



State of California – Military Department
California Cadet Corps

CURRICULUM ON CITIZENSHIP

Strand C7: Study Skills

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. Preparing to Learn**
- B. Taking Tests
- C. Building Your Learning and College Prep



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A. PREPARING TO LEARN

OBJECTIVES

DESIRED OUTCOME (Self-Mastery)

Cadets develop a deeper understanding of how to go about improving their study and test taking skills.

At the end of instruction, each Cadet will be able to:

1. Assess their own study habits by taking a Study Skills Assessment to determine in what study skill area(s) improvement is needed
2. Identify the different learning styles and their own learning style
3. Identify the 7 Habits of highly successful students
4. Identify how to improve reading comprehension
5. Properly use the Cornell System for taking notes by doing a practicum of a classroom lecture
6. Describe techniques to memorize data and improve memory overall
7. Create a weekly calendar to optimize study time
8. Identify methods to cope with test anxiety
9. Assess and find a good study location

A1. Study Skills Assessment

We all learn differently, and we each have our own style of studying. No two people are exactly the same when it comes to study preferences. To get the most out of your studying, it's important to better understand what works for you, and what doesn't. To get started it's recommend that the study skills self-assessment be completed. Read each statement and determine if it applies to you. If it does, then mark Y. If it doesn't, mark N. You don't need to share your answers with anyone else. The purpose of this checklist is to provide you with a basic self-assessment of your study habits and attitudes, so you can identify study skills areas where you might want to focus on improving.

1. Y ___ N ___ I often cram for hours the night before a test.
2. Y ___ N ___ I can't balance studying and my social life. If I spend as much time as I'd like doing one, the other suffers.
3. Y ___ N ___ I spend a lot of time studying but I'm not learning as much as I should.
4. Y ___ N ___ When I'm in class, I spend a lot of my time daydreaming, doodling, or falling asleep.
5. Y ___ N ___ I become distracted or tired when I study for a long time.
6. Y ___ N ___ I usually study with the TV or radio turned on or listening to music.
7. Y ___ N ___ When I take notes in class, I often find they are hard to understand when I review them later.
8. Y ___ N ___ I don't often review my class notes during the semester when preparing for exams.
9. Y ___ N ___ I have a hard time putting the important information from a class lecture into my notes.
10. Y ___ N ___ I often can't keep up with reading assignments, and I try to cram before a test.
11. Y ___ N ___ I struggle to figure out what is important when reading a textbook.
12. Y ___ N ___ When I read a chapter in a textbook, I often can't remember what I've just got done reading.
13. Y ___ N ___ I don't do well on essay tests even when I feel well prepared and I know the material.
14. Y ___ N ___ I often study in a disorganized way, only motivated by the threat of the next test.
15. Y ___ N ___ I study a lot for each test, but when the test starts my mind goes blank.
16. Y ___ N ___ I wish I was able to read faster.
17. Y ___ N ___ I have trouble identifying main ideas and key concepts when I read, and I get lost in the details.
18. Y ___ N ___ I don't usually change my reading speed when the information is harder to grasp or when I'm familiar with the material.
19. Y ___ N ___ When I'm assigned papers and projects I often feel so overwhelmed that I struggle to get started on them.
20. Y ___ N ___ I'm not very good at organizing my thoughts into a logical paper that makes sense.
21. Y ___ N ___ I often write my papers the night before they're due.

If you answered YES to more than one question in each category, this is an area you should work on to improve. If you just have one YES in a category, you're probably proficient enough that you don't need to focus on it.

- 1, 2, & 3: Time Management Skills
- 4, 5, & 6: Concentration Skills
- 7, 8, & 9: Listening & Note Taking Skills
- 10, 11, & 12: Reading Skills
- 13, 14, & 15: Test Taking
- 16, 17, & 18: Reading Skills
- 19, 20, & 21: Writing Skills

Practicum

In advance of the lesson, each cadet does the study skills self-assessment either during class time or outside of class time. The questionnaire, the categories, and the corresponding numbers are in a separate document that can be printed and handed out.

A2. Learning Styles

People learn in different ways. What works best for one person may not work at all for the next person. It's good to know how you learn best and seek information presented in the ways that you will learn from.

Visual Learning – learns through visual means and imagery. You understand something better if you SEE it explained via pictures, videos, graphs, and books. Pictures, diagrams, and storyboards will help you understand and retain information.



Aural Learning – learns through listening, sound, and music. You understand something better if you HEAR it, or if sound is involved. You prefer to receive information via lecture or audio presentation. Putting information into song lyrics helps you remember information when you study.



Verbal Learning – learns through speech and writing. You understand something better if you HEAR or READ it. You are good at expressing yourself verbally and in writing, and probably like rhyming, limericks, and tongue-twisters. Reading aloud and putting information in **acronym mnemonics** helps you remember when you study.



Physical or Kinesthetic Learning – learns through hands-on or **tactile** interaction. You understand something better if you DO it or experience it. This works better with some situational learning experiences than others – seek out ways you can experience the information or task.



Logical or Mathematical Learning – learns through logic, reasoning and systems. You understand something better if it's explained in equations and scientific explanation. You see patterns and can link related information, and you are good at math. Seek to understand the meaning and reasoning behind the subject you're studying.



Social Learning – preference for learning in groups or working with other people. Usually good communicators, social learners like bouncing ideas off others and working through issues as a group. If your class doesn't already have group study, make up a group of your own.



Solitary Learning – preference for learning alone via self-study. Be careful not to waste time trying to work out something complex by yourself – know when to seek help.



Hemispheric Dominance. Our brains have two *hemispheres*, or sides. The two sides work both separately and together, and which side is dominant affects a person's learning styles. When something is new, difficult or unfamiliar, we automatically go to our dominant side. No one is totally left or totally right brain dominant. You can and must develop both sides of the brain. Most people have a dominant side, but process information in very different ways. Right and left work together for many things. Most academic information is geared to the left side of the brain.

