

Guide to Self-Study

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Introduction

Self-study requires a lot of perseverance and self-discipline. One must work hard to avoid procrastination, interruptions, and simple laziness. Some of the qualities required for succeeding in self-study are: persistence, organization skills, planning and time management skills, self-discipline, and self-motivation.

For best results make a study plan, set aside a particular time and space to study and make sure you have all your study material at hand. Try to stick to your study plan as best as you can. Do not put off your study for later or another day otherwise you'll never get it done in time. Make studying your top priority (along with other necessary duties) and get these done with first before doing secondary tasks or unnecessary things.

In the first few days or weeks of your course, you'll find yourself unable to study much. This is completely normal. But you'll need to be persistent and make yourself do the required daily portion. After you get used to studying, you'll find it much easier and even interesting. Discussing what you learned with others

can make the coursework more interesting and beneficial. Not only will you be sharing important information but you'll also retain the material better.

Study plan

A study plan is very important to your success. Plan your study sessions so that you are best able to take advantage of the time allotted and are able to complete the course in time. One way to do this is by noting the total number of pages in a course and then deciding how many pages to study daily in order to complete the coursework in time. For example, if you need to complete a course in 6 months and there are 5 books you need to study, that means you'll have to complete each book in roughly 1 month. If a course has 250 pages and you plan to complete the course in four weeks, it means you'll need to study around 65 pages per week or 10 – 15 pages daily. If a course has 8 exams and you need to finish it in two months, you'll need to study the required material to do one exam every week. If each exam covers 1 unit and each unit contains 3 chapters, it means you'll need to study a chapter every two days.

By checking the time you have for the course and then deciding how much you have to study every month, how much you have to complete every week, the

number of pages you have to study daily and how many hours you need to complete your daily requirement, you can plan your work more efficiently and avoid disappointments.

At the end of the self-study guide, you are provided with a sample calendar you can use to organize your study time. On the website you will also be given a similar calendar at the start of each semester. The online calendar is not only a study schedule but also contains links to the required study material and / or suggested reading material. The provided calendars are only suggested study plans and you can opt to study in a different manner. For example, on the calendar each subject is allotted the time required for studying the whole course and the next course is not begun until the first is finished. However, you may opt to study multiple courses side by side.

If you decide to use a different plan than the one given, make sure you schedule your work so that all the courses you're studying together are finished by the time the last assignment in the group is due.

The suggested time may be longer than you need to finish any course. In that case, go at your own pace, giving yourself some time for extra breaks if needed, but try not to exceed the time allotted for each course. Otherwise, you may not be able to complete the required coursework necessary for completing the semester. You can also use the extra time to revise the material.

When making a study plan, give yourself plenty of room for breaks as well as unforeseen interruptions. You should take a one or two day break each week. On this day, avoid studying altogether. This will ensure your mind remains fresh and you don't suffer from burnout.

Timeout from study can't be stressed enough. You should allow yourself short breaks during each study session. Try to take a short ten to twenty minute break after every 30 to 40 minutes of study. You may also opt to study for several short durations (30 to 60 minutes study sessions several times a day) instead of one long stretch of 3 or 4 hours of study. Such short study sessions are not only more efficient but also more practical for the busy individual who has other obligations. So, for example, you may put in 40 minutes of study before going to work, another half-hour of study during lunch break, an hour of

study before dinner time, and a couple of hours after everyone else is asleep. If you're a stay-at-home-mom, you may decide to study an hour in the morning after the children have gone to school, an hour before they return, and an hour after they've gone to bed.

Tips for Making Your Learning More Efficient

You can use various techniques to improve the efficiency of your study. This means that you retain more material with less effort. There are various techniques you can use. In addition to using acronyms, word games, mnemonics, etc., you should pay attention to your study style and what works best for you. Some people study better from reading texts while others require a lecture. Still others learn better through practical work. Some study better alone while others do better in groups. Some learn more from discussion and teaching the material to others. Know what works best for you and use the technique that improves attentiveness to study.

Different Learning Styles:

What's the best way to study?

We all like to learn in different ways. There are basically three types of learning. Click each type below to find out the techniques that will work best for your learning style.

Listening - Some people learn by listening. If this is you, you're an auditory learner. You learn best when studying in groups, reciting concepts out loud when studying alone, phrasing concepts in your own words, and "teaching" the information to a friend or family member.

Reading - Some people learn by reading. If this is you, you're a visual learner. You learn best by reading text and viewing charts, maps, and other graphics. You should take notes when completing hands-on activities.

Doing - Some people learn by doing. If this is you, you're a kinesthetic learner. You learn best through active reading, by highlighting text as you read and

taking notes as you listen, by making and using flash cards, and by finding hands-on ways to apply what you've learned.

No learning style is better than another. You might use only one method, or you might use a combination of methods.

