smaller groups within a larger society, the larger society itself is often called the “dominant culture.” The term is often used rather loosely to refer to any group with identifiable shared characteristics.

- **Diversity of educational background.** Colleges do not use a cookie-cutter approach to admit only students with identical academic skills. Diversity of educational background helps ensure a free flow of ideas and challenges those who might become set in their ways.

- **Diversity of geography.** People from different places within the United States or the world often have a range of differences in ideas, attitudes, and behaviors.

- **Diversity of socioeconomic background.** People’s identities are influenced by how they grow up, and part of that background often involves socioeconomic factors. Socioeconomic diversity can contribute a wide variety of ideas and attitudes.

- **Diversity of gender roles.** Women have virtually all professional and social roles, including those once dominated by men, and men have taken on many roles, such as raising a child, that were formerly occupied mostly by women. These changing roles have brought diverse new ideas and attitudes to college campuses.

- **Diversity of age.** While younger students attending college immediately after high school are generally within the same age range, older students returning to school bring a diversity of age. Because they often have broader life experiences, many older students bring different ideas and attitudes to the campus.

- **Diversity of sexual orientation.** Gays and lesbians make up a significant percentage of people in American society and students on college campuses. Exposure to this diversity helps others overcome stereotypes and become more accepting of human differences.

- **Diversity of religion.** For many people, religion is not just a Sunday morning practice but a larger spiritual force that infuses their lives. Religion helps shape different ways of thinking and behaving, and thus diversity of religion brings a wider benefit of diversity to college.
• **Diversity of political views.** A diversity of political views helps broaden the level of discourse on campuses concerning current events and the roles of government and leadership at all levels. College students are frequently concerned about issues such as environmentalism and civil rights and can help bring about change.

• **Diversity of physical ability.** Some students have athletic talents. Some students have physical disabilities. Physical differences among students brings yet another kind of diversity to colleges—a diversity that both widens opportunities for a college education and also helps all students better understand how people relate to the world in physical as well as intellectual ways.

• **Diversity of extracurricular abilities.** As you remember from your college applications, colleges ask about what you do outside of class—clubs, activities, abilities in music and the arts, and so on. A student body with diverse interests and skills benefits all students by helping make the college experience full and enriching at all levels.

These are just some of the types of diversity you are likely to encounter on college campuses and in our society generally.

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**THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY**

The goal of many college admissions departments is to attract diverse students from a broad range of backgrounds involving different cultural, socioeconomic, age, and other factors—everything in the preceding list. But why is diversity so important? There are many reasons:

• **Experiencing diversity at college prepares students for the diversity they will encounter the rest of their lives.** Learning to understand and accept people different from ourselves is very important in our world. While many high school students may not have met or gotten to know well many people with different backgrounds, this often changes in college. Success in one’s career and future social life also requires understanding people in new ways and interacting with new skills. Experiencing diversity in college assists in this process.

• **Students learn better in a diverse educational setting.** Encountering new concepts, values, and behaviors leads to thinking in deeper, more complex, and more creative ways, rather than furthering past ideas and attitudes. Students who experience the most racial and ethnic diversity in their classes are more engaged in active thinking processes and develop more intellectual and academic skills (and have higher grade point averages) than others with limited experience of diversity.

• **Attention to diversity leads to a broader range of teaching methods, which benefits the learning process for all students.** Just as people are different in diverse ways, people from different backgrounds and experiences learn in different ways. College teaching has expanded to include many new teaching techniques. All students gain when instructors make the effort to address the diverse learning needs of all students.

• **Experiencing diversity on campus is beneficial for both minority and majority students.** Students have more fulfilling social relationships and report more satisfaction and involvement with their college experience. Studies show ALL students on campus gain from diversity programs. All the social and intellectual benefits of diversity cited in this list hold true for all students.

• **Diversity experiences help break the patterns of segregation and prejudice that have characterized American history.** Discrimination against others—whether by race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or anything else—is rooted in ignorance and sometimes fear of people who are different. Getting to know people who are different is the first step in accepting those differences, furthering the goal of a society free of all forms of prejudice and the unfair treatment of people.

• **Students of a traditional college age are in an ideal stage of development for forming healthy attitudes about diversity.** Younger students may not yet have reached a point at which they can fully understand and accept very different ideas and behaviors in others. The college years are a time of growth and maturation intellectually, socially, and emotionally, and a sustained experience of diversity is an opportunity to heighten this process.
• **Experiencing diversity makes us all better citizens in our democracy.** When people can better understand and consider the ideas and perspectives of others, they are better equipped to participate meaningfully in our society. Democratic government depends on shared values of equality and the public good. An attitude of “us versus them,” in contrast, does not further the public good or advance democratic government. Studies have shown that college graduates with a good experience of diversity generally maintain patterns of openness and inclusivity in their future lives.

• **Diversity enhances self-awareness.** We gain insights into our own thought processes, life experiences, and values as we learn from people whose backgrounds and experiences are different from our own.

While all the benefits described have been demonstrated repeatedly on campuses all across the country in study after study, and while admissions and retention programs on virtually all campuses promote and celebrate diversity, some problems still remain. Society changes only slowly, and sadly, many students in some areas—including gay and lesbian students, students with disabilities, and many minority students—still feel marginalized in the dominant culture of their campuses. Even in a country that elected an African American president, racism exists in many places. Gays and lesbians are still fighting for equal rights under the law and acceptance everywhere. Women still earn less than men in the same jobs. Thus society as a whole, and colleges in particular, need to continue to work to destroy old stereotypes and achieve a full acceptance of our human differences.

Multiculturalism is NOT political correctness. We've all heard jokes about “political correctness,” which suggests that we do or say certain things not because they are right but because we’re expected to pay lip service to them. Unfortunately, some people think of colleges’ diversity programs as just the politically correct thing to do. Use your critical thinking skills if you hear such statements. In the world of higher education, truth is discovered through investigation and research—and research has shown repeatedly the value of diversity as well as programs designed to promote diversity.

**OLDER “NONTRADITIONAL” STUDENTS AND DIVERSITY**

Sometimes overlooked among the types of diversity on most college campuses are older students, often called nontraditional students, who are returning to education usually after working a number of years. While many college students are younger and enroll in college immediately after high school, these older students help bring a wider range of diversity to campuses and deserve special attention for the benefits they bring for all students. As a group, older students often share certain characteristics that bring unique value to the college experience overall. Older students often

- have well-established identities and broader roles and responsibilities on which to base their thinking;
- more fully represent the local community and its values;
- have greater emotional independence and self-reliance;
- have well-developed problem-solving, self-directing, and decision-making skills;
- can share important life lessons and insights not found in textbooks;
- have relationships and experience with a greater variety of people;
- can be positive role models for younger students with less experience and maturity.

In many ways, these “nontraditional” students benefit the campus as a whole and contribute in meaningful ways to the educational process. Both instructors and “traditional” students gain when older students share their ideas and feelings in class discussions, study groups, and all forms of social interaction.

**ACCEPTING AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AND WORKING FOR CHANGE**

More than anything, multiculturalism is an attitude. Multiculturalism involves accepting and respecting the ideas, feelings, behaviors, and experiences of people different from oneself—all the forms of diversity described earlier. America is not actually a “melting pot” in the sense that people from diverse backgrounds somehow all become the same. America has
always included a great diversity of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors. For example, the constitutional separation of church and state, a fundamental principle present since early days in the United States, guarantees that people of all religion have the same freedoms and rights for worship and religious behavior. People of diverse religious backgrounds are not expected to "melt" together into one religion. Other laws guarantee the equal rights of all people regardless of skin color, gender, age, and other differences—including more recently, in some states, equality under the law for those with diverse sexual orientation. The United States does not even have an official national language—and many government and other publications in various geographical areas are offered in a variety of languages as well. In short, America as a nation has always recognized the realities and benefits of diversity.

Colleges similarly make commitments to ensure they respect and value differences among people and promote a wide understanding of such differences. Most colleges now have formal diversity programs to help all students not only accept and understand differences among students of varied backgrounds but also celebrate the benefits for all.

**WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO**

While diversity exists in most places, not everyone automatically understands differences among people and celebrates the value of those differences. Students who never think about diversity and who make no conscious effort to experience and understand others gain less than others who do. There are many ways you can experience the benefits of diversity on your college campus, however, beginning with your own attitudes and by taking steps to increase your experiences with diverse individuals.

**Acknowledge your own uniqueness, for you are diverse, too.** Diversity doesn’t involve just other people. Consider that you may be just as different to other people as they are to you. Don’t think of the other person as being the one who is different, that you are somehow the "norm." Your religion may seem just as odd to them as theirs does to you, and your clothing may seem just as strange looking to them as theirs is to you—until you accept there is no one “normal” or right way to be. Look at yourself in a mirror and consider why you look as you do. Why do you use the slang you do with your friends? Why did you just have that type of food for breakfast? How is it that you prefer certain types of music? Read certain books? Talk about certain things? Much of this has to do with your cultural background—so it makes sense that someone from another cultural or ethnic background is different in some ways. But both of you are also individuals with your own tastes, preferences, ideas, and attitudes—making you unique. It’s only when you realize your own uniqueness that you can begin to understand and respect the uniqueness of others, too.

