

# ACADEMIC SUPPORT STUDY SKILLS WORKSHEETS

1. 5 Myths About Organization
2. Goal Setting
3. Optimize Your Planner
4. Top 4 Note Strategies
5. Reading Strategy – SQ4R
6. Managing Stress
7. Project or Paper Plan
8. Weekly Schedule

# Five Myths about Organization

## 1. You have to keep everything.

We frequently fall on the extremes of the spectrum: either we save *everything* or we get rid of everything immediately and later regret it. Your inbox might have hundreds of email just in case you need something from them in the future, you have a closet full of boxes full of papers, and you have filing cabinets where you probably waste more time looking for specific items than finding them. The core belief that you must keep everything “just in case” is responsible for all that clutters and is a major cause of disorganization in your life. Here are some facts for all of you collectors:

- Most people use only 15% of what they file.
- By determining what is usable and letting go of the rest you can consolidate information that is useful and discard the rest.
- It takes great courage to let go of past information.

**Reality:** You do not have to keep everything. And by getting rid of what you don't need you will feel less burdened and free, you will have more time to do what matters, and you will be able to find the information you do need when you need it.

## 2. There is just too much information and interruptions to be organized.

In this age of technology and social media, you are overloaded with a constant barrage of information and interruptive communications. Facebook, IMs, Twitter, SnapChat, emails, etc., constantly pop up and cause distractions. People can get a hold of you whenever and wherever they want to, regardless of what *you* want. The belief that it is impossible to stop these interruptions and organize your communication practices is another blockade on the pathway to a structured work life.

In order to become more organized in this area you need to learn a method for processing your life, whether it be your inbox, texts, class notes, etc.. Ultimately, remember that *you* are the most important component of your success. You do not have to put others first. Turn your phone off when studying and remove the icon and ding that alerts you an email has arrived. Everything can wait.

Remember, interruptions only occur when we permit them. When you constantly allow people to interrupt you, whether it is in person or by telephone, you are actually training them that it is o.k. to interrupt. Set boundaries with your friends, roommates, and even family. Let them know that if they need something they will need to bring it to you at a certain time. Politely inform them that they will be sent away and asked to come back later if they choose to interrupt. Remember to stand firm in these boundaries. Over time people will know that you mean business and they will figure out that you're more helpful to them when you're organized and able to give them your undivided attention.

**Reality:** You can manage the information and the interruptions, because the problem doesn't lie in the amount of information and interruptions. The problem lies with your methods of processing that information and handling the interruptions.

# Five Myths about Organization

## 3. Getting and staying organized takes too much time.

Some people believe that personal organization it takes too much time. You might believe that it is not possible to add anything new to your already overfilled work flow. Here are a few things you might be doing that would be greatly improved by getting organized:

- Reading an email message today, and then reading it again tomorrow because it is still in your inbox.
- Showing up to a class session without the required materials or the homework assignment.
- Adding tasks to your task list and then adding those same tasks to next week's task list because you forgot to do them.
- Spending too much time filing and searching for information (also known as a way to procrastinate)

**Reality:** You *do* have the time to get organized, due to the fact that by getting organized you will be saving yourself from the countless wasted hours and days of disorganization.

## 4. I am too undisciplined to be organized.

When you get up in the morning, eat breakfast, brush your teeth, get to class, etc. you are being disciplined. Discipline is something that we practice unknowingly. What you probably lack is *motivation*.

Motivation comes from the desire to do something. Don't want to get organized? Find your desire in it. This might be to save you time in the future, or help you in class, or make your life easier. Use being unorganized as an excuse to procrastinate? Reward yourself by completing tasks and then doing something enjoyable. The reality is that you are a disciplined person but the key to applying that discipline to being organized is the cultivation of motivation. Enthusiasm will provoke you to be disciplined.

