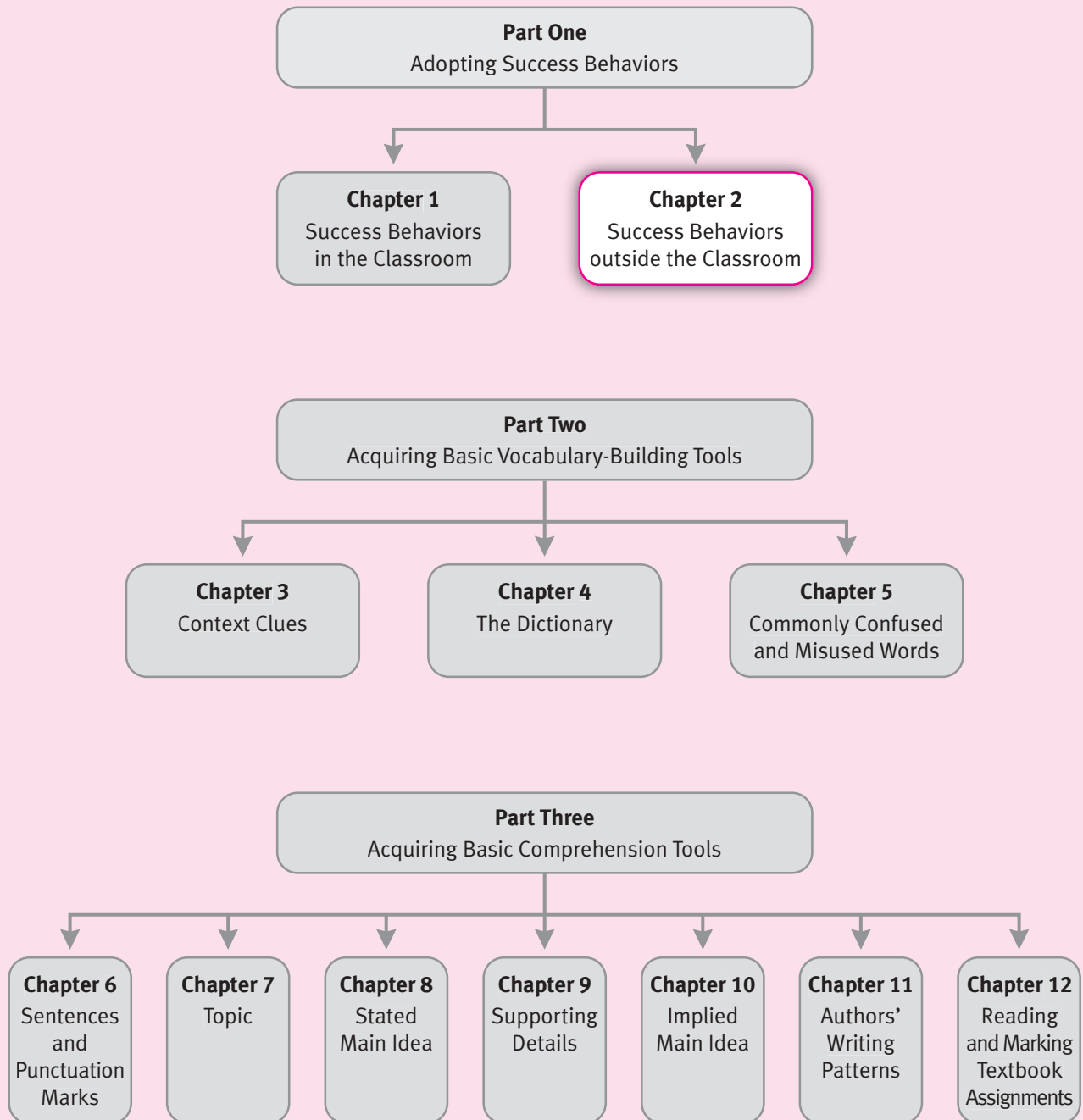


Map of Chapters



CHAPTER 2

Success Behaviors outside the Classroom

Do the Right Thing

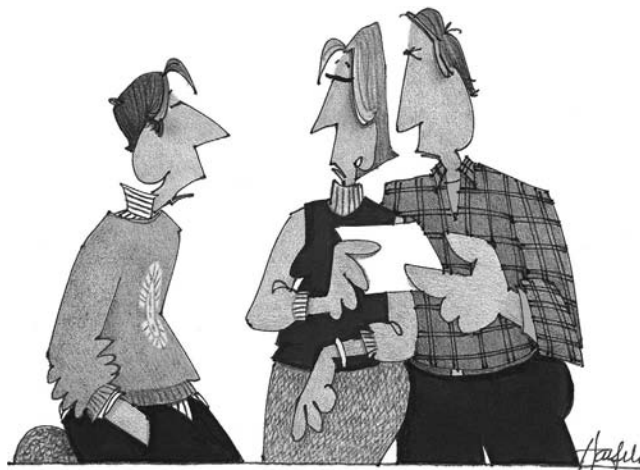
This chapter pairs nicely with Reading Selection 2, "Superman and Me."

Why You Need to Know the Information in This Chapter

College differs from high school in several ways, but one of the most challenging ones is that you have to do more of the learning on your own outside of class. The typical college course is a three-hour or three-credit course: You spend only three hours a week in class. That's not very much time! This means that you must be prepared for those three hours. This chapter explains what you can do to be organized and ready to shine in class.

Using these out-of-class behaviors consistently will enable you to

- learn more
- feel more confident
- look forward to going to class
- reduce your stress
- make higher grades



"I'm too busy going to college to study."

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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:



"My sister told me to talk to the instructor whenever I need help. I was a little scared at first, but it turned out to be very good advice."—*Tram*

"I never knew to write out my goals. It's made a difference. I taped them on my desk at home, so I'm reminded about them every day."—*April*

"Soccer is my sport. I've learned that the same things I do to be good in soccer are the same things that make me better in school. You have to show up. You have to practice. You have to have a good attitude."—*Jorge*

"I got a PDA [personal digital assistant, a handheld electronic organizer] for my birthday. It's really cool, and it helps me stay organized."—*Antonio*

Jumpstart Your Brain!

Before you start this chapter, do a few shoulder shrugs. Stretch your arms over your head. These relax you and give your brain extra oxygen. Now, jumpstart your brain—give it renewed energy—by solving these brainteasers.

