

PART III

# DEVELOPING RELATED SKILLS

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SKILLS FOR SCHOOL AND BEYOND

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## PART III: DEVELOPING RELATED SKILLS

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# IDENTIFYING YOUR LEARNING STYLE

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- How Do I Learn?
- What Do We Do Best?
- Putting It All Together
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will recognize that there are a variety of learning styles.

Students will identify their own preferred learning styles.

Students will practice using their primary learning styles to master new content.

### Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Learning Styles Profile” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Learning Styles Summary” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Project Assignment” activity sheet for each group of four to five students (Part III)

## Starter (3 minutes)

Write on the board the names of famous people from different fields who have/had considerable talent (e.g., Albert Einstein, Duke Ellington, Toni Morrison, Vincent Van Gogh, Babe Ruth, Mahatma Gandhi).

Ask students who they think is/was the smartest. Why do they think that? Lead students to recognize that it is difficult to assess who on that list is/was the smartest, because each has/had great talent in a different area. Explain that there are many different ways of learning and that different people excel in different areas. This lesson will help students identify their own learning styles.

Tell students that each individual on the list excelled in one of the following areas:

- Logical-mathematical (math)
- Musical (music and rhythm)
- Linguistic (language)
- Spatial (visual)
- Bodily-kinesthetic (athletic, body)
- Interpersonal (people)
- Intrapersonal (emotional)

Explain that each area of learning is different and requires a different set of skills and capacities.

## Part I How Do I Learn? (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of identifying their own preferred learning styles, and complete an inventory to help them do so.

### 1. Students recognize the importance of identifying their own learning styles.

Ask students to explain why identifying their own learning styles might be useful. Lead students to recognize that identifying their learning styles will enable them to develop study practices that will help them learn more effectively. This awareness will also help students to plan projects and respond to assignments by capitalizing on their learning strengths.

### 2. Students complete an inventory that assesses different learning styles.

Distribute a copy of the “Learning Styles Profile” activity sheet to each student. Tell students they will have 10 minutes to complete the profile.

When students are finished, distribute the “Learning Styles Summary” activity sheet. Have students write their responses to each question in the spaces provided and then total their responses to each type of question.

## **Part II What Do We Do Best? (10 minutes)**

**Purpose:** Students identify study methods that capitalize on their preferred learning styles.

### **1. Students group themselves according to their learning styles.**

Instruct students to organize themselves into groups according to their preferred learning style (the style with the highest response on their summary sheets). If students have two styles with equal scores, suggest that they choose the one they feel is their strongest area. Divide large groups as needed.

### **2. Students brainstorm study methods that capitalize on their learning styles.**

Instruct groups to brainstorm study methods that capitalize on their preferred learning styles and that will help them learn material as they prepare for tests. Encourage students to design specific activities, such as the following:

- Use string to create models of geometrical figures (visual/artistic/spatial).
- Conduct a role play of the signing of the Declaration of Independence (verbal/linguistic).
- Organize a study group to review the main ideas in *Hamlet*. Have each student in the group focus on a different part of the play. Have each student present their findings to the group (social/interpersonal).

### **3. Groups share the results of their discussions.**

Invite the groups to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Encourage the class to offer suggestions for each group’s list.

## **Part III Putting It All Together (20 minutes)**

**Purpose:** Students work with others who have learning styles different from their own.

### **1. Students develop an outline for a project.**

Instruct students in each group to count off. Then, have students regroup according to their number (i.e., all the ones in one group, the twos in another, and so on).

Distribute the “Project Assignment” activity sheet to each group. Explain that each group must create a plan for a presentation about one of the key events that preceded the Revolutionary War (or another assignment of your choosing).

Instruct each group to develop a plan for the project that incorporates the preferred learning styles of all its members. Remind students to assign initial tasks for each learning style (such as interviewing subjects, library research, or obtaining supplies), as well as to assign appropriate roles for the final presentation.

Allow students 10 minutes to complete this task.

## **2. Students present their project plans to the class.**

Invite each group to present its plans to the class. Have the groups identify who would be responsible for each task and the reasons for assigning the roles as they did.

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## **Conclusion (2 minutes)**

Ask students why it is important to recognize their own preferred learning styles. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- There are many different ways of learning.
- Identifying our own preferred learning styles enables us to develop study practices that will help us learn more effectively.

## **Student Assessment**

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1. Which learning style (or styles) best suits you? Why?
2. List three professions that are well-suited for people with your learning style.
3. When working with others, would it be helpful to know their learning styles? Why or why not?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects.”

Discuss how this quote applies to learning styles.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students make a class chart that lists the names of students and the learning style each one prefers.

Have students create a pie chart showing the percentage of students in each category.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students write two paragraphs with the following starters: “I learn best when...” and “I have difficulty learning when...”

Have each student partner with someone else in the class who prefers a different learning style. Have students discuss their preferred learning styles with their partners and adapt their partners’ styles to fit their own needs.

### Using Technology

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Have students search the internet for software/gadgets that might complement their learning styles and aid them in their studies (e.g., Inspiration for spatial learners, the Livescribe pen for linguistic learners).

Have students report on their findings.

## Homework

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Have students give the learning styles quiz to an adult they admire. Have them interview this adult about learning experiences in an area of strength and in an area of weakness.

Have students write a paragraph or two summarizing what they learned. Discuss what students learned in class.

## Additional Resources

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Have students read Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of *Talkers, Watchers, and Doers: Unlocking Your Child's Unique Learning Style* by Cheri Fuller. Explain that this book presents a slightly different view of learning styles.

Tell students to reflect on the learning styles they preferred when they were younger, identifying if they were “talkers,” “watchers,” or “doers.” Have them adopt some of the techniques in the book to their own styles today.



# LEARNING STYLES PROFILE

For the following statements, write “2” if the statement describes you almost always, “1” if the statement describes you sometimes, and “0” if the statement describes you almost never.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I understand what a teacher is saying much better if they draw a diagram or graph.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I can hear a song once or twice and am able to sing the lyrics.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I learn best when I discuss the material with someone else.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I prefer solving algebra problems to solving geometry problems.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ When I decide that I want something, I do everything I can to get it.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at doing impressions of people.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ I am a good writer.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to figure out the relationship between items.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ I remember names well.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ I think in images and mental pictures.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ I am very aware of my emotions.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ I can tell when musical notes are off key.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at persuading people to agree with me.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ I like being physically active.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ I often sing to myself.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to write stories, letters, or poems.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ I know how I will react in most situations.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ I like playing games of strategy (like chess) and solving riddles.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ I am able to sense what other people are feeling.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to tell stories.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ I like keeping my possessions well organized.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ I can quickly pick up new dance steps or sports moves.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ I need time to myself every day.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ I draw sketches all over my notebooks.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoy participating in clubs and group activities.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to create rhythms.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ I am good at packing and fitting items into suitcases, boxes, cars, and so on.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ I like learning about science or math.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ I know what my strengths and weaknesses are.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ I play a musical instrument well.
31. \_\_\_\_\_ Taking a walk helps me relax.
32. \_\_\_\_\_ I often feel that the best way for me to express myself is to write down my thoughts.
33. \_\_\_\_\_ I am the person people call to find out what is happening on the weekend.
34. \_\_\_\_\_ It really helps me to color code notes or assignments.
35. \_\_\_\_\_ I am good with tools.

# LEARNING STYLES SUMMARY

Bodily- Kinesthetic	Musical	Spatial	Logical- Mathematical	Linguistic	Interpersonal	Intrapersonal
6 _____	2 _____	1 _____	4 _____	7 _____	3 _____	5 _____
14 _____	12 _____	10 _____	8 _____	9 _____	13 _____	11 _____
22 _____	15 _____	24 _____	18 _____	16 _____	19 _____	17 _____
31 _____	26 _____	27 _____	21 _____	20 _____	25 _____	23 _____
35 _____	30 _____	34 _____	28 _____	32 _____	33 _____	29 _____
Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____	Total: _____

QUESTION NUMBER

# PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

**CLASS: U.S. HISTORY**

**Topic:** The events that preceded the Revolutionary War (e.g., the Boston Tea Party, the Stamp Act, the Boston Massacre, Paul Revere's ride)

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**Assignment:** Create a plan for a presentation about one of the key events that preceded the Revolutionary War.

