

Making the grade

Research has proven time and time again that regular, ongoing study is far more beneficial than "cramming" at the last minute for tests or exams. Regularly reading, reviewing and practicing concepts is the best way to ensure positive results at year end.

For students who may have difficulty getting started, educators have the following advice:

- **When are you most awake and alert?** Early in the morning? Just after dinner? Right after school? Study at times when you know you will do your best work.
- **Establish a particular time for study each day.** It is much easier to maintain an established schedule than to "fit it in" some time in the day. Set aside enough time to accomplish your goals for each study period.
- **Plan your study period.** Decide what it is you will be studying, and what you hope to accomplish during the session. Which chapters, concepts, and principles will you focus on? Long-term planning will help you to avoid cramming prior to tests or exams.
- **Study for 25 - 45 minutes at a time**, then take a break by doing something you enjoy.
- **Choose a location with minimum distractions** such as the telephone, radio or TV. Ask others in your home to respect this time and your need for concentration.
- **Prepare your study area.** Use a good chair, table and light, and ensure any materials that you need are available.
- **Try a little exercise just prior to studying.** If you feel yourself losing your concentration, go for a quick walk around the block.
- **Collect any information which may help you to learn the subject.** This includes past tests, teacher handouts, homework assignments, the notes you took in class and from the textbook. Use as many different references as you are able to find.
- **When you start an assignment, review what you already know about the subject.** Ask yourself, "What do I need to learn about this subject?"
- **Vary the methods you use for reviewing materials.** Try reading aloud to increase your focus. Pin a piece of paper on the wall and stand up when creating a diagram. Use different colours of ink, or different writing styles when taking notes. Start at the bottom of the page and work up for a change.
- **Think of questions that you would put on the test** if you were the teachers. Write the questions down and use them to study. Trade your questions with a friend.
- **When you finish an assignment, review what you have just learned.** Tell yourself as if you were instructing another student.
- **Plan the week prior to an exam or test carefully.** Ensure you get adequate sleep and physical exercise.

