Study Skills Workshop

"How to Get Better Grades in Ten Easy Steps"





This Study Skills workshop was created by the Villa Park High School Counseling Department.

James Monroe High School

Counseling Department

WHAT KIND OF A STUDENT ARE YOU?

To find out what kind of a student you are, read the following 10 questions and put check marks in the spaces that best describe you.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Always | Sometimes | Never |
| 1. | I complete homework assignments. |  |  |  |
| 2. | I have all necessary materials when I go to class (book, pencil, etc.) |  |  |  |
| 3. | I use the time teachers give us in class to get started on homework. |  |  |  |
| 4. | I take good notes. |  |  |  |
| 5. | I ask and answer questions in class. |  |  |  |
| 6. | I use tricks to memorize information. |  |  |  |
| 7. | After reading an assignment in a textbook, I know what I've read. |  |  |  |
| 8. | I get along well with my teachers. |  |  |  |
| 9. | I am good at taking tests. |  |  |  |
| 10. | I am happy with my grades. |  |  |  |

Give yourself 2 points for each Always response, 1 point for each Sometimes response, and 0 for each Never response. Add up your score.

**What Your Score Means**

20 -15 points:

14 -10 points: 9-5 points: 4-0 points:

You are a very good student. This booklet will mostly be a review for you. It could, however,
help you raise your grades even higher.

You are a student who could be getting better grades. With this booklet, you will be able to
improve your grades significantly.

You're probably not getting very good grades. This booklet can help you change that. It could
even change how you feel about school.

Your grades must be a disaster. Memorize this booklet.

Regardless of your score, this booklet can help you improve your grades!

Step One

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

It's important that you believe in yourself. You need to recognize the talents and abilities that you possess, and you must know, and believe, that you can succeed.

Take a minute now, and write down the courses that you're taking in the grid below. In the Grade column, write down the highest grade you think you can earn in each of these courses this grading period.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Course | Grade |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Think if these grades as your academic goals for this grading period. **Believe in yourself, and believe that you can achieve these goals!**

Step Two

BE ORGANIZED

If you're organized, you have what you need, when you need it. This section will give you
several ideas on how to get organized. You, of course, must determine what's going to work

best for you.

Use an assignment notebook. Get an assignment notebook, take it with you to every class, and
use one page for each day's assignments. When you're given an assignment, write it on the page
under the date it is due.

When you're given a large assignment, use your assignment notebook to break the assignment down
into smaller parts.

Use three-ring notebooks for class notes. Three-ring notebooks work well because you can easily insert handouts, and if you
miss a class, you can copy someone else's notes and insert them where they belong. Buy a hand-held 3-hole punch and put it in
your notebook. You'll then be able to punch your handouts right there in class and immediately put them in your notebook along
with your notes for the day.

Use folders for schoolwork. Use a different color folder (with pockets) for each class. In these folders, keep current
assignments, along with all returned assignments, quizzes, and tests. Old tests and quizzes can help you study for future tests, and
they may come in handy if there's ever a question about your grade. In each of your folders, keep a record of your test, quiz, and

homework grades for that class. This will eliminate surprises at report card time. If you are ever unsure as to how you're doing in a

class, talk to your teacher.

Have phone numbers for classmates. Make sure that you have a phone number for at least one
person in each class. If you're absent, you'll then have someone you can call to find out what you've

missed. Phone numbers are also helpful when you have a question about an assignment or an upcoming

test.

Keep your locker and backpack neat. Never put loose or folded up papers (homework
assignments, handouts, etc.) in your locker, backpack, or book. Always put them in the appropriate
folder or notebook, and always keep your locker and backpack neat, clean, and organized.

Get organized before you go to bed. Put completed homework in the appropriate folders, and
put everything you need for the next day in the same place each night. If there's something you
need to remember to do in the morning, leave yourself a note so that you don't forget it.





Step Three

MANAGE YOUR TIME WELL

With good time management, you have time for the things you have to do, and you still have time for the things you want to do.

Use class time. Always use the time teachers give you in class to start on your homework, to ask questions, or
to get help.

Create vour own study plan. Some students study best at night; others study best earlier in the day. Most students also have
activities, sports, and jobs that they have to work around.

Determine how much time you have available each day, take a look at the amount of homework you have, and then develop a study
plan. To help keep yourself organized and "on track," have a study plan in mind by the time you get home from school.