[illegible]

# MANAGING YOUR TIME

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Time Savers and Time Wasters
- Taking Care of the Minutes
- Daily Planning
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will identify time management strategies and barriers to effective time management.

Students will recognize that effective time management can help them accomplish their goals.

Students will demonstrate effective time management strategies by prioritizing tasks and creating schedules.

### Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Luis’s Story” activity sheet for each student (Part I)
- One copy of the “Daily Planner” activity sheet for each student (Part III)
- One copy of the “Weekly Planner” activity sheet for each student (Part III)
- One copy of the “Term Planner” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

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**Starter (3 minutes)**

Write the following quote on the board:

“Take care in your minutes, and the hours will take care of themselves.”

Elicit opinions from students about the meaning of this quote. Mention that most people “waste” small amounts of time (about five to 10 minutes of every waking hour) in a variety of ways, such as waiting in line, looking for misplaced objects, and so on. Explain that although this may not seem like much time, it can add up to many hours—almost a whole day each week.

Tell students that this lesson is about learning to take care of the minutes—in other words, effective time management.

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**Part I Time Savers and Time Wasters (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students consider barriers to effective time management and develop an understanding of strategies that can help them manage their time more effectively.

**1. Students read a story that illustrates poor time management and compare the story to their own experiences.**

Divide students into groups of four. Give each student a copy of the “Luis’s Story” activity sheet. Explain that they will have 10 minutes to read the story silently to themselves and then discuss the questions that follow with their groups. Suggest that one student in each group keep track of time. Another group member should serve as a reporter and share the group’s responses with the class.

While students read, draw a two-column chart on the board. Label one column “Time Wasters” and the other “Time Savers.”

**2. Groups share their responses to the questions.**

After 10 minutes have passed, ask the reporters to summarize their groups’ answers to each question.

While discussing the first two questions, encourage students to relate the story to their own experiences, recalling how difficult and frustrating it can be when there doesn’t seem to be enough time to accomplish everything they want to do. Point out that feeling discouraged can lead to ineffective use of time.

Questions three and four ask students to list specific time wasters and time savers. List the groups' ideas on the board in the appropriate columns. Time wasters might include distractions (such as TV), urges (such as snacking), not having materials in a convenient location, and excuses (such as being too tired). Time savers might include writing assignments in one place, prioritizing tasks, breaking down large tasks into manageable activities, and scheduling.

## **Part II Taking Care of the Minutes (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students practice prioritizing tasks.

### **1. Students recognize that effective time management helps them achieve their goals.**

When the list of time savers and time wasters is complete, ask students to identify Luis's goal in the story. Ask students if they think Luis is on his way to achieving his goal. Lead students to identify the relationship between time management and goal achievement.

### **2. Students recognize that spending time wisely means deciding what is important.**

Ask students what it means to spend money wisely. Lead students to understand that spending money wisely means not wasting it on items that are unimportant. Point out that how one person chooses to spend money may be very different from how someone else chooses to spend it. Encourage students to realize that individuals must decide on what is most important for themselves.

Ask students what was more important to Luis—passing his classes or watching TV. If students are unsure, rephrase the question by asking, "What might Luis have done if he had been given the choice to pass all of his classes or watch TV for an hour?" Point out that Luis's actions don't reflect what is important to him. Luis did not prioritize his tasks for the day. Effective time management requires prioritizing. Elicit definitions for "prioritize" from the class.

### **3. Students make to-do lists of their tasks for the day.**

Tell students that in order to prioritize, they must consider all of their tasks. Instruct students to use a blank piece of paper to make a to-do list for that afternoon. Tell them to list the activities and tasks they must do after school. Remind them to include everything, including extracurricular activities, phone calls, household chores, and homework assignments.

### **4. Students prioritize their tasks for the day.**

Instruct students to go through the list and prioritize their tasks. They should number each task according to how important the task is to them, with number one being the most important.

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**Part III Daily Planning (15 minutes)**

*Purpose:* Students use their prioritized to-do lists to create daily schedules.

**1. Students understand the importance of schedules.**

Tell students that writing down and prioritizing their tasks is only the first step to effective time management. It is important to create systems that will facilitate effective time management. Explain that people without effective systems often waste time looking for items such as assignments, keys, passwords, and so on.

Remind students that one of Luis's difficulties was that he had written down his math assignment but couldn't find it. He had no system for keeping his tasks organized.

Speculate with students how a calendar or planner might help organize such items. Ask, "Why do we use calendars and planners?" (*Students might respond: to keep track of due dates, to keep all assignments in one place, to schedule time for responsibilities and activities, to plan ahead for projects or exams.*)

**2. Students write their to-do lists on the daily planner.**

Distribute the "Daily Planner" activity sheet, "Weekly Planner" activity sheet, and "Term Planner" activity sheet to students. Explain that using planners is an important time-management strategy. Encourage students to describe other planning tools with which they are familiar.

Instruct students to write their to-do lists on the "Daily Planner" activity sheet. Point out the space for materials needed and encourage them to write down specific books or materials that they must remember to bring home. Instruct students to use the schedule space to write all scheduled activities. Allow them several minutes to complete the task.

Remind students that the tasks they have identified as most important should be completed first, even if the other tasks are more appealing.

**3. Students observe the benefits of using both short- and long-term planners.**

After students have written their assignments on their "Daily Planner" activity sheet, ask them to speculate what problems might occur if they do not follow up by also using the weekly or term planners. (*Students might respond: it would be difficult to plan ahead, to see when long-term projects were due, and to allocate time properly.*)

Ask students to consider what problems they might encounter if, on the other hand, they used only a weekly or term planner. (*Students might respond: there is not enough room to write detailed information, they might forget about smaller daily tasks.*)



Explain that most people use a combination of planners to manage their time. A daily planner should be reviewed every day, either at night or first thing in the morning. A weekly planner should be reviewed at the beginning of each week. Encourage students to suggest ways to set up routines for planner reviews.

#### 4. Students commit to trying out a scheduling system for three weeks.

Mention that one of the biggest difficulties people have with time management is that they try using a planner, yet they stop after only a week. Invite students who have had this experience to share reasons why they did this. (*Students might respond: too time-consuming, too bulky to carry around, they didn't like feeling so strictly scheduled.*)

Share with students that they have many options about the type of planner to use and that the samples you provided are only suggestions. Encourage students to personalize their planners by choosing layouts that make sense to them and to find systems that complement their learning styles.

Brainstorm with students places where people can buy planners. Elicit ideas about what they could do if they wanted a planner but did not want to buy one.

Tell students that psychologists say it takes three weeks for something new to become a habit. For this reason, ask students to commit to using their planners for three weeks, at the end of which you will measure their success with the planners. Encourage students to write that date in their planners.

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### Conclusion (2 minutes)

Refer to the quote from the starter. Ask students how using a planner and prioritizing tasks allow them to “take care” in their minutes and save hours in the end. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Effective time management helps people to accomplish their goals.
- Managing time effectively requires prioritizing.
- Using planners is an important time-management strategy.

### Student Assessment

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1. List as many time wasters as you can from your day.
2. What time-saving techniques can you use to cut down on your time wasters?
3. List four time-management strategies. Which of these strategies do you already practice?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“One thing you can’t recycle is wasted time.”

Have small groups of students brainstorm ways in which they waste time during the day. Have them write these time wasters on large strips of paper. Post them on the bulletin board.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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As a class, discuss the history of timekeeping. Refer to <https://www.nist.gov/pml/time-and-frequency-division/popular-links/walk-through-time>.

After a short discussion, have students write about their own philosophy of time. How much time do they need to relax and think? What’s the most important part of their day? What would they like to accomplish?

