Counseling 21st Century Students for Optimal College and Career Readiness

A 9th–12th Grade Curriculum

Corine Fitzpatrick and Kathleen Costantini
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Chapter 4

The Move to High School: Making the Transition to 9th Grade Successful

Memo to Counselors

In this chapter we review some of the most recent and important findings on the transitioning experience to high school, including a brief review of important research on psychosocial and cognitive modifications for the beginning high school student. We include the development of study skills and assist counselors in helping students make a successful transition to the academic demands of secondary school. Through the use of personality, learning style, and study skills inventories, counselors will deepen students’ awareness of the learning process and their own growth in the transition process. In this chapter, we also discuss how technology has changed the ways in which students learn as well as present proven study skills techniques and methods of time management and long-term planning.

Research on the Transition to High School

Most counselors, students, and their families recognize that there is a period of transition from grammar school to high school (8th to 9th grade) or from middle school to high school (9th to 10th grade). Educators focus on the academic leaps that students will have to make in high school. Researchers have documented that students often experience difficulty academically during the transition to high school (Chinien & Boutin, 2001; Forgan & Vaughn, 2000; George, 2000; Hertzog, Morgan, Diamond, & Walker, 1996; Mizelle & Irvin, 2000; Morgan & Hertzog, 2001; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000; Reents, 2002).
This transition requires students to experience new environments, new and more
difficult curricula, new class organizations, and new teachers at the same time
when they are in a stage of transition in their own cognitive, physical, and psy-
chosocial development. McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and Cochrane (2008)
studied the relationships between academic performance and problem behavior
in the transition from middle school to high school. They found that persistently
low academic skills drastically modify the school experience. Academic prob-
lems restrict access to daily academic success and close teacher–student relation-
ships, and persistent academic failure in middle school is clearly a risk factor for
continued failure in high school (Finn & Rock, 1997; Slavin, 1999) even though
cognitive ability has not been found to predict dropout (Bear, Kortering, &
Braziel, 2006).

High school teachers pride themselves on the teaching and learning of higher-
order thinking skills and recognize the higher level of academic work required
of students. Students in the 21st century must be able to show skill development
and knowledge to compete in our globalized world. We are moving beyond glo-
balization into an even more demanding age where people must be able to learn
to think more complexly and apply their thinking to novel problems (Brooks,
2008). Today’s high school students are fast entering a world in which they will
minimally need college to gain access to decent-paying careers.

As described by Wise (2008, p. 15), “The rest of the world’s education has
improved such that today the United States is increasingly competing for what
used to be our constant triumph: the high-skilled, high-paying job.” Herbert
(2008) recently addressed the toll that high schools are imposing on America’s
future by noting that we cannot even keep our students in school—one-third do
not complete school in 4 years, or drop out and half of those who remain gradu-
ate without the skills for college or a job. Of those who go on, we have fewer
going into technical fields while other countries have more.

Many people believe that our present educational system provides the envi-
ronment to develop critical and creative thinking—thinking out of the box such
as engaging in analysis and synthesis. Wise (2008) agrees but suggests that
since one-third of our high school students do not graduate, there must be a
disconnect between what we expect and what most of our schools are actu-
ally delivering. We used to lead the world in graduation rates, and now we are
16th. Nationwide, only 70% of 9th graders make it to graduation, and that figure
drops to 46% for Black males, 52% for Hispanic males, and 60% for Black and
Hispanic females. Most telling for the focus of this chapter on the importance of
transitioning is a finding of the 2010 edition of the Diplomas 2010 report from
Education Week. That edition reported that more than one-third of students lost
from high school failed to make the transition from 9th to 10th grade. Far too
many American students see a reality gap between their dreams and the real
world. Overwhelming numbers of middle school students say they intend to go
to college. Unfortunately, many do not graduate from high school, and those who
do are often unprepared.
Thus, the preparation of students for college and careers must begin with more than just an understanding that students have to transition and that the work is harder. Whether students engage in a successful high school experience, particularly those who come to high school with weak academic skills and focus, depends on attitudes they develop in these transitioning times. There must be a structure developed that supports and enhances students in transition. If we reframe the idea of transition to one that might well span the next 10 years of their lives (4 years of high school, 4 years of college, 2 years of transition to the work world), then the importance of the counselors’ and the schools’ attention to transition is even more imperative. Students need to be made aware that they need a comparable level of skill whether they want to go to work or to college after high school. Furthermore, they need to understand what level of performance is “good enough” to demonstrate readiness for college.

