

How to be an A+ Student



Written by

Lewis Ritter

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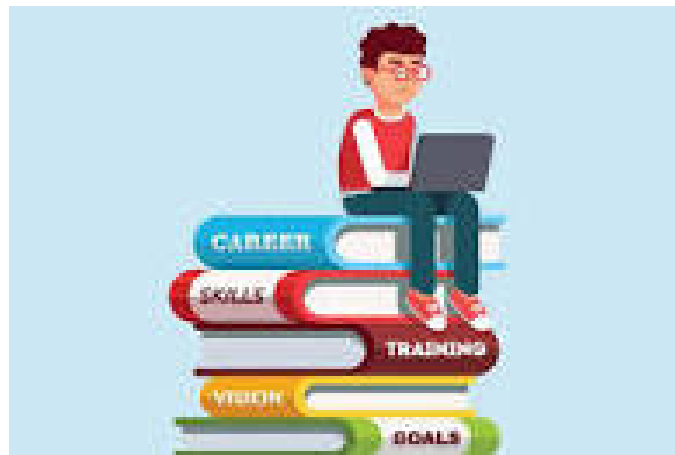
About the Author - Lew Ritter is a retired teacher. He taught several subjects including writing, library and research skills. He is a published author of a book of historical fiction entitled Turbulence: Dispatches from the Student Protest Movement Rutgers 1970..

In college, he found that he was doing poorly in his subjects. In fact, He nearly failed out in his first year. He discovered strategies that helped put him on the Dean's List in the next semester. He realized that getting good grades required strategies to help you comprehend and learn the material in a timely fashion. Good Grades are not a matter of luck, they are the result of time and effort on the part of the student.

INTRODUCTION

Getting good grades in school is vital for achieving good grade is learning proper study techniques. The problem that most students is many students never learn the best methods for studying. Most student never learn these methods and choose the hit and miss strategies and wind up with poor or failing grades in a subject.

Take the time to master the techniques outlined in this book. Take it slow. Many new concepts will be presented and they take time to become familiar and second nature.



THE INACTIVE OR PASSIVE READER

The first thing that a student must learn in order to achieve high grades in school is how to become an Active reader. Most students fall into What might be termed the Passive Reader mode. As a result, they fail to remember or comprehend their material .

During a semester, many student will be assigned chapters from either a text or fiction books to read for their classroom assignments. Most students assume the strategy of either Inactive, Skimming or the Passive Reader. They want to finish their reading as quickly as possible. As a result, they skim through the assignment as fast as they can turn a page. The problem is that they are not absorbing any material on a deep level using this method. Textbooks are not meant to be read like your favorite Harry Potter novel.

This is the traditional reading skills employed by the average student. This involves a scanning a few pages of the reading material. The average student might look at few pages and gather a few facts and then consider the assignment finished. They put the book down assured that they have read the material

Moreover, this method of reading will prevent the student from absorbing much of the material in more than surface level learning. Many student speed read the assignment and retain very little information.

Mastery of the material will be superficial at best. At test time, the students will strain their memory for facts to answer the teachers test questions This is the traditional reading skills employed by the average student. This involves a scanning a few pages of the reading material. The average student might look at few pages and gather a few facts and then consider the assignment finished. They put the book down assured that they have read the material

As a result, when they are finished with their assignments, most students will not remember more than a mere fraction of the material that they have rea

THE ACTIVE READER

In contrast to the Passive Reader, the preferred method of reading textbooks or more complex materials is via the strategy of being an Active Reader. There are several ways that a student can maximize the information that they gather because of reading and gain more benefits from your reading. Active reading involves taking the time to absorb the material by slowing down and absorbing in the material in an orderly fashion and letting your brain absorb the new information in a through manner.

Many books are organized in a fashion that makes the material easier to comprehend. Slow down. Don't rush through the assignment.

When you start a new textbook it is useful to utilize these steps. The first part of Active Reading is SURVEYING. This involved surveying or previewing the material chapter or pages that you are going to be studying or reading. Get an idea of what the material is about.



