

~Tips for Studying Biology~

Study Idea #1. *Type out your notes.*

1. It eliminates visual distractions on the page. It makes your notes appear clean and, hopefully, concise.

2. It forces you to re-visit the material. This is especially helpful when you have not reviewed the material for awhile. You will have an easier time when you eventually sit down and try to memorize things, trust me.

3. It produces a "self-test". When I sit down to type my notes, I often format them into two columns. One column is the "question" side, and one column is the "answer" side. This way I can cover up the "answer" column and test myself before the exam. Another format I use when typing my notes is simply to write out the question, skip a few lines of text, and then type out the answer. I quiz myself by trying to answer the questions on a piece of paper and then checking them with the typed answer.

Study Idea #2. *Use your artistic abilities.*

This idea is good for studying complex processes and detailed concepts. I start by breaking down my complicated notes into little segments of information. Whenever possible I try to incorporate simple, bright illustrations. **In creating these "mini-billboards" of information, I am able to familiarize myself with the material without getting overwhelmed by all the details.** After I have come to understand the basic concepts, I build on my knowledge and start memorizing the details. Typically, this means that I turn to note-cards or my typed notes to help with memorization. But visual aids are a great way to start tackling complicated information.

Study Idea #3. *You can learn a lot in 15 minutes.*

I take my notes everywhere and study them during all of life's "in-between" moments. These short study periods are helpful because the material is more familiar to me when I sit down at night to really concentrate on memorizing. **A couple minutes here and there eventually add up,** and when you are pressed for time, these precious snippets of studying really count.

Study Idea #4. *Break things up.*

To help break up the material and the long periods of study time, **I divide my typed notes into short packets of four or five pages each.** Each day I try and learn the material of one packet. As my learning progresses, I review multiple packets in one study session. To really learn the material, I normally plan out my study schedule so that I have two full days to review all of the material. This means that I have to start studying well

before the exam date, but I am able to walk into the classroom on the day of testing feeling very confident with my knowledge of the material.

Study Idea #5. *It's all about the atmosphere.*

Find a place that is conducive to studying. This means: 1. You want to go somewhere where you won't be interrupted. Sometimes this means getting away from webmail and telephones and the like. 2. Make sure you have plenty of pencils and paper, and that you bring your textbook along to answer any questions that may arise during the course of your studying.

Study Idea #6. *Go to all the review sessions.*

This will work for you in multiple ways. First off, your professor will know that you are serious about learning the material. Secondly, they incorporate yet another way for you to familiarize yourself with the topics under study. Review sessions are also helpful for the obvious reason that they allow you the chance to ask questions concerning material that still is unclear to you. Finally, they allow you to hear the questions of others. This is important because other students may present questions that you never thought of. I always look at review sessions as an opportunity to "polish-up" on my knowledge of the material.

Study Idea #7. *Write down your questions and visit your professor during office hours.*

Professor's are often pressed for time, especially when an exam is near. When studying, I keep a running list of questions. I make note of concepts that are still unclear to me. To answer these questions and clear up my understanding of the material, I first consult my textbook. If the textbook does not sufficiently cover my question, then I approach my professor during office hours. I bring the list of questions with me this way I am assured that all of my questions will be answered.

Study Idea #8. *Believe in yourself.*

If you have taken an active role in learning the material, then walk into the classroom on the day of the exam with a smile. You prepared yourself well. Now is the chance to show your professor how much you've learned.