Organize Your Study Space

Whether you typically do your homework in your bedroom, in the kitchen, near the computer, or anywhere else, it is important that you have a place with few distractions so you can get homework done quickly.

Some tips for maximizing your study space:

Keep a bucket or basket supplied with pens, pencils, a stapler, tape, paper, dictionary, grammar guide and thesaurus. This contains can carry with you or, if you prefer to stay home, in a corner or room or near the computer.

Make your space comfortable. Snaz it up with a poster, flowers, holiday lights... Making your study space more inviting will help to make the process of doing homework a bit more enjoyable.

Keep lighting and temperature at comfortable levels. The lighting should be comfortable for you—not too dim, but not too bright. Likewise, the room temperature should not be extreme. Lighting and temperature play a big role in helping you stay focused.

Play baroque music to help you concentrate. Baroque is a style of classical music that is written in the same mathematical pattern as your resting heart rate. It is not a “magic” solution for concentration, but it helps your mind and body work in sync, which is calming and minimizes distractions. If you live in an active house, it will help you drown out background noise. It also works well as background noise if you cannot concentrate when it is too quiet. To find a CD, ask for baroque music in your local music store or search for baroque online.
Maximize Your Time

Have you ever noticed how much of your time is “wasted” in a day? There are several ways you can maximize this otherwise unused time:

**Take advantage of “down-time” in school.** Some studies speculate that only 50-60% of a student’s school day is actually spent on productive lessons or related activities. The rest of the time is spent taking attendance, waiting for other students, school announcements, classroom interruptions, etc. Take advantage of this time! Open your binder and review your notes from a few previous classes, pull out your math assignment and get a few problems done, read the next section of your science textbook, etc. Many students manage to complete most, if not all, of their homework in school by using this down-time to their advantage.

**Take advantage of “down-time” during after school activities.** Just as you can find windows of time during school, you can often find small chunks of time while waiting for activities after school.

**Do you have a long bus ride?** Even if you spend 15 minutes working on some homework or reviewing your notes, it’s 15 more minutes you’ll have for yourself at home. Of course, sometimes it is nice to socialize with friends on the bus ride to and from school, which is okay; it will help you relax a bit after school and get refreshed to start your homework earlier.

**Do your homework as early in the afternoon as possible.** While it is important to give yourself a little break after school, the break should be no more than 45 minutes. As soon as you can start your homework, the more quickly it will get done. If you wait until later in the evening, you will slow down and not be as efficient.

**Power down!** Turn off your cell phone, TV, radio, and computer. No matter who you are, there is always the temptation to do two things at once, but it is impossible for you to concentrate on more than one thing at a time (your brain is not capable of processing more than one set of audio or visual input at one time). Therefore, do yourself the favor of getting your homework done and out of the way, then you can enjoy your electronics without the stress of homework to bog you down!