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Insider's Guide to Studying

Students of all ages can hone their study skills with these tips that teachers wish that they knew when they were students.

Tip 5: Study Buddy!

Want a quick tip to cut the amount that you have to study in half? Partner up! Study buddies are a great way to divide study material, save time, and gain new perspectives.

Here's how it works:

1. **Select a Study Buddy.** The best study buddy is someone who you will be able to work well with. It's nice to partner up with your friends, but if you're going to spend your time gossiping or discussing video game high scores, then it won't be time well spent.
2. **Set a Schedule.** Select a time and place to meet up to study.
3. **Divvy up the Workload.** If there are two chapters to study, each student is responsible for one chapter.
4. **Talk it Out.** A study buddy isn't about sitting down together and quietly reading side by side. A study buddy helps you learn, helps you discover areas that you need to focus on, and helps you cut down on the amount of studying you have to do on your own.
5. **Prepare.** Before you meet for the first time, do your review.
 - Make study notes: write down *titles, headings, and keywords*, and make a copy for your partner
 - Create your own *mnemonic devices*
 - Create a *fake test* for your study partner
6. **Teach it.** Take turns teaching a unit or section to one another. Review the material, but don't read word for word from the text or class notes—boring! Don't know where to start? Even if it seems awkward, just start at the beginning: "Chapter 5 is about atoms. Atoms are broken down into three basic elements..." Your study buddy can help you fill in gaps as well as point out important areas that you might have overlooked.
7. **Paraphrase.** This is just a fancy word for *putting it your own words*. If you're reciting word for word from a textbook you're just memorizing. If you can explain it in your own words, then you're on your way to *real* understanding.
8. **Pay Attention to Class Examples.** Sometimes teachers give examples in class that are not in the textbook. Teachers sometimes include these on a test to see if you were paying attention in class. Remember that films, pictures, and handouts can turn up on tests, so don't overlook these examples—even if they seem silly.
9. **Share.** Your *impressions* and *opinions* about the material might offer a new perspective on a subject. A different viewpoint can give you insights and ideas that you hadn't considered.
10. **End with a test.** Pass each other the fake tests that you've created and quiz one another. Correct each other's test and see how you did.

Sometimes teachers assign study groups, usually with 3-5 (or more) students per group. While a larger group might decrease the amount of material that you have to review on your own, it can also be a recipe for disaster. A too-large group can too easily lead to socialization and procrastination, so it's important to follow the above tips and stay organized.