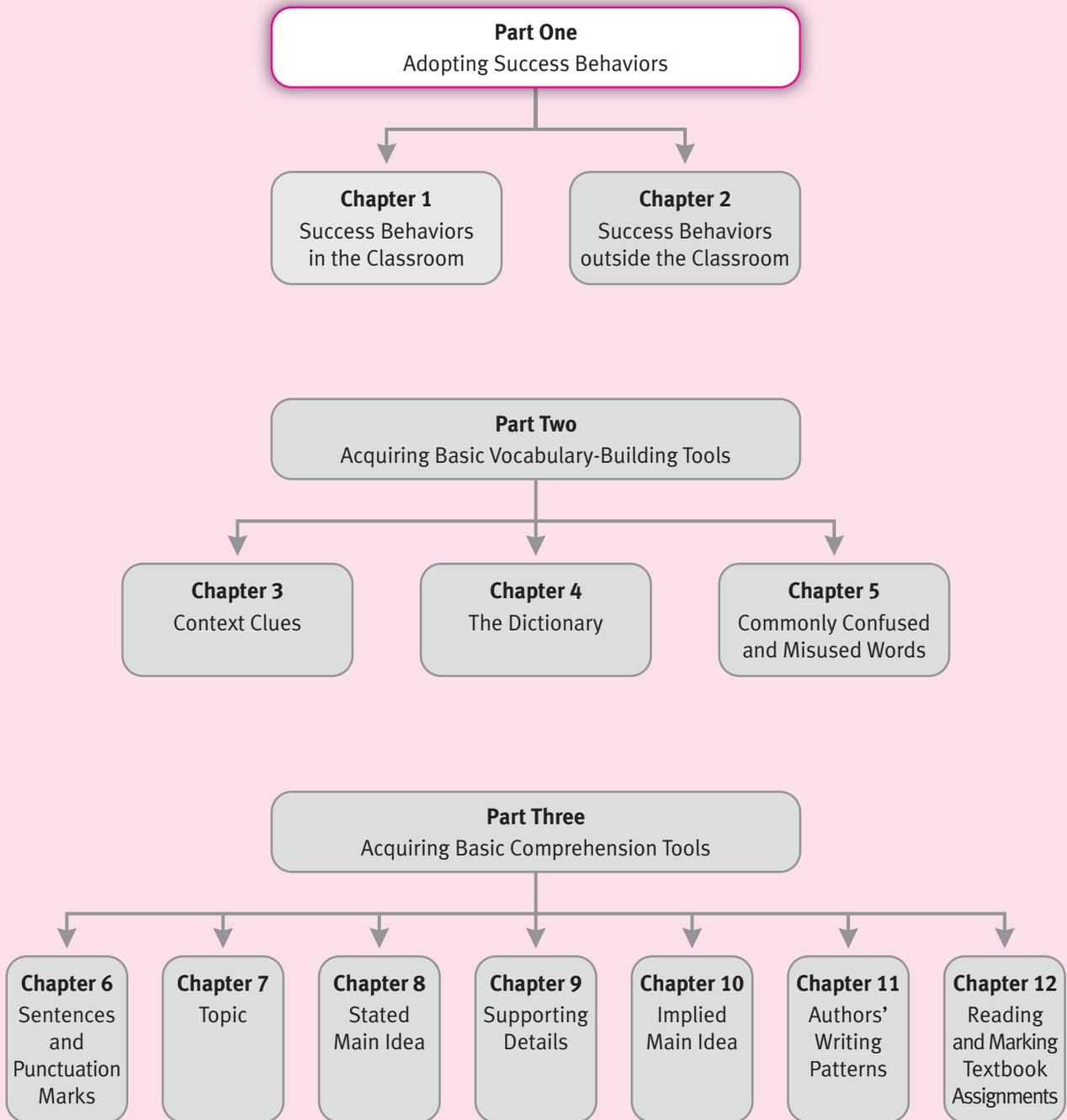


Map of Chapters



WELCOME TO PART ONE

Adopting Success Behaviors

It's been said that you are what you repeatedly do. In other words, you are your behaviors. *Behaviors* is another word for your actions. Behaviors that you repeatedly do become habits. Ultimately, your habits will make or break you. That's why it's so important for you to equip yourself with success strategies from the first day of the semester and to use them consistently until they become habits.

Part One of *Entryways* consists of two chapters to help you do exactly that: adopt behaviors that can “make” you as a student.

- Chapter 1 focuses on classroom behaviors that lead to success. These simple actions can dramatically improve the amount you learn and how favorably you are perceived by your instructors and classmates.
- Chapter 2 focuses on out-of-class behaviors that will boost your learning and foster success.

From these two chapters, you'll gain useful information as well as confidence. After all, if you do the things successful students do, you will become more successful yourself.

If you have attended college before, you may see some strategies that are familiar. Good! That should be reassuring. If you are new to college, you will learn how to get off to a good start and how to maintain that positive momentum.

A philosopher once said, “Well begun is half done.” He meant that getting off to a good start can take you a long way toward success. Does it really matter whether you get off to a good start in college? The answer is yes, absolutely! Randy Moore of the University of Minnesota investigated the importance of a good start for students enrolled in developmental courses.¹ He was particularly interested in these students because they are less well prepared for college than other students. Also, there are lots of them! About one-third of U.S. students have to take at least one year of developmental courses when they start college.

Moore's research revealed four factors strongly associated with successful completion of college:

- first-semester grade point averages (GPAs)
- first-year grade point averages
- class attendance and active participation

It was clear that students who got off to a good start were much more likely to continue to do well and, ultimately, to graduate. Students who earned first-semester

¹Randy Moore, “The Importance of a Good Start,” in I. M. Duranczyk, J. L. Higbee, and D. B. Lundell, eds., *Best Practices for Access and Retention in Higher Education*, Minneapolis, MN: The Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, General College, University of Minnesota, 2004, pp. 115–123.

GPA's higher than 2.0 also earned second-semester GPA's above 2.0; that is, they continued to do well in their second semester. Unfortunately, the opposite was also true. Students with a shaky start were likely to continue to have problems.

Moore urges students to strive for first-semester and first-year GPA's of at least 3.0. He warns that students who seek GPA's of only 2.0 (rather than higher) are likely to see their GPA's eventually drop. The bottom line is this: The higher a student's first-year GPA, the more likely the person is to graduate from college.

With regard to class attendance, Moore found that students' first-semester GPA's were strongly associated with class attendance. Moreover, he reports that "developmental education students who attend all of their classes usually make significantly higher grades than students who skip class." As two other researchers put it, "Nothing replaces being present in class."

Moore offers additional suggestions to help students succeed. He urges students to attend orientation sessions that colleges and universities offer to new students. He urges them to meet with academic advisors. He points out that if students want to remain in college and enjoy the choices and economic rewards of being college graduates, they must adopt certain academic behaviors: They must attend class and be more engaged with their education.

Finally, Moore feels that students need to have realistic expectations about what college will demand of them. They need to know that college is a challenge and requires dedication. Many first-year students do not know this. If they made adequate or better grades in high school with very little work, they are shocked when college turns out to be so different. Worse, they get off to a bad start because they discover their mistake too late. Moore concludes, "Developmental education students should be warned that their success will depend largely on their motivation and willingness to work hard." He states bluntly that students who are not motivated enough to work hard are not likely to succeed.