**Psychosocial and Cognitive Modifications**

So, too, we must be aware of cognitive and psychosocial developmental changes that are more evident in the 21st century. For example, our students have to learn more every day than prior generations, so they need to be better learners. Consequently, many countries are seeking technology-enriched curricula and textbooks that develop these skills as opposed to overwhelming students with huge amounts of facts in large textbooks (Kao, 2007). It has been suggested that we should follow countries from Germany to Singapore that have extremely small textbooks that focus on the most powerful and generative ideas and supplement them with rich technologies (Wallis, 2006). We as counselors must explore even more effective ways for students to learn and how to study, especially during times of transition.

Psychosocial development also takes a gigantic leap during this period. The capacity to understand emotions, express them, and relate to others is one of the most important aspects of optimal, healthy personality development. In addition, the ability to recognize fear, anxiety, and anger and to learn appropriate coping skills, norms, rules, and values is critical to adolescent psychological development. Future predictions indicate that children and adolescents will learn more about emotions and shape their own ability to deal emotionally from media rather than from others, including their families (Roberts & Foehr, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Transition to high school is multifaceted, developmental, and pervasive.

The three primary sources of social support—family, peers, and school adults—are each likely to undergo changes as a result of the developmental transitions of adolescence combined with the transition to high school (Newman, Newman, Griffen, O’Connor, & Spas, 2007). Psychologically, adolescence is a critical and unique stage of human development. It is a time when individuals begin and are expected to develop their own identity; academically and socially prepare themselves for adulthood; and explore and contribute to their families.
bilities, and society. As students undergo these developmental changes, they experience many changes in their social contexts. Parents often expect more autonomy and self-sufficiency. New friendships must be made, and some old peer relationships are gone. Going into high school, adolescents lose familiar teachers, advisors, and routines. High schools are typically more anonymous settings than middle schools; they are typically larger buildings with more students in larger classes. As a consequence, high school students receive less individualized attention from teachers. Newman et al. (2007) found that parents, peers, and schools can play key roles in sustaining adolescents’ sense of well-being during this transition. Most importantly, high schools provide more than an academic function. They offer a context through which adolescents experience a sense of group belonging that enables students to gain academic and psychosocial success. This research clearly suggests that the transitional focus of this chapter is critical to overall optimal adolescent development and to college and career readiness.

Transition activities might include transition classes for the 9th graders, study skills assessment (see below), regular class periods designed for transitional activities, and a focus on education and career plans for each student.

Transitional Classes

There are various outlines for the development of transitional classes for 9th graders including those that focus on using teachers (Dedmond, 2008), those that focus on the role of the entire school community (Achieve, 2008), and those that focus on the role of the school counselor (Akos, 2010). Development of these classes can often incorporate the elements developed separately in the rest of this chapter. Decisions as to whether to consider such classes should be based upon counselor review of these three possible approaches and upon the presentation to faculty and administrators of a strong rationale for inclusion of the approach in supporting the vision of the school.

What follows are activities deemed critical to this transitional period.

Study Skills Introduction

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Memo to Counselors

The approach in presenting this information is that of the voice of the counselor speaking to students.
The Move to High School: Making the Transition to 9th Grade Successful

As you enter high school, you will be meeting new challenges in all areas of your life:

- Academics
- Extracurricular activities
- Sports
- Community activities/service
- Social life

How do you begin to prioritize and balance all of the demands in your life? What we will try to accomplish in this Study Skills group session is to give you some of the tools that can help you achieve success.

