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**Understand Yourself.** A big part of academic success is having the right mindset. You have to not only believe in yourself, but also know enough about yourself to know how to achieve that success. Take the time to examine your academic strengths and weaknesses and find ways to capitalize on your strengths while overcoming or minimizing your weaknesses. Finally, understand how you learn things best -- your learning style -- and try and find classes and study methods that best utilize the way you learn.

**Manage Your Courses**. Many students struggle academically, not because they do not have the abilities, but because they simply do not actively manage their courses. You should be an expert on the syllabus of each of your courses, with a strong sense of every major assignment and test -- including expectations, requirements, and due dates. If some of your professors are too vague on their syllabi, take the time to get the detailed information you need to better plan and execute all graded materials for your classes now.

**Read Actively**. Yes, there is quite a bit of reading assigned in college. Still, part of your job as a student is to not only read all of it -- but do so actively rather than passively. Active reading means doing more than just reading. For some people, it means underlining, highlighting, or annotating the materials. Others develop a list of keywords and summarize materials as they read. Still others continually quiz themselves and try to put the information in a different context that helps them better understand it and retain it. Understand the three R's of memory: reception (attentive and observant), retention (review and recite), and recollection (organizing and visualizing).

**Utilize Every Class.** Too obvious? This tip is not just about attending every class -- though attendance is the foundation of it. Not only must you attend every class session, but you should do so with a strategy to succeed. First, you should sit toward the front of the class; studies show that students who sit in one of the first few rows generally achieve better grades than students who sit toward the back. Second, you should get actively involved in the class. Of course, some classes are pure lecture format, but most allow -- and desire -- some level of student participation -- so get involved and speak up. Finally, if you're going to make the effort to attend class, do so with the primary goal of learning -- which means don't be distracted reading other materials, texting, surfing the Net on your laptop, or talking to the student next to you.

**Take Great Notes**. It's not enough to attend and be actively involved in every class -- you need to also listen carefully and take detailed notes. Obviously you need to listen to take great notes, but there's more to listening than just taking notes. Many professors provide pretty strong clues about the most important elements within a lecture -- even going as far as to say something about a topic's importance for the next test. The best students pick up on these clues. In terms of note-taking, there are any number of systems (Cornell, outlining, mapping, charting, and sentence methods), so the crucial step for you is to find the one system -- including one you develop for yourself -- that works for you.

**Study Daily and Differently**. Every single study of academic success shows that students who commit some time every day to studying -- reading, writing, reviewing, etc. -- perform at a much higher level than those who study in larger chunks, and much better than those who cram. Studying daily builds and increases your knowledge base for the long-term -- assuming you are studying actively rather than passively. Active studying means practicing involving behaviors, such as creating outlines, developing flash cards, participating in study groups, rewriting notes, etc. When possible, take practice quizzes and tests to prepare for the actual examinations.

**Know Your Professor.** Put another way, make sure your professor knows you. It's amazing how many students choose to be anonymous in the classroom. There's nothing wrong with that strategy -- and in some massive lectures halls of thousands of students, it might be your only choice. You don't have to become best buddies with your professor -- and we are not advocating the "kiss-up" strategy either. This tip is about you moving beyond being an anonymous name or number to being an actual person -- whom the professor recognizes. We suggest visiting the professor during his/her office hours. The benefits of this strategy are enormous because you'll get the help you need as well as often getting some insider information -- and there's even something termed the "halo effect," which deals with the concept that a professor grades more leniently when s/he grades an assignment of a student s/he knows (and respects).

**Obtain the Help You Need.** Don't wait -- find the help you need as early as possible in the course, long before you begin worrying about whether the course is even salvageable or not. Your first line of help, of course, is your professor and/or graduate assistants. Next up are campus tutoring centers (most colleges have writing, math, and foreign language labs), where you can obtain expert advice and assistance from other students. You can also find your own personal tutors, as many graduate students offer tutoring on the side. If your problem is less academic and more related to other issues, visit your school's academic support center -- in which you'll find assistance for learning disabilities and other guidance. Finally, for more informal help, don't forget to turn to your classmates for assistance.

**Improve Your Writing**. Writing is the cornerstone of academic -- and career -- success. You most certainly should strive to improve both your writing and your vocabulary while in college. Becoming a strong writer with the ability to clearly express your ideas and arguments will have amazing payoffs in courses that have a writing component -- whether a research paper, term project, or essay exams. Plus, working to improve your writing also strengthens your critical thinking abilities as well as your listening, reading, and speaking skills -- and helps to build your self-confidence. Developing better writing skills will make you feel -- and sound -- smarter, and lead you to greater professional success.

**Get Involved on Campus**. This advice might seem counter to some of the other tips in this article, but studies show that students who have some involvement in campus activities actually are better at managing their time and balancing multiple demands for their time. In fact, don't just get involved but strive for a leadership positions -- doing so will force you to work harder, plus it will look good to grad schools and employers when they review your resume. But before you happily join a bunch of clubs and organizations, please note that your involvement should be moderate. Be involved, but not over-extended. As soon as your social life starts interfering with your school work, cut back so that it does not affect your goal of better academic success.