Left:

Symbols
Reading
Phonics
Handwriting
Locating Details/Facts
Talking/Reciting
Listening
Following Directions

Linear

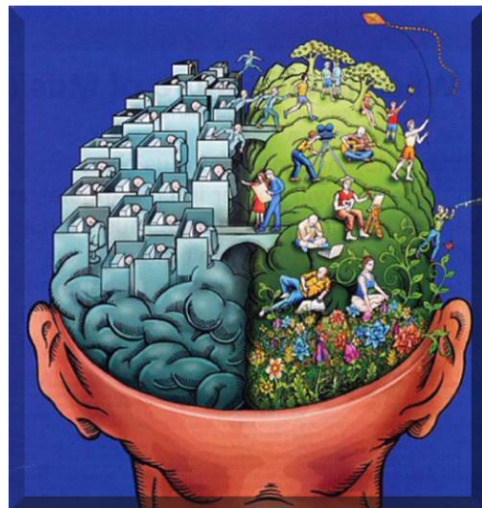
Symbolic
Sequential
Logical
Verbal
Reality Based
Temporal

Right:

Singing & Music
Creativity
Perception
Spatial Relationships
Shapes & Patterns
Visualization
Color Sensitivity
Feeling & Emotion

Holistic

Concrete
Random
Intuitive
Nonverbal
Fantasy Oriented
Non-temporal



A3. 7 Habits of Successful Students

1. **Have a study plan.** Successful students devote time almost every day to studying and keeping up with their assignments. Plot times in your life that you can reliably spend studying and preparing for exams. Include periodic reviews of class material in your plan, even if you don't have a specific homework assignment to turn in or a test to prepare for. Don't allow **procrastination** to deter you from your study

plan. You might have to put off a scheduled study session now and then because something important comes up, but don't allow yourself to get lazy or be lured to TV just because you don't want to study.

2. **Don't cram.** Successful students spread their work out over a reasonable period, spending shorter time working on studying material, notes, and preparing for an exam. You learn and retain more with this type of studying, too. If you have a big test coming up, start going over the material several days in advance. Before mid-terms or finals when you have multiple tests during the same time period, start studying for your tests a week or two in advance.

3. **Set goals.** Though reviewing your notes is useful, setting specific goals for your study session gets better results. Whether it's to memorize 10 foreign language vocabulary words every day or to read a chapter in your history book, give some thought to what you need to accomplish by a certain deadline and how you can do it. You should know going into each study session what you need to accomplish.

4. **Study the difficult things first.** Your most challenging task or subject takes the most mental energy. Attack it while your fresh mental energy is at its highest levels. Once you've completed your most challenging work, the rest of your tasks will be easier.

5. **Review your notes.** Before starting an assignment, go through your notes on the subject to ensure you're on top of the material. Go through all your current 'working' notes once or twice a week. Use the Cornell System for taking notes, which will be covered in the section A5. Below.

6. **Don't get distracted.** Don't allow distractions to reduce the effectiveness of your studying. Pick a place to study where you won't be distracted, and don't try to combine studying with socializing or TV. If you're familiar with your learning style and know that a little music in the background helps you focus, or if you study better in a group, take advantage of those things. But if they are distractors, avoid them. Distractors might be family members or friends, TV, etc. If they cause you to lose your focus, you should avoid them. Remember to take breaks, but then get back to work.

7. **Use study groups effectively.** Unless you really don't do well in a group and tend to lose focus, a study group can help you get to the meat of the lesson quickly. Your classmates may be able to help you determine what needs to be learned or memorized, and you can quiz each other. Having someone else to study with can get you quick help in understanding a concept. Make sure you're not just copying someone else's work, or spending more time socializing than working. If you have a regular study group, set up rules that keep you on track. If you study with a friend, have a plan and general guidelines, including when you'll take a break.

A4. Improving Reading Comprehension

If you've reached middle school or high school with poor reading **comprehension**, you have some work to do. Being able to sound out words and read them aloud is good, but if you don't know the meaning of what you're reading, you're getting nothing from it, and you won't be successful in school. Many students are at a disadvantage – they are learning English as a second language, or they grew up without any emphasis on reading in the home, or they haven't been exposed to different concepts or a variety of different ideas that will help them make the leap from reading words to understanding meaning.

If you have trouble reading, you might want to ask your teacher or counselor to get you some assistance. This is something that can have a profound effect on your life – don't avoid the problem; face it head on and conquer it!

If you're not getting assistance, there are still some things that can help you make the most of your opportunities to improve. Here are some suggestions:

Complete a pre-reading survey of the text. Review the introduction and table of contents if there is one. Get an overall idea of what the text covers and how the information is organized. Go through the chapter and section headings and check out highlighted or bold text. Focus on general information, not specifics. Look at:

- Chapter title and subtitles
- Focus questions at the beginning of each chapter, if present
- Chapter introductions and first paragraphs
- Bold subheadings
- First sentence of each paragraph – get an idea of what the paragraph is about
- Lists, pictures, diagrams, maps, etc.
- Chapter summary or last paragraph
- End of Chapter material, if present

Define your purpose. Know what you want to get out of the reading. If you focus on a specific purpose, it'll be easier to ignore material that isn't germane to what you're trying to get out of the text.

Read the text. If it helps, read it out loud. In a classroom type situation where you can't do that, verbalize it to yourself in your head.

Take notes and highlight important concepts. This will help you organize the information in a way you understand and will make it easier to go back to the key concepts you need to remember.

Do a post-reading review. After you've finished reading, take time to review what you've read, summarize it, and identify major points and **concepts** you want to remember. Identify concepts and information you need to spend more time on or those you may need to follow up with specific questions with your instructor or study group.

A5. The Cornell System for Taking Notes

Professor Walter Pauk, reading & study director at Cornell University, developed a system for note-taking in the 1950s that is still in use today because it works! Commonly called Cornell Notes, this method is proven to help students increase and retain knowledge. The purpose of the Cornell Notes system is 1) to record notes of class lectures, PowerPoint slides, readings, and videos/movies; 2) for review and **retention**; and 3) to study for quizzes and tests.

Setting Up the Cornell Notes Method

The Cornell Notes method is done by dividing the paper into three sections (Figure 1): one for note-taking, one for reducing ideas after class into a few key points, important people, important dates, and questions (Recall), and one for summarizing the main points of your lecture notes (Summary).

Step #1: Prepare

Name
 Course Name
 Date

| Recall Column | Note-taking Column |
|---|---|
| <div style="border-top: 1px dashed black; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="text-align: center;">--2-1/2 Inches--</div> | <div style="border-top: 1px dashed black; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="text-align: center;">--6 Inches--</div> |
| Reduce ideas after class into a few key points, important people, important dates, questions | Record the lectures as fully as possible |
| <div style="border-top: 1px dashed black; border-bottom: 1px dashed black; height: 10px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="text-align: center;">--2 Inches--</div> | |
| Summary Column Summarize the main points of your lecture notes | |

Figure 1: Setup of Cornell Notes Method

Step #1: Prepare

To start your Cornell Notes, start with a blank piece of paper and write your name, the course name and the date on the upper right corner of the paper.

