
Module 5: Good Reading Habit/Study Skills

Most people who desire to excel in their academic pursuit hardly know how to go about attaining the dreams. The problem is that majority of such people are challenged in one way or the other. Such challenge could be that they are married and have family issues that are demanding their attention and time. Some have been out of school for a while and find it difficult coping with reading, while others have the challenge of combining schooling with work. This module will introduce you to basic study habits that will enhance your academic excellence.

- Unit 1: Basic Study Techniques / Methods
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Unit 1: Basic Study Techniques/Methods

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1.0 Introduction

For effective Study, students must not depend on chance but must adequately plan their study using tested study methods. Students who follow these methods learn more easily, retain material for longer periods of time, and save themselves hours of study time. In this unit you will learn good study and reading methods.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the steps to take to develop good study skills

- Explain the SQ3R reading method
 - Demonstrate good studying and reading habit to achieve academic excellence
- ### 3.0 Main Content

3.1 Good Study Methods

There are steps you must take in order to develop good study skills.

1. Making and Keeping a Study Schedule

Students must have a functional reading schedule where specific hours are set aside for reading each day. This schedule must be faithfully kept from day-to-day. The amount of time needed for study will vary for each individual. An average of four hours of study each day is recommended.

2. Studying in an Appropriate Setting — Same Time, Same Place, Every Day

A conducive environment such as a library, or/and a study room at home is recommended for study. This will facilitate comprehension since it is expected that the environment is not only quiet but cool and has all necessary facilities for study. Have a specific place for your study.

3. Equipping Your Study Area with All the Materials You Need

Ensure that when you visit the library that you go with all necessary reading materials/resources such as: Recommended textbooks, e-resources on your laptops, pencils, pens, erasers, etc. With your materials at hand, you can study without interruption. Put your phone on silence and take only emergency calls. Studying is a serious business. You can return the calls after you have finished studying.

4. Not Relying on Inspiration for Motivation

Students must not leave studying time to when they feel like. You must stick to your daily schedule for studying whether you are motivated or not. Get yourself motivated. One method of doing this is by moving from the known to the unknown or by reading for pleasure then move on to actual study. As an athlete-in-training cannot wait for inspiration to practice in preparation for an event so you cannot wait for inspiration to study for examinations or assignments. Like the athlete, you must get into training for tests and examinations by doing the assignments and preparing daily through review to be ready for the action.

5. Keeping a Well-Kept Notebook Improves Grades

According to researchers there is a correlation between orderliness and high grades. Knowing where to find your materials when you need them is crucial.

There is no time to waste in searching for your reading materials and your thought flow must not be disrupted while already reading. Students therefore, should keep a special section for each subject in their notebook as well as a semester calendar so that they can write down the dead-lines of all assignments as they are uploaded in their portals. Having all of this information together in one place is vital to their success. A well-kept notebook is a part of good time management.

6. Taking Good Notes as Insurance against Forgetting

Students must learn to take good notes efficiently as their instructor's stress important points in class and as they study. Good notes are a "must" for just-before-test/examination-reviewing. Without notes, you will need to reread and review the entire course material or textbook before an examination or test. With notes, you can recall the main points in just a short time. The time you spend in note taking is not lost, but in fact, is a time-saver.

7. Over- learning Material Enhances Memory

According to Psychologists you must over-learn a concept for it to be internalized. This calls for constant reading in order to over-learn what you already know. Experts suggest that after you can say, "I know this material," that you should continue to study that material for an additional one-fourth of the original study time. Manipulate the material as many different ways as possible by writing, reading, touching, hearing, and saying it. In an experimental study, students who over-learned material retained four times as much after a month than students who didn't over-learn.

3.2 SQ3R READING METHOD

SQ3R is a Reading/Study formula designed to help process and increase retention of written information. It consists of the following five steps.

S = SURVEY

Scan the piece of writing to establish its purpose and get the main ideas. This may also be called skimming. Look for:

- The title, headings, and subheadings: This indicates the main topics and concepts being developed.
- Captions under pictures, charts, graphs or maps: This emphasizes important information
- Questions or teacher-made study guides and review them

- Introductory, concluding paragraphs and summary will also reveal the topics being covered as well as the purpose

Q = QUESTION

Write questions to give purpose and improve concentration. This aids comprehension. Do the following:

- Turn the title, headings, and/or subheadings into questions
- Read questions at the beginning/ end of the chapters or after each subheading
- Ask yourself, "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject"
- Ask yourself, "What do I already know about this subject?"
Note: If it is helpful to you, write out these questions for consideration.

R = READ

When you begin to Read, do the following:

- Look for answers to the questions you first raised
- Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters or study guides
- Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc.
- Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases
- Study graphic aids
- Reduce your speed for difficult passages
- Stop and reread parts which are not clear
- Read only a section at a time and recite after each section

R = RECITE

Reciting helps to put the information into your long-term memory. Put what you have learned into your own words. Do the following after you have read a section.

- Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words, what you read
- Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words
- Underline or highlight important points you've just read

It is important to note that in learning, the more senses employed, the more likely you are to remember what you have read e.g Triple strength learning: Seeing, saying, hearing; Quadruple strength learning: Seeing, saying, hearing, writing!!!

R = REVIEW

It is important to review the material to understand and remember it. Did you answer all the questions and understand the information?

Reviewing each time, you study will eliminate the need to “cram” for a test.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Studying in an appropriate setting means _____.
2. SQ3R which is a reading method stand for:

Feedback

1. To study in a conducive environment like a library that is quiet, having good lightings, well ventilated or with good air conditioners, and other facilities.
2. S=Survey, Q=Question, 1st R=Read, 2nd R=Recite, 3rd R=Review

4.0 Conclusion

A practice of good study and reading habit is a lifelong learning skill that everyone should have. Practicing it may seem difficult at the beginning, but it becomes easy after some practice. Practice of good study and reading habits take you beyond passing your examinations.

5.0 Summary

To recap what you have learned in this unit, click on the video below or copy the link and paste on a web browser. The video is a summary of what you have read in this unit. You could also click on the audio version and listen. You can also download them and play offline.

Video

Audio

6.0 References/Further Reading

<http://www.csc.edu/learningcentre/study/studymethods.csc>

Reading for understanding: The SQW3R Method

<https://students.unsw.edu.au/reading-understanding>

Harboe, T & Mullen, R.V (2007) Study skills for international students.

http://samf.ku.dk/pes/pdf_filer/Samlet_study_skills_med_nyt_navn_2010.pdf

Unit 2: Developing Good Reading Habit

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1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt all the necessary steps you needed to take to improve your study method specifically for academic and exam purpose. In this unit you will learn how to improve your reading habit in general both for academic and specifically for entertainment leading to lifelong learning.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the steps to improve your reading skills
- Read using the reading skill guide in achieving a desirable academic excellence

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Good Reading habit

Reading is both an important professional skill and a way to enjoy informative, creative, and inspiring works of literature that enrich your life experiences. You require time and dedication to develop a good reading habit just like any other skill that is worth mastering. Once mastered, reading becomes a lifelong source of enjoyment and entertainment for you.

For you to develop a good reaching habit, you have to practice the following:

1. Improve your reading skills:

For you to enjoy your reading to the fullest, you have to practice good reading skills such as:

- Read for content: - When reading, always look out for the main idea of each paragraph along with the supporting reasons. This you can achieve by using pencil to underline key idea of every paragraph.

- Look up unfamiliar words: - When reading, make a list of unfamiliar words and at a good stopping point look up these words in a dictionary. Then go back and reread the sentences, they appear in to contextualize the words and their usage in case of multiple meanings.
 - Lean to appreciate contextual meanings: - When you encounter unfamiliar words or ideas, check out for the literary, historical or social context for clues as to what the character or writer is talking about.
 - Become familiar with literary devices: - To be a better reader, you need to be familiar with common literary tactics such as metaphor, hyperbole, parallel structure, personification, and alliteration. This can significantly enrich your reading experience.
 - Don't Rush:- It takes time to develop a good reading habit. Don't be discouraged. Keep nurturing your skills and develop at your own pace. As you read each day, you improve on your skills and gain greater efficiency.
2. Keep Reading Materials Handy: - Keep your textbooks, magazines, novels, devotional materials etc, handy. They should be well arranged in your reading corner or room. You can always visit the library for new books and also the internet for open educational resources.
3. Connect Reading to Your Everyday Life:- This you can achieve in the following ways:
- Join a book club: At a book club, you meet regularly with other committed readers to share your reading experiences with. This will motivate you and you will begin to gain the benefit of talking to intelligent readers.
 - Download a news aggregator: This will enable you to follow online blogs, newspapers, and magazines. It can also help you to organize what you read into folders.
 - Find a time and place to Read: Find a favorite corner or room that is conducive for reading. Set aside regular time to enjoy reading at your favorite corner.
 - Set daily or weekly goals: - Setting reasonable goals can motivate you to becoming a better reader. For example, you can set a target of finishing a chapter of your textbook daily and finishing a novel per week. Your goal must be realistic and achievable.

4. Deciding what to Read: - Your academic reading is compulsory. You also need to read for entertainment and for this reading, choose topics that interest you. To help you achieve this, you can do the following:
- Seek out blogs, books and magazines that pertain to your own hobbies and interests to motivate you to read and maximize your enjoyment.
 - You can talk to friends with common interests. You can also visit 'Goodreads.com' or local book stores or libraries.
 - See what reviewers say: You can decide to read a book based on the reviewer's comment. This can also help you to learn and understand the purpose of literary criticism. It will teach you to articulate your own tastes as a reader. You can start up an informed conversation about a reviewed book with colleague or at a reading club.
5. Create a Reading List: It is important to have a reading timetable or create a reading list of what you will read in future. This way, you know what to read at each time.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. State two ways you can improve your reading skills
2. What do you look out for when you read for content?