The purpose of telling you about Professor Moore's research is not to frighten you. It is intended to do the opposite: to let you know that your success is largely in your own hands. *You* control your motivation, attitude, and effort.

In Part One of *Entryways*, you will learn commonsense strategies that will enable you to build a foundation for success in class and out of class. The trick, of course, is to use the strategies. That requires self-discipline. *Discipline* has been defined as "remembering what you really want." That's a wonderful definition. Goals take time to achieve, and they require effort and sacrifice along the way. However, if those goals are something you really want, you will find it easier to stay committed to achieving them.

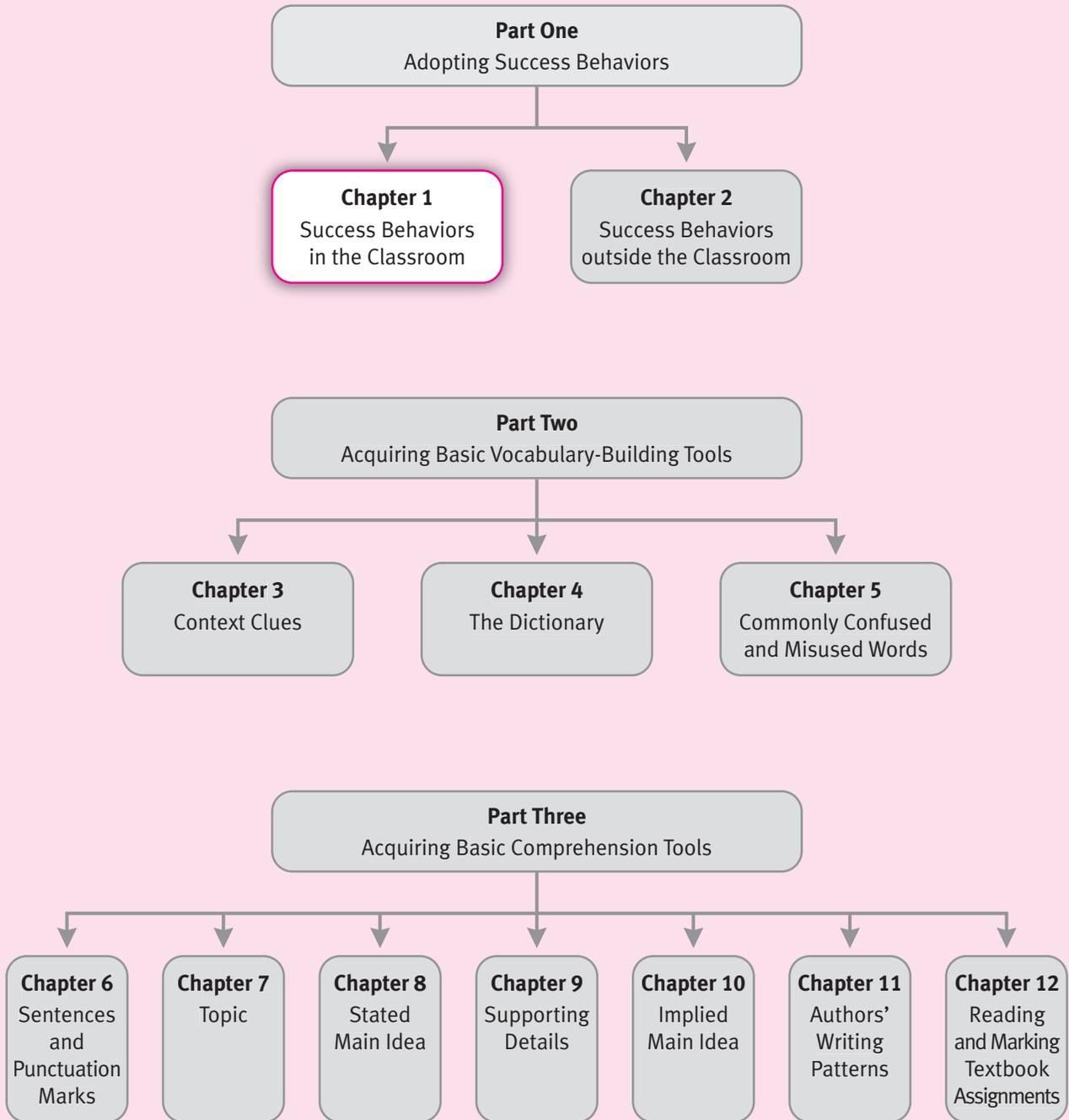
As you move through the semester and through this book, you will be reminded to look back at these two chapters. Check to see if you are using the strategies, if you need to use one more consistently, or if you need to add one. It's never too late to become a better student.

Best wishes as you begin an exciting journey!

Since students will be using *Entryways* all semester, ask them to preview the book at home: the table of contents, special features, appendixes, etc., as well as the chapter format and features. (The parts of the preview process are listed in Chapter 12, pages 383–87. Have them turn to those pages.) Spend a few minutes of the following class period going over the process with them.

The chapter on reading text assignments is placed near the end of the book because in order to comprehend their textbooks, students first need the basic vocabulary and comprehension skills in the preceding chapters. They are always welcome to look ahead, of course, but Chapter 12 will make much more sense once they have completed the chapters that come before it.

Map of Chapters



CHAPTER 1

Success Behaviors in the Classroom

Behave Your Way to Success

Why You Need to Know the Information in This Chapter

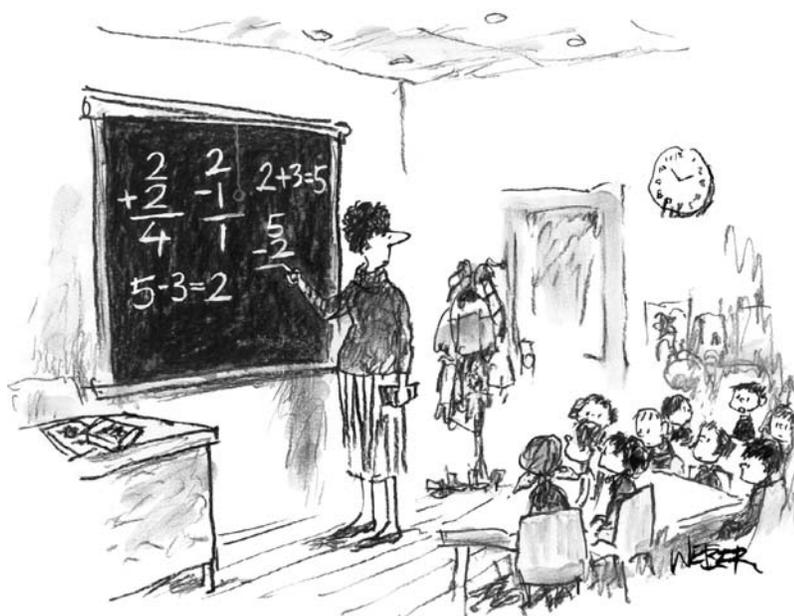
This chapter pairs nicely with Reading Selection 1, “The Courage to Learn,” and “Why Do I Need to Take This Course?” (ORL, Small Bite #1). Other related text and ORL reading selections and material are noted so that you may choose what best meets your students’ needs. For a complete, cross-referenced list, see “Related Text and ORL Reading Selections” (chart in ORL—Instructor Center, General Resources).