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students write about how they would spend an ideal day.

As a class, discuss strategies for “building more time” into the day for the activities that students enjoy.

### Using Technology

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Have students use the internet to investigate time-management software programs (e.g., Microsoft Outlook).

Have students write quick software reviews on index cards and share them in small groups. Tell each group to choose the best software and share it with the rest of the class.

## Homework

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Have students create a chart that divides their waking hours into 15-minute increments. Have them record their activities for one day.

Have students discuss the results in small groups. How are they spending most of their time? Is there anything they want to change?

## Additional Resources

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Have students read the “Out of Time” activity sheet.

Have students write a review of the article.

# WEEKLY PLANNER

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

# LUIS'S STORY

Luis's alarm began blaring at 6:00 in the morning. He had decided to get up early to finish an oral presentation that was due that day. Thinking that a few extra minutes of sleep would make him feel well rested and help his presentation, Luis reached out and pressed the snooze button.

After dozing for what felt like seconds, Luis reached over to hit the snooze button again and saw that it was 7:00, his usual wake-up time. He jumped out of bed and got ready for school. He had about five minutes to look over his presentation before he ran out the door.

When school ended at 3:30, Luis's day hadn't gone well. Not only had he been unprepared for his presentation, but he had also forgotten about an essay that had been due that day. Luis really wanted to pass his classes this semester. He needed good grades in order to get into the school that his brother attended. Frustrated, Luis decided that he needed a break from schoolwork. He walked home and turned on the TV to help him unwind.

At 4:30, he realized that he only had 30 minutes before he had to leave for work. He lugged his backpack to his room and dumped his books out on the desk. Luis knew that he had written down his math assignment somewhere, but he couldn't find it. When Luis finally found the assignment, he realized that he needed a pencil

and went to the kitchen to get one. In the kitchen, Luis saw a bag of chips sitting on the counter and started eating. His boss never let him eat on the job, so he decided to fix himself a sandwich.

Glancing at the clock, Luis sat down with his sandwich and realized that he only had 10 minutes before he had to leave for work. He knew that he could never get anything done in such a short time. He felt as if he'd never catch up with his homework.

When Luis got home from work at 9:00, he was exhausted. His favorite show was on, so he watched TV with his brother. When the show ended at 10:00, he sat down at his desk to do homework. He had to complete the essay and that math assignment. Luis figured he could rush through the math assignment because his teacher didn't always check homework, so he started with that. Luis finished the math and moved on to the essay. As he was digging through his papers looking for the right text and notes to answer the question, the phone rang—it was his girlfriend. They'd had an argument the day before, and Luis hadn't spoken to her since. He talked to her for a while.

When Luis finally got off the phone, it was close to midnight. He looked at the papers scattered on his desk. There was no way he could finish this tonight anyway.

1. Did you relate to Luis's story? Why or why not?
2. How did Luis's own feelings of frustration affect his studies?
3. What things distracted Luis from getting his homework done? Give specific examples from the story.
4. What could Luis have done differently to better manage his time?

# DAILY PLANNER

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHEDULE	MATERIALS NEEDED (E.G., BOOKS, SPORTS EQUIPMENT, ETC.)
7:00 – 8:00	
8:00 – 9:00	
9:00 – 10:00	
10:00 – 11:00	
11:00 – 12:00	
12:00 – 1:00	
1:00 – 2:00	
2:00 – 3:00	
3:00 – 4:00	
4:00 – 5:00	
5:00 – 6:00	
6:00 – 7:00	
7:00 – 8:00	
8:00 – 9:00	
9:00 – 10:00	
10:00 – 11:00	
Don't forget:	

# TERM PLANNER

DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____
DATE	MONTH:_____	DATE	MONTH:_____

# OUT OF TIME

**When work and activities take up all your so-called free time, how can you find a minute to be yourself?**

"I feel like I'm indoors all the time," says Michael Colley, 18, a junior at Mount Vernon High School in New York. "I miss going to the park, seeing movies and relaxing."

Megan Thornton, 17, a junior at Cumberland Valley High School in Mechanicsburg, Pa., says: "People always tell me that life is only going to get more hectic in college. But I know it can't possibly get any worse than it is now."

Michael and Megan have the same problem: overbooked schedules. They spend more time on their extracurricular activities and jobs than on their homework, and more time on their homework than with their friends. And they're just two members of a generation of time-challenged teens: 66 percent of you told a *React* poll that you don't have enough free time.

"Adolescence is so much more competitive," says Penny Peterson, psychologist for Montgomery County, Md., public schools. "It's no longer enough to get the lead in the school play or be hockey captain: You have to do those things and be head of the student council and hold down your job at the mall."

Many teens say they overload their high school schedules in a race for college admissions. "I did all kinds of activities in high school and was busy all the time," says Kim Warhurst, 18, a freshman at Butler County Community College in El Dorado, Kan., near Wichita. "My guidance counselor said that activities look good on your transcript—that you've got a better shot at college scholarships if you're extremely well-rounded. And the adults in charge of each activity all expected you to put their activity first."

"I'm still busy all the time," Kim says. Most days, she gets back to her room after midnight, after classes, homework, time at her college newspaper and a part-time job at WalMart. Her schedule, she says, forced her to give up some of her high school activities: "I had to quit violin and softball because I had to focus on future goals."

Megan had been pursuing a career in music, practicing piano, flute and voice each for a half-hour a day, but has now changed her focus. "I know that I'd have to put in more time and effort than I'm willing to at this point," she says. "There's too much time involved in practicing. I'd rather have time to talk on the phone with my friends. There's more to life than practicing piano, flute and voice all the time. I'd rather have more balance."

For other students, social pressures, not schedules, keep them working into the night. "Kids in my school seem really rich—they're wearing a different North Face jacket every week," says Aryanna Fernando, 18, a senior at Beekman High School in New York City. Along with dance practice and pottery class, Aryanna has held a series of jobs to earn the cash she feels she needs to keep up with her peers. "I don't want to be a slacker," she says, "and because I'm a senior, I get much less sleep than ever before."

There are some benefits: Kim says working on school publications is preparing her for a future as a writer. David Skeist, 18, a senior at the Dalton School in New York City, says that his singing group, chorus and school play give him a built-in social life: "Putting on a production with a bunch of people makes me feel proud, part of a team. But by belonging to various groups, I don't



# OUT OF TIME

(continued)

get stuck in one clique.”

But there are risks to stressful, fast-paced days, such as skimping on sleep to squeeze in homework late at night or at dawn and then relying on caffeine and junk food to reenergize. “I’m seeing an increasing number of teens with stress-related physical complaints—gastrointestinal problems, insomnia, headaches and trouble staying awake in class,” Peterson says. And when overwhelmed students turn to alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs to stay awake all night, to get to sleep or to reduce emotional stress, an impressive high school transcript can turn into a ticket to the hospital, she says.

To prevent a stuffed schedule from sucking the joy out of life, Peterson says, ask yourself this question: Do I no longer have time for things in my life that give me joy—like time with family or friends or the hobby I used to love? If so, it’s time to make a change.

“It takes courage to turn things down, but you’ve got to do it,” she says. “Eliminate a couple of activities. It’s much better to involve yourself in two or three activities and really excel in them, rather than spread yourself too thin with things you only have time to do halfheartedly.”

## TAKE YOUR TIME BACK

If your schedule is threatening to swallow you whole, try following these tips for stopping the stress.

## KICK BACK

When you finally make it home, Dr. Peterson recommends that you take some “mental health” time for yourself. Before

starting your homework, lie down on your bed for a few minutes or have a quick chat on the phone. The break will give you a chance to switch gears from soccer to geometry. Kim says she listens to classical music and takes long drives in the country to relax. Michael watches videos. Herbal baths and meditation work for Aryanna.