By moving exactly two matches in each equation, turn the equation into one that is mathematically correct. You can turn one number into another; you can change the “sign” into another sign ($/$, $+$, $-$, or \times). The equal sign ($=$) will not change, of course. The only rules are (1) you must move exactly two matches somewhere else in the equation, and (2) the new equation must be correct mathematically. (For example, $2 + 2 = 4$ is mathematically correct; $2 + 2 = 5$ is not.) To “move” a match that’s in the original equation, use a pencil and mark lightly. You can erase a line if you change your mind. Write your finished equation to the right of the original one. Remember that different people have different gifts. Solving brainteasers of this sort may or may not be yours. If it’s not, try it on your own first (it will still cause brain growth!), and then find a classmate who has this aptitude. Have fun “matching” wits with this brainteaser. Good luck!

Original, Incorrect Equation

Example:

$$7 / 1 = 5$$

$$7 - 3 = 8$$

$$5 - 3 = 4$$

$$24 / 6 = 8$$

$$31 - 22 = 31$$

$$108 / 11 = 8$$

Correct Equation You Created from It

$$7 - 1 = 6$$

$$7 + 2 = 9$$

$$6 - 2 = 4$$

$$24 / 8 = 3$$

$$9 + 22 = 31$$

$$88 / 11 = 8$$

How did you do? Compare your answers to your classmates’ answers. Check to see if everyone followed the rules and has mathematically correct equations. Explain to each other how you went about solving these brainteasers.

LOOKING AT WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW



Regardless of whether you finished high school or have attended college before, you already have some ideas about what you can do *out of class* in order to be more successful in class. Use the space below to list at least five out-of-class “success” behaviors.

Focus on things that could help you succeed in *this* class.

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

Compare your finished list with three or four of your classmates’ lists. In small groups, decide on the five most important success behaviors outside of 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 for the My Toolbox section at the end of the chapter.

This chapter parallels and complements Chapter 1, so use the same procedure. 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 reach consensus. They should pay special attention to ideas that appear on more than one group’s list. Read the final list aloud without commenting on the items. If students would like to rank the items, accept the order they decide on. Have them copy the final list because they will need the information later for the My Toolbox section that appears on page 56. This no-fail class activity gets ideas going and gets students working together early in the semester. 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 along with the one from Chapter 1.

Success Behaviors outside the Classroom

Do it right. Do it now.

Change your thoughts and you change your world.

—Norman Vincent Peale

If you are new to college, this chapter will be as important for you as Chapter 1. If you have attended college previously, you will recognize things you are doing right, and you will learn new things as well.

The Big Picture for This Chapter

This chapter focuses on what you can do *outside* the classroom to become a more successful student. The suggestions and strategies pertain to what you can do before and after class rather than while you are in class.

College professors expect you to do a great deal of learning outside of class and to do whatever it takes to accomplish this. This might include spending more time studying, getting tutoring, participating in a study group, and reading easier books on your subjects. Professors expect you to do the assigned reading and any other homework. Most of them expect you to use your textbooks as the primary source of information. Your professors expect you to find out about and take advantage of your college's resources, such as the tutoring center and the library. They expect you to attend class and to contact them if you miss more than a couple of classes. They expect you to let them know when you need help. They expect you to find out what the assignment is when you are absent and to complete it before you return to class. Motivating yourself is your responsibility.

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

Six Out-of-Class Success Behaviors

Here are six out-of-class behaviors that can make you more successful, effective, and relaxed in class:

- Set goals and make a commitment.
- Get organized.
- Prepare for class.
- Manage your assignments.

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

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

- **Monitor your progress and see your instructor when you need help.**
- **Take advantage of out-of-class resources.**

Let's look at specific information about each of the six out-of-class success behaviors.

1. Set goals and make a commitment.

Visualize yourself six months from now. Where are you? Did you complete this semester successfully? (You'll be able to visualize more effectively if you close your eyes.) Now visualize yourself three years from now. What has changed in your life? Finally, visualize yourself 20 years from now. What have you accomplished? What are you most proud of?

Many people never think hard about what they want out of life. They just move along day to day. But did you know that simply creating goals and putting them in writing can make you happier and more successful, not only in school but in every area of your life? Setting goals means deciding exactly what you want to achieve in terms of your education, health, personal relationships, career, and finances. You may also have goals in categories such as travel, volunteer work, or spiritual development.

In college, motivation is a do-it-yourself job. That's one reason it's so important to set goals: Having goals is motivating. You know you are working toward things that matter to you, so you feel a drive to succeed, and pride and satisfaction when you achieve a goal. Success builds on success. Your growing sense of confidence and pride keep you motivated.

So how do you go about setting goals? One way is to list some of the categories mentioned above—education, career, finance, and so on—and then write out your goals for each. You should also set a deadline for achieving each goal. (Think of goals as “dreams with deadlines.”) Try classifying each of your goals by one of these lengths of time:

- **Short-term goals** are ones you want to accomplish during the *next six months to a year*.
- **Intermediate goals** are ones you want to accomplish during the *next one to five years*.
- **Long-term goals** are ones you want to accomplish during your *lifetime*.

Your short-term goals should move you toward your intermediate goals, and those in turn should move you toward your long-term goals.

There are two characteristics of effective goals. First, goals must be *realistic*. They should be ones you can achieve in the time you set, even if you have to work hard to achieve them. “I will earn a college degree in two years while working full time” isn't a realistic goal. A more realistic one would be, “During the next three years, I will complete my associate's degree in business and obtain my

Related material: “What Do I Need to Do to Succeed in College?” (ORL, Small Bite #2).



BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIP

As athletes know, *visualization* is such a powerful technique that they often include it as part of their training. In their mind's eye, they “practice” a skill over and over again by seeing themselves performing it perfectly. Visualization works because our brains accept as real the mental pictures we create in our minds.

Create pictures in your mind of achieving your goals: making a high grade on a test, walking across the stage and receiving your diploma, becoming a successful business owner—whatever you aspire to. The more detailed your pictures, the better. Where are you? What are you wearing? Who is with you? How do you feel?

If you can visualize it, you believe it. If you believe it, you can achieve it. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise! The only person who can limit you is yourself.

real estate license.” Second, goals must be *specific*. “I want to do better in school” is too vague. A specific goal is, “I will make at least a B in all of my courses this semester.”

On the chart on page 40, write at least three of your short-term, intermediate term, and long-term goals. Then fill in the columns that tell why the goal is important to you and how you will feel when you achieve the goal. This information is a necessary part of the exercise. What motivates people to accomplish a goal is the personal relevance of the goal and the feelings that achieving it will produce in them. (Goals are personal. If you prefer not to write yours in your book, photocopy the page and then fill it out.)