**Consider your own (possibly unconscious) stereotypes.** A stereotype is a fixed, simplistic view of what people in a certain group are like. It is often the basis for prejudice and discrimination: behaving differently toward someone because you stereotype them in some way. Stereotypes are generally learned and emerge in the dominant culture’s attitudes toward those from outside that dominant group. A stereotype may be explicitly racist and destructive, and it may also be a simplistic generalization applied to any group of people, even if intended to be flattering rather than negative. As you have read this chapter so far, did you find yourself thinking about any group of people, based on any kind of difference, and perhaps thinking in terms of stereotypes? If you walked into a party and saw many different kinds of people standing about, would you naturally avoid some and move toward others? Remember, we learn stereotypes from our cultural background—so it’s not a terrible thing to admit you have inherited some stereotypes. Thinking about them is a first step in breaking out of these irrational thought patterns.
EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN BODY LANGUAGE

While we should be careful not to stereotype individuals or whole cultures, it is important to be aware of potential differences among cultures when interacting with other people. For example, body language often has different meanings in different cultures. Understanding such differences can help you better understand your interaction with others. Here are a few examples:

- Some Americans clap their hands together to emphasize a point, while some French clap to end a conversation.
- Many Americans cross their legs when seated and thus may point the bottom of their shoe toward another person; many Japanese find this gesture offensive.
- Many Americans may wave their index fingers at someone else to make a point, but this gesture is often offensive to Mexicans and Somalis, who may use that gesture only for dogs.
- In America, men and women shake hands with each other, but in some other cultures, handshakes across genders are not acceptable.
- In America, eye contact is generally considered polite and a sign of interest, whereas in many Asian cultures, people show their respect for others by bowing their head slightly and consider steady eye contact aggressive.

ACTIVITY: CHALLENGE YOUR THINKING

Read each of the following scenarios quickly and respond immediately without stopping to think. There are no right or wrong answers.

Scenario 1. You are walking home down a dark sidewalk when ahead you see three people standing around. Something about the way they are hanging out makes you a little frightened to walk past them.

Be honest with yourself: what did you just imagine these people looked like?

Why do you think you might have associated this particular mental picture with the emotion of feeling frightened?

Scenario 2. In a café on campus, you see a student from another country sitting alone—someone you know casually from a class—and you walk over and are just about to ask if you can join him, when two other students also from his country appear and sit down with him. You hesitate.

Would you have hesitated if this person had the same cultural background as you? What makes this situation different?

As you hesitate, you overhear them conversing in a language other than English.

Be honest with yourself: how does that make you feel now?

Scenario 3. A couple you know invites you to join them and one of their friends, whom you have not met, on a "double date"—a movie and dinner after. When you meet them outside the theater, you see that their friend, your date, is of a race different from your own.

Are you surprised or shocked? What is your first reaction?

Do you anticipate any more difficulty making conversation with your date than with anyone else whom you have just met?

Should your friends have told you in advance? Why or why not?
If they had told you, would that have made any difference? Explain.

Now think for a minute about how you responded in these scenarios. Did your mental image in the first scenario involve a negative stereotype? What images in the media or society might have contributed to that response? The second and third scenarios involve simple situations in which you couldn’t help but note some difference between you and another person. What might you feel in such situations in real life? Again, there is no “right” answer, and an awareness of differences is normal and natural even if it may cause some discomfort at first. On the other hand, if you have had significant experiences with diverse others, you might have read these scenarios and simply wondered, “So what? What’s the big deal?” It’s worthwhile thinking about what that means.

Do not try to ignore differences among people. Some people try so hard to avoid stereotyping that they go to the other extreme and try to avoid seeing any differences at all among people. But as we have seen throughout this chapter, people ARE different in many ways, and we should accept that if we are to experience the benefits of diversity.

Don’t apply any group generalizations to individuals. As an extension of not stereotyping any group, also don’t think of any individual person in terms of group characteristics. People are individuals first, members of a group second, and any given generalization simply may not apply to an individual. Be open minded and treat everyone with respect as an individual with his or her own ideas, attitudes, and preferences.

Develop cultural sensitivity for communication. Realize that your words may not mean quite the same thing in different cultural contexts or to individuals from different backgrounds. This is particularly true of slang words, which you should generally avoid until you are sure the other person will know what you mean. Never try to use slang or expressions you think are common in the cultural group of the person you are speaking with. Similarly, since body language often varies among different cultures, avoid strong gestures and expressions until the responses of the other person signify he or she will not misinterpret the messages sent by your body language.

Take advantage of campus opportunities to increase your cultural awareness. Your college likely has multiculturalism courses or workshops you can sign up for. Special events, cultural fairs and celebrations, concerts, and other programs are held frequently on most campuses. There may also be opportunities to participate in group travel to other countries or regions of cultural diversity.

Take the initiative in social interactions. Many students just naturally hang out with other students they are most like—that almost seems to be part of human nature. Even when we’re open minded and want to learn about others different from ourselves, it often seems easier and more comfortable to interact with others of the same age, cultural group, and so on. If we don’t make a small effort to meet others, however, we miss a great opportunity to learn and broaden our horizons. Next time you’re looking around the classroom or dorm for someone to ask about a class you missed or to study together for a test or group project, choose someone different from you in some way. Making friends with others of different backgrounds is often one of the most fulfilling experiences of college students.

Work through conflicts as in any other interaction. Conflicts simply occur among people, whether of the same or different background. If you are afraid of making a mistake when interacting with someone from a different background, you might avoid interaction altogether—and thus miss the benefits of diversity. Nothing risked, nothing gained. If you are sincere and respect the other, there is less risk of a misunderstanding occurring. If conflict does occur, work to resolve it as you would any other tension with another person, as described earlier.
TAKE A STAND AGAINST PREJUDICE AND HATE

Unfortunately prejudice and hate still exist in America, even on college campuses. In addition to racial prejudice, some people are also prejudiced against women, people with disabilities, older adults, gays and lesbians—virtually all groups that can be characterized as “different.” All campuses have policies against all forms of prejudice and discriminatory behaviors. But it is not enough for only college administrators to fight prejudice and hate—this is a responsibility for all good citizens who take seriously the shared American value of equality for all people. So what can you as a college student do?

- **Decide that it does matter.** Prejudice threatens us all, not just the particular group being discriminated against in a specific incident. Don’t stand on the sidelines or think it’s up to the people who may be victimized by prejudice or hate to do something about it. We can all do something.

- **Talk with others.** Communication has great value on campuses. Let others know how you feel about any acts of prejudice or hatred that you witness. The more everyone openly condemns such behavior, the less likely it is to reappear in the future. This applies even if you hear another student telling a racist joke or putting down the opposite sex—speak up and tell the person you find such statements offensive. You don’t want that person to think you agree with them. Speaking up can be difficult to do, but it can be done tactfully. People can and do learn what is acceptable in a diverse environment.

- **Report incidents you observe.** If you happen to see someone spray-painting a hateful slogan, for example, be a good citizen and report it to the appropriate campus office or the police.

- **Support student groups working for change.** America has a great tradition of college students banding together to help solve social problems. Show your support for groups and activities that celebrate diversity and condemn prejudice. Even if you are a shy, quiet person, your attendance at a parade or gathering lends support. Or you can write a letter to the editor in a student newspaper, help hand out leaflets for an upcoming rally, or put up posters on campus. Once you become aware of such student activities on campus, you’ll find many ways you can help take a stand.

- **Celebrate diversity.** In many ways, you can learn more about diversity through campus programs and activities. The more all students participate, the closer the campus will come to being free of prejudice and hate. Be a role model in how you act and what you say in relation to diversity, and you may have more effect on others than you realize.

DEALING WITH PREJUDICE

If you yourself experience prejudice or discrimination related to your race or ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or any other aspect of diversity, don’t just try to ignore it or accept it as something that cannot be changed. As discussed earlier, college students can do much to minimize intolerance on campus. Many overt forms of discrimination are frankly illegal and against college policies. You owe it to yourself, first and foremost, to report it to the appropriate college authority.

You can also attack prejudice in other ways. Join a campus organization that works to reduce prejudice or start a new group and discuss ways you can confront the problem and work for a solution. Seek solidarity with other groups. Organize positive celebrations and events to promote understanding. Write an article for a campus publication explaining the values of diversity and condemning intolerance.

What if you are directly confronted by an individual or group making racist or other discriminatory remarks? In an emotionally charged situation, rational dialogue may be difficult or impossible, and a shouting match or name-calling seldom is productive. If the person may have made an offensive remark inadvertently or because of a misunderstanding, then you may be able to calmly explain the problem with what they said or did. Hopefully the person will apologize and learn from the experience. But if the person made the remark or acted that way intentionally, confronting this negative person directly may be difficult and
not have a positive outcome. Most important, take care that the situation does not escalate in the direction of violence. Reporting the incident instead to college authorities may better serve the larger purpose of working toward harmony and tolerance.