## DON'T PANIC

Are you afraid that if you’re not involved with every activity at school, you won’t make it into the college of your choice? Don’t be. For one thing, Peterson says, “You might juggle all those activities and still not get into your dream school.” On the other hand, many schools are often more impressed by students who did amazing things with one or two time-intensive activities than by those who joined 15 groups they couldn’t have spent that much time with.

## FIND A SYMPATHETIC EAR

Megan tells her parents whenever she feels like she’s drowning, and it pays off. But if you can’t imagine making the changes you need in your lifestyle to cut your stress—and your parents can’t help because they don’t understand the pressures you’re under—ask a guidance counselor for help. “Sometimes you need to hear from your parents, your coach or whoever that it’s OK to shift priorities—that it’s crucial for your sanity,” Peterson says.

—Jennifer Kornreich

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# READING, LISTENING, AND NOTE TAKING

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Know Where You're Headed and Why
- Less Is More
- Note This
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

## Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of accurate note taking while reading or listening.

Students will identify effective note taking techniques to use when reading or listening.

Students will practice effective note taking techniques.

## Materials Needed

- The “Active Note Taking” activity sheet (Part I)
- An article to be read out loud (if students need more practice taking notes while listening) or one copy of an article for each student to read independently (if students need more practice taking notes while reading) (Part III)

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**Starter (3 minutes)**

Ask students to imagine that they are going to a deserted island where millions of dollars have been buried. They must choose to bring either a shovel or a treasure map showing the location of the treasure.

Discuss which item students would choose and the reasons for their choice. Help them conclude that if they chose the shovel, they would have to dig randomly around the island, hoping to come across the treasure. However, if they chose the map, digging might be harder, but the treasure would be found.

Suggest to students that people often take notes like the person with the shovel. They take stabs at recording information, hoping that they will write down the important ideas. Explain that today's lesson will help them develop mental "maps" that will enable them to record important information accurately.

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**Part I Know Where You're Headed and Why (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students recognize the difference between active and passive learning and develop strategies for becoming active learners.

**1. Students recognize the difference between active and passive learning.**

If the class already covered effective listening skills in Lessons 2 and 3 of *Module One: Communication Skills*, ask students to explain the difference between passive listening and active listening. If not, briefly explain the following:

- Passive listening occurs when we hear without really thinking about what is being said.
- Active listening occurs when we think about what we hear, ask questions, and make connections.

Elicit from students that it is possible to listen either passively or actively while taking notes in class. Ask whether the same is true for reading as well. If responses are slow, ask students to explain the difference between mindlessly reading a textbook and becoming absorbed in an exciting story. What content are they more likely to recall?

Explain to students that the strategies they are about to learn are effective for taking notes when they are actively reading and listening.

**2. Students recognize questioning as the first step to active learning.**

Talk with students about why some stories are more interesting than others. Ask if they know what a page-turner is. Lead students to define “page-turner” as a story that is hard to put down. Such stories cause readers to want to discover certain answers, like who did it and what happens next.

The same can be said when we read or listen to learn information. Explain that the first step in being an active learner, whether we are listening or reading, is to ask good questions. Before students start to take notes, they should ask themselves, “What do I know about this topic? What do I want to know about this topic? How will I find out what I want to know?” These questions will allow them to predict which ideas to record and which ideas might be on a test.

### **3. Students learn specific questions to ask in order to actively learn.**

Display the “Active Note Taking” activity sheet on the board. Ask students to suggest questions that they can ask themselves before taking notes in order to become more actively involved in the learning process. For example:

- For question one (“What do I know about this topic?”): Where have I heard about this topic before? What do I know about it? What are the most memorable ideas related to this topic?
- For question two (“What do I want to know about this topic?”): What key words or terms appeared or were said more than once? What did the teacher write on the board? What questions were posed? How were they answered? How will this be useful to me in the future?
- For question three (“How will I find out what I want to know?”): Where is the information written? Whom can I ask about it?

### **4. Students discuss how active learners use notes.**

Explain that active learners ensure that they have all of the information that they want to know by asking themselves questions, reviewing their notes, and doing research in order to obtain information that is missing. Encourage students to develop a system for organizing their notes and to review notes after reading or listening to information.

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## **Part II    Less Is More (10 minutes)**

Purpose: Students identify ways to focus on important information while note taking.

### **1. Students write a general description of themselves.**

Tell students that once they’ve asked the important questions, they are ready to begin taking notes. Explain that the following activity will help them recognize how the answers to those questions make note taking easier and more effective.

Instruct students to spend three minutes writing descriptions of themselves. They are to write as much as they can in three minutes. Guide students to describe their physical appearance, where they live, the number of siblings they have, and so on.

## **2. Students take notes from written descriptions.**

Divide students into pairs. Tell the pairs to trade papers and to take notes on the description as they silently read each other's work.

Allow students one minute to read and take notes. Remind them to ask themselves each question before they begin reading and to make mental notes of what they already know and what they want to learn.

Ask students to compare their notes with the written description. Elicit from students the differences between their notes and the written description.

## **3. Students identify abbreviations to use during note taking.**

Ask students how they might ensure that they write everything they need to remember without taking the time to write exactly what they read or hear. Elicit from students that abbreviations and shorthand are effective strategies to use when taking notes. Have students brainstorm abbreviations and shorthand. Ask them to identify different symbols and abbreviations that are commonly used. Offer suggestions such as the following: "lbs." for "pounds," "St." for "street," "b/c" for "because," "10 yrs." for "10 years," etc.

## **4. Students repeat the exercise.**

Ask students to find a different partner. Tell students to trade their papers and to take notes again. Remind them that they have one minute to write the most comprehensive notes they possibly can.

Ask students to again compare their notes with the written description. Elicit from students the differences between their notes and the written description.

## **5. Students recognize that the second set of notes is more effective.**

With the class, compare and contrast the two activities. Ask:

- Which of the two assignments was easier? Why?
- Did you need the same amount of time to get as much information as possible? Why?
- Which set of notes is more concise? Why?

Tell students that when taking notes, less is more. Speculate why this might be true. Lead students to recognize that it is best to write down only important information and to be as brief as possible. The questions they ask themselves before they begin taking notes will help them to determine which information is important.

## 6. Students recognize strategies for identifying important information.

Refer again to the activity sheet and direct students' attention to "Focus on the important details." Ask students to suggest ways to identify the important information in a book they are reading. (Students might respond: chapter titles, bold or italicized words, concepts that relate to material already covered in class.)

Ask students to suggest ways to identify important information when listening. Remind students about nonverbal communication and refer to part II of "Lesson 2: Listening" of *Module One: Communication Skills*, which focused on picking up verbal and nonverbal signals in order to listen effectively.

Explain that people often use their tone of voice and facial expressions to stress important ideas.

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## Part III Note This (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students practice note taking techniques and skills.

### 1. Students summarize specific note taking techniques.

Ask students to describe the ways in which note taking differs from writing. Write students' responses on the board. (Students might respond: notes are shorter, complete sentences are not necessary, grammar and spelling are not important, symbols and other abbreviations are used.)

### 2. Students practice effective note taking.

Invite students to practice effective note taking. Depending on student's strengths, either read an article out loud or distribute copies of reading material from which students will take notes. If students are reading, allow them 10 minutes to read and take notes.

### 3. Students compare notes with partners.

When students have finished taking notes, ask them to each select a partner with whom they will compare their written notes. Have them discuss why certain points were included or omitted. Encourage them to offer constructive suggestions to each other about their note taking techniques.

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe an active learner. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Active learning is more effective than passive learning.
- Asking questions is the first step to effective note taking.
- The questions that students ask will help them determine which information is important.

## Student Assessment

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1. As an active learner, what questions can you ask yourself to help you get focused?
2. How do you choose which information to take notes on?
3. In what ways are the strategies for taking effective notes on a book and taking notes on a lecture similar? How are they different?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“Indiscriminate study bloats the mind.”

Have students draw a diagram representing their minds, indicating what they study and what they would like to focus on most. Have them explain how this relates to the quote.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students examine the way their favorite websites are constructed. Have them use index cards to show the sites' layouts (i.e., how details are subsumed under main ideas).