If you feel stuck about how to achieve what you most want in life, fill out My Vision of Success, on page 41 (or write the same information on another sheet of paper). It’s an excellent tool for identifying the resources and strategies that can help you attain your vision of success.

Put your written goals where you will see them often—above your desk or on the bathroom mirror, for example. Every few months, revise them if you need to. The important thing is to have realistic, specific goals you are working toward.

Setting goals is not enough. You must also make a commitment to achieving them. Will you encounter obstacles? Absolutely. A wise person once said, “If you can find a path without any obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere.” Overcoming the obstacles gives the goals their value.

If a certificate or degree is one of your goals, you should make school a priority. There will be times when you have to give up something fun or satisfying at the moment for the greater satisfaction of achieving a bigger, more meaningful longer-term goal.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.1

Have students identify their goals by using one of the three methods: by category, as short-, intermediate- and long-term goals, or by using the vision statement form. Since goals are private, this assignment should not be collected, although you might want students simply to show you that they’ve done it. Remind them to read their goals often, and periodically remind them to update and revise their goals.

Students who have written goals in the past, but did not achieve them, may have set vague or unrealistic goals, may not have set a timeline, or failed to make a commitment to achieving them.

- Have you ever written out your goals? If so, was it helpful? If you have never written out your goals, why not? _____

- If you have set goals in the past, did you achieve them? If not, what prevented you? _____

- If you’ve never written out your goals, how would it benefit you to write them out now? _____

Putting Your Goals in Writing

	Goal	Why This Goal Is Important to Me	How I Will Feel When I Achieve the Goal
Short-Term Goals (6 to 12 months)	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Intermediate Goals (1 to 5 years)	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Long-Term Goals (Lifetime)	1.		
	2.		
	3.		

MY VISION OF SUCCESS

1. In the middle of the page, put a photo, picture, or drawing of what you most want to do or be in your life. (You can use a separate, larger sheet of paper if you prefer.) At the bottom of the page, write a success statement that tells what you plan to achieve.
2. List the skills and traits you need in order to achieve your goal. Rank them and circle the most important skill.
3. Jot down the steps you must take to achieve your goal.
4. Write the names of people who can mentor you (advise and encourage you).
5. List any obstacles that you will have to overcome and ways to overcome them.
6. List the resources that are available to help you achieve your dream.
7. List any accomplishments and awards you have already achieved.

Post this sheet where you will see it. Read your success statement aloud in front of a mirror ten times, morning and evening, for ten days. Remember that your brain will accept it as “true”!

Skills and traits I need:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Steps to achieving my goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Resources available to me:

- _____
- _____
- _____

**Photo, picture, or drawing of what
I most want to do
or be in life.**

My previous awards and accomplishments:

- _____
- _____
- _____

How I will feel when I achieve my goal:

- _____

Obstacles I may face:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

How I can overcome the obstacles:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

People who can advise and encourage me:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My success statement: _____

2. Get organized.

College students' number one complaint is that they have too much to do in too little time. Sometimes, they're right! They are working too many hours, taking too many classes, or have too many other commitments and responsibilities. They are stressed and exhausted. If that describes you, you'll have to decide where you can cut back.

Perhaps you're not sure whether your days are too full. Well, here's one way to get an objective picture. Think of the 24 hours in a day as 24 links in a chain:



On a typical weekday, how many "links" (hours) do you spend attending classes? Color or shade in the same number of links. How many links would be spent working? Commuting? Eating meals? Doing other set activities (household chores, athletic practice or exercise, or church, for example)? Shade those links. How much time do you typically spend watching TV? Sleeping? Shade in links for those. You can use different colors for different types of activities if you like. Now count the number of links that are left, the ones that are not shaded in. That's the maximum number of hours you have available for studying on a typical day. (You should base this activity on two back-to-back weekdays if your Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule is considerably different from your Tuesday-Thursday one. Find the average amount of time for various activities.)

If you're like most college students, you could manage your time much better by becoming more organized. Several strategies will help you do this. Let's look at these next.

Make a schedule.

If you've already made a schedule, congratulate yourself! If you don't have one and you plan to study "whenever you can find the time," you'll never find it! "One of these days" usually turns into "none of these days." Making a schedule is the answer. Here's how to use the blank schedule on page 44:

- Block out the times you are in class, have other set responsibilities (work, for example), or would otherwise not be available to study** (meals, exercise, commuting, sleeping). Build in a reasonable amount of time for leisure activities you enjoy. A schedule shouldn't consist only of work. No one could follow such a schedule—or would want to!
- Look at the times that are left.** Allow at least two hours of study time for every hour you are in class. For most courses, that will mean six hours per week. Many new college students are surprised at how much time studying takes. Research shows that college students routinely underestimate how long it will take them to do

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For blank weekly and monthly schedules, To Do List, and Study Habits Self-Evaluation, go to Catalyst > Learning > Study Skills Tutor > Making the Most of Your Time

To initiate a class discussion on personal responsibility, see "Dear Abby" letter (OLC—Instructor Center, Chapter 2).

their homework, study for tests, write papers, and so on. As a result, they put off these activities until the last minute and then run out of time. Stressful!

3. **From the times that are still available, block out the times when you plan to study.** It's not enough just to write "study." Write the specific subject you will study at the specific time. For example, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., you might write, "Study math." ("Study" means anything connected with a course: read the assignment, complete written work, study for a test, etc.)

Once you have your schedule, stick with it. Keep your schedule in your notebook, or post it near your desk. Allow at least three weeks to get used to your new schedule. It takes three weeks to establish a new habit or change an old one. After 21 days, it will seem normal to study at certain times each day.

Many students say they put off doing homework, but once they get started, they're fine. A schedule solves the problem of putting homework off. You'll generally feel more in control of your time and less stressed. There are additional bonuses of following a schedule: You'll have more free time, and you'll enjoy it more. You won't feel guilty that you should be studying.

You can modify your schedule, but try not to use study time for anything else. If you have to miss a study session, make up the time as soon as possible.

Another tip: Keep a semester calendar. On a regular calendar, write test dates, due dates for papers and projects, exam dates, and so forth. That way, you can see well ahead of time what is coming up. You won't suddenly discover that you have two tests on the same day, and you won't get caught at the last minute before a major assignment is due.