**JOURNAL ENTRY**

If you are in the dominant cultural group on your campus, write a paragraph describing values you share with your cultural group. Then list things that students with a different background may have difficulty understanding about your group. If your racial, ethnic, or cultural background is different from the dominant cultural group on your campus, write a paragraph describing how students in the dominant culture seem to differ from your own culture.

Look back at what you just wrote. Did you focus on characteristics that seem either positive or negative? Might there be any stereotypes creeping into your thinking?

Write a second paragraph focusing on yourself as a unique individual, not a part of a group. How would others benefit from getting to know you better?

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Diversity refers to a great variety of human characteristics, and ways in which people differ.
- Diversity in the college environment has many benefits for all students, faculty, and others. Students learn more in a diverse setting, are better prepared for the future, and contribute more fully in positive ways to society.
- Nontraditional students bring many unique characteristics to the college environment that help enrich all students’ social and educational experiences.
- Multiculturalism involves respecting the ideas, feelings, behaviors, and experiences different from oneself in any way. Colleges promote both diversity in the student body and multiculturalism among all students.
- As an individual, each of us can gain the benefits of diversity as we challenge our own stereotypes, understand and celebrate differences in others, and learn to interact well with others different from ourselves. Take advantage of campus opportunities to increase your cultural awareness and to form social relationships with diverse others.
- Although we would hope that all college campuses would be free of hate and discrimination, it can become necessary to take a stand against prejudice.

**CHECKPOINT EXERCISES**

1. List as many types of diversity as you can think of.

2. Write a description of someone who is of a different race from yourself but who may not be different ethnically.

3. List several characteristics of YOUR OWN cultural background that may be different from the cultural background of some others on your campus.
4. For each of the following statements about diversity, circle T for true or F for false:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Is it a cultural observation or a stereotype to say, for example, that Mexicans are more relaxed about time commitments than Americans? (Think a minute before answering. How would you justify and explain your answer if challenged? Could both answers be right in some way?)

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

6. List at least three ways you may be able to increase your cultural awareness and understanding of diversity on your campus.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER 6: TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH

6.1 STRESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. List common causes of stress for college students.
2. Describe the physical, mental, and emotional effects of persistent stress.
3. List healthy ways college students can manage or cope with stress.
4. Develop your personal plan for managing stress in your life.

We all live with occasional stress. Since college students often feel even more stress than most people, it’s important to understand it and learn ways to deal with it so that it doesn’t disrupt your life.

Stress is a natural response of the body and mind to a demand or challenge. The thing that causes stress, called a stressor, captures our attention and causes a physical and emotional reaction. Stressors include physical threats, such as a car we suddenly see coming at us too fast, and the stress reaction likely includes jumping out of the way—with our heart beating fast and other physical changes. Most of our stressors are not physical threats but situations or events like an upcoming test or an emotional break-up. Stressors also include long-lasting emotional and mental concerns such as worries about money or finding a job. Take the Stress Self-Assessment.
STRESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Check the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel mild stress that does not disrupt my everyday life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am sometimes so stressed out that I have trouble with my routine activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I find myself eating or drinking just because I'm feeling stressed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have lain awake at night unable to sleep because I was feeling stressed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stress has affected my relationships with other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write your answers.

6. What is the number one cause of stress in your life?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

7. What else causes you stress?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

8. What effect does stress have on your studies and academic performance?

__________________________________________________________________

9. Regardless of the sources of your own stress, what do you think you can do to better cope with the stress you can’t avoid?

__________________________________________________________________

WHAT CAUSES STRESS?

Not all stressors are bad things. Exciting, positive things also cause a type of stress, called eustress. Falling in love, getting an unexpected sum of money, acing an exam you’d worried about—all of these are positive things that affect the body and mind in ways similar to negative stress: you can’t help thinking about it, you may lose your appetite and lie awake at night, and your routine life may be momentarily disrupted.

But the kind of stress that causes most trouble results from negative stressors. Life events that usually cause significant stress include the following:

- Serious illness or injury
- Serious illness, injury, or death of a family member or loved one
- Losing a job or sudden financial catastrophe
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Divorce or ending a long-term relationship (including parents’ divorce)
• Being arrested or convicted of a crime
• Being put on academic probation or suspended

Life events like these usually cause a lot of stress that may begin suddenly and disrupt one's life in many ways. Fortunately, these stressors do not occur every day and eventually end—though they can be very severe and disruptive when experienced. Some major life stresses, such as having a parent or family member with a serious illness, can last a long time and may require professional help to cope with them.

Everyday kinds of stressors are far more common but can add up and produce as much stress as a major life event:
• Anxiety about not having enough time for classes, job, studies, and social life
• Worries about grades, an upcoming test, or an assignment
• Money concerns
• Conflict with a roommate, someone at work, or family member
• Anxiety or doubts about one's future or difficulty choosing a major or career
• Frequent colds, allergy attacks, other continuing health issues
• Concerns about one's appearance, weight, eating habits, and so on.
• Relationship tensions, poor social life, loneliness
• Time-consuming hassles such as a broken-down car or the need to find a new apartment
• ____________________________
• ____________________________
• ____________________________

Take a moment and reflect on the list above. How many of these stressors have you experienced in the last month? The last year? Circle all the ones that you have experienced. Now go back to your Stress Self-Assessment and look at what you wrote there for causes of your stress. Write any additional things that cause you stress on the blank lines above.

How many stressors have you circled and written in? There is no magic number of stressors that an “average” or “normal” college student experiences—because everyone is unique. In addition, stressors come and go: the stress caused by a midterm exam tomorrow morning may be gone by noon, replaced by feeling good about how you did. Still, most college students are likely to circle about half the items on this list.

But it’s not the NUMBER of stressors that counts. You might have circled only one item on that list—but it could produce so much stress for you that you’re just as stressed out as someone else who circled all of them. The point of this exercise is to start by understanding what causes your own stress as a base for learning what to do about it.

WHAT’S WRONG WITH STRESS?
Physically, stress prepares us for action: the classic “fight-or-flight” reaction when confronted with a danger. Our heart is pumping fast, and we’re breathing faster to supply the muscles with energy to fight or flee. Many physical effects in the body prepare us for whatever actions we may need to take to survive a threat.

But what about nonphysical stressors, like worrying about grades? Are there any positive effects there? Imagine what life would feel like if you never had worries, never felt any stress at all. If you never worried about grades or doing well on a test, how much studying would you do for it? If you never thought at all about money, would you make any effort to save it or make it? Obviously, stress can be a good thing when it motivates us to do something, whether it’s study, work, resolving a conflict with another, and so on. So it’s not stress itself that’s negative—it’s UNRESOLVED OR PERSISTENT STRESS that starts to have unhealthy effects. Chronic (long-term) stress is associated with many physical changes and illnesses, including the following:
• Weakened immune system, making you more likely to catch a cold and to suffer from any illness longer
• More frequent digestive system problems, including constipation or diarrhea, ulcers, and indigestion
• Elevated blood pressure
• Increased risk of diabetes
• Muscle and back pain
• More frequent headaches, fatigue, and insomnia
• Greater risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular problems over the long term
  Chronic or acute (intense short-term) stress also affects our minds and emotions in many ways:
  • Difficulty thinking clearly or concentrating
  • Poor memory
  • More frequent negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, frustration, powerlessness, resentment, or
    nervousness—and a general negative outlook on life
  • Greater difficulty dealing with others because of irritability, anger, or avoidance

No wonder we view stress as such a negative thing! As much as we’d like to eliminate all stressors, however, it just can’t
happen. Too many things in the real world cause stress and always will.

UNHEALTHY RESPONSES TO STRESS

Since many stressors are unavoidable, the question is what to do about the resulting stress. A person can try to ignore or deny
stress for a while, but then it keeps building and starts causing all those problems. So we have to do SOMETHING.

Consider first what you have typically done in the past when you felt most stressed; use the Past Stress-Reduction Habits Self-
Assessment.
PAST STRESS-REDUCTION HABITS SELF-ASSESSMENT

On a scale of 1 to 5, rate each of the following behaviors for how often you have experienced it because of high stress levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Response</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Drinking alcohol</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Drinking lots of coffee</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sleeping a lot</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Eating too much</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Eating too little</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Smoking or drugs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Having arguments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sitting around depressed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Watching television or surfing the Web</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Complaining to friends</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Exercising, jogging, biking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Practicing yoga or tai chi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Meditating</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Using relaxation techniques</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Talking with an instructor or counselor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total your scores for questions 1–10: __________________

Total your scores for questions 11–15: __________________

Subtract the second number from the first: _______________

INTERPRETATION: If the subtraction of the score for questions 11 to 15 from the first score is a positive number, then your past coping methods for dealing with stress have not been as healthy and productive as they could be. Items 1 to 10 are generally not effective ways of dealing with stress, while items 11 to 15 usually are. If you final score is over 20, you’re probably like most beginning college students—feeling a lot of stress and not yet sure how best to deal with it.