STRATEGIES FOR THE ACTIVE READER

1. Read the Author Forward or Preface.

This is where the author spells out what he or she is trying to accomplish with the material. They may explain how each chapter or section builds upon the other.

2. CHARTS AND GRAPHICS.

They are easier to read and present information in an easier format to digest or understand. They may include charts, maps or pictures showing the information in easier to comprehend chunks, They are included to make understanding of concepts easier than trying to read and comprehend many pages of text at a sitting.

The Active Reading Strategy is often termed the SQ3Rstrategy

OTHER SOURCES OF GAINING INFORMATION IN A BOOK

4) **GLOSSARY** – Many books will contain glossaries of terms and words that the author considers vital to understanding the material .

5) **INDEX**- A useful tool for allowing the reader to find specific topics by page. Readers can search the Index for specific topics without spending a lot of time thumbing through the different chapters searching for the subject.

6) **APPENDIX** – The Back of the book of the book – Appendix, glossary references

7) **PREFACE**- The author will tell the reader the purpose of the book or provide their opinion is about a particular subject. Read the Author's Preface or Forward.- This gives the author's point of view or what they wish to tell the reader about the material.

8) **TABLE OF CONTENTS** Each chapter has a specific title. It will tell you what the chapter is about and what information the author considers important. . In most textbooks, the author is building the understanding of the material chapter by chapter . The author is building a foundation of knowledge for the reader This will show the reader the progression of chapters and indicate what was the order of the chapters. It will indicate how the author has organized or prioritized the material

9) **GRAPHS OR VISUALS** – Similar to charts and graphics. Information in a graphic presentation may provide a summary or an easy to memorize material in a graphic, more eye pleasing format. Look at Graphs or maps. Many times, key points are presented in a graphic or visual style. This will help visual method for absorbing the material.

10) READ THE TITLE OF THE CHAPTER .

The title is crucial because it will inform you of what is being covered in the chapter. It is like a giant neon sign saying this is what you need to know. The author has organized the book into chapters. Each chapter is built on the information in previous chapters. Sometime the author will provide a summary at the beginning or end of the chapter to simplify key points These are areas that your teacher or professor will probably utilize on an upcoming test.

1. **Read the main title of each main section or paragraph.** Similar to the title of the chapter, each paragraph or set of paragraphs may indicate specific knowledge or facts. They will indicate what the paragraph(s) are about.
2. **Read each paragraph slowly.** Look at the Title of the paragraph. It tells you what the following paragraph is all about. Read the first sentence of the paragraph. Usually, this is called the **TOPIC SENTENCE**. It tells the reader what the main idea of the paragraph is about.-Most of the time, the first sentence is the Topic Sentence. As in a good essay, it will convey the main or Key idea of the paragraph. Supporting Details Sentence or Key Details.- Explains or gives examples that supports the main idea and gives examples or supporting evidence of proof of the main idea
3. **KEY IDEAS.** These are secondary ideas that reinforce or strengthen the topic sentence. Read the topic sentence of a paragraph. It is usually the author's main point. Most of the time, the first sentence of each paragraph is the main idea that the author is trying to explain to the reader. It provides a clear expression of the author's main point.
4. Look for Key Words that are in **BOLD PRINT** Circle or underline key words. Note them in your notebook.
Some of these words are vocabulary words that you must become familiar with. Many times, they will be material for the chapter or final tests.
5. Get an overview of what the chapter is about and how it fits into the overall scheme of things? What is it trying to teach.
How does it fit into the overall pattern How does it relate to previous reading assignments?

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ESTABLISHING LEARNING GOALS: PLAN YOUR STUDY TIME



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Studying by schedule? This doesn't sound appealing to most students. After all, most people have many chores or projects to keep them selves or their families busy during a day. Young students want recreation time, time to play video games with friends or learn the latest Tik-Tok craze. Yet to be a proficient student, setting up a definite study schedule makes sense.