BONUS TIP

Two online resources for time management are www.studygs.net/timman.htm, a set of time management tips, and <http://www.studygs.net/schedule> for developing a schedule. It includes a "learner's daily planner." In this Flash exercise, you can review how you spend your time in a typical day and week. You can also write out your priorities (goals), as well as pick up tips for scheduling with your college's calendar.



STOP AND PROCESS


EXERCISE 2.2

Following the guidelines just discussed, fill out the blank schedule printed on page 44. You may prefer to make a photocopy and fill it out instead. That way, you can keep it in your notebook or some other convenient place.

Use an assignment notebook.

You can't do the assignment if you don't know what it is, so write every assignment in an assignment notebook. Include the date it was assigned and the day it is due.

WEEKLY STUDY SCHEDULE							
Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
A.M.	6:00						
	7:00						
	8:00						
	9:00						
	10:00						
	11:00						
P.M.	12:00						
	1:00						
	2:00						
	3:00						
	4:00						
	5:00						
	6:00						
	7:00						
	8:00						
	9:00						
A.M.	10:00						
	11:00						
A.M.	12:00						
	1:00						

 **BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIP**

Visual-spatial learners, in particular, need to pay attention to structuring their time. If you're a visual-spatial learner, wear a watch, choose friends who manage their time well—in short, use any strategies necessary to gain control of your time. Be creative. Remember to build some free time into your schedule.

Buy an inexpensive assignment notebook that's made for this purpose, or use a small spiral. You can even use notebook paper, but keep it in one special section of your notebook. The key is *always to write assignments in one certain place*. You'll know where to find them, and you can see at a glance what you need to do before your classes meet again. Besides, it's satisfying to check off the assignments as you complete them.

Set priorities with a daily To Do list.

Did you know that after full-time college students take out time for meals, sleeping, and attending classes, they still have to make decisions about how to spend ten hours of every day? In fact, each day, you must make hundreds of decisions about how to use your time. **Setting priorities** means making decisions about what is most important.

How you spend your time is more important than how you spend your money. Money mistakes can usually be corrected, but time is gone forever. Writer Annie Dillard says, "The way you spend your days is the way you spend your life." If you don't do the important things each day, you end up feeling tired, yet you feel you didn't accomplish anything. If



BONUS TIP

The phone is your enemy when you're trying to study. Follow these strategies:

- Train your friends not to call during your study time. For example, tell them to call after 9:00 p.m.
- Resist the temptation to answer the phone while you are studying. Turn off your cell phone.
- Make or return phone calls *after* you have finished studying.

it goes on long enough, you may end up feeling that your *life* was not well spent. That would be a tragedy.

A famous 19-century American writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, reminds us, "Be grateful for each new day. A new day that you have never lived before. Twenty-four new, fresh hours, unexplored hours to use usefully and profitably. We can squander, neglect or use it. Life will be richer or poorer by the way we use today." Treat each day as the gift it is.

One way to accomplish this is to create a daily To Do list. To make a To Do list, write down everything you want to

accomplish that day. Index cards work well. Then go through your list and set priorities by numbering items according to their importance. When you do the items on the list, start with your number one priority. After you complete the first task, move to the second item, and so forth. Unless you prioritize, you will be tempted to do easy, unimportant items first. For example, your number one priority may be to study for a test, your number five priority may be to wash your car, and your number six priority may be to return phone calls to friends. A prioritized list will encourage you to study first and then, if you have time, wash your car or call friends.

Know when and where to study.

Visualize a time when you had a successful study session. Where were you? What made it successful? Were you by yourself or with others?

Think, too, about what you read in the "Identify Your Learning Style" section at the beginning of this book. When is the best time for you to study? Are you an early bird? A night owl? Consider these questions when you choose your class times and plan your study schedule. Research suggests that most students accomplish more when they study during daylight hours than at night. What matters, though, is what works best for you. Try to study at times when you are not overly tired. Learning takes longer when you are tired or sleepy.

Drink a glass of water before you study. Water supplies your brain with some of the oxygen it needs. When you study, periodically stand up and stretch. This gets additional oxygen to your brain, and it relaxes you.

Eating a high protein snack before you begin is also helpful. If you snack while you study, skip drinks and snacks with caffeine, fat, or sugar. Choose a piece of fruit or some other healthful snack instead. You'll think more clearly. (See the Brain-Friendly Tips box on page 46.)

Where should you study? Again, think about the kind of environment that suits your learning style. Do you need a quiet place? At home, close the door and turn off the stereo, radio, or TV; leave the headphones off. If you live in a noisy environment, buy some inexpensive earplugs at the drugstore. Study on campus at the library or some other quiet place.

Related material: Reading Selection 6, "The Walking Weary"

If you need some background sound, play low music, but not songs with words. (See the Brain-Friendly Tips box below for more information on brain-friendly music.) Perhaps you need a place where you can read some of the material out loud or recite information you are memorizing. If being in a study group works for you, check your school library. They often have special rooms that small groups can use. Also, you may find an empty classroom you can use. For obvious reasons, avoid the cafeteria and the student lounge as places to study.

Study at a desk or table, if that works for you. If you need to move when you read or study, try slowly pacing back and forth. Some students find that chewing gum helps get rid of excess energy (chew sugarless gum, please, to spare your teeth). Also, find a place where the lighting suits you. Some people do better with bright light; others do better with soft light.

Before you begin studying, have all the supplies you need at hand, either in a desk drawer or in your backpack. You disrupt your concentration every time you stop, whether it's to hunt for a highlighter or to answer the phone.

Discuss with students the power of habit. ("We first make our habits, and then our habits make us.") Emphasize that they need to allow a full three weeks to implement a new habit or break an old one. Unless students know this, they may try using a schedule or a To Do list for a few days and incorrectly conclude that they don't work. To be sure students understand how to set priorities, distribute 3x5 index cards and have students create in class a To Do list for today or tomorrow (depending on whether you're teaching a morning or evening class).

Choose one spot for your "school stuff."

There's nothing more discouraging than arriving in class without your homework or the book you need. Here's a simple solution: When you finish studying, put everything you need for the next day—keys, backpack or book bag, glasses, and anything else you need to take to campus with you—in one special place. When you finish your homework, put it in your notebook, and put your notebook in your spot. If there is an additional item you need to bring the next day (such as a project or an



BRAIN-FRIENDLY TIPS

Brain Food

If you want a snack or a meal before you start studying, choose wisely. Foods high in tryptophan leave you with a sense of calm and well-being. *Tryptophan* (pronounced "TRIP-toe-fan") helps your brain produce serotonin, a "feel good" chemical. It's found in milk, turkey, almonds, bananas, eggs, cheese, and complex carbohydrates.

