

Study Skills Print Pack

All ten printable sheets from the free Study Skills Self-Help Library at inchyapp.com/study-skills, in one file. No sign-up, no ads. Last checked October 1, 2026.

1. Study Skills Self-Check (1 page)

The 24 statements on paper, with a scoring key.

2. Where Does the Time Go? Weekly Time Budget and 168-Hour Log (2 pages)

A time budget worksheet, plus a one-week grid with every hour on it.

3. Weekly Study Planner (1 page)

Seven days, 7 a.m. to midnight, with space for priorities, due dates and tests.

4. Term Planner: 16 Weeks at a Glance (1 page)

Every due date and exam for the term on one page.

5. Ten Ways to Get Started (1 page)

Ten strategies for procrastination, with a box to plan the first one.

6. WOOP Plan (1 page)

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan, with an if-then line.

7. SQ3R Reading Sheet (1 page)

Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review, laid out for one chapter.

8. Cornell Notes Template and Listening Checklist (2 pages)

A blank Cornell page and a one-page lecture listening checklist.

9. Exam Checklist: Before, During and After (1 page)

What to do the week before, in the room, and when the test comes back.

10. Study Space Check (1 page)

Rate a place you study and plan one change.

License. These sheets are licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0). You may copy, print, share and adapt them, including for classes, workshops and library guides, as long as you credit Inchy and link to inchyapp.com/study-skills. License text: creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Suggested citation. Inchy. (2026). *Study skills: A free self-help library*. <https://inchyapp.com/study-skills/>

Every research claim on the sheets is cited on the sheet itself or in the Sources list on the web page. Spotted a mistake? Tell us at inchyapp.com/contact.

Study Skills Self-Check

Circle one answer for each statement. Answer for how things usually go, not your best week.
Then add up each area (0 to 6).

Area	Statement	Not like me (0)	Sometimes (1)	A lot like me (2)	Area total
Time	1. I'm often surprised by how little time is left before something is due.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	2. I study in long, last-minute sessions more than short, regular ones.	☐	☐	☐	
	3. I don't have a set plan for when I'll study each week.	☐	☐	☐	
Getting started	4. I put off starting assignments even when I have time to do them.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	5. Big projects feel so large that I don't know where to begin.	☐	☐	☐	
	6. Once I've fallen behind, I avoid looking at the work at all.	☐	☐	☐	
Reading	7. I reach the end of a page and can't say what it was about.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	8. I find it hard to pick out the main ideas in a chapter.	☐	☐	☐	
	9. My reading piles up until right before a test.	☐	☐	☐	
Notes and listening	10. My notes are hard to make sense of a week later.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	11. In class, I try to write down everything and miss what matters.	☐	☐	☐	
	12. I rarely look at my notes again until a test is close.	☐	☐	☐	
Memory and review	13. Most of my studying is rereading and highlighting.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	14. I feel like I know the material while studying, then can't recall it on the test.	☐	☐	☐	
	15. I study a topic in one long block instead of coming back to it over several days.	☐	☐	☐	
Tests and exams	16. I lose points on questions I knew how to answer.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	17. My mind goes blank or my heart races during exams.	☐	☐	☐	
	18. I don't look back at returned tests to see what went wrong.	☐	☐	☐	
Study space and focus	19. My phone or other screens pull me away while I study.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	20. I don't have a regular place where studying feels easier.	☐	☐	☐	
	21. I can't settle into work for more than a few minutes at a time.	☐	☐	☐	
Stress and sleep	22. I regularly lose sleep to study or finish assignments.	☐	☐	☐	__ / 6
	23. Stress about school gets in the way of doing the work.	☐	☐	☐	
	24. I skip meals, exercise or time with friends to keep up.	☐	☐	☐	

Reading your scores. 4 to 6: start with this section of the library. **2 to 3:** worth a look. **0 to 1:** probably fine for now. Pick the one or two highest areas and try one strategy from each for a week. The self-check is a starting point for your own planning, not a diagnosis or a test.

Where Does the Time Go?

A week has 168 hours. Estimate where yours go, see what is left, and compare it with what your classes ask for. Then log one real week on the grid overleaf and check your estimates against it.

Activity	Hours per day		Days per week	Hours per week
Sleep Include naps.		×		
Meals Making, eating and cleaning up.		×		
Getting ready Showering, dressing, personal care.		×		
Commuting Door to door, including parking and walking.		×		
Classes and labs Scheduled class time each week.	enter weekly hours →			
Paid work Shifts, including travel to them.	enter weekly hours →			
Chores and errands Laundry, shopping, cleaning.		×		
Family and caregiving Kids, relatives, pets.	enter weekly hours →			
Activities Exercise, clubs, faith, volunteering.	enter weekly hours →			
Friends, screens and downtime Be honest. Everyone needs some.		×		
Other Anything else that takes your time.		×		

A. Total committed hours (add the last column)	
B. Hours left for studying: 168 minus A	
C. Study hours your classes expect: class hours × 2 (a common minimum; see note)	
D. B minus C. If this is negative, something on the list has to give.	