**Goals**

Let’s think about the goals that you have for yourself as a 9th grader. It’s always helpful to think about what and why you want to do something before you actually attempt it. Using the Goals Exercise sheet (Table 4.1), list your goals for this year, and then rank them in the chart. At the end of the first semester, look back and see what you were able to accomplish and where you need to work harder, and then rank your goals again. Look at what worked for you and what did not—this can make the second semester a more successful experience for you. Try to be as specific as possible in thinking about the How to Achieve column. For example, in the Academics section, do not simply say *study harder*, but say *nightly/weekly review of subject material* or *planning to study prior to the night before a test*.

**Vocabulary**

Now let’s make certain terms part of your high school vocabulary. You may know their definitions, but think of them in a new way that is centered around *you*.

A you-centered vocabulary:

- Active reader
- Active listener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>How to Achieve</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4.1 Exercise on Establishing Goals for First Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>How to Achieve</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
■ Engaged student
■ Proactive student

You will notice that the one word that is missing is passive. Passive and student do not belong in the same sentence!

An active reader:
■ Notes bold headings and word sections in a textbook
■ Looks for the topic sentence in paragraphs and supporting ideas
■ Makes margin notes where possible

In effect, the active reader makes the most use of his or her abilities when reading.

An active listener:
■ Pays attention throughout class
■ Takes notes as the teacher explains
■ Stays focused despite distractions

Again, the active listener makes the most of the classroom session.

An engaged student:
■ Participates in class discussions
■ Listens to what others have to say
■ Is truly involved in the subject work

The engaged student learns the most because he or she is truly involved in the learning process.

Finally, a proactive student:
■ Has clearly defined goals
■ Has developed strategies to achieve success
■ Is an active participant in the learning process

Proactive students assume responsibility for their own success.

Learning Styles

Now it Is Time to Talk About Learning Styles

Understanding what your preferred learning style is another way that you can achieve greater academic success. All of us feel more comfortable learning in certain ways that are essentially based on three of our key senses: seeing, hearing and touching. This does not mean that you cannot learn in other ways but only that it is helpful if you understand how you learn most easily. This way you will know that when you are in a class that requires another method of learning
you may have to adapt in order to succeed. While most of us have a dominant preferred learning style, as we go through school we learn to develop the learning styles that are not our primary way of learning.

Learning styles fall into three categories: visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic.

- Visual learners like to see; they prefer to have a textbook, an image on a computer screen, or words on a chalkboard—essentially, written images that appeal to vision. For them, taking notes for future study is another way of seeing the information.
- Auditory learners like to hear; they learn through listening and are often able to relate the pitch and tone of voice to what is being said. Frequently, they learn best by hearing lectures and discussions and find recordings of classes or books helpful.
- Tactile/kinesthetic learners like a hands-on approach. Taking the kind of notes that visual learners love may not be easy for them. However, completing that chemistry lab is exactly what they love. Tactile/kinesthetic learners enjoy experiential learning—they learn best by doing.

None of us are robots; we all have our learning strengths and weaknesses. The key is to know what these are and to approach our studies understanding that there will many times that we will have to work a little harder if the class presentation does not fall into our areas of strengths.

Students will now complete a Learning Styles Inventory using Naviance and/or the College Board’s QuickStart and MyRoad (see Chapter 5 for further detail on these programs).

Now that you have:

- Established goals for your first semester
- Learned some you-centered vocabulary
- Learned your preferred learning style

Let’s look at one more essential term: executive functioning.

**Executive Functioning**

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**Memo to Counselors**

The term *executive function* describes a set of cognitive abilities that control and regulate other abilities and behaviors. Executive functions are necessary for goal-directed behavior (see Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders in Additional Resources).

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What is executive functioning? Think of it as the boss of your brain. Executive functioning helps you to (1) prioritize and plan your work, (2) organize your thoughts and effectively complete your assignments, and (3) make efficient use of your time. These are essential components of good study skills:

1. Effective planning
2. Organization
3. Time management

How good is your executive functioning? Complete the Executive Functioning Exercise (Table 4.2) to see how you rate your executive functioning. After completing this chart, note how many times you marked a No or Sometimes. These

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you look at your daily assignments and plan how you will complete them?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you prioritize your assignments by thinking about what will take the most time or effort?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think about what is the most important task for you to complete?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use a planner to write down assignments?</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you break long-term assignments into smaller parts?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you correctly estimate how long it will take you to complete an assignment?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a nightly study schedule that you try to follow?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you organize your schoolwork neatly in a binder or notebook?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you review on a regular basis, not just before a test?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you keep a record of your grades in each subject?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you include the demands of your job, sports, and so forth in your planning to complete your schoolwork?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
are areas where you can improve your executive functioning to become a better student.