You won't be surprised to learn that college students identify chocolate as the food they crave most. It contains sugar, fat (soothing and creamy), caffeine, and other substances that regulate and stimulate mood. Save the chocolate for when you're finished studying.

Background Music

Do you prefer background music when you study? Research suggests that for some people, certain types of instrumental music (no words!), played at a low volume, work well as background music when they study. Here are three possible choices:

- **Baroque music** has balance and predictability that the brain likes. Look for orchestral music by Mozart, Bach (*Brandenburg Concertos*), Handel (*Water Music*), or Vivaldi (*Four Seasons*), for example, that has approximately 50–70 beats per minute. (Select slower movements; they are labeled *adagio* or *andante*.)
- **Nature sounds**—environmental sounds of a waterfall, ocean, or rain forest, for example—create a soothing, unobtrusive background.
- **Jazz instrumentals** of George Benson, David Sanborn, and Kenny G also work for some students.

Experiment to see what works best for you. In music stores, ask for the sections with Baroque music, environmental sound tracks, and even "brain-friendly" music. (Heavy metal music is stressful since its beat is counter to the normal human heartbeat.)

umbrella), place it there as well. Check to be sure that you have everything you need in that one spot.

The spot you choose might be a table or bench near your front door. It could be a chair in your bedroom, or even just a corner of your bedroom. Any place that's convenient and that other people won't bother will work just fine. The important thing is to use the same spot each day. You won't lose time and feel stress because you're hunting for something at the last minute. Pick up anything that's in the spot, and you're ready to walk out the door. Take a minute now, and in your mind's eye, picture the spot you could use for your school stuff.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.3

- When are the best times for you to study? Can you arrange your schedule so that you can study at those times? _____

- Where are two good places you could study? Does the place you normally study suit your learning style? If not (too noisy, light is wrong, no desk or table, for example), what could you do to make it better, or where could you go instead? _____

- Do you use an assignment notebook? Does it help? If not, are you willing to try it for three weeks? What difference do you think it might make? _____

- Where in your house or apartment would be a good spot to keep the items you need for class each day? Be specific. _____

3. Prepare for class.

New college students, especially those who “never opened a book” in high school, don’t understand how crucial textbooks are in college. This makes for an interesting class discussion. With regard to cost, students often see only the book and forget that supplemental materials often come with it (such as access to an online learning center), annotated instructor’s editions, instructor resources, PowerPoint presentations, and so forth, are also included in the cost.

Preparing for class begins with buying the textbooks, other required materials (such as lab manuals or machine-scorable answer sheets), and necessary supplies (notebook and paper, pens, highlighters, index cards, etc.). Textbooks are as indispensable to college students as tools are to a carpenter.

Students are often shocked at the price of textbooks. They can cost more than tuition at public colleges and universities. Remember that in college you have to do much more of the learning on your own, outside of class. Don’t try to get by without buying a required book. Not reading the book might have worked in high school, but it doesn’t work in college.

Buy your textbooks at the very beginning of the semester. It’s not okay to tell the instructor that you won’t be able to get the book for a few weeks. It’s your responsibility to do whatever you need to do in order to get your books on time. You may have to make a short-term loan from someone or from the college. Getting off to a good start makes all the difference. If you don’t have your textbooks from the start, you will quickly get behind and feel overwhelmed.

Buying your textbooks is not enough. The fact is, you have to use them, regardless of whether you like getting information through reading or prefer to learn some other way. Even if reading is not your preferred way to learn, this book will show you techniques that will make reading easier and more efficient.

To become a successful student, do the homework. Thomas Edison, the famous inventor, said, “A genius is a talented person who does his homework.” Read your assignments. Some students mistakenly believe that if the assignment is to read a chapter, there really isn’t an assignment. Wrong, wrong, wrong! If you haven’t read the assignment, you will not know what the instructor is talking about. You can’t contribute or participate fully in class. If you do the homework as it is assigned, you will always be caught up.

In college, homework may take longer than you think, so start well ahead of time. Whenever you need to, go the extra mile. You’ll be glad you did. If you have difficulty in a course, however, you may need to do some additional things to be fully prepared for class. (These are discussed later in item 6, on pages 53–55.)



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.4

- Did you buy all of your textbooks within the first day or two of the semester? If not, what could you have done in order to have had them from the start? _____

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For additional helpful suggestions, go to

Catalyst>

Learning>

Study Skills

Tutor>

Are You Avoiding the Work?

- Have you been doing the assignments for this class? If not, why not? (If you are already behind, talk with your instructor. Work out an arrangement to get caught up.) _____

- It's still early in the semester, but are you spending more or less time than you thought you would on homework? How much time do you generally spend each day or week? _____

4. Manage your assignments.

In college, assignments can pile up quickly if you don't do them as they are assigned. This is one reason you should not enroll in more courses than you can comfortably handle, especially if you are working as well as going to school. Even if you've put off homework in the past, you have an opportunity to start this semester differently. That was then. This is now. You have the chance to get on track, stay on track, and discover how effective you can be.

When you sit down to study, pull out your assignment notebook and look over everything you need to do. (Assignment notebooks were discussed earlier in the chapter.) Estimate how much time you'll need to complete all of the assignments. Decide where you want to start. If it helps you, jot down a rough schedule (for example: 7–8 p.m.—math; 8–9—reading; 9–9:30—speech) for your study session. You may want to start with an easy subject to get warmed up, but don't leave your most difficult subject until last. You might be too tired to finish it.

Can you remember a time when you didn't read the directions for something, and it ended up costing you valuable time, some frustration, and maybe even money? When you start a homework assignment, read any instructions for it. Even if you think you know what you're supposed to do, look through the directions and the material first. Be sure you understand what you are supposed to do.

If it's a long assignment, break it into smaller "bites." In other words, divide a long reading assignment into several shorter ones. It's like cutting a pie into smaller slices. Smaller sections of a chapter, like smaller bites, are easier to digest.

You can divide a long reading assignment into shorter sections by inserting sticky notes or paperclips every few pages. Choose logical stopping points, such as the end of a section. When you reach one of those points, stop and think about what you've read. Try to put the important information in your own words by saying it aloud or recording it on paper. If you are a visual learner, take notes, make a "map," sketch a picture, or create a mental image. All of these strategies

Encourage students to use the Weekly Study Schedule form on p. 44.

