

Study Tips

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▶ [Preparing to study](#)

When you are preparing to study, think about the following things:

- **LOCATION.** Make sure you have plenty of space for your books, and plenty of light to help you read.
- **ALONE / IN A GROUP.** Most people find that they can concentrate best when they work alone. However, sometimes it can be fun and rewarding to work with other people, too. Why not ask a friend to test you on vocabulary or grammar?
- **FREQUENCY.** If you leave all your studying till the last possible moment, you will find it much more difficult, and you are much more likely to forget the information you have just revised. It is better to study for shorter periods of time on a regular basis, than to spend many hours revising all at the last minute. Remember to take regular breaks, too!
- **NOISE / QUIET.** Many people prefer to study quietly. However, some people work more effectively while listening to music. Studies have shown that quiet, instrumental music (such as classical music) is best for helping you concentrate. Loud rock music is the least effective type of music!
- **ENVIRONMENT.** Some people study best when they are in a welcoming, attractive environment: for example, facing a window or an inspiring painting or photo. Some experts think that wearing or looking at bright colours can help inspire and motivate you, too – the colour orange is meant to be particularly effective!
- **HEALTH.** It is important to eat well and take some exercise while you are studying. This will help your brain, as well as your body. Try not to eat too

much unhealthy, sugary food while you are studying. It will help you concentrate for a short while, but it can make you feel *more* tired afterwards!

► Taking notes

In class, your teacher will give you useful language tips and vocabulary to help you with your studies. It is important to take good notes to help you improve your English.

- **BEFORE CLASS.** Read the notes that you made in the last lesson. This will help you revise and remember new material, and will prepare you more effectively for the next lesson.
- **DURING CLASS.** Pay careful attention to what your teacher is saying. If she or he tells you something you didn't know, write it down! Make sure to write down all the information he or she writes on the board. If you are not sure about the meaning of a particular word, write a question mark (?) next to it. You can then ask your teacher what it means, or look up the definition of the word in a dictionary after class.
- **AFTER CLASS.** Read the notes you have just made. Is everything clear? If your notes are not clear, write them out again neatly. Check any information you are not sure about in a reference book or dictionary. If you are still not sure, ask a friend for help, or ask your teacher in the next lesson.

► Learning new vocabulary

Building your vocabulary will improve your reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, and will help you to perform better in examinations.

Here are a few vocabulary learning tips which you might like to use:

Recording vocabulary

1. Write down any new words or phrases which you read or hear in a **Vocabulary Notebook**.
2. Write down as much information as possible about each word or phrase. Ask your teacher for help, or use a dictionary. Think about the following questions.
 - **What is the part of speech?**
Write down whether the word is a / an ...
noun: *an exam*
verb: *study*
adjective: *difficult*
adverb: *quickly, easily*
 - **How is it used in context?**
Write a sentence to show how the word or phrase is used. For example:
After the party, everyone cleaned up the mess.
 - **What does it mean?**
Write down a definition, a synonym, or a translation.
clean up = tidy away
 - **How do you say it?**

Write down the pronunciation.

Revising vocabulary

1. **Regularly revise** the words and phrases in your Vocabulary Notebook.
2. **Copy out and learn** the vocabulary you have recorded in your Vocabulary Notebook in different ways. This will make revising vocabulary more interesting, and may help you remember new words and phrases more effectively. For example, you could use word maps, pictures, or graphs to help you remember certain words or phrases. It can also be useful to record and learn vocabulary in sets, for example, all the words relating to a certain topic (for example, *personality* or *travel*), or all the words which share the same root (for example, *entertain* (v), *entertainer* (n), *entertaining* (adj.), *entertainment* (n)).
3. **Practise** new words and vocabulary as much as possible when writing or speaking English.

► Approaching a reading text

When you have to read and answer questions about a text, do not panic. Follow these simple steps:

1. **READ FOR GIST.** Read the text first, before you read any questions. Read the whole text through quickly, and try to work out the general meaning. You do not need to understand every word of the text to understand the gist!
2. **READ THE QUESTIONS QUICKLY.** Next read the instructions and the questions. Make sure you understand what you have to do. For example, do you need to choose the correct answers, or complete some sentences?
3. **READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY.** Now read the questions again carefully. What kind of information will you need to answer them? Are there any key words in the questions which will help you find the information in the text?
4. **READ FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION.** Read the text again more slowly. Look for specific information which will help you answer the questions. Sometimes key words in the questions will also appear in the text. Sometimes the questions are more difficult, and you need to look for synonyms or different expressions in the text.
5. **ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.** Be careful! You must only use information which is given in the text.
6. **CHECK YOUR ANSWERS.** When you have finished, check your answers. Is the information provided in your answers correct? Is your spelling, grammar and punctuation correct? Read the text and your questions as many times as you need.

► Approaching a writing task

When you have to write a composition, it is important to prepare your writing carefully. Follow these steps:

1. **READ THE TASK.** Read the instructions carefully and make sure you understand what you have to do. What type of composition are you going to write? For example, a *description* or an *opinion essay*.
2. **BRAINSTORM.** Make notes about what you want to write. Think of as many ideas as you can. For example, if you are writing a description of a person, you might like to make notes about appearance, personality, and your opinion of that person.
3. **PLAN.** Look at the notes you made for step 2. Which of these ideas are you going to include in your composition? Decide which information you are going to include in each paragraph (REMEMBER: you will need a new paragraph for each new topic).
4. **THINK ABOUT LANGUAGE.** Read your plan carefully. Then think about what language you will need. For example, which tenses are you going to use? What functional language will you need? Can you think of any interesting vocabulary relating to the topic? It is important to have a variety of vocabulary and structures in your composition to make it more interesting.
5. **WRITE.** Now write your composition, using all the notes you made in steps 2–4. Remember to use new paragraphs for each new topic, and the correct layout if you are writing a letter.
6. **CHECK.** When you have finished writing, check your work carefully. Does it answer the question? Is it interesting? Have you used the correct grammar, spelling, word order and punctuation? When you have checked and corrected your composition, write it out neatly again.

► Taking an exam

Taking an exam can feel quite stressful, but here are a few tips to help you perform at your best:

- **BEFORE THE EXAM.** Write a study plan and make sure you follow it! Decide which subjects you are going to study, and when you are going to study them. Remember: it is better to study each subject regularly and frequently than to try to revise everything at once. Follow the tips given in 'Preparing to study' above. Make sure you allow enough time for fun and exercise, too: it is important to feel healthy and relaxed.
- **DURING THE EXAM. DON'T PANIC!** Make sure you read all the questions carefully. Try to answer every question, even if you are not sure of the answer. Allow enough time to read through all your answers at the end and correct any mistakes.

- **AFTER THE EXAM.** Well done! Now you can relax. Try not to worry too much about the exam after you have finished it. It won't change your results, and it might make you more stressed and worried for your next exam. Make sure you allow some time for a bit of fun and celebration after you have finished your exams: you deserve it!