Prepare for sabotage. Identify anything that could interrupt or ruin your study plan and figure out how to eliminate or avoid it.

"I used to get interrupted by phone calls. Now my friends don't call until 8:30, and I make sure that my homework's done by then." Ashley

"I can't lie down on the couch and watch TV until I have all of my homework done. If I do, my homework probably won't get done." Scott

Step Four

BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE CLASSROOM

If you follow the advice in this section, you'll enjoy school more and you'll get better grades.

Be in school, on time, every dav. When you miss school, you miss lectures, notes, class discussions, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how good you are about making up your work, you can never make up all of what you miss, even if you're out of school for only one day. To get good grades, you must be in school every day. Unless you have an extended illness or a chronic health problem you should miss no more than five or six days of school a year.

Learn how to adapt to different teachers. In the classroom, the teachers are in charge and they make the rules. You might have one teacher who counts you tardy if you're not in your seat when the bell rings, and another teacher who considers you on time if you've got one foot inside the door. It doesn't matter whether or not you agree with the first teacher's rule; it only matters that you are in your seat when the bell rings. Part of your education is to learn how to adapt to different sets of rules, personalities, and teaching styles.

Be prepared for each class. To be prepared, you need to have books, paper, pencils, etc. with you when you go to class. You also need to have all of your homework done. When you've done your homework, you get more out of the class, the lecture makes more sense, and you can participate in discussions. If you haven't done your homework, you may not even understand the lecture or class discussion.

Being prepared also means that you come to class ready to learn. Try taking a couple of seconds as you walk into each class to think about what you're going to be doing that day. This will make it easier for you to focus on the subject when the class starts.

Of course, to be physically and mentally alert, you also need to eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep.

Sit in the front of the class if possible. It is easier to pay attention and stay involved when you sit in the front of the classroom. It's also easier to ask questions and to see the board, overheads, etc. If you've been assigned a seat in the back of the classroom, ask your teacher if it would be possible for you to move closer to the front.

Be aware of your body language. Teachers know who is paying attention, who's taking notes, and who is listening to the class discussion. They also know who's doing homework for another class, writing personal notes, daydreaming, and "napping" (even when students think they've positioned their hands and books to hide it). If you choose to do any of these things, don't kid yourself into thinking that your teachers don't notice, even if they don't say anything. Teachers notice, and they conclude that you don't care about what's going on in their class. It's not enough for you to say that you want to get good grades; your body language has to communicate it also.

Always do your homework. Do not look at homework as something you should do. Think of homework as something you must do. Since a significant portion of your grade is usually based on homework, your grade drops every time you miss an assignment. Always have homework completed on time, and whenever possible, do extra credit work.

Participate in class. Many teachers give participation points. These are easy points to get, and participating in class helps keep you focused. Participating also makes the class more interesting.

Be a good group member. The number one reason people get fired from their jobs is because they can't get along with the people they work with. It's not surprising, then, that businesses are encouraging schools to teach students how to work together in small groups. When you have to do a group project, 1) do your share of the work and do it well, 2) accept that everyone is different, and try to be open to all ideas, 3) support the other members of the group.

Treat others with courtesy and respect Treat your teachers and classmates the same way that you want to be treated. Be polite, look at your teachers when they're speaking, and listen when others are talking. Also, be very aware of your tone of voice. The same words, in a different tone of voice, can communicate a very different message.

Remember that teachers are people too.

Involve your parents. When your parents ask you what you did in school, tell them. For example, "Well, in biology we studied photosynthesis and we looked at slides under die microscope. Tomorrow we have a tab..." Your parents will like the fact that you're talking to them about what's going on in school.

Whenever possible, let your parents help you with your homework and your studying. You can ask them to drill you on vocabulary words, read over a paper you've written, listen to you practice a speech, or help you study for a test. You'll get better grades, and your parents will see for themselves that you're really trying to do well in school.

If you ever have a problem with a subject, teacher, class, or a fellow student, let your parents know. They can help you deal with whatever the situation is, and if necessary, they can intervene on your behalf.

Step Five

TAKE GOOD NOTES

Tests usually cover materials that have been presented in class. It is, therefore, important to
have good notes from which to study.

Be an active listener. In order to take good notes, you must pay attention and actively listen to what your teacher is saying.
When you're actively listening in class, you are not just hearing the words the teacher is saying, you are also thinking about, and
trying to understand, the information that's being presented.