See note on p. 16 regarding student nametags as an exercise in following directions.

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For additional helpful suggestions, go to [Catalyst>Learning>Study Skills Tutor>Getting Off to a Strong Start](#)

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For additional helpful suggestions, go to [Catalyst>Learning>Study Skills Tutor>Studying Strategies](#)



CROSS-CHAPTER CONNECTIONS

In Chapter 12, you'll learn specific techniques for handling textbook assignments. You are welcome to look ahead. Keep in mind, however, that the techniques in that chapter are based on the reading comprehension skills you will learn in Chapters 7–11.

help transfer the information into long-term, or permanent, memory. If you need to, take a *short* break at the end of each section. You'll then be ready to tackle the next section.

Taking short breaks as you work makes it easier to stay focused. You will also be more motivated if you know that a brief change of pace is scheduled every half hour or so. Drink a glass of water. Stretch and move around a bit. Nibble on a healthy snack. Close your eyes

and take several slow, deep breaths. It goes without saying that you should avoid making phone calls, playing computer or video games, and doing other activities that could distract you from getting back to work.

Some subjects will be harder for you than others. If a subject is hard, spend more time on it. Unfortunately, many students tend to do exactly the opposite. Simply spending more time can make the difference between being successful and almost being successful.

Even if you're struggling with a subject, it doesn't mean that you can't learn it and do well. Chances are, you don't yet have the background knowledge you need in order to understand the material. If you take the time to fill in those gaps, your brain will be ready for the new material. To get the background information and help you need, explore the resources discussed later in item 6.

Complete every assignment to the best of your ability, even when you know you're not "getting it" completely. That way, you'll "know what you don't know." Best of all, you'll know the questions you need to ask at the next class session.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.5

- What is your plan for completing your homework on time? _____

- What would be the advantages to you of breaking long reading assignments into several shorter sections? _____

- Do you usually read the directions before you start an assignment? Why or why not? _____

- Which subjects seem more challenging to you? Do you lack background knowledge in those subjects? _____

5. Monitor your progress and see your instructor when you need help.

Another key to success is to monitor your progress in each of your courses. That means using feedback to evaluate how you're doing. **Feedback** is information that comes back to you in response to something you've done. The smell of popcorn burning in a microwave is feedback that tells you it's cooked too long. Ending up at the wrong website is feedback that tells you that you have typed in the wrong address. The great thing about feedback is that it lets you know if you're off track. If you are, you need to take steps to get back on track.

In school, feedback includes your instructor's verbal comments and ones written on assignments and tests. Test grades are feedback. Instructors spend time grading assignments and tests and writing comments on them. Take advantage of those comments. They're designed to help you. Some students glance at the grade. Then they either throw the paper away or shove it in their notebook without ever looking at it again. If you do this, you're throwing away a gift. In order to learn, your brain has to have feedback.

Besides using feedback from your instructor, you should monitor your own progress. Do you feel you are understanding the material, or do you feel confused? If you are not understanding it, try to figure out why. Are there too many words you don't know? Do you lack background knowledge? Are you not spending enough time on the subject? Write down your specific questions. Then talk with your instructor. Take your homework with you so that your instructor can see what you are doing. Instructors set aside certain times, called office hours, for meeting with students. They will be impressed that you care, that you want to learn, and that you are so responsible.

Remember, though, that your instructors are not there to solve your problems. Their job is to guide you in solving your own problems. Learning to solve your own problems is a valuable life skill. You gain confidence and self-esteem when you rely on yourself rather than someone else to fix your problems.

If you make a low grade on a test or don't do as well as you expected, see your instructor immediately. Go over items you missed. Describe to your instructor how you prepared for the test, and ask what you can do to improve your performance. Ask for suggestions about studying and learning the material, and for doing well in the course.

When you are reading, stop at the end of a section and use one of these techniques to give yourself feedback on your comprehension (understanding): Can you say in your own words what it was about? Can you make a sketch of what it was about and label it with key

words? If so, that's a good sign! If there is something you don't understand, write a question mark in the margin beside it. You can also make a list of questions to ask during or after class.

It's a good idea to keep a record of your grades in your classes. You'll know how you're doing, and it allows you to pinpoint material you're unsure of and need more practice on.

Another useful strategy is to jot down the date if you have to miss a class. Absences can add up fast if you're not paying attention to them. Many students are surprised when they learn that they've been absent six or eight times. Depending on how many times your course meets each week, that's equivalent to missing two to four *weeks* of class! Before a test, make sure you know what was covered in class on any day you were absent.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.6

- Have you taken any steps in the past to monitor how well you were doing in your schoolwork? If so, what were they? _____

- When you have had difficulty in a course in the past, did you seek help? If you were having difficulty in a course now, would you see the instructor? Why or why not? _____

- Do you read comments instructors write on your assignments? If not, why not? _____

- What are your plans for monitoring your progress in this course?

- How might it help if you stopped at the end of textbook sections and tried to capture the important information by saying it or putting it in written form? _____

6. Take advantage of out-of-class resources.

Download and duplicate “College Information and Resources” (ORL—Instructor Center, Chapter 2). This activity is a fun way to familiarize students with your college’s resources.

Did you know there are a wealth of resources you can draw on outside of class? These free college services are like a pot of gold, just waiting for you to discover it. Your college’s handbook or website lists its academic support services and campus resources. These can include tutoring, counseling, financial aid, library services, career planning and job placement services, intramural sports teams, student clubs and organizations, and college-sponsored events. (An astonishing array of support information is also available online. See the Bonus Tip box below for two helpful websites.)

Your college probably has a tutoring center. If so, you can schedule appointments. Be sure to go to tutoring sessions as prepared as possible. Read the chapter you want to discuss or try the assignment you want help with. That way you’ll know where you’re having problems, and it enables the tutor to be as helpful as possible.

Tutoring centers, libraries, or counseling centers usually offer free study skills sessions. Topics often include time management, listening skills, note taking, learning styles, memory, organizing and revising papers, test taking, stress reduction, and test anxiety. (Some instructors give students extra credit for attending these. Ask yours.) Some colleges offer a “master student class” or require a freshman orientation course. Before enrolling in such courses, you should strengthen your reading skills. You’ll get even more out of them.

