



Study Tips

STUDY GROUPS

Why Study in Groups?

Study groups offer several benefits. Many students find that working together makes studying more efficient and effective - and also, simply more fun. Study groups provide you with opportunities 1) to discuss issues and exchange perspectives, 2) to develop abilities to express your own ideas, 3) to discover flaws or confusions in your thinking by discussing a concept with your peers and 4) to expand your repertoire of study skills by sharing ideas on how to study and think for a specific discipline. Knowing that others expect you to be prepared for the group serves as an incentive to structure your time and complete assignments on time. Finally, studying with others is also a great way to socialize and to get to know your peers outside of class.

Study groups exemplify collaborative work. Professors are often eager to discuss ways to structure a study group and suggest topics and group activities that will be most useful. Although the Honor Code states that "students should assume, unless otherwise told by their professor, that they may work together on all class assignments," it is always wise to check with your professor for guidelines about when collaboration is and is not allowed and appropriate ways to document help received on an assignment.

Establishing the Group

- Early in the semester talk with students in your classes to identify those who might be interested in actively participating in a group. Ask them if they would like to join a group.
- Ask the professor for help. Faculty are often willing to circulate a sign-up sheet for study groups and suggest topics and activities to cover in the group.
- Limit your group size. Some students suggest 3 is the ideal size, while others feel 4-5 works best.
- Choose a convenient, comfortable place to meet, with minimal distractions.
- At the first meeting discuss expectations, determine goals for the study group and ask for a commitment to attend future sessions. Discuss how long you will meet each time, topics you might address and types of activities you might do.
- Schedule regular meetings, usually weekly, in order to ensure that the group becomes a habit.

Ensuring a Successful Study Group

- Consult with your professor for lists of topics, practice questions, problem sets or ideas to develop.
- Come prepared and organized.
- Set goals and activities at the beginning of each meeting.
- Set time limits.
- Set a limit on socializing.
- Listen to others.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate.
- At the end of each meeting, summarize what you've covered, and then determine assignments and set the agenda for the next meeting.
- During the week, follow up on questions and discussion through email.
- Attend professor's office hours as a group if a question arises that cannot be solved by the group.

Suggested Study Group Activities If Appropriate For a Course

- Review, expand and discuss class notes and assigned readings.
- Raise questions and address areas of confusion.
- Quiz each other by asking and answering questions.
- Brainstorm topics, questions or essays that might be on an exam.
- Review for quizzes or exams.
- Generate or discuss paper topics.
- Seek feedback on papers in progress.
- Share alternative ways to organize and map information.
- Work on problem sets.
- Review translations.
- Report back to the group on topics covered.
- Teach a concept to each other.
- Practice class presentations.
- Share study methods and strategies.
- Share comments from professors on previous exams, papers or problem sets.