Feedback

1. A combination of any two of the following: (a) reading for content (b) improving vocabulary strength (c) Appreciating contextual meanings (d) Knowledge of literary devices (e) Consistency in reading.
2. You look out for the main idea in every paragraph

4.0 Conclusion

You can develop good reading habit through practice. Therefore, read every day. 15 to 20 minutes every day can lead to great success in passing your examinations and meeting with daily demand in the society.

5.0 Summary

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Video

Audio

6.0 References/Further Reading

Nine good reading habits

<http://www.liketoread.com/readinghabits.html>

14 Ways to Cultivate a Lifetime Reading Habit

<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/featured/14-ways-to-cultivate-a-lifetime-reading-habit.html>

Unit 3: Handling Examinations

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1.0 Introduction

Most students get so stressed up whenever exam is approaching. The reason why they get so stressed up is because they have not taken the pain to learn and practice the steps to take in preparing for examinations. This is exactly what this unit will help you achieve.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the steps to take when preparing for an examination
- Demonstrate the skills in handling examinations

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Preparing for an Exam

You must prepare for examination well ahead of time to prevent it from being too stressful and time-consuming. Good and early preparation can help to build your self-confidence. Ways of ensuring readiness for exam are:

1. Start studying early: - There is no magic on having good grades. If you want to have good grade in your exam, begin to study course materials early. The volume of work and the difficulty level of the course should help you to determine how early to start serious studying. You need also to understand your rate of assimilation. It is important to start your study early. Ensure that you get a full night's sleep before the exam. Your brain needs time to subconsciously digest all you have read. You are advised to start your study early to avoid staying up all night. Avoid cramming.
2. Sort out your subject material: - Before you begin to review a subject, first get all materials ready. Check to ensure that you have all the handouts or the course materials for that subject. Put your notes in order. Also check your course outline or subject guide and make sure you cover your course

outline. You can enrich your notes with summaries from textbook chapters. Putting all your materials together and in order makes it easier for you to find what you need while you're studying. Reading your notes before exams will help to refresh your memory of what you have been taught and other materials you have read when you read your notes check out for any vital missing information and fill up the gap. This you can do by borrowing someone else's notes. Good notes can make all the difference when studying for exams. Concepts you may not understand on your own when reading a textbook are well explained by your lecturers in their notes and important information is highlighted and emphasized by your lecturers during lectures. Read your notes over and over.

3. Find out about the exam: - Try to find out from your lecturers the areas to cover for your exams. Pay attention during exam revision by your lecturers as clues to areas of concentration can be released to students consciously or unconsciously. You may also want to know how the exam will be graded and whether it will be multiple choice questions or essays. Don't hesitate to talk to your student counsel if you're feeling really stressed.
4. Review past Exam Papers: - Get old exam papers on the subject and test yourself. Familiarize yourself with the structure and format. Practice answering the questions within the specified time limits.
5. Know Exam venue and time:- You should make sure you know the venue and time for your exam. Always check your exam time table for details. Find out the venue and check how long it will take you to get there. You must not arrive late to your examination venue so practice waking up early or set an alarm clock.
6. Don't Panic:- You need to keep your cool. Early preparation as earlier discussed will help to build your self-confidence and not panic. In addition to this, don't talk too much to other students before your exam. Ensure that you take a light and decent breakfast.
7. Use Your reading time wisely:- Once the question paper is served and you are asked to read through, do the following:
 - Read all of the instructions carefully
 - Scan through the whole exam paper and note the number of pages
 - Check how much each question is worth in terms of marks. Consider spending more time on questions with weightier marks
 - Determine which question to answer first. Start with questions you can best answer to boost your confidence.
 - Determine how much time you will spend on each question and section.
 - Start thinking about your answers.

8. Interpret your questions well:- Be careful in decoding your questions. Take cognizance of the different components of the questions.
9. Review Your Answers:- You should try to finish your exam before time and give room for review of your answers. It is better to review all answers but start with the questions you're least confident about. Ensure you answer all your questions and their different parts and sections if any.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Mention five ways of ensuring readiness for examination?

Feedback

Any five of the following: (a) start studying early (b) early sorting of your subject materials (c) knowing your examination venue before exam date (d) knowledge about the examination (e) Reviewing of past questions (f) Being composed (g) Wise use of reading time (h) accurate interpretation of questions (i) Reviewing of answers

4.0 Conclusion

Generally, early preparation gives you sufficient time to learn your course content and build self-confidence. You should not pile up your work until the last minute so that you will not be so stressed that you get confused, disorganized and even suffer a mental break down.

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How to Prepare for an Exam

<https://www.wikihow.com/Prepare-for-an-Exam>

Preparing for Tests and Exams

<http://lss.info.yorku.ca/resources/preparing-for-tests-and-exams>