Check out your campus resources. The counseling center can be helpful when you are having academic or personal problems. Health centers offer information, screening for various health problems or diseases, and, of course, they have band-aids and aspirin. Colleges also offer special services for students with disabilities, including learning disabilities. Unless you *ask* for help, though, your college is not likely to know you need help. As an adult, it’s your responsibility to ask.

Forming and participating in study groups enhances your learning and gives you support. Research findings are clear: Adults learn well from each other. Choose two or three other motivated students to meet with outside of class. Most students prefer to meet on campus, just before or after class. You can go over the homework together, and you can ask questions about anything that’s unclear. Study groups are

especially helpful for review before tests. Two old sayings explain why participating in study groups is so helpful: “To teach is to learn twice” and “If you would thoroughly know anything, teach it to others.” When you explain something to someone else, you make it clearer in your own mind. You also cement it in your long-term memory. (Here’s a joke that illustrates someone you *don’t* want to be in a study group with: Two students are walking down the hall, trying to decide how to spend the hour before their next class. “I know,” one of them declares.



BONUS TIP

<http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc/background.html> This website links to hundreds of college and university Web pages that address a vast range of student problems and concerns. The topics are categorized and alphabetized.

<http://www.uni.edu/walsh/linda7.html> Once at this website, click on “Sites to Promote Academic Success.” (Blank hourly, weekly, and monthly schedules are available here.)

“Let’s flip a coin! If it’s heads, we’ll hang out in the student lounge. If it’s tails, we’ll play video games. If it lands on its side, we’ll study.”)

What can you do on your own when a course seems hard? Several things! One is to find easier books on the topic. Go to a public library. At the public library, ask a librarian to direct you to the young adult section or help you find an easier book on the subject that’s giving you trouble. Or, you can go to a bookstore and look for “made easy” books. These are books whose titles include phrases such as *Made Easy, for Beginners* and *an Introduction to*. (The popular *Idiot’s Guide* and *for Dummies* series are examples.) Once you’ve read a simpler explanation of a concept, the college textbook explanation of it makes a lot more sense.

Another thing you can do outside of class is to learn to type, if you don’t already know how. (See the Bonus Tip box below.) College professors



BONUS TIP

To learn to type, check into noncredit typing classes at your college. In noncredit courses, you don’t have to worry about the pressure of a grade. Noncredit courses are also called “continuing education” or “community service” courses. They may last a few weeks or the length of a semester. Tuition is usually low at public colleges.

You can also buy computer software that teaches you to type (such as *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* and *Typing Tutor*). These programs offer a series of lessons, practice exercises, and games, and they keep track of your progress.

expect you to turn in typed papers. Most employers expect you to type well enough to use a computer. Typing is a terrific skill to have, especially if you are a visual-spatial learner, have handwriting that is difficult to read, or find it slow and frustrating to write by hand. It lets you do word processing (type) on a computer. (A bonus: word-processing programs have built-in spell check and grammar-checking features.) Remember, though, that while you are learning, you have to set aside time to practice, perhaps 15 minutes a day. Once you have the skill, you’ll have it for life. The goal is to become an accurate typist. You don’t have to set any records for speed. No matter how slowly

you type, you’re bound to type better than the students who make these joking comments:

“I’m sorry my term paper turned in late: I broke my typing finger.”

“I type 60 words per minute, most of which are recognizable.”

Being able to type makes it possible for you to use the Internet more fully. If you don’t know how to use the Internet, check with your college’s library or computer center to see if they offer free training sessions. If you do not have an email account, see if one is available free through your college. You can also inquire about other services that offer free email accounts. Email gives you an additional way to contact your instructor and classmates. For that reason, some instructors require students to have email.



STOP AND PROCESS

EXERCISE 2.7

- List the resources you are aware of that are offered by your college. Which one might be useful to you? Which ones, if any, have you used? _____

Have students compare the list of resources they're aware of. Show them print materials your college offers about its resources and give them your college's website. Point out resources that might be of particular help to them, such as the tutoring center, computer center, and library. Although it's early in the semester, ask them to think about forming study groups in a couple of weeks (for those who know they learn well from others).

-
-
-
- Based on your learning style and preferences, do you think participating in a study group would work for you? Why or why not? _____
-
-

- Do you know how to type? If not, would you consider learning?
-
-

- Describe your ability to find information efficiently on the Internet. (For example, if you use a search engine, do you know how to narrow down the choices you are given? Do you know how to tell informational websites from commercial ones, and trustworthy websites from untrustworthy ones?) _____
-
-

Succeed in College and Beyond

If you consistently use the behaviors described in this chapter, not only will you be more successful in school, you will be more successful in life. In addition to academic goals, you can set personal goals, career goals, and life goals. You can apply the strategy of getting organized to your personal life and to your job. You can use the strategy of planning and preparing for important events and projects at home or at work. You can monitor your progress in various areas of your life and work, as well as in your schoolwork. You can seek support and help when you need it in any circumstance. In short, these simple strategies can help you continue to learn, grow, and achieve throughout your life and far beyond the classroom.

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For additional helpful resources, go to [Catalyst>Learning>Additional Links on Learning](#)


MY TOOLBOX of Success Behaviors outside the Classroom

What specifically can you do *outside* the classroom to make yourself more successful in the classroom? On a separate piece of paper, record those behaviors. Include 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 the way that will help you most. Here are some possibilities:

- **Write a list and brief description of the six classroom success tools.** Write them in your own words so that you will remember them. You can use notebook paper or index cards. 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 out-of-class 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 draw a study map instead of writing a list.** To make a map, draw a circle in the middle of the page. Write the words “Out-of-Class Success Behaviors” in the circle. Then write specific success behaviors on lines that radiate from the circle. You can make lines of any sort—thick, thin, solid, dashed, or dotted, for example. You may prefer simply to use key words. You can include small illustrations or sketches and work with colored pens. (The Online Reading Lab (ORL) presents information about 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. *Use these success behaviors along with the ones from Chapter 1 and you will be well on your way to succeeding in college!*



CHAPTER CHECK

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

1. Research suggests that most students accomplish more when they study during daylight hours than at night.
2. Before you begin studying, have all the supplies you need at hand.
3. To hydrate your brain, drink some water before you study.
4. When you finish studying, put everything you need for the next day in one place.
5. In college, homework may take longer than you think, so start well ahead of time.
6. When you start a homework assignment, read any instructions/directions for it.
7. Divide long assignments into shorter ones.
8. If a subject is hard for you, spend more time on it.
9. In order to learn, the brain has to have feedback.
10. If you make a low grade on a test or don't do as well as you expected, see your instructor immediately.
11. Before a test, make sure you know what was covered in class on any day you were absent.
12. Your college's handbook or website will list all of the academic support services and campus resources that are available to you.
13. Forming and participating in study groups enhances your learning and makes you feel supported.
14. Once you've read a simpler explanation of a concept, the college textbook explanation of it makes more sense.
15. If you don't know how to use the Internet, check at your college's library or computer center to see if they offer free training sessions.