## 5. I am not organized by nature.

This is the most important myth to dispel in order to move forward into organized productivity. The belief that you weren't born with the ability to become organized in your affairs is the number one offender on this list. Organization is not something hard coded into your D.N.A. It is a skill that can be taught, learned, and then practiced. It is actually an essentially simple skill to master once you are willing to let go of any pre-conceived notions regarding yourself and your ability to be organized.

**Reality:** You can be an organized and a more productive individual. All it takes to become the organized person you long to be is a willingness to learn a few techniques and to practice those techniques until they are an ingrained aspect of your work style.

Organization is not something that only certain people are capable of. Anybody, even you can learn to be an organized and productive person. If you find yourself believing otherwise, try saying to yourself, "I am an organized person," and believe it – even if the evidence hasn't shown itself quite yet.

# SET & ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS

You may have heard the acronym “SMART” Goals. It is a popular way of teaching and understanding how to set and accomplish goals. There are many different variations of SMART Goals as different people and organizations adapt its basic structure to meet their needs. The following is a variation of SMART Goals that has been revised to help you set and accomplish your specific goals as a student.

## **SPECIFIC:**

Set some goals! Be clear, concise, and establish *WHY* you are working toward this goal. If your goal is to apply for a law internship...why? Well, because you want to be sure that entering the law field or going to law school is something you will enjoy.

## **MEASURABLE:**

Quantifying your goals sounds like the most tedious or confusing part of creating goals, but it's not. In fact, making your goals measurable is great because you can reward yourself as you hit your *measurable* benchmarks! For example, if your goal is to apply for graduate school and your measurable tasks are to complete each task as follows: write a draft of my personal statement, have someone edit my personal statement, revise my personal statement, and turn in my personal statement, then after each task is accomplished, treat yourself. Go meet up with friends, call your mom (or dad, or parent like figure), or whatever else will motivate you to keep on going!

## **ACCOUNTABLE:**

While most SMART Goals have the “A” represent “achievable,” we would like to believe anything is within your grasp (within reason) with your determination. So instead, how are you going to be *accountable* in achieving your goal? The loose definition of accountable is: your justified actions or decisions. If your goal is to get a 95% or better on your next Philosophy exam, an example of holding yourself accountable could be making the decision to study on Friday night instead of going out to dinner with friends.

## **RESOURCES:**

Be resourceful! Identify what resources you need to achieve your goal. For example, if your goal is to receive a high GRE score, what will you need? Perhaps you will purchase a GRE study book, download a study app for your phone, form a study group, etc. Anticipate what you will need and write it down.

## **TIME-BOUND:**

Big picture, when will you want to achieve this goal? By the end of the semester, next month, a year from now? For some goals it can be helpful to set smaller benchmarks. For instance, if you are writing a research project and your big picture goal is to finish by the end of the semester, set smaller goals for when you will finish collecting research, when you will write your outline, etc.

## **+FLEXIBILITY:**

(Sorry this doesn't fit in with the SMART acronym, but it's the most important part!) Life is not linear. You cannot anticipate everything that will happen to you. When something does happen that is unplanned, be flexible. You can achieve you goals even with setbacks. Readjust, be kind to yourself, and keep moving forward.

THE COLLEGE  
*of* IDAHO  
The PEAK Center



# WRITE YOUR GOALS DOWN

Goal:	
Why this goal?	Completion Date:
Define tasks & steps to be completed: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____	Task 1 Deadline: _____ Task 2 Deadline: _____ Task 3 Deadline: _____ Task 4 Deadline: _____
What resources do you need?	
What evidences will show this goal has been completed?	
Create a reward for accomplishing this goal:	

Goal:	
Why this goal?	Completion Date:
Define tasks & steps to be completed: 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____ 4) _____	Task 1 Deadline: _____ Task 2 Deadline: _____ Task 3 Deadline: _____ Task 4 Deadline: _____
What resources do you need?	
What evidences will show this goal has been completed?	
Create a reward for accomplishing this goal:	