Have each student construct an outline of their favorite site from their index cards (headings only) and write a justification for the choice.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students write a paragraph evaluating their skills as note takers. (See *How to Improve Your Study Skills* by Marcia J. Coman and Kathy L. Heavers.) Have them set a specific goal for improvement.

Have students share their goals with a classmate. If possible, pair good note takers with those whose skills need improvement.

### Using Technology

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Have groups use a search engine of their choice to research a topic. Have them carefully word their questions so their search is as focused as possible.

Have the groups present the sites that provide the best answers to their questions—as well as a few that are off topic—and explain how narrowing their question helped them focus their search. Emphasize to students that just as their searches must be concise, so must their note taking be concise and focused to be effective.



## Homework

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Have students discover who, besides students, takes notes. Tell students to observe restaurant and store employees. They should also ask people they know if they take notes on the job.

As a class, create a list of people who take notes on the job. Discuss student reactions to the need for notes after finishing school.

## Additional Resources

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Review *How to Improve Your Study Skills* by Marcia J. Coman and Kathy L. Heavers as a class. Assign groups one of the following topics from the book: outlining, signal words, patterning, highlighting, margin notes, and streamlining. Have each group read its assigned section and prepare a presentation.

After their presentation, groups should read a passage out loud that offers students a chance to practice the skill covered.

# ACTIVE NOTE TAKING

1. What do I know about this topic?

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2. What do I want to know about this topic?

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3. How will I find out what I want to know?

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4. Focus on the important details.

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# WRITING REPORTS AND PRESENTING TO AN AUDIENCE

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## AGENDA

- SESSION 1
  - Starter
  - Get to the Point
  - Get Organized
  - Write It or Say It
- SESSION 2
  - Review
  - Look It Over
  - Say It Loud and Clear
  - Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of effective reports and oral presentations.

Students will identify effective presentation skills and report techniques.

Students will recognize the importance of revising and proofreading as well as identify and practice effective oral presentation techniques.

## Materials Needed

- Session 1: 10 index cards for each student (Part I)
- Session 2: A board on which you have written the steps to an effective report covered in Session 1 (Part I)
- Session 2: One copy of the “Count the Letter” activity sheet for each student (Part II)
- Session 2: Students’ first-draft reports from Session 1 (Part II)
- Session 2: 10 index cards for each student (Part III)

## SESSION 1

### Starter (2 minutes)

Begin by modeling poor oral presentation skills. Read the following text:

Today, we are going to learn how to give good presentations and oral reports. Oral presentations are very important. Did you see that show last night? It reminds me of giving presentations. I like that actress, too. Where was I? Oh, yeah. Reports.

Your actions should be exaggerated, and your words and train of thought difficult to hear and follow. Keep your head down, make no eye contact, mumble, and slouch.

Pause and ask students to describe your presentation. Have students list the characteristics that were ineffective. Ask students why report preparation and presentation skills are important. Elicit from students that reports and oral presentations are intended to convey information to other people. If the information is not clearly presented, it is lost to its intended audience.

Explain to students that in this lesson they are going to work through the process of writing a very short report and preparing an oral presentation.

### Part I Get to the Point (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students understand the importance of having a well-defined topic for a report. Students practice doing research and taking notes for their reports.

#### 1. Students understand the difference between a general topic and a specific topic.

Explain to students that sometimes when a report is assigned, it is mentioned in general terms. It is the student's responsibility to narrow the general topic to a more specific idea.

Start a list on the board with the heading "Steps to Effective Reports and Presentations." Write "Step 1: Have a general topic" beneath it.

Provide an example of a general topic, preferably one from a course students are currently taking (e.g., the Civil War). Point out that one report on the entire Civil War would be very long. A more effective report would narrow the topic to a more specific idea. Encourage students to generate specific topics based on the general one. As students come up with ideas, point out that it helps to know something about the general topic in order to decide on a specific one.

Write "Step 2: Research the general topic for more specific topics" and "Step 3: Narrow the general topic to a more specific topic" on the board.

#### 2. Students prepare to research their topics.

Explain that now that students have a specific topic, step four is to research the topic. Write “Step 4: Research your topic” on the board.

Ask students what they think it means to be an active researcher. Suggest that they think about the characteristics of an active listener or an active learner. Explain that researching a report involves asking thoughtful questions and taking good notes to answer those questions. Review tips for taking good notes with students (covered in “Lesson 3: Reading, Listening, and Note Taking”).

Suggest to students that they take notes for their report on index cards. This way of taking notes allows students to put one idea on each card. Then, when they are finished, they can arrange their ideas easily, as if completing a puzzle. Tell students that they are going to practice using note cards for their in-class mini-reports.

### **3. Students research and take notes on a specific topic.**

Explain to students that they are now going to research a specific topic. Ask them to write a report on a general topic—their community. Tell them to imagine that they have narrowed this wide topic to the specific idea of the community surrounding the school. Tell students that they are to research this topic by recalling the area. If time and circumstances permit, allow students to go outside to conduct further research. Encourage them to consider all aspects of the community—what it looks like, the activities they see, the sounds they hear, the aromas they smell, and so on. If there is additional time, suggest that students read the local newspaper or spend some time doing research in the library.

Distribute approximately 10 note cards to each student. Remind students that they are to write only one idea on each card. Suggest that students label cards with a heading, such as “Sounds” or “Activities,” as a way of organizing the information.

Tell students that you are going to give them eight minutes to observe the community, either by recalling it or by going on a quick walk.

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## **Part II Get Organized (13 minutes)**

Purpose: Students practice compiling notes and writing a report from notes.

### **1. Students compare notes with their groups.**

Arrange the class into groups of five or six. Instruct each group of students to compare their notes from Part I with each other. Allow approximately five minutes for this activity.

### **2. Students practice organizing notes for a report.**

Have students describe the structure of a report. Explain that a report has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. Encourage students to offer the content that belongs to each of these sections.

Instruct each group to discuss the best sequence of ideas for each student's notes. Encourage them to determine which points belong in the introduction, body, or conclusion. Allow approximately five minutes for this activity.

As students work, write "Step 5: Organize notes" on the board.

Point out that although many people think only of writing a report, much of the process is actually doing the research and organizing the notes.

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### **Part III Write It or Say It (20 minutes)**

Purpose: Students write short reports from their notes.

#### **1. Students prepare to write reports from their notes.**

Tell students that their notes should now be complete and well organized. They are ready to begin writing. Write "Step 6: Write report" on the board.

Ask students what they must do next in order to turn their notes into a finished report. (Students might respond: compose cohesive, logical paragraphs; write complete sentences; add transition words.)

#### **2. Students write short reports from their notes.**

Tell students that they have 15 minutes to write a first draft of a mini-report from their notes. Explain that this first draft does not have to be neat, with perfect spelling and grammar. They will proofread it later. The first draft is intended to get their ideas on paper in an organized fashion.

Before students leave, collect the first drafts of their mini-reports and keep them for use in the next class period.

## SESSION 2

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### Part I Review (5 minutes)

Purpose: Students review the mini-reports they have written and recall the steps to writing an effective report or presentation.

#### 1. Students review the first drafts of their mini-reports.

Distribute the reports students wrote during Session 1. Allow students several minutes to read their reports quietly to themselves.

#### 2. Students recall the steps of writing an effective report.

Briefly review the steps of writing an effective report, which should be written on the board.

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### Part II Look It Over (18 minutes)

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of peer editing, revising, and proofreading.

#### 1. Students recognize the importance of revising.

Explain that the next step of writing a report is revising. Remind students that a piece of writing is not finished until the ideas are expressed logically and clearly.

#### 2. Students practice peer editing.

Ask students what they should look for when they revise their own writing. Write students' ideas on the board. (Students might respond: sentence structure, clarity of ideas, choice of vocabulary.)