REVIEW EXERCISES

Below are two case studies of students whose out-of-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 activities 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.

SET 1

Read these remarks written by Brian, who has just completed his first month at a vocational and technical college. He is 24. He is married and has a young son. He works 40 hours a week for a delivery service. His ambition is to become a certified computer technician. Certain things he is doing outside of class are limiting his success. Based on the chapter information, what advice would you give him? Write your suggestions and advice in the space provided.

"I have a full-time job and a family, so I have a lot of responsibility. I want to get through college as quick as possible. That's why I plan to take at least four courses every semester. Right now, I take classes four evenings a week. Between work and class I swing by a fast-food restaurant, pick up a soft drink and something to eat at the drive-through, and eat while I drive to campus.

"The only time I can study is after I get home at night. I'm tired, and I often fall asleep when I study. I've started turning on upbeat music to keep me awake and drinking more coffee. I study at the kitchen table so that I don't disturb my wife and son while they're trying to sleep.

"When I study, I try to push myself to keep going. I'm afraid if I take a break I might not get back to the books. On weekends, I like to spend time with my family or to relax. I play games on the computer. I don't think I should have to study on weekends.

"On the first test in my computer class I made a 63. I'm not sure why. I reread most of the material the night before the test, so I figured I knew it. How can you tell whether or not you know it until it's too late? It's very frustrating."

Blank lined area for writing suggestions and advice.

SET 2

Now read what Natalie has to say. She's attending a state college and lives in an apartment with two roommates. She works on campus in the bookstore 18 hours a week. This is her first semester in college. Use the chapter information as the basis for giving her advice about changing things she is doing outside of class.

"College seemed like it would be fun and my two best friends from high school were planning to go, so I decided to go too. The three of us share an apartment, and that part is very cool. We go out a lot. Also, we have a plasma screen TV with built-in DVD, and we record our favorite soap operas and watch them at night.

"I hate to say it, but I feel resentful about having to study. I always intend to study, but I'm just not disciplined enough to do it on my own. Going to the mall, hanging out, and chatting online are much more fun and I end up doing them instead. It makes me feel guilty, though. The assignments seem so long. I look at how many pages I have to read, and I get discouraged and I give up before I ever start. When I do read a textbook assignment, I never know whether I've gotten anything out of it.

"I feel like I spend my time rushing from one thing to another and from one place to another. I forget things and have to double back. Like last week, I left my history book at work. I had a test the next day, so I had to go back and pick it up. Usually I have a bunch of

errands, and before I know it, an entire afternoon or evening is gone, and I don't have the time or energy to study.

"As I mentioned, I have trouble keeping up with stuff. My keys, my cell phone, even my purse. Yesterday I was late to class. It took me 20 minutes to find my car keys. They were in the pocket of the jeans I wore the day before. There was a survey I was supposed to fill out and turn in for my health and fitness class. I still can't find it.

"I've already missed four days of class this semester. A couple of times I overslept. Because I missed a class, I didn't know I had a psychology test, and I flunked it. How am I going to get caught up? Where can I get some help on the stuff I missed? Two of my courses are especially hard. How can I learn the material in them? I need to improve my writing. I don't even know how to type. Unless I get these problems straightened out, they're going to keep bugging me. I don't know where to begin.

"No one else in my family has ever attended college. I don't want to disappoint them, but I don't think they understand what I'm coping with. I'm not sure what it means to be a 'college student.' I'm not even sure what I want in life, or how college is going to help me achieve it. Help!"

SET 3

Choose one of the following scenarios. Use the principles in this chapter to develop a plan that would allow you to complete effectively and on time the assignment described in it. What steps would you take to get organized and to break the bigger tasks into smaller steps?

Scenario 1

In your psychology class, you are assigned to write an eight-page paper about college students' stress. The directions tell you that you can focus on what causes students the greatest stress, when during the semester they feel the greatest stress, how they cope with stress, or some other aspect of the topic. You must gather data by creating and administering a short written or oral survey to at least 20 students. In your paper, you are to explain what you researched, how you gathered data (attach your survey), the information that you discovered, and your interpretation of your findings. The paper should be typed, and it is due in two weeks.

Scenario 2

In your speech class, you are to make a presentation that teaches your classmates how to *do* something. You are to choose something that you are good at, such as changing a tire, serving a tennis ball, or decorating a cake. You must include one or more visual aids in your presentation. Photos, props, a poster, or real items (such as a tennis racket and ball, or cake and frosting) are examples of visual aids. Plan an opening, middle, and end to your presentation and jot your notes on index cards. Be ready to give your presentation one week from today.

ASSESS YOUR UNDERSTANDING

In this chapter, you learned that one way you become a better student is by monitoring your understanding and then taking steps when there are things you don't understand. Now is your chance to apply that skill to this very chapter.

How did you do on the Chapter Check? You can use it as a source of feedback. Also, ask yourself, "Could I tell someone what the six out-of-class success behaviors are? Could I explain what each behavior is and why it's important?" On a scale of 1–10, circle a number on the scale that reflects your level of understanding. (On the bright side, you already know at least *one* of the six strategies: using feedback to monitor your understanding!)

Encourage students to *think* before they mark a number. Otherwise, many will be tempted to circle the psychologically safe 5. (You may even want to instruct them not to choose 5.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I wouldn't even know where to start!

I might stumble a bit.

No problem! I could do it easily!

Now that you've ranked yourself, think about *why* you chose the number you did. *If you marked less than 10 on the scale, identify what it is that you don't understand.* What, specifically, are you unclear about? One certain success behavior? Or are you hazy on several of them? It's important to answer these questions. When you know what the problem is, you can decide how to fix it. Write your response on the lines below.

For the things you mentioned above (things you don't understand or can't remember), what steps could you take to improve your comprehension? Do you need to reread all or part of the chapter? Ask a classmate or your instructor questions? Write the information down or review the information some other way? Write your response here.

(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 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's anything you still need to learn, go back and take care of it now. Then you can move forward with confidence.