Note: U.S. federal rules define one credit hour as roughly one hour of class plus at least two hours of out-of-class work each week across a semester (34 CFR 600.2). Your courses may ask for more or less. The time budget idea follows the long-running Virginia Tech Cook Counseling Center "Where Does the Time Go?" self-help exercise.

What I will change

168-Hour Log

Fill in what you actually did, an hour at a time, as close to the moment as you can. Codes: **Sl** sleep · **Cl** class · **St** study · **W** work · **M** meals · **T** travel · **F** friends and family · **Sc** screens · **E** exercise · **O** other.

Hour	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
6 a.m.							
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.							
9 a.m.							
10 a.m.							
11 a.m.							
12 p.m.							
1 p.m.							
2 p.m.							
3 p.m.							
4 p.m.							
5 p.m.							
6 p.m.							
7 p.m.							
8 p.m.							
9 p.m.							
10 p.m.							
11 p.m.							
12 a.m.							
1 a.m.							
2 a.m.							
3 a.m.							
4 a.m.							
5 a.m.							

Weekly Study Planner

Week of _____

Block in fixed things first: classes, work, sleep. Then place study blocks of 25 to 50 minutes next to the classes they belong to. Leave some blank space; plans that fill every hour tend to break by Wednesday.

Most important this week

Due this week

Tests and quizzes

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 a.m.							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12 p.m.							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							

Term Planner: 16 Weeks at a Glance

Sit down with every syllabus in week 1. Copy each exam, paper and project deadline onto this page. Then, for each big one, mark a start date two to three weeks earlier. Seeing the crunch weeks early is the point.

Week	Starts	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Big things this week
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									

Ten Ways to Get Started

Putting work off has causes you can work on. A large review of the research linked procrastination most closely to tasks that feel unpleasant, rewards that feel far away, doubts about your ability and impulsiveness (Steel, 2007). These strategies go after those causes. Try one at a time.

- 1 Shrink the first step.** Make it so small it feels silly: open the file and type the title. A step that small costs almost nothing to begin.
- 2 Write an if-then plan.** "If it's 4 p.m. Tuesday, then I open the lab report at the library." A time, a place and an action.
- 3 Set a 10-minute timer.** Agree to work until it rings, then decide whether to keep going. Stopping is allowed.
- 4 Start in the middle.** Skip the introduction. Begin with the section you understand best.
- 5 Leave the work where you'll trip over it.** Book open to the page, document open on the screen, before you walk away.
- 6 Work next to someone.** A library table, a study group or a video call with a friend who is also working.
- 7 Remove one distraction first.** Phone in another room or a site blocker on. Just one, before you sit down.
- 8 Name what's in the way.** Boring? Pair it with music or a small reward. Confusing? Send one question to the instructor. Scary? Write a rough version you're allowed to throw out.
- 9 Forgive yesterday.** Students who forgave themselves for putting off studying procrastinated less before the next exam (Wohl et al., 2010).
- 10 End with a note to your future self.** Before you stop, write the very next step: "Next: finish paragraph two." Restarting is easier.

My plan. The task I keep putting off:

The smallest first step:

If it's (time and place):

then I will:

Sources: Steel, P. (2007). *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65–94. Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 69–119. Wohl, M. J. A., Pychyl, T. A., & Bennett, S. H. (2010). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 48(7), 803–808.

WOOP Plan

WOOP is a goal-planning method developed by psychologist Gabriele Oettingen: you picture the outcome you want, then the inner obstacle most likely to stop you, then a plan for that exact moment. Take five quiet minutes.

W**Wish**

Something about school you want this week or this term. Hard but doable, and yours, not someone else's.

O**Outcome**

The best result of getting it. Picture it in detail: what it looks like and how it feels. Write a few words.

O**Obstacle**

The main thing inside you that could stop you: a habit, a feeling, a thought. Picture it happening.

P**Plan**

What will you do when that obstacle shows up? Write it as an if-then sentence.

If (obstacle)

then I will
(action)

In a 2013 study, fifth-graders taught this method (formally, mental contrasting with implementation intentions) improved their report card grades, attendance and conduct compared with a positive-thinking group (Duckworth, Kirby, Gollwitzer & Oettingen, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(6), 745–753). Free official guide: woopmylife.org.

SQ3R Reading Sheet

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. Francis P. Robinson set it out in his 1946 book *Effective Study*. Use one sheet per chapter or article.

Course _____ Chapter or article _____ Pages _____

S Survey (about 5 minutes). Look over the title, headings, bold terms, figures, the summary and any end-of-chapter questions. What is this chapter mostly about?

Q Question, then **R Read**, then **R Recite**. Turn each heading into a question. Read that section to answer it. Then close the book and write the answer from memory, in your own words. Check it, and fix what you missed.

