



Studying in the Sciences: Time & Task Management Tips



****Expecting the time****

- Be prepared to spend more time in class because of lab each week.
- Be prepared for weekly problem sets, prelab assignments, and lab reports as well as textbook reading.
- Expect to visit your professor in office hours at least once every couple of weeks to go over problem sets and questions.

****Finding the time****

- Create a tentative schedule for yourself before the week starts to see how much time you will have to spend on your science course.
- Try to schedule 15-20 minutes at some point after each class to reread your lecture notes and review the concepts you have learned that day.
- Schedule at least two problem set sessions for yourself – don't try to do the whole thing in one night!
- Come to lab prepared to start work right away. Make sure you have read the lab the night before and have worked on the prelab before the lab period begins. This will allow you to do the prelab work properly, ask for help on it, if necessary, and then work efficiently in lab and finish sooner.
- Glance at your lab for the week and see if you will spend any time waiting for your experiment – if so, you can use that time to do calculations or lab summaries.
- If you finish the lab early, consider staying in lab for a little while to work on postlab questions and talk with your instructor about the lab – this is a great time to get help!
- Make sure you have some free time after your lab period so that you can recover!

****Managing the time****

Reading in the Sciences

- Try to do your readings before lecture so you will better understand the material being presented in class.
- Pay attention to pictures, diagrams, graphs, and not just the words.
- Stop and summarize frequently. Ask what is the main point and what evidence is provided in support.

- Jot down any important formulas or concepts you find in the reading and use these notes to work through your homework problems.
- Read the material a second time after the lecture in order to gain a deeper understanding.

Note-Taking in the Sciences

- Use different colored pens to note important equations and concepts.
- Draw pictures to help describe important processes.
- Participate by asking questions to keep yourself engaged during the lecture.

Problem Sets in the Sciences

- Consider working in a group to solve some of the more complicated problems in your problem set. This will also force you to look at the material ahead of time.

Lab Reports in the Sciences

- Read some published journal articles on your subject to get an idea of the standard writing format of a lab report.
- Double-check your calculations with your lab partner before writing the report.

Exams in the Sciences

- Try to start studying at least 5 days in advance of your test. This will give you more time to absorb the material and a chance to ask your professor any questions you have.
- Rework some of the questions from your problem sets. Test questions are often based on homework. Make sure you work homework problems out of order because that's how they will appear on tests.
- Redraw some of the diagrams you used in class or noted in the book.
- Don't save the reading until the night before the test!
- Consider reviewing in a group so that you can practice articulating the concepts and ideas that may be on your test.

****Enjoying the time****

- Talk with your professor about what research she is currently doing to get an idea of what kind of studies are being done in this field.
- Ask your professor for interesting articles on material you learn in lecture.
- Try to relate what you are working on in lab with ideas and studies being conducted in the outside world.