Now it's time to look at some practical tools that can help you achieve the success that you want. Effective planning and time management make all the difference in academic success. These are tools that once developed will enhance your success in college and career.

**Let’s Get Started: Using a Planner**

*Why Use a Planner?*

A planner will help you:

- See what your assignments are
- Organize your time more effectively
- Schedule your time for long-term assignments
- Keep track of your grades for each quarter
- Include personal, extracurricular, and family events in your time schedule

*How to Make Effective Use of Your Planner*

1. Fill in the subjects on the left side of your planner. Do this for the first 4 weeks of school. Be sure that you keep the subjects in the same order for every week.

   **HELPFUL HINT**

   If you are assigned a long-term project or paper, write in the due dates now. This will remind you of future deadlines.

2. Many of the best planners available do not list the month and the dates because it gives students more flexibility in incorporating school activities into their planning. If you have a blank planner, fill in the month and date at the top of the planner page. Do this for at least the first 4 weeks of school. Make sure that you include the weekend dates—you will have homework over the weekend. Also note any days off and mark them in your planner. Note that some comprehensive online systems have planners too, such as Naviance.

3. At the bottom of the planner sheet, write in your own activities, such as extracurricular activities, sports, and family events. Remember, you are developing time-management skills as you plan for your homework and other commitments.
HELPFUL HINT
You have a life outside of school and homework. Include this in your planner so you can effectively allot your time.

4. Now go to the back of the planner where you will find pages designed to help you keep track of your grades. List your classes in the appropriate column. Beneath each subject, create a section for the components of your grade such as tests, quizzes, papers, class participation, and labs. As the quarter proceeds, write down your grades in each subject. You may not be able to estimate your class participation, but this will remind you to be involved in class discussions.

HELPFUL HINT
You should never be surprised by your quarter grade if you keep track of your grades. Not doing so well? Ask your teacher or another student for help before you receive a low grade on your report card.

Remember to fill in the rest of the dates for your planner.

Getting Organized and Staying Organized

Organization is a vital key to academic success, so let’s talk about how you organize your schoolwork.

Different subject areas demand different kinds of organization, but the common theme is that you should have the necessary materials at your fingertips. Teachers may tell you how they want your work organized. For example, your math teacher may want all of your work in one notebook.

If your teacher allows you to decide how to organize, try this method. The materials needed are

- 2-inch binder
- Dividers with pockets
- Loose leaf paper

Sample Binder

As a sample, let’s organize your English and Social Studies binder.

1. First, label a divider English.
2. Then label dividers—class notes, homework, tests and quizzes, and handouts.
3. Place loose leaf paper in appropriate dividers.
4. For vocabulary, you may want to use index cards so that you can quiz yourself on words. You may need another divider labeled Vocabulary.
5. Now label a divider Social Studies.
6. Then label dividers—class notes, homework, test and quizzes, and handouts.
7. You may also need a divider for maps.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Adapt this system to each class. For example, in science class, you may need a divider for labs.

If you follow this method of organizing your materials, you should be able to find whatever you need quickly.

**HELPFUL HINT**

At the end of a unit or a quarter, remove materials from your binder and place them in large envelopes or file folders for future use.

You do not need to carry 2 months’ worth of notes in your daily binder, but you will need this material for midterm and final exams. Make sure that you label stored material, for example, English first-quarter materials. Then store it safely in your room at home.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Clean out your binders regularly. You will be amazed at how many unnecessary papers you will find. They will only get in the way of your effective studying.

**Who Am I as a Student? What Are My Study Skills?**

Now that you have filled out your planner and organized your binders and notebooks, let’s talk about you as a student.

Remember, this is your primary job: to study and to achieve as much academic success as possible.