Guide students to the awareness that it is often difficult to look critically at their own writing, especially when they have been working intensely on it. Explain that peer editing can help with this problem. Peer editing involves exchanging papers with other students to proofread each other's work. Briefly discuss the guidelines for peer editing: The proofreader should be tactful and thoughtful. The writer should remember that the proofreader is making suggestions and intends to be helpful. Students must respect their classmates' work and offer all criticisms and suggestions in the most constructive way possible.

Tell students to exchange papers. Give them five minutes to read and make suggestions about each other's work. When they are finished, ask students to return the papers. Give students time to revise their writing to form a solid second draft.

#### 3. Students recognize the importance of careful proofreading.



Invite students to complete an exercise in proofreading. Distribute copies of the “Count the Letter” activity sheet. Give students approximately 30 seconds to count the number of times the letter “f” appears in the paragraph.

Once students are finished, take a poll to see how many times they counted the letter “f.” Students might be surprised at the varied numbers. Explain that some of them miscounted because the eye tends to overlook things that are familiar. Ask students how they think this might impact their own proofreading. Tell students that the letter “f” appears 11 times.

Explain to students that once they have revised their writing, they are ready to proofread. Remind students that no matter how strong their ideas are, the report will be difficult to read if it contains grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Careful proofreading is essential to writing a report. Instruct students to proofread their reports and correct them until they are free of errors. Suggest that they again exchange papers with a partner and proofread each other’s mini-reports to be sure that they are totally correct. Assign students to write their final drafts as homework for the following day.

Write “Step 7: Revise report” and “Step 8: Proofread report” on the board.

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### **Part III Say It Loud and Clear (25 minutes)**

Purpose: Students understand the techniques of preparing and presenting an effective oral report.

#### **1. Students recognize that oral presentations are generated the same way as written reports.**

Refer students to the list of steps generated throughout the lesson. Encourage students to add one more step to turn their written reports into oral presentations. Explain that an oral presentation involves the same preparation as a written report, with the added element of effective speaking.

Students may have trouble deciding whether an oral presentation should be written. Remind students of the importance of following the structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. Point out that those same elements are also needed in an oral presentation. Although we do not read from a report when presenting, writing the report provides an opportunity to structure the key points into a logical and coherent presentation.

#### **2. Students break their reports into notes for an oral presentation.**

Share with students that while it is not appropriate to read from a report, many speakers prepare note cards to refer to as they speak. Because these note cards contain main ideas, key phrases, and critical transitions, they are different from the note cards students used to write their reports. Distribute 10 index cards to each student.

Instruct students to break down their written reports into notes that they might use for an oral presentation. Focus their attention on which notes will help them give the report orally by having them consider the following questions: What are the main ideas? Which key phrases must they remember? What transitions will be most helpful to the audience? Allow students 10 minutes to create note cards.

### **3. Students recall characteristics of an ineffective speaker.**

Ask students to recall from the starter activity at the beginning of this lesson the characteristics that make an oral presentation ineffective. Create a two-column chart on the board. List the ineffective characteristics in one column. When that list is complete, have students change the ineffective characteristics to make them effective techniques. For example, if “mumbling” is in the left column, students will say “speak loudly and clearly” in the right column. Write their changes in the adjacent column.

### **4. Students recognize the importance of practicing their presentations.**

Have students discuss ways to ensure that they use effective oral presentation techniques when presenting. Elicit from students that an oral presentation must be well rehearsed. Suggest to students that the best way to rehearse an oral presentation is to practice in front of someone else.

### **5. Students work in pairs to practice effective oral presentations.**

Divide students into pairs and instruct them to practice their presentations with each other. Remind students to observe their partners in order to provide constructive feedback for improving the presentations. Suggest that students base their evaluations on organization of ideas; clear introductions, bodies, and conclusions; liveliness; and volume and speed of the speaker’s voice.

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to identify the steps of developing a written report. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Reports and oral presentations are often required at work and at school.
- Deciding on a well-defined topic is the first step to writing an effective report or presentation.
- Careful proofreading is essential to completing a report.
- Peer editing can be helpful.
- An oral report involves the same preparation as a written report, with the added responsibility of effective speaking.

## Student Assessment

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### SESSION 1

1. Why is it helpful to choose a specific report topic?
2. List three reasons to take notes on note cards.

### SESSION 2

1. List five things you should look for when you proofread.
2. How is preparing an oral report similar to and different from preparing a written report?
3. List three characteristics of an effective oral presentation.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech.”

Have a volunteer give the definition of “impromptu.” As a class, discuss the contradiction in this quote.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students play a version of *The \$25,000 Pyramid*. Draw a pyramid with three boxes on the bottom, two in the middle, and one on top. Each box should contain a general category guessable by giving specific clues (e.g., for a category called “U.S. Presidents,” students could use “George Washington” as a clue). Have students play in two teams of two and alternate giving and receiving clues.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students write a how-to report about something they excel at (e.g., how to shop for computers, make a friend, entertain a child younger than two).

Ask students to present their journal entries as oral reports. Have listeners outline the information given and compare notes.

### Using Technology

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Have students choose a general subject for a report and use the internet to research and narrow it down.

Have students present their suggested topic to a small group for critique.

## Homework

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Discuss with students how writers research scripts for television shows and movies (e.g., by reading about a certain time period, running focus groups, etc.).

Have students watch their favorite television show or movie and write a list describing what the writer might have needed to research before completing the script. Then have students write, with their lists in mind, their own scripts about a historical event.

## Additional Resources

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Divide students into eight groups, one for each major part of Ron Hoff's *I Can See You Naked*. Assign each group a part of the book to read.

Have each group report on the tips that Hoff gives regarding presentations.

# COUNT THE LETTER

Read the following paragraph and count the number of times the letter “f” appears.

The sheriff of Fargo, North Dakota, recently found a large bag of five dollar bills. He’s not sure how many fives there are in the bag, but he is going to assign some of Fargo’s most fearless investigators to look into the incident.

# PREPARING FOR TESTS AND EXAMS

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Studying: Getting Ready
- Test Day
- Showing Off What You Know: Game Show
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

## Objectives

Students will recognize the importance of preparing for tests.

Students will identify strategies for preparing for tests and examinations.

Students will practice techniques for effective test taking.

## Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Test-Taking Self-Assessment” activity sheet for each student (Starter and Part I)
- One copy of the “Game Show” activity sheet for each student (Part III)

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**Starter (6 minutes)**

Tell students that you are going to give them an opportunity to reflect on something that they have been doing for years: taking tests. In your usual manner, tell students that they are about to take an important pop quiz. Have them clear off their desks. Distribute the “Test-Taking Self-Assessment” activity sheet. Once students have had a chance to read it, tell them that this exercise will not be graded. Have students complete the activity sheet, keeping in mind how they felt when you announced the pop quiz.

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**Part I Studying: Getting Ready (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students recognize the importance of preparing in advance for a test.

**1. Students discuss their views on taking tests.**

Discuss student responses to question one on the activity sheet. Let students share their feelings about taking tests. Mention that people can improve their attitude toward test taking if they think of a test as an opportunity to demonstrate what they know.

**2. Students recognize the impact that preparing for a test has on their attitude.**

Talk about question two. Ask students why some of them might have felt anxious about taking this test. Ask, “Would your reactions have been different had you received advance notice?”

Point out to students that although the material on a pop quiz might be the same as on an announced test, a pop quiz often causes more anxiety because students don’t have an opportunity to prepare. Elicit from students the awareness that preparing in advance for an exam helps to decrease anxiety.

**3. Students recognize the impact that preparing for a test has on their performance.**

Discuss question three. Invite students to share how far in advance they usually prepare for a test. Suggest to students that they could prepare for a test as a runner prepares for a marathon: a marathon runner begins training well in advance of a race. Gradually, the runner builds endurance, running longer and longer distances. Finally, it is the day of the race. The runner is confident that they are ready and able to complete the race at peak performance.