Draw a **vertical** line 2 inches from the left side of the paper. This creates your Notetaking Column on the right and your Recall Column on the left. Draw a **horizontal** line 2-½ inches from the bottom of the paper. This creates your Summary Column on the bottom of the page. You're set to take notes!

Step #2: Note-taking

Put your notes from the lecture in the Note-taking Column. During the lecture, write as many facts as you can. Shorten the ideas into bullets to capture the full idea. Leave spaces between ideas so you can fill in more later.

Step #3: Recall

Recalling what you wrote in your notes, write questions, key points, and important names and dates in the Recall column. Write your questions as close as possible to the beginning of the section in your notes you are quizzing yourself on. Write a question for each new idea presented in your notes. This will help you clarify the meaning of the topic and reveal relationships between ideas. The questions will also

help you study for exams later because they will become your best method for checking what you have learned!

Step #4 Summarize

Reduce after class: As soon after class as possible, summarize these ideas and facts in as *few* words as possible in the Summary Column. This helps show relationships between points and strengthens your memory of the details. It prepares you for exams gradually and ahead of time.

Step #5: Recite

Recite from the Recall Column: Cover the Notetaking Column; using only the information in the Recall Column, restate the key points as fully as you can *in your own words*. Then, uncover your notes and check what you have said against the facts. This will help transfer ideas to your long-term memory!

Step #6: Reflect

Reflect on possible test questions and mark unclear points. This helps in making sense of your notes by finding relationships and order in the material. Try to put ideas in categories and tie old material to the new. Think about which points will appear on tests and highlight any unclear points so you can ask questions about them *before* the next lecture.

Step #7: Review

Review to improve your memory (Figure 2). If you will spend ten minutes every week or so in a quick review of your old notes, you will retain most of what you have learned and you will relate the facts and ideas to present lectures or readings.

| Recall | Note-taking |
|---|----------------------------|
| S | |
| T | |
| U | |
| D | |
| Y | |
| Focus on understanding the key ideas | Re-read for examples |
| Summary | |
| Re-read | |

Figure 2: Cornell Notes Review

Note-Taking Tips

Here are some tips about taking good notes that will help you retain the information you have learned and put it in context to review for follow-on learning and exams:

- Come to class prepared. Complete assigned reading and review your notes.
- Keep a separate section of your notebook or binder for each course.
- Notes for each lecture should begin on a new page.
- Date your lecture notes and number all pages.
- Never use a sentence when you can use a phrase, or a phrase when you can use a word.
- Use indentations to distinguish between major and minor points.
- Put most notes in your own words. However, the following should be noted exactly:
 - Formulas, Definitions, and Specific facts
- Use abbreviations and symbols wherever possible. Note down unfamiliar vocabulary and unclear areas.
- If you should miss something completely, leave a blank space and get it later. Note something was missed. For example, your note could look something like this: Missing?
- Develop a code system of note-marking to indicate questions, comments, important points, due dates of assignments, etc. **Examples:** → Δ < ? *
- Make sure you can understand what you have written and if needed, make corrections.
- Clear up misunderstandings or fill in missing information by consulting the lecturer, TA, classmates, the texts, or additional readings.
- When needed, take a picture with your phone of the instructor's notes on the board or slide so you get all the information. Go through your notes with the picture to make sure you got everything.
- Compare your notes with those of friend, or in your study group. You may have missed something someone else picked up on, and vice versa!
- Minimize distractions. Focus on the lecture and on taking notes, not what's going on elsewhere in the classroom, outside, or in your daydreaming head!
- Write down questions, and seek the answers, either from your instructor or other research.

Suggestion for the Lecturer/Teacher

After the lecture, give the cadets time to come up with any questions. For a 10-minute lecture, give them two minutes; for a 20-minute lecture, give them four minutes.

Have the cadet do the Summary 24 hours later/the next day.

Cornell Notes Examples

2.4: Cornell Note Activities

Tutor Handout 2.4.3 (1 of 4)

Sample Cornell Notes

| | |
|---|--|
| Class Notes If there was no class lecture this week, write a paragraph about what you learned and/or questions about what you didn't understand. Topic: <u>Literary Elements</u> | Name: <u>Student A</u> Class: <u>English 8</u> Period: <u>3</u> Date: <u>1/10/03</u> |
| Questions/Main Ideas: | Notes: |
| Define irony. | Irony is a contradiction between what is expected and reality. |
| What is characterization? | Characterization is the way an author describes a character. |
| Some ways to understand a character | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical description • dialogue • actions / behavior • opinions of other characters • thoughts |
| What is conflict? | The problem of the story or book |
| Types of Conflict | man vs. man man vs. machine man vs. society man vs. self man vs. nature man vs. unknown |
| Two categories of conflict | 1) internal (inside character) 2) external (character vs. anything other than himself) |
| Summary: Authors use many different elements to create a story or write a book. Some elements include irony and characterization. Authors also focus their stories around a problem or conflict. There are internal and external conflicts. | |

LEARNING CYCLE

Prof Jones

9/03

Page 1

*Chart from
Powerpoint

NTS: What brain
foods should
I include in my diet?

What is the difference
between hearing
and listening?

How does Jones signal
something is important?

4 Steps of Learning Cycle

I Preparing

II Absorbing

III Capturing

IV Reviewing and Applying

I Preparing

Mental: Do Assignments

Review syllabus

Set learning goals

Physical: Get sleep

Eat right

Operational: Supplies on hand

Sit in the right part of
the class

II Absorbing: Listening and Reading

1 Listening - Hearing w/ the obj of
UNDERSTANDING.

Focus on what is being said - give the
speaker your undivided attention. Don't
prejudge. Find ways of confirming what you
just heard is what they intended. Eliminate
distractions.

Look for Signals: Each instructor uses
different ways to let you know what is
important: Writing on the board, repetition,
change of inflection.