You’ve probably already spent several years in school and countless hours in class. Were you as successful as you wanted to be? If not, there *is* a solution. If you know and use certain behaviors, you can be more successful in any college classroom. This chapter explains those behaviors.

Using these classroom behaviors consistently will help you

- feel more comfortable that you fit in and belong
- increase your teachers’ and your classmates’ respect for you
- enhance your confidence and self-respect
- get the most out of the time you spend in class each week

Have students turn to the inside front cover of the text. Give them a minute to fill in the important information. If they leave their book in the classroom or lose it, the person who finds it will know how to locate the student or you, the instructor. In either case, students are much more likely to get their books back. (For this reason, they should jot the same information in the front of all of their textbooks.) Also, it’s handy for students to have your contact information readily available. New-to-college students may object to writing in their books. Remind them that this is college, and they will probably be writing and marking in every chapter of all of their books. If they are concerned about selling their book back to a bookstore at the end of the semester, remind them that books are considered “used” whether they have been written in or not.



"Please, Ms. Sweeney, may I ask where you're going with all this?"

Source: Copyright © *The New Yorker Collection*, 2001, Robert Weber from cartoonbank.com. All rights reserved.

Super Student Tips

Here are tips from other students who have been successful in college classes like the one you're taking now. Here's what experience has taught them:



"In high school I always sat at the back of the room. In my first college class, I ended up near the front. It felt real strange at first, but I got used to it. It made me pay more attention, so I learned more. Now I try to sit near the front of the room in all my classes."—*Tamika*

"My first semester in college I cut class a lot. I caused myself a lot of stress and hassle. Now I try to make every class."—*Eduardo*

"I was embarrassed that I was always walking in late, so I set my watch a few minutes ahead. I also leave for school about 15 minutes earlier than I used to. Problem solved!"—*Adrienne*

"Keep all your handouts from every class in a ring-binder notebook. Buy a small hole punch that you can keep with you. Divide your notebook into sections. If you get off to an organized start, it makes all the difference."—*Jesse*

"I thought if I asked a question, I'd look dumb. Instead, most instructors are glad you ask questions."—*Francisco*

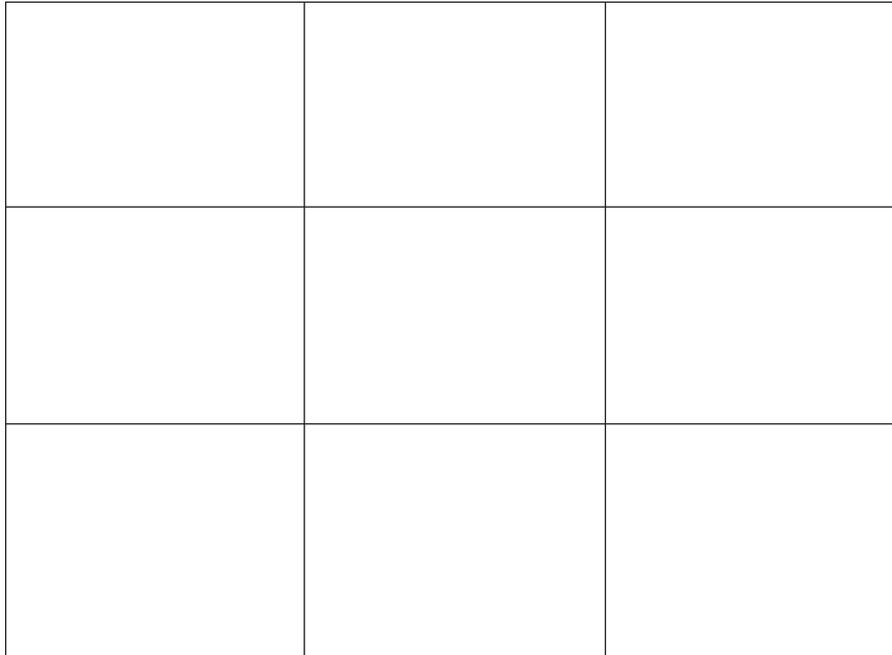
"There was this guy in my math class who was always making rude comments under his breath. He thought he was being funny, but all it did was annoy everyone who had to sit near him. He never did get it."—*Ashley*

"I took a public speaking class. It helped me feel more confident about speaking up in class and giving presentations."—*Tran*

Jumpstart Your Brain!

Before you begin the chapter, get yourself ready to think. Stand up or stretch. Better yet, stand up *and* stretch. Take a couple of deep breaths. These simple actions get oxygen to your brain, and your brain loves oxygen! Then jumpstart your brain—give it renewed energy—by solving this brainteaser: How many rectangles are there in the design below? Good luck!

There may be more than you think! (Remember that a rectangle has four sides. A square is a type of rectangle that has four equal sides.)



Brain research indicates that it is the process of attempting to solve problems that causes brain growth, and *not* whether or not a person gets the right answer. For this reason, students will benefit from the Jumpstart activities at the beginning of each chapter. These activities present various kinds of problems to solve—ones that involve words, numbers, and designs. They are fun, and they appeal to and capitalize on multiple intelligences. This means that even students who are not good readers can still be successful with them. Since they provide opportunities for collaboration, they illustrate to students that “all of us are smarter than any one of us.” You can have students try them at home and then compare their answers in class, or you can have students use the first few minutes of class for them, working independently or in groups. They are an excellent change of pace activity.

Can you figure out how many rectangles there are in this design?

Write your answer here: _____ **36** _____

Compare your answer to your classmates’ answers. Explain to each other how you went about solving the puzzle.

Let students explain to each other how they approached this puzzle. Ask for the totals they came up with. Assign them to work in groups of 3–4, and to arrive at a total as a group. Ask for the total each group came up with. Invariably, groups find more rectangles than individual students do. Point this out to them. Equally important, ask students how they *felt* when they were working alone. You will typically get answers such as “frustrated,” “isolated,” and “unsure.” Ask students how they felt when they worked in groups. You’re likely to get responses such as “less frustrated,” “supported,” “excited,” etc. By the way, students often overlook the one large rectangle (the perimeter) when counting rectangles. A helpful approach—after the class discussion is finished and if there is any controversy—is to have them count single “boxes” (9), rectangles composed of two boxes (6), three boxes (6), four boxes (4), six boxes (4), and twelve boxes (1):
 $9 + 12 + 6 + 4 + 4 + 1 = 36$.

LOOKING AT WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW



You started learning the day you were born. Your brain did it automatically. No one, however, is born knowing how to be a good student. Happily, it's something you can learn.