Take notes to help you pay attention. You can think much faster than anyone can talk. This is one of the reasons that your
mind sometimes wanders when you're listening to a lecture. When you take notes, however, your mind has something additional to
do, and you don't have time to think about anything else. Taking notes then, helps you stay focused. (Taking notes also shows your
teacher that you're interested in the class and that you're paying attention).

Recognize important information. You can often hear a change in your teacher's voice when he/she is going to say something
that's important for you to know. Teachers often speak louder, speak slower, or they give verbal cues like "the most significant
outcome," "the main point," "the most important reason," "the three causes," etc.

Anything that your teacher writes on the board or overhead should be considered very important. Double underline or put a star
beside this information (or any information that's very important) so that you'll know to give it special attention when you're
studying later.

**Take notes that are easy to read.**

* Put the name of the class, the date, and the page number at the top of each page of notes. This is easy to do, and
it will help keep your notes organized.
* Write on every other line and only use one side of the paper. Your notes will be neater and easier to read, and you'll

have space if you want to add something later.

* Use symbols and abbreviations whenever possible.
* Use pencil or erasable pen to keep your notes neat.
* Leave a wide margin on the left side of each page. As you're taking

notes, listen for key words, and then write these key words in the

margins. Key words (topics, people, places, events, etc.) help you
organize your thoughts, and they make your notes more understandable.

Key words are also helpful to use when you are reviewing for a test; just
cover up your notes, look at each key work, and then

test yourself to see what you can remember about that topic, person, place, or event.

Go over your notes as soon as possible. While the information is still fresh in your mind, go over your notes and
clarify anything that's confusing, nil in the spaces, and make sure that you have all of the key words written in the
margins. Of course, while you're going over your notes, you are also "fixing" this information in your memory.

If you are really serious about getting the best grade possible in a class, completely redo your notes. Eliminate the
unimportant information, and rewrite the rest of your notes using your own words. Your notes will be much clearer,
and as you rewrite them, you'll also be learning the material. This is time consuming, but it pays off.

Get copies of class notes if you're absent. When you are absent, it is your responsibility to ask your teacher for
handouts and assignments. It is also your responsibility to make up any work that you've missed. Do not just assume
that your teacher will tell you if there's something you need to know or do. Also, get copies of the notes you've
missed, and put them in your notebook as soon as possible.



Step Six

 KNOW HOW TO READ A TEXTBOOK

When you know how to read a textbook, you comprehend and remember
what you read.

Textbook authors have already done a lot of your work for you. They've inserted boldfaced subtitles that tell you exactly what you're going to be reading about. They've put all of the important words in bold or italic print, and they've added pictures, charts, graphs, lists of vocabulary words, summaries, and review questions. The textbook authors have provided these "learning tools" in order to make it easier for you to learn and retain the information they're presenting.

In this section, you will discover how to use the learning tools that the authors provide:

Scan. Scanning gives you a quick overview of the materials you're going to be reading. To scan, read the title, the subtitles, and everything in bold and italic print. Look at the pictures, graphs and charts, go over the review questions, and read the summaries.

Scanning provides you with a great deal of information in a very short amount of time. In addition to providing you with an excellent overview of the material, scanning also provides you with a kind of "information framework." Having this framework of topics and main ideas makes it much easier to read, understand, and remember the more detailed information.

Read. When your reading has a purpose, your comprehension improves, and it's easier to stay focused. To give your reading purpose, try turning each boldfaced subtitle into a question. Keep your question in mind as you read, and when you finish the section, see if you can answer your question. Your question will give you something specific to look for, and it will help keep your mind from wandering. You will, therefore, remember more of what you read.

Before you start to read a section, look to see if there are any vocabulary words, names, places, or events in bold or italic print, and then ask yourself, "Why is this word, person, place, or event important?" You should, of course, have an answer to that question when you finish reading the section. When you have completely finished your reading, you should also be able to answer all of the review questions.

Review. Okay, you've scanned and read the material. This is when most students will say, "I'm done," and close their book. Taking a few extra minutes for review, however, will make a huge difference in what you're able to remember later. When you review, you lock the information into your brain before it has a chance to evaporate.