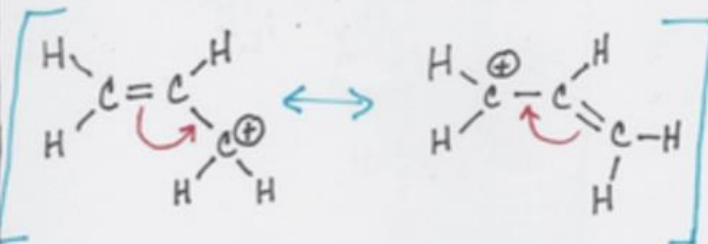


There are 4 steps to effective learning: Preparing, absorbing, capturing and reviewing. Each of these steps must be used continually to be a successful student.

What is the difference between resonance structures & true structures?

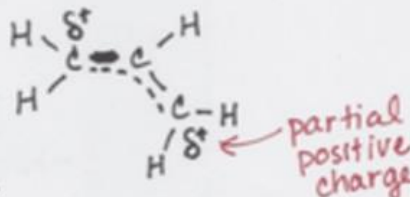
Why does charge delocalization stabilize a molecule?

Resonance Hybrid: True structure of molecule represented by a set of resonance structures

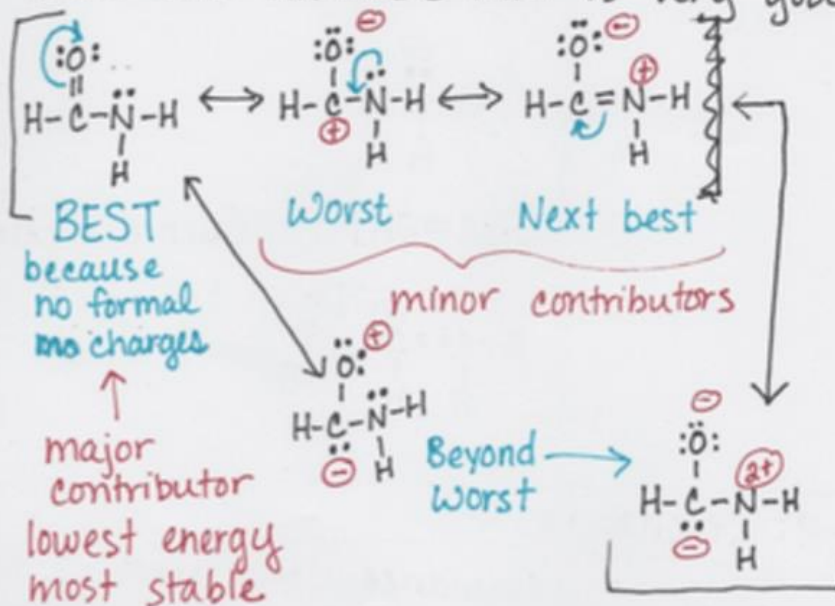


"True structure"


Positive charge is delocalized over carbon 1 & 3



Some sets of resonance structures have one structure that is very good.



Resonance structures are used to represent true structure of molecule. The more resonance structures you can draw, the more stable the molecule due to delocalization of e^- .

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Cornell Notes  AVID Division of College Access | Topic/Objective: Identify significant literary devices that define a writer's style and use to interpret work | Name: Class/Period: Lang. Arts Date: Oct. 12, 2009 |
| Essential Question: How does Langston Hughes' poem, "Mother to Son", advise the reader to overcome difficulty and keep from giving up in life? | | |
| Questions: | Notes: | |
| ① What is the significance of the speaker in the poem? | ① <u>Speaker</u> - * voice that communicates a poem's ideas, actions, descriptions, & feelings - similar to narrator - can be <u>unknown</u> or <u>specific</u> (like character) | |
| ② How does a poet's choice of speaker affect the mood/ meaning of a poem? | ② <u>Impt.</u> - Poet's choice of speaker - <u>contributes</u> to the poem's <u>mood/meaning</u> - who speaks is as <u>impt.</u> as what is said - <u>different points of view</u> regarding same event (ie. parent, child, elderly person) - * the person telling the story gives point of view and affects the message told ← <u>P.O.V.</u> | |
| ③ How does Hughes use vocabulary to contribute to and convey his message? | ③ <u>Writer's/poet's style</u> <u>Vocab</u> - helps to understand meaning "crystal stair" = luxuries (<u>metaphor</u>) ^{compares 2 things} ie. "Life for me ain't been no crystal stair" "reachin'" - <u>replace letter at end of word</u> (<u>dialect</u>) "cause" = because → <u>slang</u> ^{var. lang. used by group speech act.} | |
| Summary: The speaker/voice in the poem is important because it communicates the ideas/feelings of the poem. Who the poet chooses as the speaker identifies the point of view and affects the message/meaning. Hughes uses vocabulary and style to convey the message that life is hard when Mother says "Life for me ain't been no crystal staircase." | | |

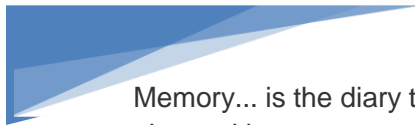
Practicum

*Have the cadets take out a piece of paper and set it up to take notes for the next section, **A6. Improving Your Memory** using the Cornell Notes method. All the cadets should take notes during the lecture for the next section. Give them time to ask any questions. Instruct them to complete the Summary Column after class and bring the paper to the next class session.*

Was the Cornell Notes method set up correctly on the cadet's paper? Did the cadet put their name, course name, and the date in the upper right corner? Does the cadet seem to understand the process? Is the information they recorded in the columns the correct type for the column? For example, does the Recall Column have the ideas reduced to key points and questions that correlate with the Note-taking Column? Did they summarize the ideas and facts in the Summary Column?

A6. Improving Your Memory

We all need to remember things, whether it's where your mom hid the spare key to the front door or math equations. And the need to remember things doesn't stop once you're out of school – it'll be a requirement for the rest of your life! Everyone struggles with it, but there are some strategies for memorizing things that will help you, whether you need to know something word for word, or need to be able to list things, or just need to remember a concept.



Memory... is the diary that we all carry about with us.

- Oscar Wilde

What is memory? It's simply the way the mind stores and remembers information.

How does memory work? Let's not get into the physiology of the brain – let's just talk about remembering things. We could also get all philosophical about the sum of what you remember being who you really are – but let's keep to what's important here: how you remember things you need to know.

Organize the information. Things are easier to remember when you list similar things together, like in foreign language vocabulary, learn words that are related together, or in drilling, learning all the stationary drill movements together. If things are random, they are harder to associate and remember.