Ask yourself:

- Who am I as a student?
- What are my strengths?
- Where do I need to improve?
- How does this fit into knowing who I am and what I want to become?

Heavy questions, but you probably know many of the answers. Sometimes we all need to stand back and look at the bigger picture in order to understand the
smaller details. Reexamine your answers to the Executive Functioning Exercise (Table 4.2). They also reveal your strengths and weaknesses in study skills. Use this knowledge to help you become a better student.

**Doing That Nightly Homework**

You know that homework varies from night to night, but there is always something to do. But before we begin, think about the following:

- What does it mean to prioritize and how can it help you?
- What does it mean to review and why is it important?
- What is the difference between doing homework and studying?

**What Does It Mean to Prioritize?**

To *prioritize* is to decide which assignments are the most demanding and important to you. Look over your assignments, and decide the order in which you will do your homework.

For some suggestions about completing your daily homework, look at the exercise below to help you plan how you will approach your assignments. While it is important to decide the order of your work, you should also give yourself some short breaks (10–15 minutes).

**Exercise on Prioritizing and Planning Your Work**

Answer the following questions then fill in the Prioritizing Schedule (Table 4.3) to plan your work for optimal effectiveness:

- What assignment is most important?
- Do I have a test or quiz to prepare for?
- What assignment will take the most time?

Note the difference between your estimated time and the actual time that it took you to complete your assignments. This will help you in future planning and time management.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Turn off your cell phone and instant messaging when doing your homework. You can use your breaks to catch up with friends, but regard the time you have slated for your schoolwork as solid—no interruptions!
Why Is It Essential to Review?

Think of your mind as a computer. If you work on an essay on your computer and then forget to save your work, you lose it. The same is true for your memory. We all have short-term memory and long-term memory. Unlike saving on a computer, getting information into your long-term memory is not so easy, but you can incorporate many techniques into your study habits that will help you remember information.

To review means to go over. As you do your homework each evening, spend 2 minutes going over your class notes from that day. Believe it or not, these few minutes can have a great impact.

Also, once a week review your class notes in each subject—this can go a long way in improving test grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Estimated Time</th>
<th>Actual Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Helpful Hint

Use a highlighter to mark key ideas in your class notes when you review. Don't overhighlight, but just mark essentials. This helps to make ideas stand out in your mind.

What Is the Difference Between Homework and Studying?

You are in high school now, and more is expected of you as a student. Doing your homework is important, but it is the minimum. Studying demands review and attempting to understand the subject material as thoroughly as possible.
**HELPFUL HINT**

If you have a long-term assignment, break it into pieces so that it does not become overwhelming. For example, do your lab report in segments, or prepare your English essay in sections by doing the outline, then a rough draft, and a final version.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Leave spaces in your class notes so you can write clarifying information texts.

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## How to Take Good Homework Notes

Doing your homework is the best way to be prepared for class. A common assignment, especially in social studies and science, is to read and take notes on a number of pages in your textbook. Taking good notes is great preparation and will ensure that you get the most out of class the next day.

- Preview the material that you are to read. Remember that most textbooks use boldface and larger fonts to show subdivisions in the material that you will be reading.
  - Look over the assigned pages, noting any boldface subdivisions.
  - Note any individual words that are boldfaced. This tells you that these are key terms you will need to know.
- Now it’s time to read. Have questions in mind as you examine the material: Think about the five W’s—the who, what, where, when, and why—of the passage. It will help you to understand what you are reading.
- Most paragraphs begin with topic sentences that express the meaning of the paragraph.
  - Be aware of the meaning of each topic sentence, and then look for the supporting details that explain the topic sentence.
- Take notes as you read.
  - Use the boldface subdivisions as a way of dividing your notes.

**HELPFUL HINT**

You do not need to do a formal outline; instead, use spacing and indentation in your note taking.
Sample Notes on the Civil War

The North had many advantages over the South in the Civil War:

- Larger population
- Strong industrial base
- Existing government
- Existing army and navy

Taking notes this way shows the main idea of Northern advantages. Indenting points out the specific points that support the main idea.