My question (from a heading)	Answer from memory

R Review. Cover the answers and quiz yourself on the questions. Come back more than once: ☐ later today ☐ in 2 or 3 days ☐ in a week ☐ before the test

CUES AND QUESTIONS

NOTES During class: ideas in your own words, not full sentences.

Same day: sum up the page in two or three sentences, from memory.

How to Use Cornell Notes, and a Listening Checklist

The Cornell system was developed by Walter Pauk at Cornell University and described in his book *How to Study in College* (first edition 1962).

The five steps

- 1 **Record.** During class, write main ideas and examples in the Notes column.
- 2 **Reduce.** Soon after, pull key words and questions into the Cues column.
- 3 **Recite.** Cover the Notes column. Answer each cue out loud or on scrap paper, then check.
- 4 **Reflect.** Ask how this connects to what you already know. Write the summary.
- 5 **Review.** Spend a few minutes each week reciting from the cues.

Lecture listening checklist

Before class

- ☐ I skimmed the reading or my last notes for five minutes.
- ☐ I wrote down one question I hope the class answers.
- ☐ I'm sitting where I can see the board and hear clearly.
- ☐ My phone is silenced and out of sight.

During class

- ☐ I listen for signals: "the main point is," "there are four causes," anything repeated or written on the board.
- ☐ I write ideas in my own words, not every word said.
- ☐ I write down the examples the instructor uses.
- ☐ When I miss something I leave a gap and mark it with ?.

After class, the same day

- ☐ I filled the gaps from the slides, the reading or a classmate.
- ☐ I wrote cues and questions in the left column.
- ☐ I wrote a two- or three-sentence summary from memory.
- ☐ I took any question I still have to office hours or email.

Laptop or paper? A well-known 2014 study found longhand note-takers did better on conceptual questions (Mueller & Oppenheimer). A 2019 replication did not find a clear advantage either way (Morehead, Dunlosky & Rawson). What helps more is writing ideas in your own words, whichever tool you use.

Exam Checklist: Before, During and After

Most of the work happens before you walk into the room, and some of the most useful work happens after the grade comes back.

About a week before

- ☐ I know the format: topics covered, question types, length, what I can bring.
- ☐ I listed the topics and marked each one *solid*, *shaky* or *lost*.
- ☐ I'm quizzing myself (practice questions, flashcards, explaining out loud), not just rereading.
- ☐ I've spread my study sessions over several days instead of one long night.
- ☐ I did at least one timed practice run.
- ☐ I asked about the topics marked *lost*: office hours, a tutor, a classmate.

The night before and the day of

- ☐ I'm planning to sleep instead of pulling an all-nighter.
- ☐ My bag is packed: ID, pens or pencils, calculator, water, a watch if phones aren't allowed.
- ☐ I'll arrive a few minutes early.
- ☐ If I'm anxious, I'll spend a few minutes writing my worries down before the test starts.

During the test

- ☐ I read the directions, then looked over the whole test.
- ☐ I budgeted my time by points: big questions get more minutes.
- ☐ I did the questions I'm sure about first and marked the rest to come back to.
- ☐ For essays, I jotted a quick outline before writing.
- ☐ If my mind went blank: breathe slowly, move to another question, write down anything related.
- ☐ I kept the last five minutes to check my answers and my name.

When it comes back

For each lost point, tick why:

Didn't know it	Misread the question	Ran out of time	Careless slip

Next time I will:

Sources: Dunlosky et al. (2013), *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 14(1), 4–58; Ramirez & Beilock (2011), *Science*, 331(6014), 211–213. If test anxiety is affecting your grades or health, your campus counseling or disability services office can help.

Study Space Check

Rate one place where you study. Then rate a second place and compare. The goal isn't a perfect room; it's knowing which place works for which kind of work.

The place: _____ Usually used for: _____

Statement	Mostly true	Sometimes	Not true
I can find everything I need within a minute of sitting down.	☐	☐	☐
The noise level works for me (or I can fix it with headphones).	☐	☐	☐
My phone can be out of reach and out of sight here.	☐	☐	☐
The light is good enough to read without straining.	☐	☐	☐
I'm comfortable, but not so comfortable that I get sleepy.	☐	☐	☐
People around me know not to interrupt, or there's nobody to interrupt.	☐	☐	☐
Only the materials for one task are in front of me.	☐	☐	☐
I can use this place at the times I actually study.	☐	☐	☐
I don't do much else here that pulls me away (gaming, TV, bed).	☐	☐	☐
I usually get more done here than I expected.	☐	☐	☐

The biggest problem here is

One change I will make this week

My best place for each kind of work

Kind of work	Best place	Second choice
Reading		
Problem sets		
Writing		
Memorizing and review		
Group work		

Good to know: memory is somewhat tied to the place you learned something, but a 2001 review of the research found the effect shrinks when people picture the original setting (Smith & Vela, *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 8(2), 203–220). If your exam is in a different room, take a moment to picture where you studied.