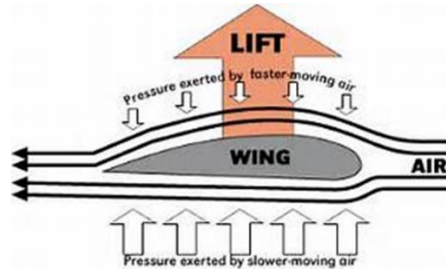
“Chunk” pieces of information – don't try to remember long numbers or paragraphs all at once. Break them down to smaller pieces, then once you're familiar with each piece, put them together.

Example

GENERAL ORDERS

- *1. I will guard everything within the limits of my post and quit my post only when properly relieved.
- *2. I will obey my special orders and perform all my duties in a military manner.
- *3. I will report violations of my special orders, emergencies, and anything not covered in my instructions to the Commander of the Relief.

Visualize the information. This works well to remember cycles or processes. Visualize how the process works; don't just try to remember the steps in the cycle.



Actively study the information. Put yourself in a position to explain the information to someone else, maybe in your study group, or to a friend or family member. Critically analyze material you're studying by asking questions about it or finding a way to apply it.

Make connections with a person, place, feeling, or situation. By **associating** ideas that are new with ideas that are familiar, you can more easily learn the new idea. For vocabulary words, make up a sentence to use the word, one that will help you remember the word's meaning. To remember which way a screw tightens, we say "Righty tighty, lefty loosey." Can you remember which way clocks move for Daylight Saving Time? "Spring Forward, Fall Back!"

Frequently review material you are learning. Don't just wait for the night before an exam to go over your notes – review them several times a week as you add to the material. Review material you're trying to memorize at different times throughout the day. You may study the material at night but go over it in your head on the bus or while walking home. Find times when your brain is available to add more review time to your schedule!



If you are a creative person, **make up stories** that include the information you're trying to remember. One piece of information remembered in a story will lead to the next piece, and so on.

Verbalizing is a great way to remember it. Find someone to talk to using the information you're trying to memorize, or even talk to yourself! This is similar to explaining the information when you're actively studying.

Repetition works great when you're trying to memorize things, whether it's a list of key words that describes a process, or a definition, or even a song or tune. Say it over and over and over, or sing it over and over and over, and pretty soon you'll know it.

Mnemonic (ne-mon-ic) devices are another way people memorize things, especially lists. **Mnemonics** are patterns of letters, ideas, or associations that assist in remembering something. We use this in the Cadet Corps! An example is the Cadet Code – a list of values that are important to cadets that spells out LEADERSHIP: Loyalty, Education, Ambition, Duty, Enthusiasm, Respect, Service, Healthy, Integrity, Personal courage. Do you see how we called ‘courage’ “personal courage” in order to fit the acronym Leadership? It’s easier to remember that way!

Expression Mnemonics are easy to remember, and describe what you need to know:

Boyles' Law: At constant temperature, pressure is inversely proportional to volume.

“Boyle's law is best of all because it presses gasses awfully small.”

Can you name the planets in our solar system?

“Millionaires Vacation Every May, Just So Uber Never Profits”

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.



It doesn’t really need to make sense, it just needs to be something you can remember!

Sometimes mnemonics don’t work out perfectly, and you might not be able to spell out a word. But you can remember six CACC objectives in the **acronym** LCPABH: Leadership, Citizenship, Patriotism, Academic Excellence, Basic Military Knowledge, and Health/Fitness/Wellness. LCPABH doesn’t make any sense, but it’s easy to memorize, and will key you in to the real information you need to know.



If you can make something **rhyme**, it’ll be much easier to memorize. Some examples you may recognize:

“30 days hath September, April, June, and November.

All the rest have 31

Except February my dear son.

It has 28 and that is fine

But in Leap Year it has 29.”

“In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” How else would you remember the year?!

How is your spelling? *“I before e except after c, or when sounding like a, as in neighbor and weigh.”*



Flashcards are a good study tool. You can use them for vocabulary, or even just to put down specific concepts you need to learn, or the military ranks you’re trying to learn for your Cadet test! You can put them in different stacks and mix them up, review them every day, or when you’re on the bus, etc. Quiz yourself or your study group with them. You can add and delete to keep your stack current.

For vocabulary lists, use a **T Chart**. Put the term on the left, the definition on the right. (Figure 3)