Maybe you finished high school or earned a GED. Maybe not. Either way, you already know some things that can make students more successful in class. Take a minute to list at least five behaviors that you think would make you more successful in *class*. Focus specifically on behaviors that could help you be successful in *this* class. Write them in the space that follows.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now that you have finished your list, compare it with three or four of your classmates' lists. In small groups, decide on the five most important behaviors for success in class. When all of the groups are finished, share your lists. Then decide as a class on the top five success behaviors. Jot down the class's final list on scratch paper. You will need it later for the My Toolbox section of the chapter.

Have students compare their responses in small groups. The groups should then process their responses as a class. Accept all responses without comment or judgment (without changing the wording or "improving" any answer), and record them on the board or on a transparency as the groups give them. Allow students to add, modify, or delete items until they reach consensus. They should pay special attention to behaviors that appear on more than one group's list, even though the wording varies. Read the final list aloud without commenting on the items. If students would like to rank the items, accept the order they decide on. (Allowing students to make decisions whenever possible gives them a sense of control.) Have them copy the final list because they will need the information later for the My Toolbox section that appears on page 25. This "no-fail" class activity taps into students' existing schemata. It gets ideas going, and it gets students working together from the beginning. It also demonstrates to them that they each have something to contribute. It's also a good idea to post the class's final list.

Success Behaviors in the Classroom

(1) Notice that whenever possible statements are worded positively (“Do this” rather than “Don’t do this”) because the brain comprehends them more easily than negative ones. (“Please stand up” is easier to comprehend than “Please don’t remain seated.”) Try this in your own teaching. (2) Take the opportunity to point out how a chapter’s title and headings can give readers the big picture, a preview of what the chapter will be about. (3) You may want students to mark or keep a list of words that are new or confusing to them. (4) Point out the Brain-Friendly Tips boxes, which have to do with making learning easier, and the Bonus Tips, which provide supplemental information. (5) See the Chapter 1 Teaching Tips, Instructor ORL.

You don’t have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great.

—Joe Sabah

We first make our habits, and then our habits make us.

—John Dryden

A comedian once joked, “I made straight As in school. Of course, my Bs were a little crooked . . .” Like all college students, you want to do well in college and make good grades. This book can help you achieve that.

If you are new to college, this chapter and the next one will be especially important for you. Even if you attended college in the past, you will still learn new things. Also, these chapters will confirm the things you are already doing right. So whether you are new to college or are a returning student, read on! (Be sure to read the Brain-Friendly Tips and Bonus Tips that appear in the boxes. They’re there to help you learn faster and more easily and to provide pointers and extra information.)



BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIPS

1. Before you read any chapter, look through it to see what it contains. Look at the title, headings, and words in bold print. This gets your brain ready to read.
2. If the chapter seems too long to read all at once, divide it into smaller parts. Place sticky notes or paperclips at logical breaks. Then read one section at a time, spreading the assignment over several shorter study sessions.
3. Find your learning style below. (See “Identifying Your Learning Style,” pages xxix–xxxiv.) Throughout this book, use the tips that make learning easier for you:

Auditory learners: Before you read the chapter, read aloud the chapter title and the headings. To help

you understand and remember the material, try reading the chapter sections out loud.

Visual learners: Look at (read) the chapter title and headings before you begin reading the chapter. Pay special attention to words and sentences in bold print and italics.

Visual-spatial learners: Make sketches or doodles in the margin to remind you what each section is about.

Tactile-kinesthetic learners: Make sketches or doodles in the margin to remind you what each section is about. You may also find it helpful to move as you read. (Tap a hand or foot, chew gum, or even pace slowly back and forth as you read.)

The Big Picture for This Chapter

This chapter focuses on *classroom* behaviors that can help you succeed. All of them are common sense. They are not difficult, although they do require self-discipline. The key is doing them consistently. They will not only make you more successful, they will cause you to feel increasingly proud of yourself. (In Chapter 2, you will learn about behaviors outside of class that contribute to your academic success.)



BONUS TIP

The time you spend in class should be the *easiest* part of each course. You have an instructor, an expert, who is there to help you, guide you, and answer questions. Equally helpful, you have classmates you can work with.

Starting college, or even a new semester, is the perfect time to change any behaviors that limit your success. You can replace bad habits and attitudes with positive ones. In about three weeks' time, you can "lose" bad habits simply by not doing them!

In literature, there are many famous stories about people who pretend to be something they aren't and then actually become what they pretended to be. One such story is by the writer O. Henry. In the story, a young man who intends to help with a bank robbery poses as a policeman. He stands in a uniform outside the bank all day. The bank customers greet him and treat him with respect. *Because he is behaving like a police officer, he begins to feel like a real police officer. Then he begins to act that way.* When his partner arrives to rob the bank, the young man chases him away and prevents the robbery. Why? It was

because he enjoyed the way he felt when he was acting like a police officer. Because other people respected him, he had more respect for himself. He started out playing a role, but after a while it began to feel natural. Something similar happens when students go through the motions of being an effective student: *They become effective students.*

Phil McGraw is a psychologist, best-selling author, and popular talk-show host. "Dr. Phil" always advises people to "behave their way to success." This is because repeated behaviors become habits. *When you repeatedly do the things successful people do, you become more successful.* It's only logical that if you do the same things that successful students do, you will become a more successful student.

Now read the rest of this chapter to see how your class's list of success behaviors compares with the six success behaviors discussed here. Did you and your classmates identify some of the same behaviors? Are there differences?



BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIP

When you come to the end of each *section* in a textbook chapter, try the appropriate learning-style strategy to get the most from what you just read:

- *Auditory learners:* Try to say out loud in your own words what you just read.
- *Visual and visual-spatial learners:* Pick out what seem to be the most important sentences or ideas, and mark them. Create one or more pictures in your mind or sketches in the margin to help you remember what you read.

Six Behaviors for Success in Class

Here are six classroom behaviors that can make you a more successful, effective, and relaxed learner:

- Read and understand the syllabus.
- Be in class on time, every time.
- Learn your instructor's name and your classmates' names.
- Sit in the right place.
- Come prepared for class, and participate.
- Be polite and use appropriate language.

Let's look at specific information about each success behavior.

1. Read and understand the syllabus.

In college, instructors typically hand out a syllabus during the first week of class. A **syllabus** describes a course, its requirements, and other important information you need to know about it. It is also called a *course description*. Every syllabus tells

- who the instructor is and how to contact that person
- what you will study in the course
- the textbook and other materials you will need (such as a supplemental manual, a computer disk, or index cards)
- the course requirements and how your grade will be determined
- policies about attendance, missed assignments, tardiness, and makeup work
- information about tests and quizzes

Most instructors discuss the syllabus in class. If your instructor goes over the syllabus, tune in and listen carefully. If there is anything you do not understand, ask! Understanding the syllabus is the first in-class success behavior, and it is an important one.

Not all college instructors go over the syllabus in class. They expect you to read it carefully on your own. Some students, however, merely glance at the syllabus. They throw it away or shove it into their notebook, and they never look at it again. This is a big mistake. The syllabus is your course guidebook. Read it. Ask your instructor about anything you do not understand. Your instructor will be

Students are always interested in "school-real world" connections.

Download and duplicate the "Syllabus Quiz" (ORL—Instructor Center).