Knowing how you learn will help you identify the study strategies that work best for you. (What's the best way to study? *Hit the Ground Running*, Penn Foster College, 2013)

To find out your learning style, do the following [assessment](#):

Some things you can do to help you retain what you study:

- Reading the text aloud
- Reading into a tape recorder and then listening to the material
- Taking notes, summarizing the material in your own words and using it to retain the material
- Testing yourself after short periods of study
- Using flash cards
- Discussing the material with a study partner or family member
- Doing practical work

When studying, remember you don't have to memorize the whole book. Most exam questions are related to material associated with chapter and section headings (that is, any bold headings in the chapter). Studying the section with the heading in mind (and searching for material related to the heading) will ensure you retain important material and also make your reading active reading, thereby making the reading more interesting and not boring.

To help you with this, change section / chapter headings to questions and look for answers to the questions. For example, if the heading is Philosophy and

Islamic Philosophy, your questions may be 'what is philosophy?' what is Islamic philosophy?' 'What is the difference between general philosophy and Islamic philosophy?' 'How are the two different?' etc.

SQR3 Technique of Studying

You can also use the SQR3 technique when you study. SQR3 stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. Studying in this manner will make you become an active reader instead of being a passive reader. Active readers find the material more interesting and also retain the material more. SQR3 has been used for decades by college students and academicians and is proven to provide positive results.

Below is a brief explanation of SQR3:

Survey - Survey the material by quickly looking through it to get familiar with what you'll learn. Look at features such as the titles and headings, photos and graphics, vocabulary words and other highlighted information, quiz questions, and summaries.

Question -Question a section's title. This just means turning each section title into a question to help direct your reading and your thinking.

Read -Read one section at a time, setting your own pace. Highlight important points, take notes, and look up words you don't understand.

Recite -Recite the headings and main points you've just read. You can do this silently or out loud. You can do this from memory or by referring to your notes. If you have trouble reciting this information, reread the section to help you understand the concepts.

Review - Review your lesson materials to keep the information fresh in your mind. Try reviewing a section and the notes and questions you created for that section. A good tip is to review your lesson materials before taking a self-check, and again before taking an exam. (Do you have any study tips?, *Hit The Ground to Success*, Penn Foster College, 2013)

Sample Study Calendar:

Semester 1:

March 2014

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Guide to self-study	16 Guide to self-study	17 Guide to self-study	18 Guide to self-study	19 Quran's Miraculous Nature	20 Quran's Miraculous Nature	21 BREAK
22 Quran's Miraculous Nature	23 Quran's Miraculous Nature	24 Quran's Miraculous Nature	25 Philosophy & Islamic Philosophy	26 Philosophy & Islamic Philosophy	27 Philosophy & Islamic Philosophy	28 BREAK
29 Essentials of Islam Part 1	30 Essentials of Islam Part 1	31 Essentials of Islam Part 1				

April

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 Essentials of Islam Part 1	2 Essentials of Islam Part 1	3 Essentials of Islam Part 1	4 BREAK
5 Essentials of Islam Part 1	6 Essentials of Islam Part 1	7 Essentials of Islam Part 1	8 Essentials of Islam Part 1	9 Tafsir	10 Tafsir	11 BREAK
12 Tafsir	13 Tafsir	14 Tafsir	15 Tafsir	16 Tafsir	17 Tafsir	18 BREAK
19 Tafsir	20 Tafsir	21 Tafsir	22 Tafsir	23 Surah Memorization	24 Surah Memorization	25 BREAK
26 Surah Memorization	27 Surah Memorization	28 Surah Memorization	29 Surah Memorization	30 Surah Memorization		

May

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
					1 Uloom UI Quran	2 BREAK
3 Uloom UI Quran	4 Uloom UI Quran	5 Uloom UI Quran	6 Uloom UI Quran	7 Uloom UI Quran	8 Uloom UI Quran	9 BREAK
10 Quran & Science	11 Quran & Science	12 Quran & Science	13 Quran & Science	14 Quran & Science	15 Quran & Science	16 BREAK
17 English composition	18 English composition	19 English composition	20 English composition	21 English composition	22 English composition	23 BREAK
24 Arabic	25 Arabic	26 Arabic	27 Arabic	28 Arabic	29 Arabic	30 BREAK
31 Arabic						

June

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 REVISION	2 REVISION	3 REVISION	4 BREAK	5 SHORT EXAM*	6 BREAK
7 BREAK	8 BREAK	9 BREAK	10 BREAK	11 BREAK	12 BREAK	13 BREAK
14 SEMESTER 2	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

*note: the end of semester exam is a mini-exam to test your learning. You will have a full exam in all the subjects studied at the end of the year. This ensures that time isn't wasted in-between while also allowing the student to learn the material well by revising it at the end of the year.

Questions for Review:

1. What are some of the skills and qualities required for succeeding in self-study course?
2. What are some things you can do to make your study more efficient?
3. What are some different learning styles?
4. What is the difference between active reading and passive reading?
5. SQ3R stands for _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
6. Briefly discuss SQ3R.

True or False:

1. You should stick to the study plan provided by the college in the study calendar.
2. All people study in the same manner.
3. A study plan is not necessary for success.
4. For best results, you should set a time and place for your study.
5. Active reading is better than passive reading.