# OPTIMIZE YOUR PLANNER

Before you begin using your planner successfully, you'll need to figure out where you invest your time currently. On the second sheet you'll find two week-long time logs. For two weeks, write out by-the-hour tasks and activities that you participate in. This should include when you wake up, how long it takes to get ready, meal times, social time, class time, TV time, etc. After two consecutive weeks of recording your daily investments, you'll be able to visualize where in your schedule you can allot more or less time to certain tasks. *This is the foundation for optimizing your time management skills!*

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1. First, go to the campus calendar on The College of Idaho's website and identify important dates to add to the month and weekly views of your planner. Important dates include when campus is closed, class registration, add/drop dates, etc.
2. Next, gather all your course syllabi and start by writing any major due dates in the month and weekly views of your planner. Examples are mid-term exams, papers, and large projects.
3. Then go through your syllabi and add homework & reading assignments only to the week view. Tip: you can identify which class the homework belongs to either by color coding or by adding the course number next to the homework assignment.

**Note: Keep your daily tasks to the week view while using the monthly view exclusively for larger events and dates.**

4. Once all your academic commitments are planned out, think about your other activities: work, club meetings, athletic practice, etc. All extra-curricular and co-curricular commitments should be added to the weekly view of your planner.
5. Finally, looking at your weekly views for the whole semester, go through and designate time for:
  - a. Studying/homework time
  - b. Meal times
  - c. Social/non-academic time
  - d. Self-care time (exercising, watching TV, etc.)
6. As the semester goes along, professors may ask you to do additional work that is not indicated on the syllabi or change assignments! Make sure and always travel with your planner so you can add to it whenever needed.
7. Now that you've got important dates all in one place, your biggest challenge is to **USE IT!** You've just created a personal guide to keep you on track – academically and personally. Refer to your planner often and cross-off tasks as you complete them. This will help keep track of what there is still to-do.



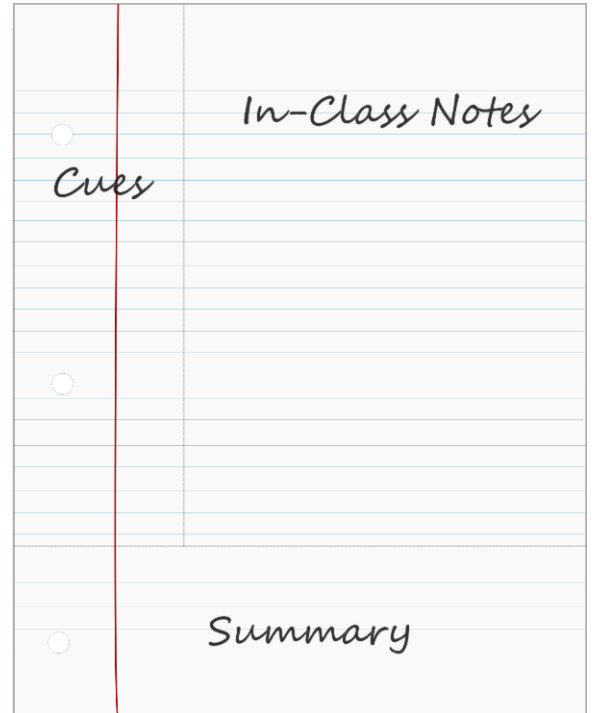
# FOUR Note Taking Strategies

## 1) Cornell Notes:

- a) Divide paper into three sections:
  - Left side column = Main concepts & cues (big questions or themes). Can be identified during lecture or after.
  - Right side large space = Notetaking during lecture.
  - Bottom of page = Summary. Develop at the end or after class.

**PROS:** Well-known note taking strategy that others can relate with. Allows for easy studying for a test (cover a section and either describe the notes for a specific cue, or identify the cue from a section of notes). Rigidly organized and consistent structure for every class.