What’s wrong with those stress-reduction behaviors listed first? Why not watch television or get a lot of sleep when you’re feeling stressed, if that makes you feel better? While it may feel better temporarily to escape feelings of stress in those ways, ultimately they may cause more stress themselves. If you’re worried about grades and being too busy to study as much as you need to, then letting an hour or two slip by watching television will make you even more worried later because then you have even less time. Eating too much may make you sluggish and less able to focus, and if you’re trying to lose weight, you’ll now feel just that much more stressed by what you’ve done. Alcohol, caffeine, smoking, and drugs all generally increase one’s stress over time. Complaining to friends? Over time, your friends will tire of hearing it or tire of arguing with you because a complaining person isn’t much fun to be around. So eventually you may find yourself even more alone and stressed.
Yet there is a bright side: there are lots of very positive ways to cope with stress that will also improve your health, make it easier to concentrate on your studies, and make you a happier person overall.

**COPING WITH STRESS**

Look back at your list of stressors that you circled earlier. For each, consider whether it is external (like bad job hours or not having enough money) or internal, originating in your attitudes and thoughts. Mark each item with an E (external) or an I (internal).

You may be able to eliminate many external stressors. Talk to your boss about changing your work hours. If you have money problems, work on a budget you can live with, look for a new job, or reduce your expenses by finding a cheaper apartment, selling your car, and using public transportation.

What about other external stressors? Taking so many classes that you don't have the time to study for all of them? Keep working on your time management skills. Schedule your days carefully and stick to the schedule. Take fewer classes next term if necessary. What else can you do to eliminate external stressors? Change apartments, get a new roommate, find better child care—consider all your options. And don't hesitate to talk things over with a college counselor, who may offer other solutions.

Internal stressors, however, are often not easily resolved. We can't make all stressors go away, but we can learn how to cope so that we don't feel so stressed out most of the time. We can take control of our lives. We can find healthy coping strategies.

All the topics in this chapter involve stress one way or another. Many of the healthy habits that contribute to our wellness and happiness also reduce stress and minimize its effects.

**GET SOME EXERCISE**

Exercise, especially aerobic exercise, is a great way to help reduce stress. Exercise increases the production of certain hormones, which leads to a better mood and helps counter depression and anxiety. Exercise helps you feel more energetic and focused so that you are more productive in your work and studies and thus less likely to feel stressed. Regular exercise also helps you sleep better, which further reduces stress.

**GET MORE SLEEP**

When sleep deprived, you feel more stress and are less able to concentrate on your work or studies. Many people drink more coffee or other caffeinated beverages when feeling sleepy, and caffeine contributes further to stress-related emotions such as anxiety and nervousness.

**MANAGE YOUR MONEY**

Worrying about money is one of the leading causes of stress. Try financial management skills in this course to reduce this stress.
ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE

You know the saying about the optimist who sees the glass as half full and the pessimist who sees the same glass as half empty. Guess which one feels more stress?

Much of the stress you feel may be rooted in your attitudes toward school, your work—your whole life. If you don’t feel good about these things, how do you change? To begin with, you really need to think about yourself. What makes you happy? Are you expecting your college career to be perfect and always exciting, with never a dull class or reading assignment? Or can you be happy that you are in fact succeeding in college and foresee a great life and career ahead?

Maybe you just need to take a fun elective course to balance that “serious” course that you’re not enjoying so much. Maybe you just need to play an intramural sport to feel as good as you did playing in high school. Maybe you just need to take a brisk walk every morning to feel more alert and stimulated. Maybe listening to some great music on the way to work will brighten your day. Maybe calling up a friend to study together for that big test will make studying more fun.

No one answer works for everyone—you have to look at your life, be honest with yourself about what affects your daily attitude, and then look for ways to make changes. The good news is that although old negative habits can be hard to break, once you’ve turned positive changes into new habits, they will last into a brighter future.

LEARN A RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

Different relaxation techniques can be used to help minimize stress. Following are a few tried-and-tested ways to relax when stress seems overwhelming. You can learn most of these through books, online exercises, CDs or MP3s, and DVDs available at your library or student health center. Practicing one of them can have dramatic effects.

Deep breathing. Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, filling your lungs completely. Exhale slowly and smoothly through your mouth. Concentrate on your breathing and feel your chest expanding and relaxing. After five to ten minutes, you will feel more relaxed and focused.

Progressive muscle relaxation. With this technique, you slowly tense and then relax the body’s major muscle groups. The sensations and mental concentration produce a calming state.

Meditation. Taking many forms, meditation may involve focusing on your breathing, a specific visual image, or a certain thought, while clearing the mind of negative energy. Many podcasts are available to help you find a form of meditation that works best for you.

Yoga or tai chi. Yoga, tai chi, and other exercises that focus on body position and slow, gradual movements are popular techniques for relaxation and stress reduction. You can learn these techniques through a class or from a DVD.

Music and relaxation CDs and MP3s. Many different relaxation techniques have been developed for audio training. Simply play the recording and relax as you are guided through the techniques.
Massage. Regular massages are a way to relax both body and mind. If you can’t afford a weekly massage but enjoy its effects, a local massage therapy school may offer more affordable massage from students and beginning practitioners.

GET COUNSELING

If stress is seriously disrupting your studies or your life regardless of what you do to try to reduce it, you may need help. There’s no shame in admitting that you need help, and college counselors and health professionals are there to help.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: STRESS

• Pay attention to, rather than ignore, things that cause you stress and change what you can.
• Accept what you can’t change and resolve to make new habits that will help you cope.
• Get regular exercise and enough sleep.
• Evaluate your priorities, work on managing your time, and schedule restful activities in your daily life. Students who feel in control of their lives report feeling much less stress than those who feel that circumstances control them.
• Slow down and focus on one thing at a time—don’t check for e-mail or text messages every few minutes! Know when to say no to distractions.
• Break old habits involving caffeine, alcohol, and other substances.
• Remember your long-range goals and don’t obsess over short-term difficulties.
• Make time to enjoy being with friends.
• Explore new activities and hobbies that you enjoy.
• Find a relaxation technique that works for you and practice regularly.
• Get help if you’re having a hard time coping with emotional stress.
JOURNAL ENTRY

All college students feel some stress. The amount of stress you feel depends on many factors, including your sleeping habits, your exercise and activity levels, your use of substances, your time management and study skills, your attitude, and other factors. As you look at your present life and how much stress you may be feeling, what short-term changes can you start making in the next week or two to feel less stressed and more in control? By the end of the semester or term, how would you ideally like your life to be different—and how can you best accomplish that? Write your thoughts here.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

KEY TAKEAWAYS

• Everyone feels stress, and many of the things that cause stress won’t go away regardless of what we do. But we can examine our lives, figure out what causes most of our stress, and learn to do something about it.

• Stress leads to a lot of different unhealthy responses that actually increase our stress over the long term. But once we understand how stress affects us, we can begin to take steps to cope in healthier ways.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. Why should it NOT be your goal to try to eliminate stress from your life completely?
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. List three or more unhealthful effects of stress.
   _______________________________________________________________________

3. Name at least two common EXTERNAL stressors you may be able to eliminate from your life.
   _______________________________________________________________________

4. Name at least two common INTERNAL stressors you may feel that you need to learn to cope with because you can’t eliminate them.
   _______________________________________________________________________

5. List at least three ways you can minimize the stress you feel.
   _______________________________________________________________________
6.2 EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the common causes of anxiety, depression, and other negative emotions in college-age people.
2. Describe changes you can make in your life to achieve or maintain emotional balance.
3. List characteristics of healthy relationships.
4. Describe the steps of conflict resolution.

Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health—and maybe more so. If you’re unhappy much of the time, you will not do as well as in college—or life—as you can if you’re happy. You will feel more stress, and your health will suffer.

Still, most of us are neither happy nor unhappy all the time. Life is constantly changing, and our emotions change with it. But sometimes we experience more negative emotions than normally, and our emotional health may suffer. Use the Emotional Self-Assessment to evaluate your emotional health.

EMOTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT
Check the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I sometimes feel anxious or depressed—without disruption of my everyday life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I sometimes feel so anxious or depressed that I have trouble with routine activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I sometimes feel lonely.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I sometimes feel that I have little control over my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I have sometimes just wanted to give up.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Negative emotions have sometimes kept me from studying or getting my work done.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Negative emotions have affected my relationships with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write your answers.

8. Describe your emotional mood on most days.

9. Describe what you’d ideally like to feel like all the time.

10. What specific things are keeping you from feeling what you’d ideally like to feel like most of the time?

11. Are you happy with your relationships with others?

12. What do you think you can do to be a happier person?
PROBLEMATIC EMOTIONS

When is an emotion problematic? Is it bad to feel anxious about a big test coming up or to feel sad after breaking up a romantic relationship?

