

Student Success Cheat Sheet

Writing Papers

Students too often put off a written assignment, considering it a chore too formidable to approach until the last minute. As a result, grades inevitably suffer. Writing is not a talent reserved for a select few; it is a skill that can be learned. Planning and organization are its essentials. With knowledge of these, the student can practice and improve his/her writing ability. Below is a guide to organized writing. Use this outline when writing class assignments, term papers and essay tests.

1. Introduction - Opening Paragraph

- Begin with a general statement
- Narrow it down to the main idea for the thesis statement

2. Body - - Consists of 3 Paragraphs

In each paragraph:

- Use transitions (repetition of key words and ideas) to connect paragraphs together smoothly
- Develop the topic sentence with details, definitions, illustrations, comparisons and contrasts
- Conclude the paragraph with a summary of the main idea

3. Conclusion - Finishing Paragraph

- Restate the thesis from your first paragraph in some way
- End with a general statement finalizing the points you have made in your paper

**Remember to use your Spell Check and have a friend Proof Read!
Make sure your name is on the front page with your student number.**

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Taking Effective Notes

It is important to take notes during class. Your notes help you remember what your instructor said about important concepts. Good notes also help you remember what ideas or facts your instructor stressed during his/her lecture. These are important because they will be the things that will likely be necessary for assignments and exams.

1. Before Class

- Review your notes from last class
- Formulate some questions you would like to ask
- Make sure you have pens and paper to write with

2. During Class

- Listen for and write down the main ideas
- Watch for cues from your instructor that help you know what is important
- Use abbreviations (don't try to write out every word)
- Leave spaces to fill in missing information later
- Make up your own short hand (symbols & abbreviations for words or ideas)
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand something

3. After Class

- Read over your notes and fill in missing information
- Compare notes with classmates to see if you missed anything
- Try to summarize the lecture in a paragraph
- Review your notes regularly

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Planning for Great Presentations

At some point in your school career you will be asked to make a presentation to the class, the school, or future employers. It is important to plan early so that you have plenty of time to practice. Good planning makes good presentations.

1. Before

- Think about what you need to say
- Use visual aids, stories and jokes
- Write out 3-4 main points you want to make
- Know your points inside and out
- Do not memorize your talk as it will be less interesting for your audience
- Time your presentation so you know how long it takes
- Practice in front of the mirror or on tape recorder

2. During

- Always begin by telling your audience what you are going to talk about
- Let listeners know the 3-4 main points you will discuss. This helps listeners follow what you are saying.
- Speak more slowly than you think you should. People have a tendency to speak very rapidly when they are nervous.
- Always summarize the things you said at the end of your talk
- Thank listeners for listening and ask if there are any questions. Only ask if there are questions if you are prepared to answer them.
- If you cannot answer someone's question just say so. Do not bluff or make something up. Just let the person know that you will find an answer for them as soon as possible.

