

# Active Studying

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*Studying is the process of organizing and processing information to enhance comprehension and retention. It involves tailoring your approach to how you best understand and learn new material.*

## Passive vs. Active Studying

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There are two (2) main approaches to studying: passive and active. *Passive studying* involves receiving information in an uninvolved manner, such as reading textbooks, listening to lectures, and reviewing lecture notes. Passive studying often lacks engagement, resulting in surface-level understanding.

On the other hand, *active studying* encourages a deeper engagement with the material. This includes discussing concepts with peers, analyzing information, and applying knowledge through practice. Active studying focuses on thinking critically, debating, and doing something with the information to deepen understanding. It is beneficial to vary your study methods to avoid mere memorization and foster a more comprehensive grasp of the subject.

## Tailoring Study Approaches for Different Classes

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Different subjects may require distinct studying techniques. Understanding the nature of each class will help you determine the most effective study methods.

For example:

- Mathematics may use practice problems and applying formulas.
- History might involve creating timelines and analyzing events.
- Literature may require discussing themes and character developments with others.

## Using Bloom's Taxonomy

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Bloom's Taxonomy provides a framework for categorizing different levels of learning, ranging from basic recall to higher-order thinking. The taxonomy includes:

**Remembering:** Recalling facts and basic concepts.

**Understanding:** Explaining ideas or concepts.

**Applying:** Using information in new situations.

**Analyzing:** Examining and drawing connections among ideas.

**Evaluating:** Making judgments and justifying decisions.

**Creating:** Generating new ideas or products.

Applying this framework can help you determine the level of cognitive effort needed for different types of content.

See our [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) handout for more information.

## Determining Your Active Study Strategies

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To choose the most effective study strategies, consider the following questions:

- What is the content being tested?
  - Understand the specific topics and material covered in your exam or assignment.
- How will I be tested on the content?
  - Determine the format of the test (e.g., multiple-choice, essay, practical application) to tailor your study methods accordingly.
- What level of learning (Bloom's Taxonomy) is needed?
  - Assess whether your focus should be on recalling facts, understanding concepts, applying knowledge, analyzing information, evaluating arguments, or creating new ideas.

## Tips for Effective Studying

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Engage with peers to discuss and debate concepts, and practice regularly to apply your knowledge. This approach ensures a deeper and more effective learning experience. If the strategy you try does not work for you, do not be afraid to try something different! Below are a few ways that you can apply active studying to your next study session.

Preparation Strategies	Practice Strategies
Make a timeline	Create visual aids to associate with each event
	Identify relationships between events on timeline
	Teach timeline to a friend
Make a concept map	Reorganize concept map and identify gaps
	Apply concept map to practice questions
	Create your own practice questions from the connections in the concept map
Make a study guide	Create mnemonics to help connect the material
	Practice the study guide material until you can shrink it down to a notecard
	Create mini summaries for each of the topics on the study guide

See our [5 Day Study Plan](#) for more examples and to apply active studying to your next round of exams.