It is normal to experience negative emotions. College students face so many demands and stressful situations that many naturally report often feeling anxious, depressed, or lonely. These emotions become problematic only when they persist and begin to affect your life in negative ways. That’s when it’s time to work on your emotional health—just as you’d work on your physical health when illness strikes.

ANXIETY

Anxiety is one of the most common emotions college students experience, often as a result of the demands of college, work, and family and friends. It’s difficult to juggle everything, and you may end up feeling not in control, stressed, and anxious.

Anxiety typically results from stress. Some anxiety is often a good thing if it leads to studying for a test, focusing on a problem that needs to be resolved, better management your time and money, and so on. But if anxiety disrupts your focus and makes you freeze up rather than take action, then it may become problematic. Using stress-reduction techniques often helps reduce anxiety to a manageable level.

Anxiety is easier to deal with when you know its cause. Then you can take steps to gain control over the part of your life causing the anxiety. But anxiety can become excessive and lead to a dread of everyday situations. There are five types of more serious anxiety:

1. **Generalized anxiety disorder** is characterized by chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little or nothing to provoke it. The person may have physical symptoms, especially fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, and hot flashes.

2. **Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)** is characterized by recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions), repetitive behaviors (compulsions), or both. Repetitive behaviors such as hand washing, counting, checking, or cleaning are often performed with the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or making them go away.

3. **Panic disorder** is characterized by unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear accompanied by physical symptoms that may include chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, or abdominal distress.

4. **Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat.

5. **Social phobia (or social anxiety disorder)** is a persistent, intense, and chronic fear of being watched and judged by others and being embarrassed or humiliated by one’s own actions. Their fear may be so severe that it interferes with work or school, and other ordinary activities. Physical symptoms often accompany the intense anxiety of social phobia and include blushing, profuse sweating, trembling, nausea, and difficulty talking.

These five types of anxiety go beyond the normal anxiety everyone feels at some times. If you feel your anxiety is like any of these, see your health-care provider. Effective treatments are available to help you regain control.
**LONELINESS**

Loneliness is a normal feeling that most people experience at some time. College students away from home for the first time are likely to feel lonely at first. Older students may also feel lonely if they no longer see their old friends. Loneliness involves not feeling connected with others. One person may need only one friend to not feel lonely; others need to feel more connected with a group. There’s no set pattern for feeling lonely.

If you are feeling lonely, there are many things you can do to meet others and feel connected. Don’t sit alone in your room bemoaning the absence of friends. That will only cause more stress and emotional distress. You will likely start making new friends through going to classes, working, studying, and living in the community. But you can jump-start that process by taking active steps such as these:

- Realize you don’t have to be physically with friends in order to stay connected. Many students use social Web sites to stay connected with friends at other colleges or in other locations. Telephone calls, instant messaging, and e-mail work for many.
- Understand that you’re not alone in feeling lonely. Many others like you are just waiting for the opportunity to connect, and you will meet them and form new friendships fast once you start reaching out.
- Become involved in campus opportunities to meet others. Every college has a wide range of clubs for students with different interests. If you’re not the “joiner” type, look for individuals in your classes with whom you think you may have something in common and ask them if they’d like to study for a test together or work together on a class project.
- Remember that loneliness is a temporary thing—it’s only a matter of time until you make new friends.

If your loneliness persists and you seem unable to make friends, then it’s a good idea to talk with your counselor or someone at the student health center. They can help.

**DEPRESSION**

Depression, like anxiety and loneliness, is commonly experienced by college students. It may be a mild sadness resulting from specific circumstances or be intense feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Many people feel depressed from time to time because of common situations:

- Feeling overwhelmed by pressures to study, work, and meet other obligations
- Not having enough time (or money) to do the things you want to do
- Experiencing problems in a relationship, friendship, or work situation
- Feeling overweight, unhealthy, or not in control of oneself
- Feeling that your new life as a student lacks some of the positive dimensions of your former life
- Not having enough excitement in your life

Depression, like stress, can lead to unhealthy consequences such as poor sleep, overeating or loss of appetite, substance abuse, relationship problems, or withdrawal from activities that formerly brought joy. For most people, depression is a temporary state. But severe depression can have crippling effects. Not everyone experiences the same symptoms, but the following are most common:
• Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings
• Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
• Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
• Irritability or restlessness
• Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
• Fatigue and decreased energy
• Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
• Insomnia, early morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
• Overeating or appetite loss
• Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
• Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems

If you have feelings like this that last for weeks at a time and affect your daily life, your depression is more severe than “normal,” temporary depression. It’s time to see your health-care provider and get treatment as you would for any other illness.

SUICIDAL FEELINGS

Severe depression often makes a person feel there is no hope—and therefore many people with depression do not seek help. In reality, depression can be successfully treated, but only if the person seeks help.

Suicidal feelings, which can result from severe depression, are more common in college students than in the past. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death in American college students (after accidents). In most cases, the person had severe depression and was not receiving treatment. Recognizing severe depression and seeking treatment is crucial.

Depression can strike almost anyone at any age at any kind of college. It is a myth that high-pressure colleges have higher suicide rates or that students who feel compelled to excel because of college pressures are more likely to commit suicide. In reality, anyone can be ill with severe depression and, if not treated, become suicidal.

Following are risk factors for suicide:

Depression and other mental disorders or a substance-abuse disorder (more than 90 percent of people who die by suicide have these risk factors)

• Prior suicide attempt
• Family history of mental disorder, substance abuse, or suicide
• Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
• Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, such as family members, peers, or media figures
WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE

- Being depressed or sad most of the time
- Having feelings of worthlessness, shame, or hopelessness about the future
- Withdrawing from friends and family members
- Talking about suicide or death
- Being unable to get over a recent loss (broken relationship, loss of job, etc.)
- Experiencing changes in behavior, sleep patterns, or eating habits

If you or a friend is in a crisis and needs help at any time, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Call for yourself or for someone you care about. All calls are confidential.

If you think someone is suicidal, do not leave him or her alone. Try to get the person to seek immediate help by calling the hotline number. Many campuses also have twenty-four-hour resources. In an emergency, call 911. Try to ensure that the person does not have access to a firearm or other potential tool for suicide, including medications.

ACHIEVING EMOTIONAL BALANCE

Emotional balance is an essential element of wellness—and for succeeding in college. Emotional balance doesn't mean that you never experience a negative emotion, because these emotions are usually natural and normal. Emotional balance means we balance the negative with the positive, that we can be generally happy even if we’re saddened by some things.

Emotional balance starts with being aware of our emotions and understanding them. If you’re feeling angry, stop and think about the real cause of your anger. Are you really angry because your friend said something about one of your bad habits, or are you angry because you haven’t been able to break that habit? Are you feeling anxiety because you’re worried you might not be cut out for college, or are you just anxious about that test tomorrow?

See the “Tips for Success” for other ways you can achieve and maintain a healthy emotional balance.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS: EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Accept that most emotions can’t be directly controlled. But the things you do—such as getting exercise, using a relaxation technique, trying the various stress-reduction methods discussed in this chapter—do improve your emotional state.
- Connect with others. Your emotional state is less likely to change when you keep to yourself and “stew over” the feeling.
- Develop your empathy for others. Empathy involves recognizing the emotions that others are feeling. You’ll find yourself in better emotional balance as a result, and your relationships will improve.
- Be honest in your relationships. If you try to hide your feelings, the other person will know something is wrong and may react the wrong way.
- Understand that negative emotions are temporary. You may be feeling bad now, but it will pass in time. But if a negative feeling does last a long time, recognize that you likely need help resolving it—and that help is available.
- If you’ve just become a college student, know that the first term is usually the hardest. Hang in there. Once you’ve developed effective study habits and time management skills, each term will be easier and happier than the one before.
RELATIONSHIPS

Romantic relationships are often as much a part of a rich emotional life for college students as for anyone else. But the added challenges of college, especially while also working and maintaining a family life, often stress these relationships. You may have to give extra attention to a relationship to keep it healthy and avoid conflicts that lead to unhappiness and other problems.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Ideally, a healthy relationship should have these characteristics:

- Both partners should respect each other as individuals with unique interests and personality traits. Don't expect your partner to be just like you; embrace rather than reject differences. Both partners should be supportive of each other.
- Both partners should trust each other and be honest with each other. You must feel that you can open up emotionally to the other without fear of rejection. Starting out with deceptions is certain to cause eventual problems.
- Both partners should be understanding and have empathy for each other. Good communication is essential. Many relationship problems are rooted in misunderstandings, such as when one partner doesn't make the effort to understand what the other wants or needs.