BONUS TIP

A syllabus may also include

- a week-by-week overview of the topics you will study
- specific test dates
- information about papers and projects, and when they are due
- other important information about the course (such as related computer instruction or required supplemental instruction, exit testing, etc.)
- information about the college support services (such as a tutoring center or counseling services)

www.mhhe.com/entryways

To explore how these behaviors fit with work, see "Making Career Connections" (writing activity).

Mention that the plural of syllabus is syllabi.

impressed that you care. Keep the syllabus in your notebook or other safe place so that you can refer to it during the semester.

Not knowing what’s in the syllabus is not an excuse for asking for special treatment. (“But I didn’t know that late assignments lose ten points each day!”) You will make a good impression on your instructor if you know what is in the syllabus. Read the syllabus. Make a good impression!



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.1

Select any of the following items you want students to respond to. You may want them to highlight the specific questions they are to answer. You may prefer to have them respond on notebook paper.

- Did you receive a syllabus in this course? If so, did your instructor go over it in class? Did you listen carefully and ask questions about anything you did not understand?

- If your instructor expected you to read the syllabus on your own outside of class, did you? If not, why not?

- If you received a syllabus, what major topics are included in it?

- If you did not receive a syllabus, your instructor probably explained the course requirements. What do you recall of the important course information?

Chapter 12 deals with handling textbook assignments, but it’s helpful have students survey their text now. Download and duplicate “Previewing Your Textbook (ORL—Instructor Center, Chapter 1). This is a good collaborative activity.

If you have not yet read the course syllabus for each of your classes, set aside time today or tomorrow to read them. They’re like road maps for a course. They’re important.

2. Be in class on time, every time.

Have students read “Characteristics of A, B, and C Students” on the Student ORL.

Attend every class session, and be on time. This is a key behavior for success in college. Instructors really do notice who is present and who is not. They also notice who comes in late or leaves early.

Let’s be practical. Someone has paid tuition for you to attend college: your parents, your employer, or you. It makes no sense to pay for something and not get your money’s worth. Try not to miss even a day of the instruction you paid for.

Some professors excuse an absence only if you bring a doctor’s note, proof that you were in court or on jury duty, and so forth. Other



BONUS TIPS

There are times when you should make a special effort not to miss class. In particular,

- **Be there the first day and the first week of class.** That's when teachers go over the syllabus, explain important class procedures, have class members introduce themselves, and so forth.
- **Be at every class the first few weeks of the semester.** During this crucial time, you are developing the foundation for the rest of the semester.
- **Be there the class session before a test.** That's usually when teachers explain the type of test and the material that will be covered on it. They may even review the class for the test.
- **By all means, be there on test days and on days when major assignments are due.** Being absent on those days looks bad. It can leave your instructor with a negative impression.

professors may allow you a certain number of absences, and you do not have to give a reason. Don't use any "allowed absences" if you don't absolutely have to. Save them in case you have an illness or a real emergency. Your course grade may be affected by each absence beyond the number allowed. Be sure you know the policy of each of your instructors. The bottom line: Strive for *perfect* attendance, even if your instructor permits a certain number of absences. Most instructors acknowledge that if a student is on the borderline between two grades, they usually give the higher grade if the person has had excellent attendance.

In most courses, you are in class only three hours a week. That means that every class session is important. Class sessions prepare you to do the homework assignments. They give you feedback. They surround you with help in the form of your instructor and your classmates.

There will be times, of course, when you can't make it to class. You are ill. Your car doesn't start. The bus doesn't arrive on time. However, having a hangover, sleeping in, or just blowing off class are not good reasons for being absent. Besides, it's always harder to find out what you missed in class and catch up than it is to be there.

If you are absent twice in a row, call or email your instructor. Let him or her know what your situation is and when you will return to class. If you do not know what the most recent assignment is, ask. You can also ask a classmate if that feels more comfortable. The point is, whenever you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what the assignment is and then *do* it. Unlike high school teachers, college professors expect you to have the assignment ready the day you return to class.

Did you know that a student's attendance and final course grade are related? Research shows that top students have perfect or nearly perfect attendance. The pattern is clear: The greater the number of absences, the lower a student's final course grade tends to be. Fortunately, attendance is usually something you can control.

Let's talk a bit about being on time. Perhaps you've heard this joke:

Professor: You should have been here at nine o'clock!

Student: Why? What happened?

Or this joke:

Linn: How come you're always late to this class?

Pat: Lots of people have trouble making it to an eight o'clock class.

Linn: Yes, but this is a night class.

With regard to success behavior in number 3, page 17, give students tools to help them learn each other's names (memory pegs, association, etc.). Hand out 5x8 index cards and have students make tent-style name cards; they are a boon to visual learners. You can demonstrate the power of oral repetition by having each student introduce himself or herself after repeating the names of those who have gone before. It's effective because each person keeps silently "rehearsing" since his or her turn is coming. Be the last one to repeat the names—see if you can give the first name of every student. (They'll help you out if you get stuck!) You can also have students fill out a class roster with phone numbers. Make copies and distribute them. (See the ORL Instructor Center, Chapter 1 for name card directions and a blank roster form.) Some instructors use a digital camera to create a class photo that they and the students can use.

Or this one:

Student: I'm making progress. This is the earliest I've ever been late.

Kidding aside, being on time to class is important. Some students, though, sign up for early classes when they really aren't "morning people." Many students underestimate the amount of time it takes to get to campus. Some are always late because they didn't think about the bus schedule or traffic jams when they registered. Some evening students don't allow enough time to get from work to class. All of these students need to leave earlier for campus or else sign up for classes that meet at later times. Being chronically late isn't okay.

In fact, walking in late, especially if you do it repeatedly, is rude. It distracts your classmates and the instructor. It also puts you behind. Think about the kinds of things that happen at the beginning of class. Instructors take attendance, and some teachers mark you absent if you are not there when they take attendance. Instructors collect the homework or go over the answers. Some instructors give a brief overview of the day's lesson. They make other important announcements. Some give pop quizzes. Whenever you enter the classroom late, someone has to stop and catch you up, or else you have to sit there and try to figure out what's going on. Neither is a good thing.

So make it a habit to be on time to class. If you do happen to be late, don't "make an entrance." Enter quietly. Don't ask classmates what's going on or what has happened so far. That interferes with their learning. Wait until after class to ask a classmate or the instructor what you missed at the beginning. And it's always courteous to apologize to the instructor for being late.

By the way, it's important to stay for the entire class. Leaving early is just as bad as arriving late.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.2

- Have you had good school attendance in the past? If not, are you willing to make a commitment to be at every class session? If not, why did you enroll? _____

- Are you usually on time? If so, terrific! If not, what do you need to do differently? _____

- Describe your plans for your attendance and punctuality in this class.

3. Learn your instructor's name and your classmates' names.

Want to know a simple way to enjoy class and learn more? Learn the names of your instructors and classmates. Even if you cannot learn everyone's name, learn as many as you can. After the first couple of class sessions, exchange names and phone numbers with a few of them. If you are ever confused about an assignment, you will know some classmates you can check with. Of course, you could also contact your instructor. You may also want to form a study group with a few classmates. (Study groups are discussed in Chapter 2.)



