



Lesson #4

GETTING READY FOR CLASS

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Remember that Study Smart means you use PAT, a systematic way to study. The first step in systematic study is preparing. In this lesson you will learn how to prepare for class.

Q: Why Do I Need to Prepare?

There are two reasons why preparing is a part of successful study. The first is to eliminate competing thoughts. Our minds can only think about one thing at a time. If you think about something other than your class, then you will not pay attention, and you may miss important information. Preparing helps you focus your attention on the class and forget about other classes or things you might be doing.

Second, preparing lets you build on knowledge you already have. It is well known that we learn much more quickly and easily if we build on knowledge we have than if we learn something completely new. By preparing you can recall your knowledge and use it to build new knowledge.

Q: How Do I Prepare for Classes?

The main idea is to clear your mind and concentrate on the topic of each class. Here are some specific things you can do.

REVIEW: Look at your notes from the previous class. Read them quickly and recall the main points. In a later lesson, you will learn how to take notes so you can do this quickly and easily. For now, briefly study your notes before the teacher begins class.

QUESTION: Think of questions you have about the class. This may be something you do not understand, something that is unclear or confusing or something you would like to have more information about. You can make up these questions at home or just before class begins. But, you should look at them right before class.

PREDICT: Guess what the teacher will say in the class before it starts. You can think about topics (e.g., he will talk about imagery) and what the teacher will say about the topics (e.g., he will say that we should include imagery in our papers). You can base your prediction on your homework,

your reading and what was presented in the previous class. You can do this right before class or when you study at night.

READ: You can read ahead in your textbook or another book. Choose topics you believe the teacher will talk about. Then, while you are in class you can see if your teacher adds any new material to what you have read.

Q: When Should I Prepare?

You should prepare for every class. This will help you listen carefully and learn more. As long as you are in class, you should learn as much as you can. Most classes cover all or nearly all the material that will be on tests. So, if you can learn well in class, you will have more time for other things after school.

You can prepare best if you get to class a little early. Sit down and relax. Then, look at your notes, think about questions, predict topics and details or think about the reading you did. You do not have to do all of these to be prepared. You can do one or two.

Q: What About My Goals?

You do want to remember your goals. The standards you have set for yourself are important. Specifically, you can remind yourself how the class will help you meet your goals.

Here are some examples of how you could prepare for classes in different subjects.

Math

Think about problems worked the day before
 Look at problems in your notes
 Quickly work several problems
 Look at your homework
 Make up questions to ask about problems.

Science

Think about main topics and relate these to details
 Quickly page through your textbook looking at the topic of the day
 Think of several questions you can ask
 Work problems in your textbook
 Read notes

Language

Rehearse vocabulary
 Practice saying phrases silently
 Look at your textbook to identify the topic to be covered
 Think of questions to ask

Social Studies

- Relate current incidents to the topic you are studying
- Read notes from previous classes
- Read ahead in text
- Predict what teacher will present
- Review events, dates, places and people

English

- Read notes from previous classes
- Think about plots, themes and actions
- Review purposes of classes
- Predict what teacher will say
- Read about literature in another source

Q: How Do I Get Started?

When you begin systematic study you have to think about preparing. After you do this for a while, it will become second nature.

Now, you can prepare for each class you have before actually going to class. Try this now.

Think about each class you will have tomorrow and answer the questions below. You can use the form provided ^(4.1), if you wish.

1. What class is it?
2. What topics were presented today?
3. What were the main points?
4. What do you have questions about?
5. What will your teacher do tomorrow?

Think about these same questions when you go to class tomorrow. Do this for every class for the next two weeks. It should take about 10-15 minutes each day. Remember to think about these questions and your answers for one or two minutes just before each class begins.