Challenge students to relate preparation for a marathon with test preparation. Explain to students that just as with training for a marathon, people perform their best on exams when they allow themselves plenty of time to prepare.

**4. Students identify effective study practices.**



Talk about question four. Encourage students to share specific ways that they prepare for an exam. Write student responses on the board. (Students might respond: taking good notes in class, staying organized, making note cards or flashcards.)

Elicit from students that study sheets can be extremely useful when preparing for a major exam, especially the following two types of sheets:

- A “key terms” sheet, which contains dates, names, events, places, and other specific facts that need to be memorized
- A “general themes” sheet, which groups and outlines major ideas or recurring themes that must be reviewed

Point out that the key terms study sheet is useful when preparing for short-answer tests, while the general themes sheet enables students to organize information that might appear in essay questions. Suggest to students that they should prepare study sheets five to seven days before a major test.

Discuss with students the usefulness of mnemonic devices for remembering key terms. Explain that mnemonic devices are tricks to enhance memory. For example, some people remember the order of the planets with a sentence like “My very entertaining mother just served us nachos” (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune). Elicit from students examples of mnemonic devices that have been helpful to them in the past.

Remind students that in the first lesson of this module they identified their learning styles and discussed techniques for studying that complement their learning style. Explain that mnemonics, study sheets, and even study groups are adaptable to various learning styles.

## **5. Students identify advantages and disadvantages of studying in groups.**

Take a poll of students who get together with friends to study. Elicit from students the advantages and disadvantages of this method. Write their ideas on the board. (Advantages include: learning from one another, in-depth discussions, steady studying schedule, makes studying more fun. Disadvantages include: lost time if friends are not prepared, panicky students spread test anxiety to each other, groups may use time more inefficiently than one person alone, more distractions in groups.)

Conclude with students that choosing the right people to study with is important.

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## **Part II Test Day (15 minutes)**

*Purpose:* Students identify effective test-taking strategies.

### **1. Students recognize that it is important to relax and sleep well the night before an exam.**

Ask students to imagine that it is now the night before an exam. Have students suggest useful pretest activities. Point out that they should have done most of their major studying already, and that, ideally, all they need is a brief review. Lead students to understand that the most important thing that they can do the night before an exam is to relax and get a good night's sleep.

## **2. Students brainstorm effective pretest strategies.**

Divide the class into groups of four or five. Give students the following instructions:

- Each group needs a sheet of writing paper.
- At my signal, one student in each group will write down one pretest strategy. This can be anything you do from the time you wake up until the minute before the exam begins.
- That student then passes the paper to the student on their right, who adds a different strategy to the list.
- Continue to pass the paper around the circle.

Give the groups two minutes to list as many pretest strategies as they can. The paper can go around the circle more than once. (*Students might respond: eating a good breakfast, being on time, dressing in comfortable clothing, bringing all materials needed for the test [e.g., sharpened pencils, pens, scrap paper, calculators], bringing a watch, arriving a minute or two early to quickly review notes, avoiding talking to anxious students.*)

## **3. Students brainstorm effective test-taking strategies.**

When two minutes have passed, instruct students to take two more minutes to write down as many test-taking strategies as they can. Groups should again pass the paper around the circle and include ideas from each member. (*Students might respond: looking over the entire test first, budgeting time, reading directions carefully, reading each question carefully, watching the time, circling difficult questions and coming back to them.*)

## **4. Students discuss the strategies identified by their groups.**

When two minutes have passed, have the groups discuss the pretest strategies. Compile the groups' ideas on the board and add other ideas they might have missed.

On a separate list, compile students' test-taking strategies and add any that are missing. Duplicate the lists and distribute them to students for their future reference.

## **5. Students discuss strategies to reduce anxiety.**

Ask students how many are anxious before or during a test. Explain that test anxiety is very common but that there are some simple things that they can do to combat it. Encourage students to offer suggestions. (*Students might respond: being well prepared, taking deep breaths, thinking calm thoughts.*)

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### Part III Showing Off What You Know: Game Show (12 minutes)

*Purpose:* Students learn and recall pretest and test-taking strategies in a game-show style activity.

#### 1. Students participate in a game-show style activity.

This activity provides an opportunity to reemphasize strategies that might be particularly important to your students. Use the questions and answers on the “Game Show” activity sheet as you facilitate the game.

Divide the class into two or more teams. Tell students that you will read questions out loud. The teams should raise their hands as soon as they know the answer. Call on the first team to raise their hands.

Begin the activity.

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### Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to identify three strategies that they use to prepare for and take tests. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Preparing in advance for an exam helps to decrease anxiety and increase the likelihood of success.
- Study sheets are useful when compiling notes in preparation for a major exam.
- Specific test-taking strategies can be applied during an exam to improve performance.

### Student Assessment

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1. What are your usual strategies for test preparation in the week leading up to a test? What can you do to make your preparation more effective?
2. List three mnemonic devices that you find effective.
3. List five test-preparation techniques that can help you get ready the day of a test.

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“No man ever became wise by chance.”

Discuss the meaning of this quote. Have students create their own sayings with similar meanings.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Distribute a magazine or news article to students. In small groups, have students devise 10 test questions (four true/false, four multiple choice, two essay) on the article.

Discuss how students arrived at the points they included on the test as well as the process for writing each question. Chart the groups' questions to see the overlap in what they included on the test.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students complete this sentence: “The worst test-taking experience I ever had was....”

Have students share their work with a partner and brainstorm ways to improve future test-taking experiences. Have them keep a list of suggestions in their journals.

### Using Technology

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Have students use software to create outlines, flowcharts, and study guides to help them review for tests. Have them visit <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker> to make custom crossword puzzles for vocabulary review.

Have students create study guides, at least a week in advance, for an upcoming exam. After the exam, have them discuss which tools were most helpful.

## Homework

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Have students review the test taking tips found on <https://www.usu.edu/academic-support/files/TestTakingTips.pdf>. Students may want to show this page to their parents or guardians. Have students take notes on new information or tips they find especially helpful.

## Additional Resources

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Assign groups selections from *Test-Taking Strategies* by Judy Kesselmann-Turkel. Ask the groups to present strategies for taking different kinds of tests.

# TEST-TAKING SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. How did you feel when the teacher said that you were going to take a quiz?
2. Why did you feel this way?
3. How far in advance do you usually begin studying for a test?
4. Name three study tools that help you prepare for a test.

# GAME SHOW

- 1. What kind of study sheet helps you to compile notes, such as names and dates?**  
A key terms sheet
- 2. How far in advance should you begin to study for a test?**  
Five to seven days
- 3. Complete the sentence: It can help your attitude to think of a test as \_\_\_\_\_.**  
An opportunity to show what you know
- 4. Why does a pop quiz often cause more anxiety than a quiz announced beforehand?**  
Because you don't have an opportunity to prepare
- 5. Name two effective study practices.**  
Any two of the following: taking good notes in class, staying organized, making note cards or flash cards, compiling notes into a key terms sheet or a general themes sheet, mnemonic devices, studying in groups, scheduling study time, reviewing notes after class, or finding a quiet place
- 6. True or false: You should spend as many hours as possible studying the night before a major test.**  
False—you should relax and get a good night's sleep
- 7. What kinds of people should you avoid on the day of an exam?**  
People who make you nervous
- 8. Name two advantages of studying in groups.**  
Any two of the following: lets students learn from one another, in-depth discussions, steady studying schedule, moral support, makes studying more fun, teaching others increases your own retention of facts
- 9. Name two disadvantages of studying in groups.**  
Any two of the following: lost time if friends are not prepared, lost time going over things you already know well, panicky students spread test anxiety, groups use time less efficiently
- 10. Name two things you should do the morning of a test.**  
Any two of the following: eat a good breakfast, dress comfortably, bring a watch, arrive early, make sure you have all the materials you need
- 11. True or false: You should eat a very big breakfast the day of an exam.**  
False—you should eat a healthy breakfast, but not more than you usually eat
- 12. Name two important strategies to use during a test.**  
Any two of the following: look over the entire test before you begin, budget time (based on point values), read directions carefully, read each question carefully, watch the time and pace yourself, circle difficult questions and come back to them
- 13. Name one anxiety-reducing strategy.**  
Any of the following: be well prepared, take deep breaths, think of a peaceful place

# MANAGING STRESS

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## AGENDA

- Starter
- Stress or Not?
- You Stress Me Out
- Analyze This
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

### Objectives

Students will identify sources and symptoms of stress.