These positive characteristics of a good relationship don't happen overnight. The relationship may begin with romantic attraction and only slowly develop into a trusting, mutually supportive friendship as well. The following signs may indicate that a dating relationship is not developing well:

- Your partner is pressuring you for sex when you're not ready
- Your partner seems angry or abusive when you disagree about something
- Your partner seems possessive when others want to spend time with you
- Your partner treats you unequally in any way
- Your partner is emotionally or physically abusive (whether it happens once or many times)

If you recognize that any of these things are happening with someone you're dating, it may be time to reconsider, even if you still feel attracted. Any relationship that begins this way is not likely to end well.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

In any friendship or relationship, conflict will eventually happen. This is just natural because people are different. If a conflict is ignored, or the partners just argue without resolving it, it may simmer and continue to cause tension, eventually weakening the relationship. It's better to take steps to resolve it.

Conflict resolution is a process of understanding what's really going on and then finding a solution. The same general steps of conflict resolution can work to solve a relationship conflict or a conflict between any people or groups because of a disagreement about anything. Following are the general principles of conflict resolution:
1. **Allow things to cool off.** It's difficult to resolve a conflict while either party is still emotional. Wait a few minutes or agree to talk about it later.

2. **Using “I statements” rather than “you statements,”** each party explains what bothers him or her about the **cause of the conflict.** For example, don't say, “You’re always playing loud music when I’m trying to study.” Instead, say, “I have difficulty studying when you play loud music, and that makes me frustrated and irritable.” “You statements” put the other person on the defensive and evoke emotions that make resolution more difficult.

3. **Listen carefully to what the other person says.** Then restate the message in your own words to give the other a chance to clarify their thoughts and feelings. Each party should listen to the other and restate the other's message to ensure the real issue is out on the table for discussion.

4. **Accept responsibility for your role in the conflict, instead of blaming the other.** A good example of accepting responsibility is to say, “I know I'm always studying and need the quiet. I guess that makes it hard for you to listen to your music.”

5. **Brainstorm together to find a solution that satisfies both of you.** Some compromise is usually needed, but that is usually not difficult to reach when you're calm and are working together on a solution. In this example, you might compromise by going elsewhere to study at selected times when the other has friends over and wants to listen to music, and the other may compromise by agreeing to use headphones at other times and never to play music aloud after 10 p.m.

6. **Apologize, thank, and forgive.** After reaching a resolution, emotional closure is needed to restore your relationship and end on a positive, affirming note. When appropriate, apologize for your past anger or arguing. Thank the other for being willing to compromise to resolve the conflict. In your mind, forgive the person for past misunderstandings and actions so that you do not carry any grudge into the future.

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**ONLINE AND LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS**

Can your relationship survive if you and your partner are living at a distance? This is a common issue for young people going off to college at different schools—and for older college students, too, who may move because of work or school. Sometimes the relationship survives, and sometimes it doesn't. It's important, if you're making an effort to stay together, for both partners to accept that being apart will add new pressures on the relationship. Accept also that both of you will be changing in many ways. You may naturally grow apart and decide to break up.

Yet often long-distance relationships do survive successfully. If you do decide to work to keep your relationship alive and vibrant, there are things you can do:

- Acknowledge that you are both changing, and accept and celebrate your new lives.
- Don’t feel guilty about being excited by your new life, and don’t try to pretend to your partner that you’re always miserable because you’re separated.
- Don’t be upset or jealous when your partner tells you about new friends and activities—be happy that he or she seems happy. Talk about these changes and be happy for each other.
- If your relationship is solid, it is already based on trust and mutual support, which should continue to give you strength when apart.
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Emotional health is just as important as physical health. We can take steps to reduce the negative emotions that plague us from time to time and gain control over our emotional health.
- Emotional balance results from a variety of things in our lives. We need to connect with others, to be honest and empathetic in our relationships, and to resolve conflicts that can cause bad feelings and threaten our daily happiness. We can learn skills in these areas just as in other areas of our lives.

CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

For each of the following statements about emotional health, circle T for true or F for false:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety is always a mental health disorder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>When you're feeling depressed or anxious, it's best to keep to yourself and not try to connect with others until after these feelings pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. List at least two things you can do to make new friends at college.
   
   _____________________________________________________

2. Describe three characteristics of a good relationship.
   
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. List the six steps for effective conflict resolution.
   
   a. __________________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________________
   c. __________________________________________________
   d. __________________________________________________
   e. __________________________________________________
   f. __________________________________________________
6.3 SEXUAL HEALTH

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the importance of understanding your sexual values and making wise decisions regarding your sexuality.
2. Describe guidelines for sexually active college students to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.
3. List actions some can take to protect against sexual assault.

Sexuality is normal, natural human drive. As an adult, your sexuality is your own business. Like other dimensions of health, however, your sexual health depends on understanding many factors involving sexuality and your own values. Your choices and behavior may have consequences. Learning about sexuality and thinking through your values will help you make responsible decisions. Begin with the Sexual Health Self-Assessment.

SEXUAL HEALTH SELF-ASSESSMENT

Check the appropriate boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think about issues related to sexuality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have experienced unwanted sexual advances from another.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If I am sexually active, I protect myself from the risk of sexually transmitted infections.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If I am sexually active, I protect myself from the risk of unwanted pregnancy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am proud of the choices I have made regarding sexual activity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am concerned about the possibility of sexual assault including date rape.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I have been in situations involving some risk of date rape.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write your answers.

8. How comfortable are you with your past and present decisions related to sexual behavior?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

9. If you are not presently sexually active, do you feel prepared to make responsible decisions about sexual activity if you become active in the near future?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

10. If you are sexually active, how well protected are you against the risks of sexually transmitted infection? If you are not active now, how well do you understand protections needed if you become active?

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Adapted by Kansas City Kansas Community College from College Success, an open educational resource, by Saylor.org, [http://www.saylor.org/books](http://www.saylor.org/books)
11. If you are sexually active, how well protected are you against the risk of unwanted pregnancy? If you are not active now, how well do you understand the different types of protection available if you become active?

12. If you suddenly found yourself in a situation with a potential for sexual assault, including date rape, would you know what to do?

SEXUAL VALUES AND DECISIONS

It's often difficult to talk about sexuality and sex. Not only is it a very private matter for most people, but the words themselves are often used loosely, resulting in misunderstandings. Surveys have shown, for example, that about three-fourths of college students say they are "sexually active"—but survey questions rarely specify exactly what that phrase means. To some, sexual activity includes passionate kissing and fondling, while to others the phrase means sexual intercourse. Manual and oral sexual stimulation may or may not be included in an individual's own definition of being sexually active.

We should therefore begin by defining these terms. First, sexuality is not the same as sex. Human sexuality is a general term for how people experience and express themselves as sexual beings. Since all people are sexual beings, everyone has a dimension of human sexuality regardless of their behavior. Someone who practices complete abstinence from sexual behavior still has the human dimension of sexuality.

Sexuality involves gender identity, or how we see ourselves in terms of maleness and femaleness, as well as sexual orientation, which refers to the gender qualities of those to whom we are attracted. The phrase sexual activity is usually used to refer to behaviors between two (or more) people involving the genitals—but the term may also refer to solo practices such as masturbation or to partner activities that are sexually stimulating but may not involve the genitals. For the purposes of this chapter, with its focus on personal health, the term sexual activity refers to any behavior that carries a risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease. This includes vaginal, oral, and anal intercourse. The term sexual intercourse will be used to refer to vaginal intercourse, which also carries the risk of unwanted pregnancy. We'll avoid the most confusing term, sex, which in strict biological terms refers to reproduction but is used loosely to refer to many different behaviors.

There is a stereotype that sexual activity is very prominent among college students. One survey found that most college students think that OTHER students have had an average of three sexual partners in the past year, yet 80 percent of those answering said that they THEMSELVES had zero or one sexual partner. In other words, college students as a whole are not engaging in sexual activity nearly as much as they think they are. Another study revealed that about 20 percent of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old college students had never been sexually active and about half had not been during the preceding month.
In sum, some college students are sexually active and some are not. Misperceptions of what others are doing may lead to unrealistic expectations or feelings. What’s important, however, is to be aware of your own values and to make responsible decisions that protect your sexual health.

Information and preparation are the focus of this section of the chapter. People who engage in sexual activity in the heat of the moment—often under the influence of alcohol—without having protection and information for making good decisions are at risk for disease, unwanted pregnancy, or abuse.

**ALCOHOL AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY**

Almost all college students know the importance of protection against sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy. So why then do these problems occur so often? Part of the answer is that we don’t always do the right thing even when we know it—especially in the heat of the moment, particularly when drinking or using drugs. Some four hundred thousand eighteen- to twenty-four-year-old college students a year engage in unprotected sexual activity after drinking, and one hundred thousand report having been too intoxicated to know if they had consented to the sexual activity.

**WHAT’S “SAFE SEX”?**

It has been said that NO sexual activity is safe because there is always some risk, even if very small, of protections failing. The phrase “safer sex” better describes actions one can take to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.

**SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIS)**

About two dozen different diseases can be transmitted through sexual activity. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) range from infections that can be easily treated with medications to diseases that may have permanent health effects to HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), the cause of AIDS, a fatal disease. Despite decades of public education campaigns and easy access to protection, STIs still affect many millions of people every year. Often a person feels no symptoms at first and does not realize he or she has the infection and thus passes it on unknowingly. Or a person may not use protection because of simple denial: “It can’t happen to me.”

Table 6.2 “Common Sexually Transmitted Infections” lists facts about common STIs for which college students are at risk. Although there are some differences, in most cases sexual transmission involves an exchange of body fluids between two people: semen, vaginal fluids, or blood (or other body fluids containing blood). Because of this similarity, the same precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV will prevent the transmission of other STIs as well.

Although many of these diseases may not cause dramatic symptoms, always see a health-care provider if you have the slightest suspicion of having acquired an STI. Not only should you receive treatment as soon as possible to prevent the risk of serious health problems, but you are also obligated to help not pass it on to others.
## Table 6.2 Common Sexually Transmitted Infections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infection</th>
<th>U.S. Incidence</th>
<th>Transmission</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Causing AIDS</td>
<td>About 56,000 new HIV infections per year</td>
<td>Contact with infected person’s blood, semen, or vaginal secretions during any sexual act (and needle sharing)</td>
<td>Usually no symptoms for years or decades. Later symptoms include swollen glands, weight loss, and susceptibility to infections.</td>
<td>Because medical treatment can only slow but not cure AIDS, the disease is currently eventually fatal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlamydia Bacteria</td>
<td>Over 1 million new cases reported annually, with many more not reported</td>
<td>Vaginal, anal, or oral sex with infected person</td>
<td>Often no symptoms. Symptoms may occur 1–3 weeks after exposure, including burning sensation when urinating and abnormal discharge from vagina or penis.</td>
<td>In women, pelvic inflammatory disease may result, with permanent damage to reproductive tissues, possibly sterility. In men, infection may spread and cause pain, fever, and rarely sterility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) Causing Genital Warts</td>
<td>6.2 million new cases a year (before vaccine)</td>
<td>Genital contact, most often during vaginal and anal sex</td>
<td>Most infected people have no symptoms at all and unknowingly pass on the virus. Warts may appear in weeks or months.</td>
<td>Of the 40 types of HPV, many cause no health problems. Some types cause genital warts; others can lead to cancer. Vaccine is now recommended for girls and young women and protects against cancer-causing HPV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital Herpes Virus</td>
<td>An estimated 45 million Americans have had the infection</td>
<td>Genital-genital or oral-genital contact</td>
<td>Often no symptoms. First outbreak within 2 weeks of contact may cause sores and flu-like symptoms. Outbreaks occur less frequently over time.</td>
<td>Many adults experience recurrent painful genital sores and emotional distress. Genital herpes in a pregnant woman puts the infant at risk during childbirth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gonorrhea Bacteria</td>
<td>700,000 new cases each year</td>
<td>Direct contact with the penis, vagina, mouth, or anus; ejaculation does not have to occur</td>
<td>Often no recognized symptoms. Burning sensation when urinating. Abnormal discharge from vagina or penis. Rectal infection symptoms include itching, soreness, or bleeding.</td>
<td>If untreated, it may cause serious, permanent health problems, including pelvic inflammatory disease in women with permanent damage to reproductive tissues and possibly sterility in both men and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trichomoniasis Protozoa</td>
<td>7.4 million new cases each year</td>
<td>Genital contact, most often during vaginal sex</td>
<td>Most men have no symptoms or may have slight burning after urination or mild discharge. Some women have vaginal discharge with strong odors.</td>
<td>Trichomoniasis makes an infected woman more susceptible to HIV infection if exposed to the virus. Trichomoniasis is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Infection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infection</th>
<th>U.S. Incidence</th>
<th>Transmission</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Risks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syphilis Bacteria</td>
<td>36,000 cases reported a year</td>
<td>Direct contact with a syphilis sore, which occurs mainly on the external genitals, vagina, anus, or in the rectum but can also occur on the lips and in the mouth; during vaginal, anal, or oral sex</td>
<td>Often no recognized symptoms for years. Primary stage symptom (a small painless sore) appears in 10–90 days but heals without treatment. Secondary stage symptoms (skin rashes, fever, headache, muscle aches) may also resolve without treatment. Late-stage symptoms occur after 10–20 years, including severe internal organ damage and nervous system effects.</td>
<td>Because the infected person may feel no symptoms, the risk of transmission is great. Syphilis is easy to treat in the early stages, but treatment in late stages cannot repair damage that has already occurred. Untreated, syphilis is often fatal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are guidelines to protect yourself against STIs if you are sexually active:

- Know that only abstinence is 100 percent safe. Protective devices can fail even when used correctly, although the risk is small. Understand the risks of not always using protection.

- Talk with your partner in advance about your sexual histories and health. Agree that regardless of how sure you both are about not having an STI, you will use protection because you cannot be certain even if you have no symptoms.

- Avoid sexual activity with casual acquaintances whose sexual history you do not know and with whom you have not talked about health issues. Sexual activity is safest with a single partner in a long-term relationship.

- Use a latex condom for all sexual activity. A male condom is about 98 percent effective when used correctly, and a female condom about 95 percent effective when used correctly. With both, incorrect use increases the risk. If you are unsure how to use a condom correctly and safely, do some private online reading. Good information can be found at [http://www.emedicinehealth.com/how_to_use_a_condom/article_em.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/how_to_use_a_condom/article_em.htm). You can watch a video demonstration of how to use condoms correctly at [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/teen-talk/watch/how-use-condom-26797.htm](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/teen-talk/watch/how-use-condom-26797.htm).

- If you are sexually active with multiple partners, see your health-care provider twice a year for an STI screening even if you are not experiencing symptoms.

### PREVENTING UNWANTED PREGNANCY

Heterosexual couples who engage in vaginal intercourse are also at risk for an unwanted pregnancy. There are lots of myths about how a woman can’t get pregnant at a certain time in her menstrual cycle or under other conditions, but in fact, there’s a risk of pregnancy after vaginal intercourse at any time. All couples should talk about protection before reaching the stage of having intercourse and take appropriate steps.

While a male condom is about 98 percent effective, that 2 percent failure rate could lead to tens of thousands of unintended pregnancies among college students. When not used correctly, condoms are only 85 percent effective. In addition, a couple that has been healthy and monogamous in their relationship for a long time may be less faithful in their use of condoms if the threat of STIs seems diminished. Other methods of birth control should also therefore be considered. With the exception of the male vasectomy, at present most other methods are used by the woman. They include intrauterine devices (IUDs),

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implants, injected or oral contraceptives (the "pill"), hormone patches, vaginal rings, diaphragms, cervical caps, and sponges. Each has certain advantages and disadvantages.

Birth control methods vary widely in effectiveness as well as potential side effects. This is therefore a very personal decision. In addition, two methods can be used together, such as a condom along with a diaphragm or spermicide, which increases the effectiveness. (Note that a male and female condom should not be used together, however, because of the risk of either or both tearing because of friction between them.) Because this is such an important issue, you should talk it over with your health-care provider, or a professional at your student health center or an agency such as Planned Parenthood.

In cases of unprotected vaginal intercourse, or if a condom tears, emergency contraception is an option for up to five days after intercourse. Sometimes called the “morning after pill" or “plan B," emergency contraception is an oral hormone that prevents pregnancy from occurring. It is NOT an “abortion pill." Planned Parenthood offices around the country can provide more information and confidential contraceptive services including emergency contraception.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DATE RAPE**

Sexual assault is a serious problem in America generally and among college students in particular:

- About a third of all dating relationships involve some physical violence.
- One in six women and one in ten men will be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes.
- About a fourth of sexual assault victims are in the typical college age range of eighteen to twenty-four years old.
- As many as one in four women experience unwanted sexual intercourse while attending college.
- In more than three fourths of rape cases, the victim knows the perpetrator.

Sexual assault is any form of sexual contact without voluntary consent. Rape is usually more narrowly legally defined as forced sexual intercourse, a specific type of sexual assault. Both are significant problems among college students. Although men can also be victims of sexual assault and rape, the problem usually involves women, so this section focuses primarily on the issue for women in college. Men must also understand what is involved in sexual assault and help build greater awareness of the problem and how to prevent it.

Sexual assault is so common in our society in part because many people believe in myths about certain kinds of male-female interaction. Common myths include "It’s not really rape if the woman was flirting first" and "It’s not rape unless the woman is seriously injured." Both statements are not legally correct. Another myth or source of confusion is the idea that “Saying no is just playing hard to get, not really no." Men who really believe these myths may not think that they are committing assault, especially if their judgment is impaired by alcohol. Other perpetrators of sexual assault and rape, however, know exactly what they're doing and in fact may plan to overcome their victim by using alcohol or a date rape drug.