The idea of building a study schedule may not sound appealing, but it can be a vital strategy for improving your learning. There are several ways that this can be achieved. Purchase a daily planner notebook or utilize an Online system such as Google Calendar to help plan out your study time. . Whether that's a virtual calendar such as Google calendar or a physical planner that travels everywhere with you, use it and stick to it as best you can.

Visualize your day and break your schedule up into different time blocks for different activities. Try to set the same time every evening for at least one-half hour to one hour that you will devote to your studies times. Schedule in your free time, test prep hours, everything you can think of that you have to finish for the day and the week.

This way, you're able to visualize how each day's hours get spent, and you'll find a sense of accomplishment ticking each of those tasks off. Make sure you're budgeting in time for adequate sleep! Without the right amount of sleep, you won't accomplish your tasks as efficiently.



Take time to reevaluate your to-do list. Determine your most pressing assignments. Check for due dates from most projects. Don't let the due date for a paper or a test slip up on you without your awareness.

What's the most pressing item there, and which ones can wait? Since you have your daily planner dialed in (ideally a few weeks ahead of time), you should be able to look ahead at what's coming and figure out what needs to be tackled first. Certain projects can be highlighted with colored markers or tabs to indicate that this assignment is coming due in a short period of time.

Some students prefer to complete the harder tasks first and get them off their to -do list. It can be gratifying to see that you have finished or have worked on a larger project and broken it down into smaller chunks of time. Rather than a last-minute rush to complete a project to avoid it being late and the teacher reducing your grade by some points or even a full grade because it was handed in after the official deadline established by your teacher.

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Other students prefer tackling the easier tasks first, so they're able to cross off a few things on their to-do list quickly. Determine which method works best for you and then stick to it. The most important thing is that you look at your upcoming tasks holistically and figure out what needs to be handled first.

SETTING UP YOUR SPACE

In order to succeed, make sure your study space is set up to your liking. Clear off all your distractions, have all of the materials you need: think textbooks, notebooks, highlighters, your favorite snack, etc. If your desk is disorganized, it can be difficult to focus on what really matters. We recommend having a study space separate from where you like to relax, play video games or sleep. This way, when it's time to work, you come to your study space, and when it's time to relax, you're able to disconnect from your work and recharge.

MOTIVATION AND REWARDS - REWARD YOURSELF FOR A GOOD JOB

Take some time to reward yourself for committing to a definite schedule. Go to your favorite restaurant

or eating your favorite snack, or watching a favorite show. Just make sure you come back to your work when you need to. Remember your long-term goals and why each of these small tasks really matters. Small successes add up to your overall goals. Keep the long game in the back of your mind while you focus on bite-size tasks that will get you there. Don't forget to reward yourself for the small wins along the way to keep yourself motivated and charging forward.



When you find yourself following your Daily or Weekly Planner, reward yourself with some down time or time off. Get an ice cream or take a walk to the nearby pond or anything that you can enjoy and feel good about yourself. Tell yourself that you are following the planner and staying with it. Like anything else, the regimen can be difficult at first, like sticking with any routine, but in the long run, getting better grades and the feeling of satisfaction will be the long term goal.

Minimize distractions; In this technological age, many students are absorbed in checking their phones for the latest texts or messages from boyfriends or girlfriends. They may also be reading the latest stories on the Internet or checking up on the latest Tik -Tok or Instagram post on social media. This means turning off your phones, social media, loud music or anything that can distract you from concentrating on your studying material. Most people find it difficult to pay attention to two things at once!

Create Reading Goal: Decide on how many pages that you will complete in a study session. If they are assignment multiple chapters, set aside time to read at least one of the chapters in an evening.

T THE STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF LEARNING

The best way to learn a subject is to purchase a set of blank index cards. As you come across a new topics or key words, jot them down on an individual index card. Have the question to a term or on one side and the answer on the reverse side. Many times , a new topic might not sink in the first time you read it. However, by using the Index Card method, you are enabling the material to sink in at a faster and deeper level.