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.3

At this point, do you know the name of any classmates? Take a few minutes to exchange names and phone numbers with at least three of them. Also find out the time when you're most likely to be able to reach them by phone. Write this information here:

	Name	Phone Number	Best Time to Call
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

(1) One benefit of cooperative learning is that because the composition of the groups changes, students are not always sitting in the same place at every class session. This literal change of perspective is brain-friendly. (See the ORL Instructor Center, General Resources, Grouping Techniques, for creative ways to form groups.) (2) If you assign seats, periodically rotate students (perhaps every 3 weeks in a 15-week semester. Warning: Students may groan, so explain the brain benefits. Also, it ensures that everyone sits in one of the "good seats" at some point during the semester.) (3) It also benefits students if you do not always speak from the same place in the room. Sit, stand, and speak from different places in the room.

4. Sit in the right place.

In the real estate business, there is an old saying that "the three most important factors in buying a house are location, location, and location." What that means is no matter how good a house is, it's not a good buy if it's in a bad location.

For students, "location," or where you sit in the classroom, is every bit as important. Where would you think the best places would be for a student to sit? The worst places?

Where you sit affects how much you learn. Regardless of how a classroom is arranged or the type of furniture, sit where you can see and hear best. Teachers know that students who want to do well sit near the front or wherever the action is. In fact, those students usually show up early just to get a good seat. Teachers know that motivated students like to be "in the loop."

Teachers also know that students who sit at the back often do not *intend* to participate. In classrooms with tables, they sit facing away from



BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIP

Before you continue with this chapter, take a minute to stretch your hands above your head and wiggle your fingers. Rotate your head in a circle first in one direction and then in the other.

It's a good idea to use some simple relaxation techniques every 15 minutes or so whenever you are reading and studying. It gets oxygen to your brain. It helps you maintain your focus.

the instructor and the board in hopes that they won't be called on. They want to be "invisible." The truth is, the farther away you sit, the more likely you are to be distracted and not pay attention. You make it harder on yourself, not easier.

Of course, you may not always be able to pick where you sit. When you have a choice, though, don't limit your success by choosing a "bad" seat. Instead, select a seat that puts you where the action is. Even if it feels uncomfortable at first, choose a good seat.

If you know that you will be tempted to talk with certain classmates rather than pay attention, choose to sit away from them. Besides, research shows you learn more when you work with others who are different from you rather than working with friends.

Each week you have a few hours when you can be in class with an expert (your instructor) and learn from your classmates. To get the most out of that time and to maximize your success, choose a place to sit that puts you where the action is. Some instructors have students change seats during the semester so that everyone has a chance to sit in the best locations. If that doesn't happen, ask your instructor if you can change where you sit.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.4

- In the past, when you had a choice, where have you sat in classrooms? Why did you choose that location? What effect do you

think it had on your learning? _____

- Where do you sit in this class? Is it a "good" location? Why or why not?

- What do you think the effect would be on your learning if you always sat near the front or facing the area where the instructor is?

5. Come prepared for class, and participate.

It isn't news that it's important to participate in class. But participating is more than just answering your instructor's questions. *Asking* a good question is also a way to participate. An example of a "good question" is asking for clarification (asking the instructor to make something clearer).

Students who are shy will be interested in ORL Reading Selection 14, "Shyness."

According to brain-compatible learning specialist Dr. Robin Fogarty, cooperative learning is the single most powerful factor in increasing learning. It is grounded in the principle of positive interdependence; that is, students must cooperate in order to succeed at a task—they "sink or swim" together. Cooperative learning fosters a strong sense of community, and that helps anchor students in your class. Because cooperative learning activities provide support, they lower students' stress. Students do not automatically know how to function effectively as members of a group, however, and merely having them sit together in small groups does not constitute "cooperative learning." Initially, they will need more guidance and structure (such as assigning each group member a specific role). Over time, they develop a sense of trust, as well as skill in decision making, conflict resolution, and group communication. Cooperative learning is teacher orchestrated but not teacher centered. By structuring activities carefully, you can enable students to demonstrate to themselves that each person has something to contribute. Cooperative learning is based not only on the concept of individual accountability but also on the premise that each person is responsible for everyone else's success as well. This aspect of the philosophy can be summed up, "All of us are smarter than any one of us" and "We're all in this together." It's worth spending class time to discuss the principles of cooperative learning. (See the Instructor Center on the ORL for extensive resource material on cooperative learning.)

In contrast, these are not good questions: a question that makes it obvious you haven't been paying attention, or asking about a grade you received or other matters that pertain only to you. Handle those things outside of class.

Many students feel shy about speaking up in class. If this describes you, you may find that asking questions is a comfortable way to learn to participate. If it makes you feel more secure, you can write out a question or two before class. You'll have it there to look at when you get ready to ask. The biggest mistake you can make is being afraid to make a mistake.

Even if you have to force yourself, speak up during the first couple of weeks of class. *Research indicates that students who do not speak up at least once during the first few class sessions usually do not speak in class the entire rest of the semester.* It's normal to feel a little stress when you speak for the first time in a class. Once you have done it, though, it is easier the next time. After all, you don't want it to look as if you've chosen shoulder shrugging as your college major! The only people who are never scared or embarrassed are the ones who never take any chances. They don't learn very much either, and they miss out on a lot of what college and life have to offer.

Participating in group activities is another way to contribute to class; so is listening attentively. Offering examples and observations are ways to participate, but be careful not to get off track with lengthy personal examples or issues.

You will be ready to participate in class only if you have prepared for class. Doing the homework prepares you to learn as much as possible at the next class session. It enables you to make a contribution to the class.

If you have not done the homework, you will not be ready to participate. You may think that it's no big deal. This isn't true. When you come unprepared, you let your classmates down. You let the instructor down. You let yourself down. It is harder for you to pay attention because you do not understand what is going on. In short, being prepared just makes sense.

There's a joke about a student who tells his roommate that he wants to go to a party, so he asks his roommate if he will do the homework for him. His roommate says, "No. It just wouldn't be right." He replies, "Well, maybe not. But give it a try anyway." You need to do the homework *yourself*. There may be times when you are tempted to copy someone else's homework. Don't do it. You won't be ready to participate unless you've done the assignment yourself, and you won't feel very good about yourself.

Sometimes students who come to class without the homework try to finish it in class. If you do this, you hurt yourself twice: You are not prepared for class that day, and you make matters worse by not paying attention to the very material you need to learn. In this case, it's better to concentrate on what's going on in class.

Another part of being prepared for class is showing up with your textbook and other materials you need for class. Teachers are impressed when you do this. In contrast, you create a negative impression if you repeatedly offer excuses for not bringing what you need. ("I left it at home" or "I forgot to put it in my book bag.") Constantly needing to

If students are assigned to permanent *base groups* (in the cooperative learning sense of the term), you can begin the class session by having them see if each group member has completed the assignment. If there is a group member who has not, the others should find out the reason and help the person figure out how he or she can do better in the future.

borrow a pencil and to look on with someone else because you forgot your book are things to avoid.