College administrators and educators have worked very hard to promote better awareness of sexual assault and to help students learn how to protect themselves. Yet colleges cannot prevent things that happen at parties and behind closed doors. Students must understand how to protect themselves.
Perpetrators of sexual assault fall into three categories:

1. Strangers
2. Acquaintances
3. Dating partners

Among college students, assault by a stranger is the least common because campus police departments take many measures to help keep students safe on campus. Nonetheless, use common sense to avoid situations where you might be alone in a vulnerable place. Walk with a friend if you must pass through a quiet place after dark. Don’t open your door to a stranger. Don’t take chances. For more information and ways to reduce your risk of sexual assault, see [http://www.rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-prevention](http://www.rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-prevention).

Most sexual assaults are perpetrated by acquaintances or date partners. Typically, an acquaintance assault begins at a party. Typically, both the man and the woman are drinking—although assault can happen to sober victims as well. The interaction may begin innocently, perhaps with dancing or flirting. The perpetrator may misinterpret the victim’s behavior as a willingness to share sexual activity, or a perpetrator intent on sexual activity may simply pick out a likely target. Either way, the situation may gradually or suddenly change and lead to sexual assault.

Prevention of acquaintance rape begins with the awareness of its likelihood and then taking deliberate steps to ensure you stay safe at and after the party:

- Go with a friend and don’t let someone separate you from your friend. Agree to stick together and help each other if it looks like things are getting out of hand. If your friend has too much to drink, don’t leave her or him alone. Plan to leave together and stick to the plan.
- Be especially alert if you become separated from your friend, even if you are only going off alone to look for the bathroom. You may be followed.
- Be cautious if someone is pressuring you to drink heavily.
- Trust your instincts if someone seems to be coming on too aggressively. Get back to your friends.
- Know where you are and have a plan to get home if you have to leave abruptly.

These preventions can work well at a party or in other social situations, but they don’t apply to most dating situations when you are alone with another person. About half of sexual assaults on college students are date rape. An assault may occur after the first date, when you feel you know the person better and perhaps are not concerned about the risk. This may actually make you more vulnerable, however. Until you really get to know the person well and have a trusting relationship, follow these guidelines to lower the risk of sexual assault:

- Make it clear that you have limits on sexual activity. Take care that your body language or appearance does not send a message that you might be “easy.” If there is any question that your date may not understand your limits, talk about your values and limits.
- If your date initiates unwanted sexual activity of any sort, do not resist passively. The other may misinterpret passive behavior as consent.
- Be careful if your date is drinking heavily or using drugs. Avoid drinking yourself, or drink very moderately.
• Stay in public places where there are other people. Do not invite your date to your home before your relationship is well established.
• Trust your instincts if your date seems to be coming on too strong. End the date if necessary.
• Pay attention for signs of an unhealthy relationship.

If you are sexually assaulted, always talk to someone. Call a rape crisis center, your student health center, or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE for a confidential conversation. Even if you do not report the assault to law enforcement, it’s important to talk through your feelings and seek help if needed to prevent an emotional crisis.

**DATE RAPE DRUGS**

In addition to alcohol, sexual predators use certain commonly available drugs to sedate women for sexual assault. They are odorless and tasteless and may be added to a punch bowl or slipped into your drink when you’re not looking. These drugs include the sedatives GHB, sometimes called “liquid ecstasy,” and Rohypnol, also called “roofies.” Both cause sedation in small doses but can have serious medical effects in larger doses. Date rape drugs are typically used at parties. Use the following tips to protect yourself against date rape drugs:

• Don’t put your drink down where someone else may get to it. If your drink is out of your sight for even a moment, don’t finish it.
• Never accept an open drink. Don’t accept a mixed drink that you did not see mixed from pure ingredients.
• Never drink anything from a punch bowl, even if it’s nonalcoholic. You can’t know what may have been added into the punch.
• If you experience unexpected physical symptoms that may be the result of something you drank or ate, get to an emergency room and ask to be tested.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

• Sexual health is an important dimension of wellness and something we should all think about to affirm our values and make responsible decisions.
• Your time in college and your overall health and well-being would be seriously impacted if you were to acquire a sexually transmitted infection or experience an unwanted pregnancy. You owe it to yourself—and anyone with whom you are in a relationship—to have the facts and know how to protect yourself.
• The huge number of sexual assaults that occur every year is one of our society’s “dirty little secrets.” This problem is as rampant on college campuses as in society in general. You need to know what’s involved—and what to do to protect yourself from the pain of becoming a victim.
CHECKPOINT EXERCISES

1. For each of the following statements about sexual health, circle T for true or F for false:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>As long as you always use a condom, you don’t have to worry about an STI from sexual activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>You may have a very serious STI without feeling any symptoms at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Abstinence is the only 100 percent effective method of birth control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>It’s not rape if a man has sexual intercourse with a woman after she says no as long as he does not use force.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. List at least three things a woman can do at a party to ensure she does not become a victim of sexual assault.

3. Describe a first date scenario in which a woman is well protected from the risk of sexual assault. List at least three things she should make sure of.

__________________________________________________________________

6.4 CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER TAKEAWAYS

- Good health helps you be more successful in college.
- For good nutrition, eat a varied diet with lots of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains and minimize fats, sugar, and salt.
- Regular exercise is not only important for good health but is a great way to reduce stress in your life.
- Sleep is one of the first areas where college students cut back when they find themselves too busy with classes, work, and other activities. Taking the time to get enough sleep, however, makes you so much more efficient when studying that it can actually save you time.
- Substance use and abuse not only takes its toll on the body but also contributes to problems in college, at work, and in the future. You may need to make a smart decision between short-term pleasures and long-term success.
- Since many stressors are unavoidable in life, we all need to find good ways to minimize their effects. The best stress-reducers over time become good habits that will increase our wellness and help us succeed in college and careers.
- If you are having an emotional or relationship problem that persists and affects your life, don’t hesitate to seek help. Most colleges have counselors and health professionals trained to help you get through any crisis.
- Sexual health is your own business—except that sexuality usually affects and is affected by others. Smart choices focus on protecting yourself from potential problems, regardless of your choices about sexual activity.

CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Whose fault is it if I’m overweight now? ______________________
2. Whose fault is it if I’m overweight two years from now? ________________
3. Whom can I talk to if I want to find a weight loss program that will work best for me? ________________
4. Complete these sentences:
   - What I think most needs change in my diet is ______________________
   - The main reason I don’t get enough exercise is ______________________
   - When I feel stressed, I often ______________________ (How healthy is that? Should you choose healthier activities instead?)
8. The first step in resolving a conflict you are having with someone else is to
   ________________________________________________________________

9. How do you know if you’re drinking too much or too often?
   ________________________________________________________________

10. As a college student, why should you care about how much stress you feel and what you do about it?
    ________________________________________________________________

11. If you have a friend who has seemed very depressed lately, what signs should you look for that might indicate he
    or she is becoming suicidal?
    ________________________________________________________________

12. If you do see signs of suicide in your friend, what should you do?
    ________________________________________________________________

13. If you are sexually active, can you be certain you are at zero risk for acquiring HIV? If so, when? If not, why not?
    ________________________________________________________________

OUTSIDE THE BOOK

1. Choose a friend you enjoy spending time with and see if he or she will help you with an “experiment.”
   Together, make a list of fun things to do together in the next week that will help minimize your stress.
   Choose activities that are different from your usual habits. Following are some ideas, but be creative and try
   to include your own healthy ideas:
   
   o Cook a healthy meal together (if you have a kitchen) or shop together for snacks you can carry with you for
     when you’re hungry between classes.
   
   o Go for a jog, bike ride, or long walk at least three times during the week.
   
   o Study together early in the evening, with snacks and drinks that won’t slow you down or keep you up, and
     then get to bed on time.
   
   At the end of the week, talk about the experiment and how you felt during and afterward. Did you have fun?
   Did you get some ideas for other or better things to do? Plan to keep doing some of these activities.

2. Spend twenty to thirty minutes online getting more ideas about healthy ways to minimize the stress you
   feel as a student. Start by typing the phrase “stress reduction” into your search engine. Look for specific
   ideas and activities not already covered in this chapter. Write them down here to share with other students
   and your instructor.

   a. _____________________________________________________________
   
   b. _____________________________________________________________
   
   c. _____________________________________________________________
   
   d. _____________________________________________________________
   
   e. _____________________________________________________________
**MAKE AN ACTION LIST**

**Nutrition**
My worst eating habits are

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

My action plan to eat better includes the following:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Exercise**
I don't get enough exercise because

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I'll try to do these things to become more active:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Sleep**
I sometimes/often don't get enough sleep because

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I can better manage my time to get enough sleep in the following ways:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Substances**
I tend to overuse or abuse these substances:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

My action plan to avoid substance problems includes the following:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Stress**
These things cause me the most stress:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I will take these steps to better cope with these stresses:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Emotional Health**
I am happiest when I

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

I'll be happier if I make these changes:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

**Sexual Health**
I am/might be putting myself at risk when/if I do these things:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What I should always do to reduce these risks is to

________________________________________________________________________