



BLACK HAWK COLLEGE

Study Groups

Study groups help you to better understand what you are learning by providing an opportunity to discuss class material and clarify areas of confusion. Students who utilize study groups tend to get better grades than those who don't. When you explain something you've learned in class to someone else, you begin to understand it better yourself.

The Benefits of Study Groups

Group study offers other advantages in addition to gaining a deeper understanding of class material. These include the following:

Better class notes:

Study group members can compare their class notes to make them clear and fill in any missing information.

Cover more information:

Three study group members may be able to solve an algebra problem that none would have solved alone. You learn more than you would by yourself by discussing class materials together.

Keep up with class assignments:

Participating in a study group keeps you motivated to commit more time to studying and to stay up to date with your class assignments.

Develop a Support system:

Members of a study group often have common goals, such as good grades, which results in the group members being supportive of one another.

How to form a study group

The following guidelines will help you to form an effective study group.

Number of members:

Create a group of four to six people. In a larger group, it's easy for someone to get left out, and smaller groups can too easily get off track.

Who to ask:

Ask classmates who seem to share your interest in doing well in class. Look for people who stay alert in class, take notes, ask questions, and respond to the instructor's questions.

Where to meet:

Hold study group sessions in a place that is free of distractions and that has room to spread out books, notes, and other class materials. You can use the library, study lounges, etc.

How long to meet:

Study groups should meet for no more than two to three hours at a time. Having a time limit will help the group focus. If you know you only have an hour, you're more likely to stay on task.

When to meet:

If possible, try to meet on the same day and time each week. Treat the study session as you would other activities such as classes and appointments to ensure that everyone attends.

Activities for Study Groups

- Review and compare notes
- Work on problems/questions/exercises
- Discuss readings - compare with lecture
- Create study sheets - organize information from notes/reading
- Discuss which topics were especially emphasized by the instructor
- Predict test questions and formulate answers
- Take turns teaching mini-lessons on the material
- Ask each other questions where you are confused
- Share methods you are using to study/learn the material
- If your group cannot answer a question, plan for a group member to talk with the instructor or make an appointment as a group with your instructor
- Determine how you will prepare for future classes and your next group meeting

Getting the Most out of a Study Group Session

The greatest benefit of studying with a group of classmates is the support you receive from one another. Here are some tips to help your group get the most out of each study session:

State objectives or goals.

Knowing what you want to achieve at each session helps the group stay focused and manage time. At the start of each meeting, a designated session leader should state what the goals are. For example, the session leader might announce, "Today we'll review chapter 7 and discuss the concepts introduced in class on Wednesday."

Be prepared.

Before a session, be sure to finish your assigned reading, review notes, and list topics you want to go over. By being well-prepared, your group can make the most of your time together by questioning one another on the assigned material.

Take turns teaching.

When you instruct the group, you not only help the other group members, but also reinforce your own knowledge.

Stay on topic.

For each session, assign one member to be the "taskmaster." This person's job is to steer the group members back to the topic if they begin to drift. Also, schedule five-minute breaks into your study sessions after every half hour or so of work. This allows all the group members to get off-topic chatting out of their systems. By supplementing your individual study with a study group, you can reinforce what you've learned, deepen your understanding of complex concepts, and maybe even make a few new friends.

Adapted from myroad.comr