HELPFUL HINT

Don't crowd your note taking; give yourself plenty of space. This makes it easier to review and study for exams.

Remember always to:

- Preview
- Note boldfaced subdivisions
- Be aware of boldfaced terms
- Keep the five W's in mind as you read
- Take notes using space and indentation

HELPFUL HINT

While we have been talking about note taking in social studies and science textbooks, you can adapt this method to your other subjects such as math, foreign language, and English.

Taking Notes in Class

A rule to live by: Taking notes in class is always easier if you have done your homework. This helps you to know what the teacher is going to discuss and greatly enhances your understanding of the material.

1. Have your homework on your desk so that you know the order of the material.
2. Stay focused despite distractions.
3. Listen for key phrases such as the key significance or the most important. These signal ideas you want in your notes.
4. Be aware of what the teacher writes on the board—another signal for important material.
5. If you missed an important point, note it and make sure to check with a friend after class so that you are not missing any information.

HELPFUL HINT
If the lesson is closely related to your homework, take notes directly on your homework notes. That’s one of the advantages of leaving lots of space. Use a different colored pen for class notes so that you know what the teacher emphasized. Do this with your teacher’s permission. Some teachers may want to look at homework separate from your class notes.

HELPFUL HINT
Always take notes in pen, not pencil. Two months from now when you are studying for a midterm exam, that pencil may have faded.

6. Before beginning the next day’s homework, make sure that your notes are complete. Always take a few minutes to review and highlight key terms.

Preparing for Tests—Large or Small
Taking tests is a fact of academic life. Now comes “The Big If”—If you have done nightly and weekly review, this will be much easier for you. If you haven’t, don’t panic—there is still time to prepare.
Remember how we talked earlier about how to get information into your long-term memory? Well, effective review is the answer.

■ How to prepare for that unit test, midterm, or final exam?
  – First of all, know what material will be on the test.
  – Organize your notes, old tests, quizzes, and relevant handouts.
■ Establish a realistic time schedule for studying for your test or exam. Do not leave all of your studying until the night before the test.
■ Start to review materials in realistic amounts—for example, a chapter at a time for a midterm.
  – Use a highlighter to mark key ideas.
  – Box in key terms, names, places, and events with a red pen.
Doing this method of review will help ideas stand out when you take a test.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Make a cover sheet for each chapter or unit. For example, for a test on the American Civil War, use a chart to mark key people, places, events, and terms. Do not identify—simply list.

After you have reviewed your notes and listed items, use the cover sheet to quiz yourself.

**HELPFUL HINT**

Make sure to keep cover sheets with the appropriate materials. They can be invaluable in studying for major exams such as midterm and final exams.

While the cover sheet example is for a social studies test, you can adapt this method to other subjects. List short stories, authors, themes, characters, and so forth for English and terms for science or theorems for math.

**HELPFUL HINT**

For some subjects it is helpful to make flash cards for vocabulary. You may want to use index cards to help you master Spanish. On each card, print the word on the front and definitions on the back. Make sure to keep cards in a labeled envelope, for example, Spanish Chapter 2 vocabulary. Store these at home or in a pocket folder in your binder.

Review, review, review is what studying is all about!

**Taking Tests**

**Some Do’s and Don’ts About Test Taking**

Definitely Do:

- Get a good night’s sleep and eat breakfast.
- Be conscious of time allotted for the test.
- Look over the entire exam.
- Read directions. It is important that you know what you are being asked to do. If you are uncertain, ask for clarification.
Work systematically. Do not jump around answering questions; you may end up leaving some questions blank.  
Be aware of the number of points attached to a question. Don’t spend so much time on one question that you are unable to answer others. 
Stay focused during the entire exam.

Definitely Don’t:

Stay up all night trying to cram.  
Skip reading directions because you think it may take too much time.  
Answer some questions and not others thinking that you will be able to come back to them later. This usually ends up in blank answers.  
Spend too much time on one essay question or math problem and then are unable to finish other questions.  
Rush through the exam thinking that you will have time to check your answers.  
Finish early and relax rather than checking your answers.

We all know the fable about the tortoise and the hare. Remember who wins—consistent effort is what pays off.