Make it a habit to check your assignment sheet and your book bag before you leave for class each day. That way, you'll arrive with everything you need. In fact, it's a good idea to pack your book bag the night before. You won't be grabbing things at the last minute—or make yourself late because you can't find something (more on this in a minute).

Concentrate on what's going on in class. It's a mistake to "tune out" because you want to get a jump on the next homework assignment. It's also a mistake to work on assignments for other classes. If you are going to do these things, you might as well not have come to class that day.

Make a commitment to come prepared for class and to participate.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.5

- Do you come to class prepared (you've done the homework)? If not, why not? _____

- Do you usually participate in class? If so, in what ways do you participate? If you do not usually participate, why not? _____

- What changes could you make to improve your preparation and participation? _____

The instructor is the model for appropriate classroom behavior and language and sets the standards. Classroom rituals can also foster courtesy. Something as small as consistently having students welcome those around them at the beginning of class or thank each other at the end of class can dramatically change the tone of the class. In addition, classroom rituals foster a sense of community. Possible class rituals include high-fives at the end of class, standing near the door and greeting students as they enter, and taking a couple of minutes to have students stand up and stretch at the beginning of class or at logical points during class. Students can choose or create class rituals of their own.

6. Be polite and use appropriate language.

Being polite is important. It may sound obvious and even silly to mention that, but lots of people forget even to say "please" and "thank you." It's polite to greet others while you're waiting for class to begin and to say good-bye at the end. It makes others feel good about you and think well of you. Politeness is the WD-40 of relationships. It makes all of them go more smoothly.

An old joke goes, "Our professor says that his job is to talk and that ours is to listen. But we usually finish before he does." Being polite means not talking when someone else is speaking. It might be another student or the instructor. It means paying attention and not being disruptive. Eating, putting on makeup, text messaging or checking your

cell phone for messages, and talking when you should be listening are real turn-offs in a college classroom.

Some behaviors are obviously disruptive, but did you know that dozing off and sleeping in class are rude and disruptive? There's a gag about a student who always sleeps in class:

First student: Why are you late?

Second student: I overslept.

First student: You mean you sleep at home too?

Related material for Bonus Box: Reading Selections 4, "Roller-Coaster Attention Cycles," and 6, "The Walking Weary"; "Sleep Tips for Teens" (ORL, Small Bite #5).

There are valid reasons why a student might doze off in class. He's exhausted from working a double shift. She was up all night studying for a test or helping a sick roommate, child, or other relative. Allergy medicine made him very drowsy. What it looks like to everyone else, though, is that the sleeper has no interest in the class. If you doze off in class, apologize to the instructor and explain what caused it.

If you are chronically tired, that's a different matter. Reconsider your schedule and lifestyle. Do you need to get more rest? Work fewer hours? Take fewer courses? Exercise more? Eat a better diet?

Just as your level of alertness influences others' opinion of you, so do the words you use. Mohandas ("Mahatma") Gandhi, an Indian nationalist and revered spiritual leader, said, "A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers." Your language, the words you know and choose, are an exact reflection of your own character and growth. Make your words reflect positively on you.

Some students are so accustomed to using inappropriate language that it sounds normal to them. They don't realize the poor impression they may be making on others, especially their

professors (and employers). Certain words that are okay to use outside of class with your friends may not be okay in class.

People who use profanity or other inappropriate language typically do it to sound grown up or impressive. Instead, it makes them sound immature. It also makes them sound as if they have limited, weak vocabularies and that they are trying to make up for it by talking that way. A better way to sound "powerful" is to develop a great vocabulary!

A student who uses bad language can unknowingly make other students feel uncomfortable. Making negative comments about other people or groups also makes others uncomfortable, and it can lower their opinion of you. Rude comments reflect badly on the person who makes them.

Finally, think for a minute about your overall speech habits:

- Do you sprinkle your sentences with empty, irritating fillers such as "uh," "like," and "you know"? Do you say, "He's, like, uh, you



BONUS TIP

Let's hope this never happens, but if you are ever so exhausted that you absolutely cannot stay awake in class, go home and sleep. You won't get anything out of class even if you are "there." (Besides, you'll be more comfortable sleeping at home.)

If you can't go home, or if you are so tired that driving might be dangerous, go to your college's health center. Explain your situation and ask if you can lie down for a while. If they have space, they will usually allow you to do this. Tell them what time your next class is, and ask them to wake you up in time to go to it.

Related material: Reading Selection 11, “Speaking So People Will Listen” and “Six Sloppy Speech Habits” (ORL, Small Bite #3).

know, a really nice guy” instead of, “He’s really nice”? If so, the first step is to become aware of this habit.

- Do you make statements sound like questions? If you’re not sure, listen to yourself when you speak, or ask your friends. If you have this confusing habit, concentrate on dropping your voice at the ends of sentences. You will sound more definite, confident, and mature.
- Is *got* the main verb in your vocabulary? There’s always a better, more precise verb that can be used instead. Just for fun, try this the rest of the day: Find a better word whenever you start to use *got*.

If your answer to any of the questions above is yes, follow the suggestions for changing them.

College is a great time to add words to your vocabulary and to develop speech habits that will help you get ahead not only in school but also in the workplace.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 1.6

- How would you rate yourself in terms of politeness? _____

- How well do you pay attention in class? What keeps you from paying attention? _____

- Do you use appropriate language in the classroom? If not, were you aware that it might be a problem? _____

- Do you have any annoying speech habits, such as constantly using “like” or “you know”? (If you’re not sure, ask your friends or family members. They’ll tell you!) _____

- What improvements do you need to make in your politeness, language, and speech habits? _____

Become the Student—and Person—you Want to Be

It's been said that the type of student you are is the type of person you are. If you are motivated, responsible, honest, and hardworking, you are likely to be that type of student. So if you want to change the type of student you are, change the type of person you are.

College is wonderful because it gives you a chance to reinvent yourself: You can become any type of person you want to be. What type of student do you want to be? Organized? High achieving? Respected? Eager to learn? Dependable?

The positive qualities you develop to help you in college will serve you well in every area of your life. Those same qualities will make you a better employee or employer, a better spouse or partner in a relationship, a better parent, a better neighbor, and a better citizen. Never doubt it: You can become the kind of person and student you want to be.

Download and duplicate (or make a transparency of) “Dear Abby’ Letters” (ORL—Instructor Center, Chapter 1). First-generation-to-college students in particular will find these interesting.

www.mhhe.com/entryways

For more suggestions and strategies for college success, go to

[Catalyst> Learning> Study Skills Tutor> Doing Well in College](#)



MY TOOLBOX of Classroom Success Behaviors

For this chapter and challenging chapters, give students time in class to work on the Toolbox. (It's helpful to have paper, colored markers, and other supplies on hand.) As they work, circulate, ask them questions, and give feedback. (Students can finish the activity at home.) If you are in a room in which only reading classes are held, post some of the best Toolbox efforts.

You can also assign students to work in pairs on the Toolbox. Pair them according to the technique they choose (concept map, "recipe," etc.) or their learning styles.

Study maps (concept maps) are explained on the ORL, Student Edition.

