

ACTIVE STUDY

If you're going to take the time, you might as well get the most out of it.

When you study, do you just look over your notes or reread the textbook? Does your mind wander when you do this or do you fall asleep? To study more effectively, you need to be more active. When you study you should speak, write, simulate, draw, and manipulate whenever possible. This way, more different regions of your brain are engaged in the learning process.

Which of these techniques do you use? Try some other ones and see if they work for you.

Active Study Checklist

RECITE

1. ___ I describe or explain the topic out loud, in my own words.
2. ___ I record myself explaining topics and then play them back.
3. ___ I teach or explain the information to someone else.
4. ___ I role play a part.
5. ___ I simulate the lesson.

WRITE

1. ___ I make a chapter study review by writing key points on index cards.
2. ___ I make and use flashcards for short answer questions or concepts and then sort them into three piles of "Got it", "Getting it" and "Need more work." Shuffle the last two piles and repeat.
3. ___ I make lists of related information by categories.
4. ___ I draw a diagram, map, sketch, timeline, or chart from memory, and then check the book for accuracy.
5. ___ I write difficult questions I think will be on the test and recite the answers.
6. ___ I create concept maps (visual representation of ideas) to summarize the unit (webs, sequence chains, Venn diagrams).
7. ___ I use mnemonic devices to remember information.
8. ___ I rewrite class notes, rearranging the information in my own words.

VISUALIZE

1. ___ I close my eyes and picture in my mind what I am trying to remember (chart, map, event, scene, experiment, character).
2. ___ I try to remember where information is located on a page.
3. ___ I picture in my mind how I think the test will look based on previous similar tests.
4. ___ I organize and design graphic organizers to put abstract information into concrete and visual form.
5. ___ I represent concepts with symbols so I can remember them.

The Bottom Line: If you are truly studying, there should be some artifact of your efforts left that you can point to e.g. piles of sorted flash cards, handwritten copies of notes, parents who now know more about mitosis than they did before, etc.