

# A Student's Guide to Success – You Can do This!

## 1. Set specific goals

The goals you set must be prioritized and **specific**. It is a good idea to set goals that are **measurable** early on in the semester. You have to be the captain of your own life and set goals that are both **achievable** and **realistic**.

Make decisions throughout the year that are in your long-term best interest by accomplishing these goals in a **timely** manner. What you decide to do with your time is up to you. Remember, everyone also needs time to hang out with friends and pursue hobbies, sports, or simply have some down time.

## 2. Develop good habits

You need to consciously work at building good habits so that these behaviours become automatic and something you do without even thinking about it. When studying and drilling down on your homework becomes an automatic part of your routine, things will get accomplished without you even thinking about it.

Use a calendar with very specific timeframes to nudge you towards accomplishing your goals. Write in the details on a calendar for each day and specify when you are going to accomplish these tasks. Be detailed and stick to your plan.

Start implementing these habits right at the beginning of the semester. The faster they become part and parcel of your daily routine, the sooner you will reach your goals.

## 3. Break down big assignments with a 'backward timeline'

The most effective way to deal with large assignments is to break these projects down into bite-sized tasks that you work on well ahead of the project deadlines. Set specific milestones in your calendar and be sure to stick to the timeline.

For large assignments, make a “backward timeline” and begin by recording the final deadline on your calendar. Work backwards from this date to figure out what steps are necessary to complete the task and record when you will be working on these sub-tasks. Make sure you meet all required deadlines leading up to the final submission of the assignment. Recognize the fact that you need to start early and persevere!



## GOAL SETTING

- S** Specific
- M** Measurable
- A** Achievable
- R** Realistic
- T** Timely



## 4. Know what time you're at your best

Many people are unaware of when their energy and focus are at their best. Some students incorrectly believe they are “night-owls”, when in fact, they are able to focus better during the early evening. Do some intentional exploring of your own biological rhythm to observe when your focus and energy is best. Use the time when your energy level is high to complete the hardest assignments and tasks.



## 5. Take care of yourself

Be intentional about your mental state. **Take time to be mindful, get proper sleep, exercise, and eat well.** Reward yourself when you complete your tasks with social time with friends or an activity you enjoy.

It is not healthy to study for ten hours straight (nor is it healthy to play video games for ten hours straight!). You have to study to do well – break that into manageable chunks of time so that you are actively studying over a series of days instead of cramming for a test or exam the day before.

## 6. Do ONE thing, and do it well!

When you are working on a project or studying, **be actively engaged in that one task.** Put your phone away and focus on that one thing. Do not have at hand things that will cause you to be distracted from the task at hand. Schedule specific breaks to get up, stretch and move around. Give yourself a few minutes to check your phone/inboxes and then get back at it.

## 7. Take advantage of the resources available to you

If needed, go in for extra help – don't wait until the day before a test or project is due. If you are struggling with a concept, find a time to conference with your teacher in order to get additional support. There are also many websites, such as Khan Academy, that can be very useful in order to clarify and assist you with concept attainment and practice.

Seek out help immediately if you need clarification or assistance – don't wait until tomorrow.

## 8. Take a 'growth mindset' toward grades

Remember that not everything will necessarily go as planned. If you get a grade that is disappointing to you, don't let that discourage you. A grade doesn't define you as a person, nor does it limit your future potential. Use evaluations to reflect on what you did well and what you need to improve upon. Conference with your teacher in order to identify specific areas you can work on and precise steps you can take to get there.

## 9. Study actively

Simply reading and highlighting notes is often not an effective way to study. How many times have you done this for a length of time and realized that when you get to the end of a page, you can't remember what you just read!

By the time you get to studying for a test or an exam, if you have implemented the above strategies, you should already be familiar with the material. You should be spending time **actively** studying by writing out answers, creating mind maps, developing Venn diagrams, condensing the material to manageable, memorable chunks (try out some mnemonics) and testing yourself. You need to not only know the material, but you also need to practice how to deliver that knowledge on a test.