To review, go back to the beginning and go through the same process you did when you scanned the material. This time, as you read the boldfaced subtitles, briefly restate the purpose or point of each section to yourself using your own words. As you look at the vocabulary words and the words in bold and italic print, think about what they mean and why they are significant. If you really want to lock the information into your brain, review everything again a day or two later. When you go to study for the test, you'll be amazed at how well you already know the material.

While it may take a little practice to get the Scan, Read, and Review process down, you'll soon realize that this process doesn't mean more work; it just means better comprehension, better retention, and better grades.



Step Seven

STUDY SMART

Students who "study smart" find that they spend less time studying, and yet they get better

grades.

Find a good place to study. Although it's usually best to have one place where you study regularly, it
doesn't matter where you study as long as it has a surface for writing, it's well lit, and it's comfortable. In
addition to paper, pens and pencils, your study area should be equipped with a calculator, dictionary,
thesaurus, and a one-volume encyclopedia.

Get started. Getting started on your studying is usually the hardest part. Don't put it off until later,
don't make excuses, and don't wait until you're "in the mood." Begin with something simple or a subject
you like, and just get started.

Know your learning style. We all learn differently. Some learn best by seeing the material (visual learners) and some learn best
when they can hear the information (auditory learners). Some learn best by doing (kinesthetic learners) and some learn best through
the use of technology. Think about how you learn and adjust how you study accordingly.

* Visual learners learn best from films, pictures, TV, reading, and demonstrations. If you're a visual learner, take notes, use

flash cards, charts and diagrams, form pictures in your mind, and make use of color in your notes.

* Auditory learners learn best from lectures, discussions, TV, films, and music. If you're an auditory learner, read aloud, have

discussions, listen to tapes, review information out loud, and use memory tricks involving rhythm and rhyme.

* If you're a kinesthetic learner, you learn best from role playing, labs, and hands-on activities. Move around while you study,
use objects whenever possible, and role play ideas and concepts.
* If you're a technological learner, use computers, the Internet, and high-tech equipment to help keep you interested,

motivated, and focused.

As a general rule, the more senses you involve and the wider variety of methods you use while studying, the more you remember.
William Glasser, an expert in the field of education, stated:

"Students learn 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they
see and hear, 70% of what is discussed with others, 80% of what they experience personally, and 95% of

what they teach to someone else."

**Organize your study time.**

* Before you start to study, make a plan. Decide exactly what you want to get done and the order in

which you're going to do it. Make sure that your plan is realistic.

* Prioritize your work in order to make sure that you have enough time for the things that are the
most important.
* If you have something that seems overwhelming, break it down into smaller parts.
* Always allow more time than you think you'll need.
* If you have something to memorize, work on that first, and then go over it again at the end of your study session.
* Study your least favorite subject first to get it out of the way.
* Alternate types of assignments (e.g., read English, do math, read history).
* Know when and how to take breaks. Research has shown that students learn the most during the first and last ten minutes of
any study session. After studying for 20 minutes, try taking a short break (get a drink, get up and stretch, etc.).

**Know how to study for tests.**

* Know what the test is going to cover so that you'll know what to study. For essay tests, it's important to understand the big
picture and to know main points and key facts. For fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice test, you need to know more detailed
information.
* Pay particularly close attention in class the day before a test. This is when teachers often go over information that you need to
know.
* Have all of your reading done ahead of time.
* If your textbook has review questions, know the answers to all of these questions. Also, go through your textbook and make

sure that you know the meaning of all the words in bold and italic print.

* If a teacher gives you a review sheet, study it until you know everything on it. Then use the review sheet to come up with

questions that you think might be on the test.

* You really know something if you can explain it in your own words. Try teaching the material to yourself in front of a mirror.
* Review often and review out loud. When you review, you move information from your short-term memory into your long-term
memory. Review is the key to learning anything!
* Write down any names, dates, formulas, and/or facts that you need to remember on an index card. Take this card with you the

day of the test, and go over it as often as you can before you take the test.





**Use tricks to help you memorize information.**

* Use flashcards to memorize vocabulary words, facts, and lists.
* Write down what you want to memorize and stare at it. Close your eyes and try to see it in your mind. Say it, and then look at it

again. Do this until you know it.