**CONS:** Requires time after class to develop summary.

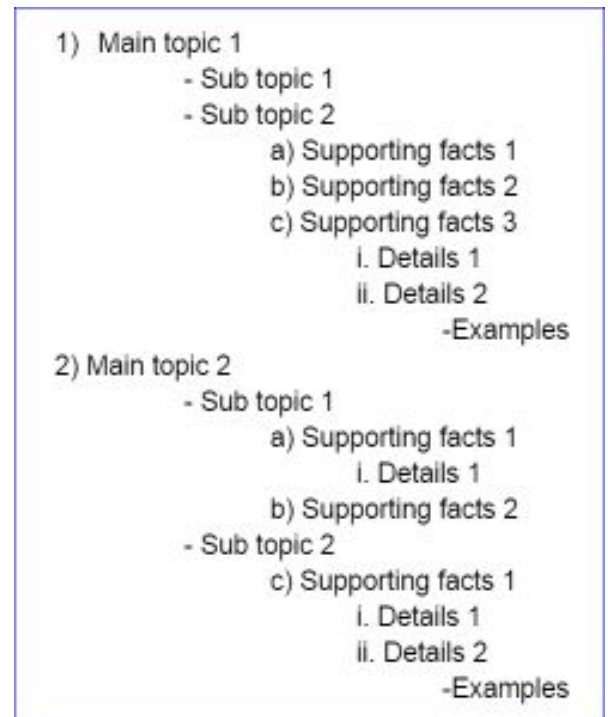


## 2) Outline Method:

- a) Indicate main theme or concept with a numerical or alphabetical bullet furthest to the left of the page.
- b) For sub-themes, create another level of information with an indentation and a different bullet point style.
- c) Create more levels for definitions, facts, and specific information.
- d) Repeat all steps per main theme or concept.

**PROS:** Pre-programmed formatting when using computer. Rigidly organized and consistent structure for every class. Shows hierarchy of information linearly. Can be used for most fields of study.

**CONS:** Requires alert attention for identifying hierarchy of information. Not a well suited note taking strategy for fast spoken lectures (takes time to process what information goes where, especially with 4-5 levels of information).



## 3) Mind Map or Concept Map:

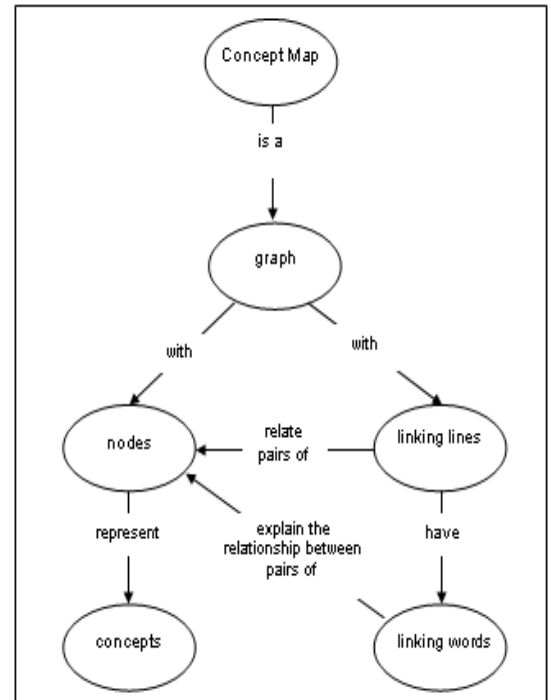


# FOUR Note Taking Strategies

- Create a circle in the middle or top of the page and write the main concept/topic for the class inside the circle (sometimes this main concept will be indicated on your syllabus). If you do not know the main theme, leave the circle blank and determine what should go there after class.
- For each sub-theme or concept, draw a line off the main circle and create new circles with sub-themes indicated.
- Off the sub-themes, create multiple lines and circles for facts, dates, specifics, etc.
- During or after class, draw additional lines for sub-themes that can be connected and understood together. This creates a fluid understanding of the information.

**PROS:** You can identify multiple pathways/connections for the same information. Best if done with paper and pen. Best used for understanding/learning theories and philosophical concepts.