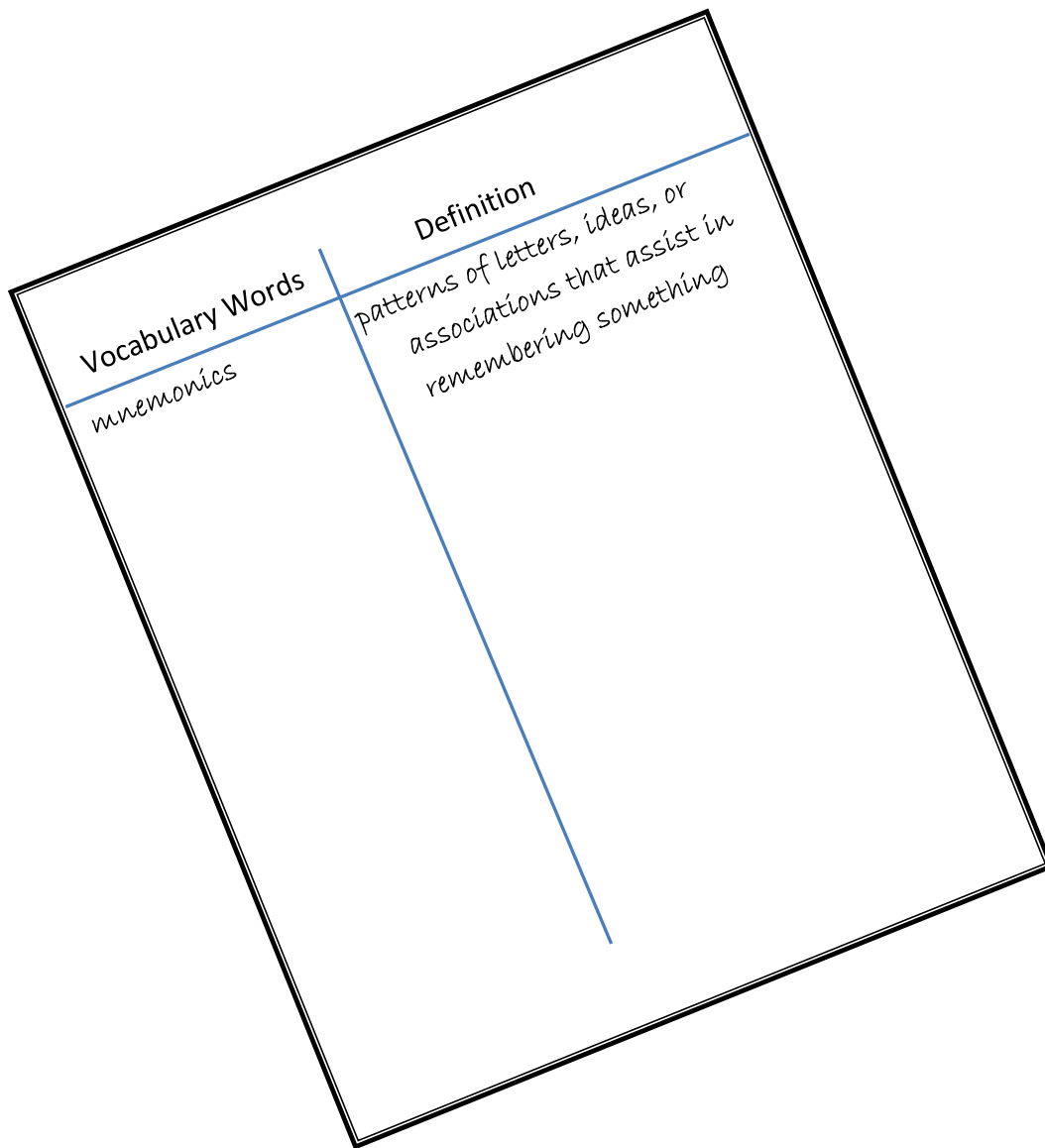


Figure 3: T-Chart

As students, you do a lot of memorizing. Developing ways to memorize things will help you throughout your life. That's one reason Cadet Corps uses memory work that you need to know to be a successful cadet. Who's the Father of the Cadet Corps? When was the CACC founded? What's the definition of Leadership? What are the Cadet Codes? What are our Core Values? What is the Cadet Honor Code? If you're able to remember these facts and pieces of information, you'll be a better cadet who knows something about our organization, and you're starting to accrue knowledge that will make you an even better cadet and better student!

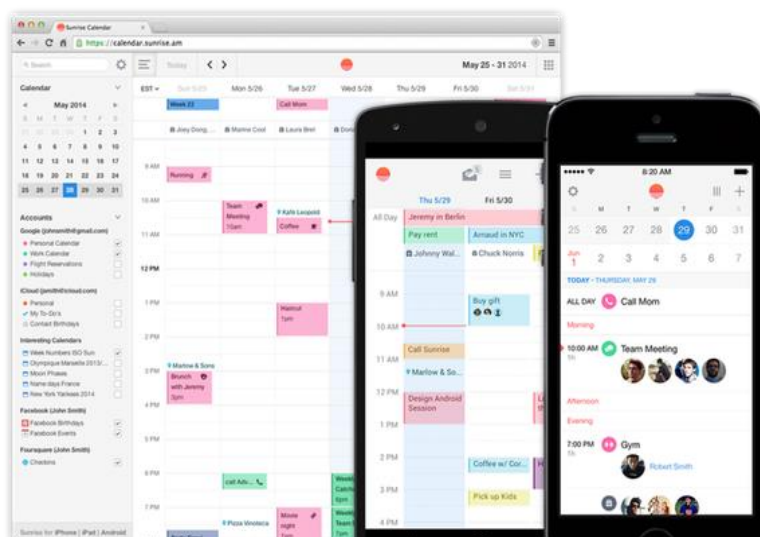
A7. Using Effective Time Management to Optimize Your Studying

Time is our most precious resource. If you're not able to manage your time effectively, you may not be successful unless you're just not trying to accomplish much. Effective time managers know what their near, short, and long-term requirements are; they prioritize tasks to stay on top of what's due now, while steadily working on the bigger long-term projects that take more effort. If you actively manage your time, you can accomplish MUCH more than you would by just dealing with things as they arise.

At the beginning of each semester, make a semester (or term) calendar that contains the major events of the semester: tests if you know about them, assignment/project due dates, CACC and other activities from both school and other parts of your life, important social events, family events, etc.

At the beginning of each week, you should develop a weekly schedule. This will guide your time through the week. Include all the events from your semester calendar, including time to work on projects that may be due in upcoming weeks. Add in school or extra-curricular activities that didn't make it to your semester calendar.

Add things you didn't complete in the previous week that you still need to do. **Ensure you have study time allotted to review your notes, do required reading, and prepare for any quizzes or tests.**



You should have a daily schedule that works for you. You'll do some things at basically the same time every day, and some things on a recurring basis – i.e., CACC drill team practice after school every Tuesday and Thursday. Your schedule should have blocks of time you can use to study, do homework, and prepare for tests, practice a musical instrument, or participate in team events or study groups. If you manage your time, you'll get way more done than if you just float from event to event.

Ensure your schedule allows regular time for exercise – staying active and fit keeps your mind sharp! Take care of your body by exercising, eating right, and getting enough sleep. Teenagers need 8-10 hours of sleep a night. You can cheat sleep for a night or two, but it'll burn you out and you won't be able to work at top capacity. Force yourself to get the sleep you need to stay healthy and happy.

Practicum

Each Cadet creates his/her own schedule/calendar for the upcoming week. It can be done electronically or on paper. Since study time is the primary focus, ensure that time is allotted. However, other items should also be calendared, such as school classes, CACC drill practice, sports practice, band practice, or whatever other activities fill their time.

A8. Coping With Test Anxiety

What is test anxiety? Do these symptoms seem familiar?

- My head feels like it's in a clamp.
- My stomach hurts.
- I'm sweating.
- I studied this stuff yesterday, why can't I remember?
- I can't think!
- As soon as I leave the test, I remember everything!

What causes this? It's natural. You have learned to react this way to tests, but you can learn to NOT react this way.



Yerkes-Dodson Law describes the relationship between performance and stress (Figure 4). Performance increases with stress, but only to a certain point, beyond which performance will start to go down. Some stress is good for you! It motivates you to do a good job and to work hard to improve. But if your stress keeps getting higher, it will start taking over and will shut you down.