* Right before you go to sleep, go over any information that you want to remember. Your brain will commit it to memory while
you sleep.
* Use acronyms to help you memorize. For example, the acronym HOMES can help you remember the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior).
* Use the first letter of the words you want to remember to make up a silly, ridiculous sentence. For example, let's say that you

need to remember the names of the planets for a test. To help you remember the planets in the right order, make up a silly

sentence like, "My very elegant mother just scooped up nine piglets." (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus,
Neptune and Pluto). As soon as you get your test, say this sentence to yourself and, at the top of your test, write MVEMJSUNP -
the first letter of each of the planets. When you need to write in the names of the planets on the test, you'll have your memory
cue ready. This technique can be used in many ways. For example, if you need to remember the 5 main causes of the Great
Depression, take 5 key words, and then use the first letter of each of these words to make up a silly sentence.

* Look for an easy or logical connection. For example, to remember that Homer wrote the Odyssey, just think, "Homer is an odd
name."
* Information is easier to remember if it's grouped or categorized. Use lists and diagrams to group related terms, facts, ideas, etc.
* Use ridiculous, unforgettable images to help trigger your memory. For example, a ridiculous image could help you remember

that Hawthorne wrote The Scarlet Letter. Just visualize a large red letter A with a big thorn sticking in it saying "Ha!" (for
Hawthorne). It can be fun coming up with your own ridiculous images, and, they work.

Know how to write a paper. The key to writing a good paper is to spread it out over as much time as possible. Writing a paper
should be a process, not a one-time event. Start off by brainstorming and taking notes, then make an outline. From your outline,
write a rough draft. Rewrite the paper until you have it just the way you want it, and then write the final draft. It's important to put
your paper away at least once or twice during this process. When you take it out and read it again, you'll see and hear things that
you didn't notice before.

To get a good grade on a paper, 1) follow the direction exactly, 2) have someone else read your paper to give you suggestions, 3)
make sure that there are no spelling or grammatical errors, 4) make sure your paper looks neat, and 5) turn in your paper on time.

Remember to always identify another person's words or ideas within your paper by using quotation marks or footnotes. If you

present another person's words or ideas as your own, it's plagiarism.

**Use tricks when making a presentation or speech.**

* Use props whenever possible. Props (posters, books, sports equipment, etc.) give you something
to look at and something to do with your hands. You can also put notes on the back of your props.
* To help add enthusiasm and energy to your voice, pretend that you are telling your best friend
something really important.
* Effective speakers make eye contact with those in their audience. If this is difficult for you to do,
look at their foreheads instead.

Have good computer skills. If you don't know how to type or how to use a computer for word
processing, see your counselor and sign up for a keyboarding or computer class as soon as possible.



Step Eight

USE TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

In order to do well on any test, you must study hard and be prepared. Having done that, you
can further improve your test performance by using these test-taking strategies.

Get off to a good start. Have everything you need for the test with you when you go to class (pencil, erasable pen, calculator,
etc.). If you have a couple of minutes before the test starts, try to relax. Think about something else or talk to your classmates. As
soon as you get your test, write anything that you want to remember (facts, dates, equations, formulas, memory aids, etc.) in light
pencil at the top of your test. Put your name on your test, and read the directions carefully.

Develop a plan. Before you begin answering questions, quickly look over the entire test and develop a plan. For example, if a
one-hour test has 25 multiple-choice questions and 2 essay questions, you could plan to spend 10 minutes on the multiple-choice
questions, 20 minutes on each essay questions, and 10 minutes checking over your answers.

Mark the questions that you want to return to. As you go through the test, put a dot or light check mark by any answer that
you're not sure of. After you've gone through all of the questions, go back to the ones that you have marked and try them again.

Don't panic if you don't know the answers to the first few questions. Sometimes it takes a few minutes for your

brain to get in gear. Chances are you'll know the answers when you come back to them.

**Increase your odds on multiple-choice questions.**

* As you're reading a multiple-choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head before you look
at the answer choices.
* If you're not sure of an answer, eliminate the choices you know are incorrect by crossing them out. Then
make an educated guess.
* If two of the choices are similar or opposite, one of them is probably the correct answer.
* Read all of the answer choices. At least a couple of the answers will probably look like they could be correct. Don't be tempted

to mark the first answer that sounds good.

Look for key words in True/False questions. Statements with always, never, every, all and none in them are usually false.
Statements with usually, often, sometimes, most and many in them are usually true. Read True/False questions very carefully; one
word will often determine whether a statement is True or False.