Tools are devices that help you accomplish tasks. You can use them to create new things, to fix things, and to solve problems. In any job, tools are necessary. At this time, your "job" is being a student. Start now to assemble your own "toolbox" of important information and skills. At first, you may feel that your toolbox doesn't have many tools in it. That's okay. As you progress through this book, you will be adding tools in every chapter. Tools consist of concepts and strategies that pertain to academic success, vocabulary, reading, and study skills.

In order to remember this information, you must rehearse it. Two effective ways to rehearse information are to say it and to write it. That's why you are asked to "stop and process" information at various points in the chapters. That's also why you need to record important information in your toolbox.

What specifically can you do to make yourself more successful in the classroom? On the following page or on a separate page, record the five items that you identified with your classmates in the Looking at What You Already Know section (at the beginning of the chapter), as well as the six points from this chapter. Some of the same items may be on both lists, so you may have fewer than 11 items.

Different people would organize a toolbox in different ways. Since each person learns differently, you should organize the information in your toolbox in a way that will help you most. Here are some possibilities:

- **Write a list of the classroom success tools discussed in this chapter, along with the ones that the entire class agreed on.** Write them in your own words so that you will remember them. If you like, you can use more than one color pen. Color helps some students remember information more easily.
- **Pretend you are writing a letter to someone who is just starting college.** In your letter, include the important classroom success behaviors covered in this chapter. (Explaining something to someone else is a great way to review and learn it yourself.)
- **If you prefer, you can create a study map (concept map).** Draw a circle in the middle of the page with the words "Classroom Success Behaviors" in it. Then write specific success behaviors on lines that radiate from the circle. You can include small illustrations or sketches, and work with colored pens. (The Online Reading Lab, or ORL, has information on making study maps.)

When you have finished your list, letter, or map, put a star or a check mark beside the three behaviors that you think will help *you* most. Make a commitment to concentrate on these three behaviors first. Once they become habits, you can begin to add other success behaviors that are in your toolbox. *You can do it!*

Have students see Module 2 in the Student ORL for information on study maps.



CHAPTER CHECK

Answer these questions about the information in the chapter. Write the missing word or information in each blank. When there is more than one part to the answer, there is more than one blank.

1. In every course, you should read the _____ **syllabus** _____, or course description, to be sure you understand all of the important information about the course.
2. Information in the course description could include _____, _____, and _____. (List at least three things.) (**Answers will vary.**)
3. After you have read the course description, you should _____ **save/keep** _____ it.
4. You should try to be in class on _____ **time** _____, every _____ **time** _____.
5. Two times you should try never to be absent: _____ **at the beginning of the semester** _____ or _____ **on the day of a test** _____. (List any two of the specific times mentioned as times you should try never to miss class.)
6. If you are absent twice in a row, you should contact your _____ **instructor** _____.
7. When you are absent, you should find out what the _____ **assignment** _____ is, and then do it.
8. Even if an instructor allows some excused absences, you should try to _____ **save** _____ them rather than use them.
9. You should learn the names of your _____ **instructor** _____ and your _____ **classmates** _____.
10. In the classroom, you should sit where you can _____ **see** _____ and _____ **hear** _____ well.
11. In addition to answering questions, you can participate in class by _____ **asking** _____ questions.
12. If you have not done the _____ **homework** _____, you will not be ready to participate in class.

13. The classroom is a place to be _____ **polite** _____ and to use appropriate _____ **language** _____.
14. Making negative comments about other people or groups reflects badly on the person who makes the _____ **comments** _____.
15. The type of student you are is the type of _____ **person** _____ you are.

REVIEW EXERCISES

SET 1

Read these comments by Lynn, a 20-year-old first-semester community college student. She lives with her parents; she works 30 hours a week as a cashier. She didn't enjoy high school but believes that she will have better job and life opportunities if she continues her education. She has completed the first two weeks of the semester and reports she is already starting to feel frustrated and discouraged. Based on the chapter information, what advice would you give her to help her turn the situation around? Write your suggestions and advice in the space provided.

Here are two case studies of students whose inappropriate in-class behavior is limiting their success. Give your students the opportunity to apply chapter concepts by having them decide what each student needs to do differently in order to be more successful. You may want to assign one or both as homework, and then have students discuss their responses with a partner or in groups. Or, you can have students collaborate on Set 1 in class and then do Set 2 as homework. Some students may see aspects of themselves in these hypothetical students. The activity, though, is nonthreatening and can lead to a lively, productive class discussion.

"I was late the first day of class since I didn't know where the classroom was. I chose a seat at the back of the room in the corner. My psychology instructor—I don't know his name—was just finishing going over a handout about the course. I put mine in my notebook, but I haven't had time to look at it. I haven't had a chance to buy the textbook either. But I got paid yesterday, so I plan to get it this weekend. I think there have already been a couple of assignments the instructor has taken up. I'm worried because I don't know if I can turn them in late, or if I can, whether it will affect my grade.

"The instructor said that we have a short quiz next week, but I'm not sure which day he said it's going to be. Once I find out, I'm thinking about not going to class that day. Tests make me nervous. Besides, there's lots of stuff I don't understand, and I'm not sure where to get help.

"At this point, I really don't know the name of anyone else in the class, except for a girl named Ann. She's nice and very funny. We sit next to each other, and we've written a couple of notes back and forth. There's another girl who sits nearby. She seems to understand what's going on in class, but I don't know how to get in touch with her.

"So far I haven't said anything in class. I'm hoping the instructor won't ever call on me, but I know that sooner or later he will. It stresses me just to think about it. I get all flustered. Besides, I probably wouldn't know the answer anyway.

"I'm considering dropping out and starting fresh next semester, but I hate to lose the tuition I've paid. Also, my parents would be all over me. Even if I quit now and try again next semester, I'm not sure that things would be any different. I don't know what to do."

It's important students get off to a good start with the homework. See "Missing Homework Assignment" (ORL—Instructor Center, General Resources) for a download for students who fail to turn it in.

Since it is the beginning of the semester, you may wish to duplicate and distribute the Student Information Sheet (ORL—Instructor Center, General Resources).

(1) Learning to monitor their own understanding and performance is a crucial skill for students. The first few times you assign Assess Your Understanding, you may want to set aside a few minutes of class time for it. It never occurs to many underprepared students that they are capable of evaluating their own level of understanding. (2) Be sure to collect (but not grade) the Assess Your Understanding pages. Students' assessments may be inaccurate initially (in either direction), but they'll get better at the process. The Assess Your Understanding sheets will become a valuable source of feedback to you not only on individual students but also on the class as a whole. You'll know whether you need to make any instructional adjustments. Also, students are always interested in what the "class average" is on the assessment scale.

If there were things you didn't understand or success behaviors you couldn't remember, what steps could you take to fix the problem? Do you need to reread some or all of the chapter? Go over the exercises? Ask a classmate or your instructor questions? Write the information down or review it some other way? Write your response here:

Monitoring your understanding, identifying trouble spots, and correcting them are major strategies for success. That's why you'll be asked to do a quick self-assessment at the end of each chapter, such as the one you just completed. These are for your own benefit and not for a grade. You'll become better and better at self-assessment. You've taken the first step, and you're on your way!