**CONS:** Not well suited for computers. Works well with limited fields of study (i.e. Religion, Philosophy, etc.)

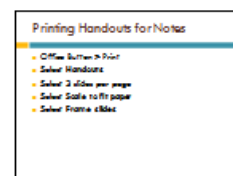


## 4) Power Point Slides:

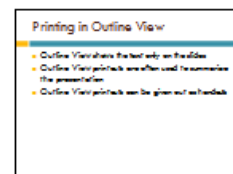
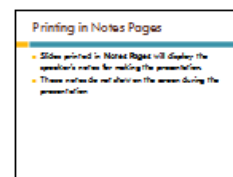
- Print slides before class.
- As the professor goes through each slide, add anecdotes, facts, and definitions.

**PROS:** The main themes are provided already. Notes will match with professors resources; some professors develop tests based off of class slides/lectures (with additional outside readings and resources).

**CONS:** Professor may not make power points available prior to class. Notes may not be all in one place for studying unless compiled into a binder or folder.



Handouts for note taking



\* Whatever style you choose, remember to date your notes!

\*\*Images used from Google Images.





# Reading Strategy: SQ4R

**SURVEY:** Prior to reading anything, figure out how long your reading section is. Flip through the section and scan all the title(s) and subheadings. Take a brief look at pictures, charts, and/or graphs provided. Then, if an abstract is provided read it over and figure out what the major take-away(s) are: the purpose, major theme(s), or concept(s) you should focus on.

**QUESTION:** From your initial observations or deductions, develop questions you would like answered through this reading section. Sometimes your professor will provide questions to be answered, but if not, when you create your own questions you are actively reading and learning. If you read the required section and your questions are not answered then you have identified great questions to ask your professor or present for class discussion.

**READ:** Start reading. Slowly. Re-read. Pause. Consider what you just read and if it answers your questions. Does it pose another question? Continue reading. Annotate in the margins. Highlight.

**RECITE:** Look over your notes, highlights, and annotations. Recite and note key points or words either out loud or to yourself.

**RELATE:** Connect take-away concepts by relating them to your experiences. By doing so, you are developing multiple pathways in your brain to arrive at the same answer which will assist you in recalling information.

**REVIEW:** Step away from the reading material for a period of time. Just make sure that prior to the next class period, you review your notes, highlights, annotations, and skim through the actual reading again. Gather the questions that were left unanswered and you will be ready for class discussions and future tests.

# Managing Stress



**Manage Your Time:** Create to-do lists, use a planner or calendar, and intentionally schedule self-care time.



**No Substance Abuse:** Drugs and Alcohol mask stress. They do not solve or help stress.



**Move Your Body:** Physical activity can reduce stress naturally.



**Take A Break:** Stretch, go for a walk, call a friend or family member, and/or eat a snack.



**Minimize Distractions:** Interruptions can prevent comprehension and can make tasks longer.



**Eat Healthier Foods:** Foods with high fat, sugar, and sodium or skipping meals will make you more lethargic.



**Practice Positive Thinking:** Focus on things you can control. Worrying about negatives will not change the thing you are worrying about. Positive thinking and actions can.



**Seek Help:** RA's, FYM's, Counselors, Residence Life, LDS, and the PEAK Center all exist to support you. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. Seeking help is a sign of self-awareness and maturity.



**Do Not Skip Sleeping:** Not sleeping compounds stress. Figure out how much time you need to feel fully rested and make sure and develop your schedule around your sleeping needs.



**Sometimes Say No:** You are probably a "Yes-er," saying yes to everything. Do not feel guilty for saying no. Taking on too much will add to your stress, not reduce it. The quality of your work may suffer as well.

# Project or Research Paper Plan

- **Name of Project** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Class/Professor** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Final Due Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Divide assignment into smaller sections (i.e. research, writing intro, peer edit, etc.)</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Personal Due Date</b>



# Weekly Schedule

(Where do I invest my time?)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
5:00AM							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00PM							
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10:00							
11:00							
12:00AM							
1:00-4:00							