**Know how to approach essay questions.**

* Read each question and then start with the easiest one. This will give you confidence, and it will give you time to think about
how to answer the harder questions. Note how many points each essay is worth, and adjust the time you spend on each
question accordingly.
* Before you do any writing, brainstorm. Jot down the key words, ideas, and points that you want to cover in your answer. If you
have time, organize these ideas and points into a simple outline; if not, just number the ideas in the order you want to present
them.
* Begin writing. Use clear, concise, complete sentences, and write legibly. (Studies have shown that when two identical essays
are graded, the one that is easier to read gets the higher grade.) In your opening paragraph, restate the question, and tell the
reader what he/she can expect to learn from your essay. In your middle paragraphs, present examples, details, evidence, and
facts to support the points you're making. In your final paragraph, restate the most important points, draw conclusions, and
write a brief summary. Finally, reread your entire essay and make corrections.
* If you don't know the answer to an essay question, take a couple of minutes to write down what you do know about the

subject. You may hit on something and get partial credit. If you don't have time to complete an essay, write your teacher a note explaining that you ran out of time, and then briefly list the points you would have covered. Again, you might get partial credit.

Improve your math scores. 1) Before you start to solve a problem, try to estimate what the answer will be. 2) If you're having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture or a diagram. 3) Don't spend too much time on one problem. If you get stumped, go on and come back to it later. 4) Show all of your work. Even if you get the wrong answer, if you were on the right track, you may get partial credit.

Be prepared for an open book test. During an open book test, you must be able to locate information quickly. To help you do this, 1) highlight your notes, 2) put self-stick notes or bookmarks in your textbook to help you locate information, and 3) write down all of the information that you know you'll need on a separate sheet of paper.

Check your answers. If you have time, check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may have made a careless mistake. Always use all of the time that you're given to take a test.

Go over all returned tests. Once your test is returned, go over each question you missed and write in the correct answer. You may see one or more of these questions again. Also check to make sure that your test was graded correctly. (Teachers sometimes make mistakes.) Keep a record of your test scores, and keep returned tests in your folders.



Step Nine

REDUCE TEST ANXIETY

A little anxiety before a test improves your concentration and alertness. Excessive worry, or
test anxiety, can lower your test scores.

It's possible for students with test anxiety to get themselves so worked up that they can't think clearly. The brain is like a computer
in that it contains a great deal of information. This information is useless, however, if you're not able to "access" it when you need
it. Having test anxiety is like not having the password for your computer. The information is there, but you can't get to it.

To reduce test anxiety, study enough to feel confident that you know the material. Then try to replace the worry and negative

thinking with thoughts that are positive and relaxing.

Some of the following suggestions may help you:

• Start studying early. The night before a test, review the material and get a good night's
sleep. Cramming increases test anxiety.

• Mentally practice going through the testing experience. Close your eyes and see yourself
calmly and confidently walking into the test. See yourself answering the questions correctly,
and then see yourself receiving the grade you want. Go through this mental imagery
exercise several times before the day of the test.

• Walk into the test with your head up and your shoulders back. How you act can definitely affect how you feel. If you act confident, you may just find that you feel more confident.



Step Ten

GET HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

When you have a problem, do something to resolve it.

If you need academic help, or if you have a class-related problem, talk to your teacher. If the problem continues, or if you feel that you can't talk to your teacher, see your counselor.. If you ever have a problem and you don't know where to go for help, talk to your counselor.

Every student has his/her share of normal teenage problems. Some students, however, have problems that are so overwhelming that they cannot pay attention in class or concentrate on their schoolwork. Even though they may put up a good front, these students need to get help.

If you are dealing with any of the following, please talk to a parent or counselor immediately:

alcohol, drugs, a pregnancy, an abusive relationship, bullying, an eating disorder, a health concern, problems at home, depression. Thousands of students across the country are struggling with these same problems. The smart ones get help.



RESOURCES:

1. Staff List - Phone numbers and e-mail addresses for teachers, counselors and administrators. You can obtain these through visiting the school's website.
2. Edline - You can also check your student's progress through Edline.
3. After School Tutoring - Teachers provide tutoring after school on designated days from 4:00-6:00 p.m.
4. School Counseling webpage - This website has valuable information about an array of topics, including links to academic resources. Access the website by selecting the guidance tab from Edline or visit jmhscounseling.weebly.com.
5. **Remind.com** – Remind.com is a texting service that allows parents and teachers to receive announcements from the school counseling office. Sign up by texting @jmhsguid to 81010. Standard text messaging rates do apply.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Your children need you to be interested and involved in their academic progress. Your
children must, however, be responsible for their own grades, attendance, and behavior.

