



Lesson #1

SYSTEMATIC STUDY

Systematic Study is a special way to learn school subjects. It is both easy and successful. If you study systematically your grades will improve and you might actually spend less time studying. Systematic Study is smart study.

Q: Why should you use Systematic Study?

You should study systematically to make good choices about how and when you study. Most students study without thinking about how they will learn. This may mean they read their textbooks or go over notes they took in class. These students often just close their books or notes when they have finished reading or reviewing.

This is usually a poor way to study for several reasons:

1. They may not be studying the best way for a particular lesson.
2. They did not choose a specific study activity. The students just did the first activity (reading or going over notes) that came to their minds.
3. They made no attempt to see what they learned. These students did not test themselves.
4. They made no plan to be successful students.

STUDY SMART will show you how to **choose** and **plan** how you study. This will make learning easier and faster.

Q: Why do you need to learn to study?

Learning in school can be both difficult and time consuming. We are not born knowing how to do our best in school. We learn to study by listening and watching teachers, parents and friends. But, because study is private, we can't see exactly what others do or think while they study. Most of us do what seems to be best and get into the habit of always studying one way.

Psychologists have discovered that most students could learn more in less time by **changing** how they study. This means using some new study actions and

different attitudes during study. The purpose of STUDY SMART is to help you learn and use these successful study actions and attitudes.

You can think of learning to study better as similar to a carpenter with a tool box or a cook with cooking utensils. If they had just one tool - a screwdriver or a mixing spoon - their chances of success would be limited. However, if both had a complete set of tools or utensils, they would be more likely to succeed.

The same is true for studying. Students who have only one way to study will have less chance to succeed than if they have many. In STUDY SMART you will learn many ways to study so, like the good craftsman, you will have a full box of study tools.

Q: What does it take to improve study?

Improving any skill or ability takes some work and desire. The same is true with study. While we can show you more effective study skills, no one can study and learn for you. As you know, a mixing bowl does a cook no good unless it is used. The same is true of these skills. You will have to use these STUDY SMART ideas when you study.

Sometimes using new study skills may not be easy and you may find some study ideas don't work right away. If this happens, don't give up. New ideas and actions take time to learn and get used to. All the ideas, skills, activities, and attitudes presented in STUDY SMART do work.

But, you must also be willing to change what you do when you study. This will take some effort and some time. But, you will get big rewards in the future when you learn more in less time and remember it better. So, practice the skills and ideas you learn in STUDY SMART. You will find study will be easier and more successful.

Q: What will you learn about study?

First, you will learn to study systematically. This will help you think about study differently. You will use this approach to choose study skills and study times and to make study plans. We call this study approach PAT. PAT stands for **P**repare to study, **A**ct to learn, and **T**est yourself.

Second, you will learn how to use your abilities more effectively. All students can do well in school if they use their abilities well. You can learn to read faster and remember more, take good notes, listen better so you can hear test questions, improve your memory for facts and ideas, organize your time, and write better papers.

STUDY SMART has 24 lessons. You should do one or two lessons each week. After you work through a lesson, you should apply the ideas to your study for at

least one week using the practice suggestions in each lesson.

In this way you will continue to add new ways to study but also master each new skill without feeling overwhelmed. If you have problems or questions, talk to your teacher or counselor. Most people do have questions, so don't feel like you are having special problems if all these ideas don't work right away.

Q: Where do these STUDY SMART ideas come from?

We have developed these ideas from talking to successful students. These are students like you who make very good grades in school.

Successful students may appear to learn very quickly and effortlessly. Some people even believe these students do well because they are especially smart or have very high intelligence scores. But, this usually is not the reason students are successful in school.

The main difference between successful and less successful students is how and why they study. If you study like more successful students, you can be just as successful. STUDY SMART will show you how to study like the most successful students.

Q: How do you get started?

Begin by changing how you think about study. This will not be easy; but, it is a very important part of changing and improving your study.

First, we want you to learn how to study systematically. The three steps in systematic study are: **Prepare**, **Act**, and **Test**.

Prepare: This is an important part of study just as it is for athletes, travelers, and people in all occupations.

Athletes **Prepare** by stretching and warming up their muscles before they compete. They also make a game plan or strategy to use their skills. The same goes for travelers who choose a route to follow, buy tickets, make reservations, etc.

The best students **Prepare** when they study. They think about what they need to learn, they choose how to study, they select where they will study, and they decide how to determine if they were successful. **Preparing** is the first part of study; you will learn how to **Prepare** for class and home study.

Think now about how you usually begin your study. What do you do? Open a book and begin reading? Grumble to yourself about having to study? Turn the radio to your favorite station? Find your favorite program on TV? Lay down on your bed?

Act: This part of study involves using the best skills to achieve success. When you are finished with STUDY SMART, you will have many skills or study tools to choose from. Developing many skills is important. Most good students use many skills because they choose the best skills for the study task which they have been assigned.

Now, think about how you choose to study. What do you do? The first thing you think of? The only thing you know? Or, do you consider several different ways to learn, memorize, and understand?

Test: This is the part of study where you **Test** yourself to see if you learned successfully. Good students rarely rely only on teachers to **Test** them. They **Test** themselves every time they finish studying.

Now, think about how you finish studying. What do you do? Close the book and heave a sigh of relief? Be grateful you don't have to read another chapter? Fall asleep? Listen to a favorite song? Turn on the TV? Call a friend on the phone?

Q: How do you begin to improve your study?

Becoming a better student requires change. STUDY SMART will show you many ways to study differently. You may also already have some ideas of how you can change to improve your study. The best place to begin is to look carefully at what you are doing now. For the next week, keep a diary using Form 1.1 of what you do while you study. Include:

1. When you start and stop (time and date).
2. What you study.
3. What you did to **Prepare**.
4. What **Actions** you took to learn.
5. What you did to **Test** yourself.

After about a week, identify the best things you did and the things you think you should change while you study. These should include skills such as reading and note taking, attitudes such as "disorganized" and "unsystematic", mental approaches such as "bored" and "not interested", and physical states such as "tired" and "sore from athletic practice."

To analyze your own study, use Form 1.2, Study Analysis, to write your best study actions and the study actions you would change. In the next lesson, you will use this list to develop skills to **Prepare** and plan your study.



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Form 1.1
Study Diary

Subject	Date	Time Start / Stop	Prepare	Learning Actions	Test



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Form 1.2
Study Analysis

Best study actions

Study actions to change

Study I have the most trouble with