Example: Studying the textbook on Macro Economics, the reader can jot down new concepts or unfamiliar terms and write them on an index card in the above manner. Ask yourself the question: What is the term **SUPPLY SIDE ECONOMICS** ? then flip it over to the reverse side to learn the answer or you can do the reverse. e.g. How does Macro Economics differ from Microeconomics? Macro Economics is the study of the whole economy or how the government organizes the economy. Microeconomics is more related to how business are organized founded or organized, By doing this with the cards, a difficult term or topic can be better understood.



STRATEGY #2 FORM A STUDY GROUP OR USE A PARTNER.

What happens when you get stuck on a concept you don't fully understand, and you're stuck at home without access to your teacher? This is where study groups can really come in handy. Forming study groups with a few classmates will help reinforce concepts, allow everyone to talk through questions, and really solidify your understanding. Reviewing aloud can immensely help students absorb the material and make sure they fully grasp it. It's also a great opportunity to help out other classmates while you continue reviewing the material. It can also break up the monotony of studying for hours on end alone.

Sit down in a quiet place like a library or living room free from distractions. Find a class mate or two and form a study group. Take turns quizzing each study partner or members of your groups. This will reinforce the material in a fun and fast fashion. It becomes a learning game that will pay dividends when it comes to the test.

Strategy #3 REVIEW YOUR WORK

As difficult as it sounds, review the material at least once a week or every few weeks. The material will remain fresh in your mind, and it will be ready for you to ace your test.

Stop after every paragraph or page. Keep a separate notebook for your reading or a separate page apart from class notes. Indicate the chapter that you are reading and place a date on the material so that you can refer back to it without thumbing through multiple pages or tons of notes. Try and jot down important ideas that the paragraph is trying to convey. Write questions for each heading or sub heading.

Read information one paragraph at time. Ask questions about what did I just read? Try to use index cards with the question on one side and the answer on the reverse side. The information will sink deeper into your brain if you practice with this method. Complex material will become second nature if you review the material in this fashion.

Stop at end of chapter. Don't rush through the material.



Strategy #4 POST READING

Sit in a comfortable chair and read the material at a slow pace. Concentrate on the material and think about what you are reading. Sometimes, reading aloud helps you concentrate on the material better than a quick skim or read. You will absorb more material when you hear yourself reading the words at a reasonable rate.

With approaching application deadlines, regular schoolwork, and finals on the horizon, it can all feel a bit overwhelming. Breaking down your workload into smaller tasks is a great way to manage the many different balls you juggle in your academic career.

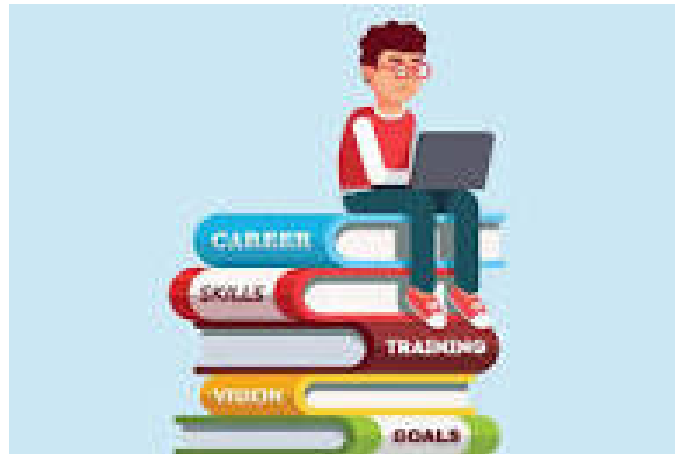
Why It Works

These techniques work well because the timer creates a sense of urgency. It inspires the individual working to get as much done in a given amount of time. The physical act of setting a timer, rather than just setting a time mark, also makes the work period more concrete. The buzzer or timer going off at the end of each pomodoro announces a reward or break--which is exciting to work towards.

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These smaller efficiency-packed sessions help break up the tasks and make the workload feel less daunting. It also helps to avoid long working sessions that tire you out and fail to result in productivity.

CONGRATULATIONS



You have taken a giant step toward becoming a better student. Remember, use these techniques and you will find that your grades will improve. They will take time to become second nature, but persistence is part of success.