Be interested. Make sure that your child knows that his/her academic progress is important to you. Attend all open houses and
parent conferences. Know when each grading period ends, and make sure that you see all report cards as soon as they come out. If you do not see a report card, use Edline to view your child’s grades. If you are unable to access, please call the counseling office. Do not just assume that someone will call you if there's a problem.

Discuss classes and set goals. Sit down with your son or daughter at
beginning of each grading period and help him/her set realistic academic

goals for the term. Your child will better understand what your expectations are, and having goals will give your child something to work towards. Throughout the term, recognize effort and improvement. Acknowledge each academic success, even if it's only a good grade on a quiz or homework assignment. At the end of a term, you can offer "rewards" if
goals are met and/or "consequences" if they're not. Rewards are particularly good when you want to encourage a change in attendance, effort, or behavior. Eventually, doing well will be its own reward. Consequences should be logical whenever possible. For example, a logic consequence for routinely being late to school is an earlier bedtime. Never positive activity (sports, school plays, music lessons, scouting, etc.) as a consequence.

Be available to help. Be available to help with homework, but don't give more help than is wanted. Your son or daughter may
not ask again. Keep in mind that it is your child's responsibility to be organized, to get homework done, and to prepare for tests.

Listen. Talk to your child about what's happening in school and be a good listener.

Encourage involvement. Students who are involved in school-related activities enjoy school more and they have greater
academic success. Encourage your child to be involved in one or more activities at school.

Monitor activities and jobs. Make sure that your child is not spending too much time watching TV, playing computer games, or
talking on the phone. Also, make sure that your child is not working too many hours or working too late at a job.

**Important "don'ts".**

* Don't nag about school or grades. Your child will tune you out.
* Don't allow your child to miss school unless he/she is truly ill. You will send a message that school isn’t important.
* Don't criticize a teacher in front of your child. Your child will only lose respect for that teacher.
* Don't make your child's failures (or successes) your own. Your child may see getting poor grades as a way to rebel.
* Don't have expectations that are unrealistic. If your child knows that your expectations cannot be met, he/she may

 not even try.

Work with the school. Know that teachers, counselors, and principals are there to help your child get the best education
possible. A health problem, death in the family, or divorce can affect your child's attitude and/or performance in school. If such a
circumstance should arise, contact the principal or counselor and explain the situation. If you have a concern that relates to a
specific teacher or class, call the teacher. For other questions and concerns, call your child's counselor.





If Your Child is **Not** Doing Well in School..

Most students who don't do well in school feel like failures. They are frustrated, discouraged, and sometimes angry. The "I don't care" attitude they often display is a defense mechanism. It's important for these students to know that their parents have not given up on them. They also need to know that their parents are interested, supportive, and willing to take the time to help them figure out how to be more successful in school.

Students who are not doing well in school usually have problems in one or more of the following areas:

Attendance - It is extremely important for students to be in school, on time, every day. Unless a child is truly ill, he/she needs to be in school. Attendance can be viewed daily on Parent Portal.

Appropriateness of Courses - We cannot expect students to get good grades if they are in the wrong classes. If any of your child's courses are too difficult, too easy, or not right for him/her, call the school counselor. You may also want to look into career- oriented (vocational) programs. Many students are happier and more successful in career and technology programs where there is a more "hands-on" approach to learning.

Accountability - It's human nature to be tempted to "slack off" when we're not held accountable. How seriously would most workers take their jobs if they know that their bosses would never know how hard they were working or how many days they missed?

Your child needs to know that someone cares and that someone is checking on how he/she is doing. Your child needs to know that successes will be recognized and that poor performances will be noticed. It's also important that your son/daughter know that you will be consistent in your interest. See every progress report and report card, and if your child has a low grade in a class, contact the teacher.

Alcohol/Drug Abuse - Students who abuse alcohol or drugs are often distracted to the point where their school performance is affected. If you know or suspect that your child is drinking or using drugs, talk to him/her about it. If you need information or advice, talk to your doctor or to the school counselor. They can help.

If you believe that there are other reasons for your child not doing well in school, make an appointment to see your child's counselor. Recognizing that there is a problem is the first, and most important, step in finding a solution.

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