

10 Top Tips on Academic Learning

	Managing Your Time	Referencing	Presentations	Group Work	Critical Reading	Effective Reading	Successful Assignments	Getting the Most Out of Lectures
1	Keep your long-term goals in mind. They can motivate you	Be meticulous about publishing details. Accuracy is essential	Know who your audience is, what they know, & what their level of interest is	Meet with your group as soon as possible	Accurately record title, author(s), date & place of publication	Find a quiet, uninterrupted time & place to read	Read the question. Make sure you know what to do. If not, ask your tutor	Do the required readings before the lecture
2	Schedule due dates, work times, & social occasions on a semester planner	Decide the best way to cite your sources: quote directly, paraphrase, or summarise	Gather the material, find a focus, & structure it simply, clearly, & logically	Try not to be in a group with friends: working with friends can be harder than you think	Determine your reason(s) for reading the article. Is it for general background on a topic or supporting evidence?	Decide why you are reading the text	Schedule time for reading, note-taking, drafting, & referencing, & editing	Download & read lecture notes & outlines before class
3	Prioritise tasks for the week & cross them off the list as you finish them	Quote if the exact words are really important	Frame your presentation with an introduction & conclusion	Decide on a timetable & exchange contact details at first meeting	Identify the author's purpose	Read for main idea first. This is found in the title, abstract, introduction, thesis statement, & conclusion	Read textbooks for general information before reading journals	Make note of important terminology before class
4	Break down large tasks into smaller tasks	Paraphrase when you want to support your argument	Hand out an outline to help the audience follow your points	Identify your strengths & say what you can contribute to the group	Ask yourself 'Does the author describe adequately the current knowledge on the topic?'	Look for organisational cues: sub-headings, graphs, & summaries	Plan the structure of your assignment – make an outline	Arrive before the lecture to get any handouts





Managing Your Time	Referencing	Presentations	Group Work	Critical Reading	Effective Reading	Successful Assignments	Getting the Most Out of Lectures
5 Focus. Identify your time wasters (TV, surfing the net), & manage them	Summarise main ideas & conclusions	Signpost your presentation. Use phrases like 'Another important point is'	Brainstorm so that each person has a task to do before the next meeting	Find the evidence to support the author's argument	Read topic sentence (usually first) of each body paragraph	Start writing a draft as soon as you have something to say	Sit near the front of the room to help in your concentration
6 Schedule in breaks every hour	Use transition phrases to link your & others' ideas	Repeat important points	Turn up to <u>ALL</u> meetings	Take notes of key information. Write any questions you think of, as you read	Identify author's purpose, perspective, approach & orientation	Draft a thesis statement & write according to your plan	Be an active listener. Ask yourself questions, & make notes based on these questions
7 Plan to study at times when you are alert & motivated	Use the right referencing format for your school or department	Make eye contact, & use gestures & voice in a natural way	Be respectful to <u>ALL</u> group members & remain task-focused	After reading the text, ask yourself, 'What do I think of what I've just read?'	Evaluate the evidence	Revise, edit, revise, & proof read	Experiment with concept maps & other strategies to organise lecture material
8 Establish a nice, comfortable study place	Use Endnote or similar software	Don't rush. Speak slowly & clearly	Leave time to finalise assignment or rehearse together	Consider the argument in light of your other reading & experiences. Does it make sense?	Highlight, underline, & take notes during full reading of text	Follow guidelines regarding word limit, due dates, & submission requirements	Review your notes. Make a list of questions you need to ask about
9 Reward yourself when you finish a task	Avoid plagiarism. Acknowledge the original author	Never go over time. Allow time for questions	Communicate as much as possible – always gain consensus	Identify any weaknesses or limitations in the argument	Every 20 minutes, take a short break (e.g. roll shoulders, look at ceiling)	Submit on time	Record the lecture (with the lecturer's permission)
10	Find out & attend workshops in your College or University						

FIGURE 11J 10 top tips on academic learning



Photocopiable:

Essential Study Skills, Third Edition © Tom Burns and Sandra Sinfield, 2012 (SAGE)