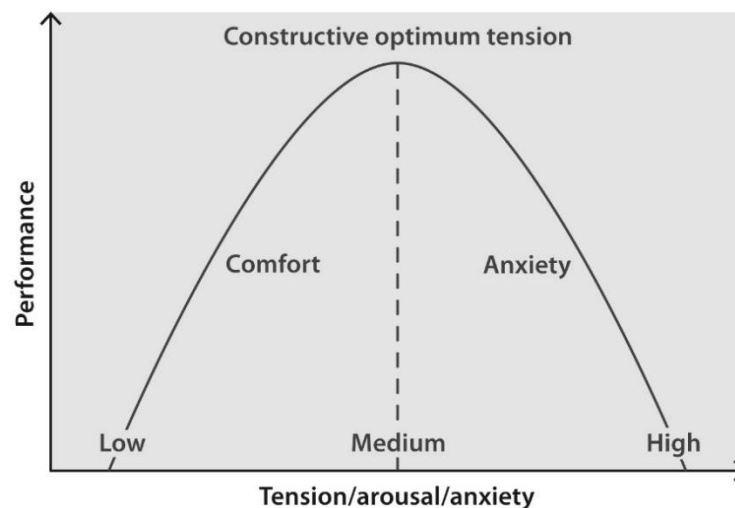


Figure 4: Yerkes Dodson Law

The best place to be on this chart for optimal performance is in the middle. Athletes call this “the zone”.

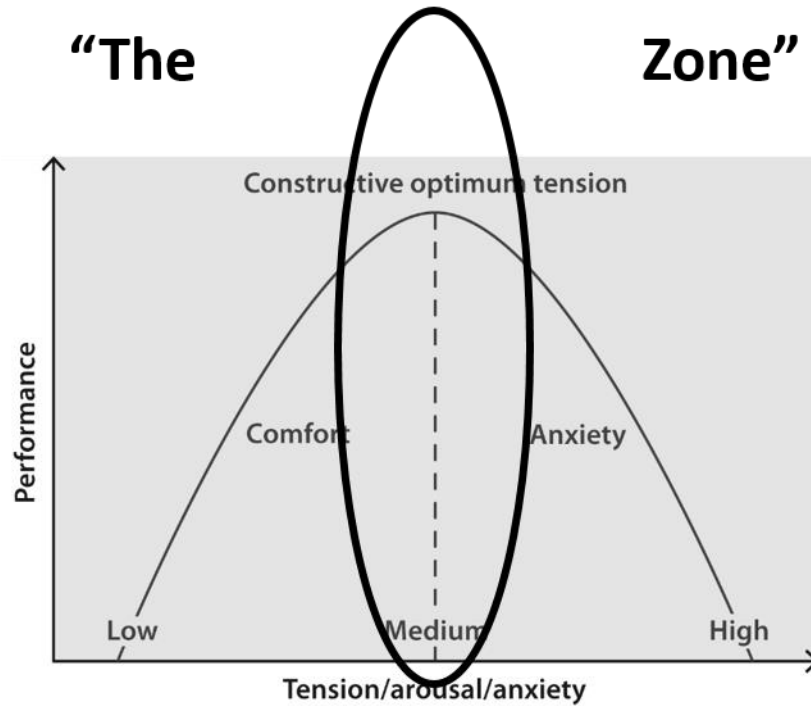


Figure 5: "The Zone" - Optimal Performance

There are several factors that can increase your performance. In each case, we will be working on reducing stress to get you back into the zone.

1. Physical Factors – relaxation, rest, etc.
2. Rehearsal – practice, practice, practice
3. Thought – what you think is what you get

Physical Factors

Physical Factor #1: Take Care of Yourself. Basic health is key for optimal performance. Eating right, sleeping right, and exercising all help your body to be prepared to be able to work. Not abusing your body also helps – using alcohol or drugs (including caffeine) that alter your natural state detracts from your abilities to function.



Example:

Mary decided to cram for an exam. She started drinking energy drinks that are packed with caffeine. By 10:00 pm, she had consumed several energy drinks. At 11:00 pm, Mary noticed that her hands were shaking, her heart was racing, her head was pounding, and her breathing was fast.

Her diagnosis: "I must be so anxious because I waited so long that I can't concentrate anymore." She spent the rest of the night alternately trying to sleep and study, neither of which she managed very well. She went to the test exhausted and with a large sense of dread.

The other diagnosis: caffeine overdose.

Physical Factor #2: Beyond basic health, learning a relaxation technique allows you to better control your anxiety, if it does become a problem, by teaching you how to slow down your body's pace to a level where you can perform better.

In the *Cadet Wellness Strand*, how to take good care of yourself and some relaxation techniques are covered in detail.



Practicum

*Here's a simple **technique** you can do anywhere:*

Get comfortable. Close your eyes (after you read all the instructions) and take a deep breath. Hold the breath for a split second then breathe out slowly.

Repeat this a couple more times. Breathe normally, but slowly for a couple of minutes.

That's all there is to it. Most people will find that just slowing down feels better.



As you practice doing this more, you will find that your body will learn that you want it to relax and that just by getting comfortable, you will begin to feel yourself slowing down. Let's assume the problem is that your stress is too high, rather than too low. Slowing your body down will contribute to being more able to control yourself in the way that will help you perform better.

Rehearsal

The more experience you have doing something, the better you tend to be at it. The less experience you have doing something, the more difficult and overwhelming it may seem. Most people report that new things are more difficult and stressful than familiar things, and many people report anxiety when they have to perform without adequate practice.

Here's the basic rule:

**The more you practice something just the way you will have to perform it,
the easier it will become to perform it.**

There are 3 basic kinds of tests:

- 1) Objective tests
- 2) Essay tests
- 3) Concept Learning (story problems)



Each test requires different kinds of practice.

Objective tests (like multiple choice, true-false, short answer, and matching) ask you to know how discrete bits of information are connected.



For example, a question might have “1492” and you have to match or make a choice that it connects to “Columbus landed in the Americas.”

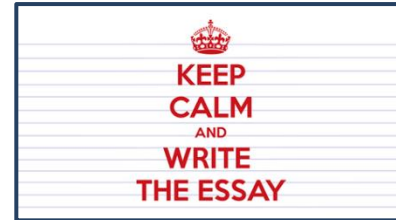


Practicing for these by some method **approximating** flash cards usually works best.