Students will identify ways to manage and reduce stress.

### Materials Needed

- Three copies of the “Stress or Not?” activity sheet (Starter and Part I)
- A dictionary (Part I)
- One copy of the “Stressful Situations” activity sheet or one blank piece of paper that you have folded and unfolded to make 10 or 12 boxes (Part II)



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### **Starter (3 minutes)**

Before you begin, give three students who like to perform copies of the “Stress or Not?” activity sheet dialogue to practice quietly.

On the board, write the word “stress.” Draw a circle around it to begin a word web. Explain word webs to students who are not familiar with this kind of organizer. Have students freely associate words that they relate with the word “stress” as you write their responses in the area surrounding the circle.

Discuss students’ ideas and conclude that stress is a big part of our daily lives. Explain that today’s lesson will help them recognize and manage stress.

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### **Part I Stress or Not? (10 minutes)**

Purpose: Students define “stress” and the ways in which our perceptions of situations determine whether or not we are stressed.

#### **1. Students define “stress.”**

Ask a volunteer to look up the word “stress” in the dictionary. List the various definitions on the board. Have students identify the definitions with which they are most familiar. (Students might respond: tension, pressure, mental or physical strain.)

#### **2. Three students perform a dialogue for the class.**

Explain to the class that they are going to see a brief skit about stress. Remind them to keep the definition of “stress” in mind.

Instruct the three students you chose during the starter to perform the dialogue for the class.

#### **3. Students recognize that our perceptions of situations determine whether we are stressed.**

When the dialogue is complete, ask students if they thought that the test was stressful. Lead students to understand that the test was stressful for Eddie, but it was not stressful for Dominique. Have students identify the reasons why this was the case. (Student responses may include that Eddie was not prepared for the test, while Dominique was prepared.)

Point out that the students’ attitudes toward the test were different. Guide students to realize that attitude is a major factor in how we perceive the level of stress involved in a situation. Most situations are not stressful in themselves; rather, it is how we perceive them that determines the stress.

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**Part II You Stress Me Out (20 minutes)**

Purpose: Students identify situations that cause stress.

**1. Students brainstorm situations that they find stressful.**

Ask students to list situations that they find stressful. Write their ideas on the board. In addition, ask a volunteer to write the situations on the “Stressful Situations” activity sheet or the sheet of paper you have previously folded to create boxes. Have the volunteer write one situation in each square.

**2. Students identify symptoms of stress.**

Refer students to a situation on the board. Ask them to describe how they feel when that situation occurs. Encourage them to consider their emotional and physical reactions. (Students might respond: tension, rapid breathing, losing sleep, sleeping too much, depression, getting sick, anger, eating too much or not enough.)

Explain that these responses can be symptoms of stress and that learning to recognize these symptoms can help us reduce stress.

**3. Students work in groups and prepare to role-play stressful situations.**

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask the student volunteer to tear the activity sheet or folded paper into pieces so that one situation is on each piece. Place the papers in a bag or box. Have each group randomly choose a stressful situation to role-play.

Instruct students to include the following in the role plays:

- Identify and describe the stressful situation by acting it out.
- Show the symptoms of stress.
- Show how and why one character’s perceptions of the situation make it stressful.

Explain to students that they do not need to show a resolution for the situation at this time.

Allow students five minutes to prepare their role plays.

**4. Students perform their role plays.**

Have students perform their role plays for the class.

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**Part III   Analyze This (15 minutes)**

Purpose: Students analyze the role plays and suggest techniques for managing or reducing stress.

**1. Students brainstorm some stress-management techniques.**

Explain to students that they are now going to suggest ways to manage or reduce the stress that they saw in the role plays.

Ask students to suggest some common techniques for managing or reducing stress. (Students may respond: being prepared, staying healthy, talking it out, going for a walk, breaking down big tasks into manageable pieces, breathing deeply, visualizing relaxing places, exercising, thinking of the “big picture.”)

**2. Groups analyze the role plays.**

Explain to students that they are now going to suggest appropriate ways to handle the stressful situations they portrayed in their role plays. Assign each group one of the role plays that another group performed.

Allow students eight minutes to discuss the following questions:

- Why was the situation perceived as stressful?
- What stress-management techniques could be useful?

When they are finished, have groups share their analyses with the class.

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## Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to identify techniques for reducing stress that they can apply to their own lives. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Most situations are not stressful in themselves; rather, it is how we perceive them that determines the stress we feel.
- Recognizing the symptoms of stress can help us reduce stress.

## Student Assessment

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1. Define “stress.”
2. List three physical and three emotional signs of stress.
3. List three techniques for managing your stress.
4. Describe a stressful situation in your life. What can you do to make this situation less stressful?

## LESSON EXTENSIONS

### Using Quotations

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“When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.”

Discuss the role of acceptance and flexibility in reducing stress.

### Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

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Have students compile a resource guide of stress-management tips. Students might contribute information from teen-interest magazines or reference books for adults. Use a recipe box to separate this information by categories.

Have students write their favorite tips on an index card to keep with them wherever they go.

### Writing in Your Journal

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Have students use the following prompt to begin their journal writing: “Stress! I’ve got plenty. For example....” Have them identify symptoms of stress, develop a personal plan of stress-reducing techniques, and identify where to get help with tough problems.

Discuss sources of stress common to the students in the class.

### Using Technology

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Show a relaxation or stress release video. Discuss the elements of the video and the suggestions it offers.

Have students create their own stress release videos.

## Homework

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Have students take a quiz to find out their “hassle quotient.” (See pages 21–24 of *Urban Ease: Stress-Free Living in the Big City* by Allen Elkin, PhD, or have students make up their own quiz.)

Discuss the quiz results in class. Talk about how people respond differently to stressful events. Students might want to give the quiz to a family member and discuss whether their coping styles are the same or different.

## Additional Resources

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Invite a guest speaker skilled in a particular method of relaxation (e.g., meditation, yoga, tai chi) or a traditional sport to demonstrate and discuss their area of expertise and how it reduces stress.

Have students write about the activity and whether it seems likely that the strategy will work for them.

# STRESS OR NOT?

The following dialogue has three roles:

- Teacher
- Eddie
- Dominique

Practice the dialogue several times before performing it in front of the class.

*For about 30 seconds, the two students sit at desks at the front of the room. Eddie shuffles frantically through papers, trying to cram for a history test. Dominique sits calmly and looks relaxed, perhaps reading a book. The teacher enters the room and walks over to his desk in the corner, talking as he walks.*

**TEACHER:** Okay, class, it's time for your history test. I need you to clear everything off your desks.

**EDDIE:** (still shuffling, to himself) One more time...Okay, who was president during the Great Depression?

**TEACHER:** Eddie, did you hear me? It's time for the test. Please clear everything off your desk. (Teacher begins organizing some papers.)

**DOMINIQUE:** (to Eddie) Hey, what are you so worried about? This thing is going to be a breeze!

**EDDIE:** What do you mean it's going to be a breeze? I need at least a B in this class to be eligible to play this year, and if I don't do well on this test, I'm never going to get it.

**DOMINIQUE:** Well, I need to get a good grade in this class, too. This is an important requirement for the college I want to get into. But you don't see me freaking out over it.

**TEACHER:** (returning attention to students) Class, I can't begin the test until your desks are clear.

**DOMINIQUE:** (to Eddie) C'mon! I want to get started!

*Eddie looks up with an expression of panic.*

# STRESSFUL SITUATIONS
