

## Study Tips

BYS surveyed several BHS upperclassmen about what has worked for them in managing their school work. Here's what they had to say about getting and staying on top of their assignments. .

**Student Tip #1:** Learn to talk to your teachers. If it's too hard, start with emailing them, but practice and keep doing it until it's comfortable. It will get easier as you do it more and it's so important for helping you do well.

**Student Tip #2:** Set aside a specific time to study.

**Student Tip #3:** Not everyone likes using planners. Try setting phone reminders for your assignments instead.

**Student Tip #4:** Figure out how to use double class periods to your advantage. I like to use the first day to start on my homework and use the second day to ask teachers questions I might have. But do what works for you.

**Student Tip #5:** If you miss a day's homework, don't give up. Start again the next day with those assignments. Turning in some work is better than not turning in any work.

**Student Tip #6:** Prioritize your assignments. Be smart about what you focus on. For example, if you have five missing assignments in a class, first do the ones that are worth the most points. Put your energy and effort into what counts the most. Then move on to the others.

**Student Tip #7:** Doing homework is something you have to practice and, just like any skill, as you practice it, you will get faster and better at it.

**Student Tip #8:** Use BYS tutoring services! I've made it a priority to get peer tutoring and it's made a huge difference. Email [tutoring@bainbridgeyouthservices](mailto:tutoring@bainbridgeyouthservices) or stop by BYS and they'll hook you up.

**Student Tip #9:** Play around with what notebook set-up works for you. Some students like having one notebook for 1-3-5 days and another for 2-4-6. I like having one small notebook for all my classes where I keep only the current/pending assignments and homework. I clean it out every other week and organize it into bigger notebooks that I keep at home.

**Student Tip #10:** Talk to your school counselors. They are available for more than just college recommendations. They can help you change your schedule or find solutions if a class isn't working out well or you're having a hard time communicating with a teacher.

**Student Tip #11:** Use your down time to do little bits of homework, like between classes, during breaks, and on the bus. You'd be surprised how much you can get done in little spurts of time.

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We also asked Dr. Judith Whitfield, an academic counselor, for some study tips. Here's what the expert recommends.

**Pro Tip #1:** Break up your work into smaller pieces. Look up the "Pomodero Method" for focus and give it a try. Set a timer for 25 min, work until the timer rings, take a five minute break. After four "pomodoros" (focus periods) take a longer break (20-30 minutes). Look for a pomodoro app to find timers and help.

**Pro Tip #2:** We're all different. Keep in mind that breaks are good for some people but not everyone. Some folks have a hard time starting, but once they start they're ok. These are the folks that should NOT take a lot of breaks. They may prefer to just keep working until they're done. Taking frequent breaks just means you have to restart again and again.

**Pro Tip #3:** There is no evidence that cramming for tests helps. You are much better off going to bed and resting your brain and body. Research shows that "massed" practice is best, meaning you study a little each day, building on the day before.

**Pro Tip #4:** Research shows that if you start something, you're more likely to finish it. If you do at least the first math homework problem at the end of class, then you're more likely to get back to it and finish the assignment.

**Pro Tip #5:** Do you often write your assignments on your planner and then never open up the planner again? If you get a spiral planner or notebook and keep it open to the current day, you're more likely to see it and use it. "Out of sight, out of mind" is very true. If you don't keep your planner OPEN your brain will not care. Put it in the most conspicuous place, somewhere you will see it first when you get home and set up for homework time.

**Pro Tip #6:** ABC (antecedent -- behavior -- consequence). Think about a behavior you want to change (procrastinating, not turning in a paper, etc). Then think about what you do BEFORE the behavior, and what the payoff is afterward. Keep notes for a few days and you'll likely see a pattern emerge pretty quickly. You can choose to change the A or the C, and then see how that affects the behavior.

**Thanks for all the great ideas shared by students and an academic expert. Sign up for a BYS peer tutor if you want more support.**