Essay tests ask you to tell how things are related or not related to each other or ask you to show you know content.

- Compare/Contrast
- Describe/Discuss

Outlining and understanding main points and how they are connected works best



Concept learning asks you to show you know the **concept** by being able to use it.

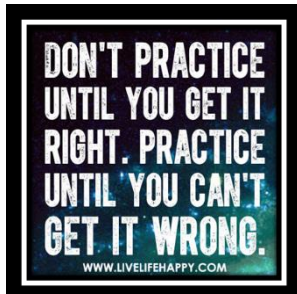
- Math story problems
- Using a concept in a different way than was discussed

Studying the concepts from different angles and views to see how they connect to each other works best.



Remember: the best way to reduce anxiety is to practice in the same way you will have to perform.

BUT, first you have to study the material. This means you might want to study far enough ahead to allow yourself the time to practice. After you’ve studied the material and know it, practice it like you’re taking the test. Ask yourself the same types of questions as the test you will take (multiple choice, essay, concept learning). Time yourself. As you practice, look for any information you are missing or you don’t know well. After you’ve identified weak areas, study more, then practice again. If you’re unsure that you have studied everything you need to know, ask your teacher a few days before the exam. Take a list of the things you know. Ask if the list is complete. Don’t ask, “What’s on the test?” Teachers hate that; they really do. So, study and practice. Find your weak points. Study and practice.



Thought

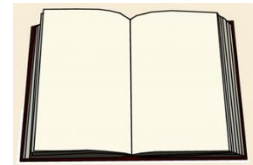
The third part of reducing test anxiety is entirely within you. It's what you're thinking about how you are going to perform.

Well, you've waited until the day before the exam because you've said to yourself, "I can only study when I feel energized and now I feel really energized. But since I've waited so long, I'm not sure I can do very well because I may not have enough time to study everything. And since I may not have enough time to study everything, it might be that what I study won't be on the test and what I don't study may be on the test. What if I get to the test and I can't recognize any of the questions? What if I really bomb the exam? What if I just freeze?"



Now, instead of studying, you close your eyes and picture yourself going to the exam, full of dread, knowing that you don't know. You see yourself sitting in the desk as the test papers get passed back. You can clearly see yourself looking at the top page of the exam and blanking out completely.

And you rehearse this over and over again. So, you go to class the next day, full of dread and when the test hits your desk, you look down at the first page and blank out. No surprise here.



Psychologists and great thinkers who study humanity like to believe that they know lots about people. The truth is, we don't know that much. BUT, here's one thing we do know:

What you think will happen has a dramatic and often direct effect on how you behave.

Each time we imagine something or ask ourselves questions, or make statements to ourselves, a part of us hears each of these as a suggestion for action. Remember how we get good at things – practice, practice, practice. If you practice how awful you will perform, it is likely that that is how you will act.

“Formulate and stamp indelibly on your mind a mental picture of yourself as succeeding. Hold this picture tenaciously. Never permit it to fade. Your mind will seek to develop the picture... Do not build up obstacles in your imagination.”

– Norman Vincent Peale, The Power of Positive Thinking

The third part of reducing test anxiety is to reduce and/or eliminate negative messages and images you give yourself about how you will do on the test and replace those thoughts with more realistically positive thoughts and images.

Here are some examples of how you can POSITIVELY influence your actions. **These examples are based on the assumption that you have taken adequate time to prepare.**

“I may not answer all the questions, but I can start with the ones I really know and move to the harder ones and do the best I can.”

“Even if I feel a little shaky, I can still perform to the best of my ability and let the anxiety energize me.”

“I have studied this material to the best of my ability and will answer the questions as best I can.”

“Expecting myself to get all the questions correct is not a good strategy. It is likely I may get several questions wrong. But that will not deter me from doing my best.”

“I can allow myself to relax enough so that I can perform at my peak level.”



You can also imagine yourself doing a good job. As you walk to your test, imagine yourself feeling confident about your ability to perform. Feel a sense of anticipation of wanting to start the test to show what you know. Watch yourself working through the test and feeling good about your performance. Imagine skipping a hard question for now and coming back to it later. Leave the test excited.

Summary:

1. The first key to reducing test anxiety is good basic health – eating, sleeping, exercising – and avoiding mood enhancing foods and drinks like caffeine.
2. Studying in advance and practicing the way you will be tested allow you to be in the “zone” with your skills. Knowing how to study differently for different types of exams is critical to practicing appropriately.
3. Learning a stress management technique can help you to reduce the symptoms of anxiety and stress. Deep breathing, soothing imagery, quiet time, etc. all help to teach your body to slow down so that you can perform to the best of your ability.

4. Thinking realistically positive thoughts and practicing your performance positively in your mind increase the likelihood of good performance. Rehearsing disaster has the opposite effect. Learn to stop negative thinking and replace it with positive thinking.



A9. Finding a Good Study Location

Where you study can have a huge impact on how well you study. But we can't give you the ideal answer, because it very much depends on your learning style and where you most effectively can focus on learning.

Did you read the lesson on learning styles in section A2.? Were you able to figure out what works best for you? Some people focus better in absolute solitude; others aren't comfortable unless other people are around. Some students must have music playing in the background, while that's a big distractor for others. Here are some general guidelines:

- Know your study preferences. Quiet/noise, privacy/people, solitude/study group, etc. What distracts you? Anticipate distractions and eliminate them before you start.
- Develop a routine. Study in the same place and the same times.
- Ensure you are comfortable. Physically, make sure the ergonomics of your study location won't distract you by causing you pain (comfortable chair, computer screen at the right height, temperature adequate, etc.). Make sure you have what you need – writing utensils, paper, computer, books, etc. Adequate lighting, especially if you'll be going over notes.
- Establish some personal study rules. The order of topics, time you'll spend studying, when you'll take a break, etc.

Some common places that work well for many students are libraries, your bedroom, the kitchen, living room, a classroom, study hall, coffee shop, a park (on a nice day). The most important factor is where you'll be comfortable (but not fall asleep!) and where there are no distractions that **impede** your focus.

Practicum

Take some time to think about and identify your best study location(s). It would be wise to write it down on the calendar you created in section A7. Use your learning style assessment from section A2 to help you with this exercise. You may also want to review your weekly calendar to determine where you will be physically before and after your study times. In other words, if one of your designated study times is a 1-hour slot between your last class and sports practice at school, leaving campus to study may not be ideal.