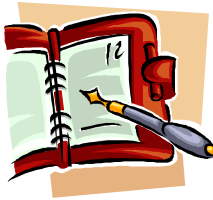


THE MUSKIE KEYS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS



*Prepared by Leigh Williamson
Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
Muskingum College
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KEY #1: GET ORGANIZED!

Notes

Use your planner!

Your planner should become an extension of your body, especially any time you go to class. Many students will keep one to carry with them, and then have another larger semester view calendar to use back in the dorm room. Keep a semester calendar posted in a convenient location in your room so you will always be able to keep an eye on the “big picture” and plan for the semester of work ahead.

When you get a syllabus for a class, write the important dates for the semester in your planner and on your semester calendar. If you have a large assignment, plan backwards to allow time to finish different segments of work in smaller parts. This way, you won't be trying to do it all at once, at the last minute, or when other assignments are due around the same time.

Use a 3-Ring notebook for class notes:

Many students think a spiral notebook will be easiest for keeping class notes together, but a 3-ring notebook actually works the best. With a 3-ring notebook, you can punch holes in handouts and insert them with the corresponding day's notes. Also, if you miss something and need to go back and add notes in, it's easy to do. Make sure you keep the syllabus in the front of the notebook, so you will be able to reference it whenever needed.

Use a memory stick:

Keep your computer work on your hard drive, AND on a memory stick that you carry with you. This way, if your computer crashes, you still have the information, or, if something happens to the stick, you still have the information on the hard drive. Most professors won't accept excuses like, “I don't have my paper because my computer crashed.” There should always be a back-up.

Keep all returned work (homework, quizzes, test, etc.)

You should ALWAYS keep all work returned to you by your instructor! If you are keeping a 3-ring notebook, you can punch holes in the paper and insert it in the appropriate spot within your class notes. This will help you keep track of material from test period to test period, and will help you easily locate them to study from for a future test. Also, you should always keep your graded work so you know what kind of grades you have in the course. If there is ever a dispute about a recorded grade, you will have the graded work to show.

Get phone numbers and emails of classmates:

You should have contact information for at least one person in your class. This will allow you to ask questions about something you didn't understand in class. Also, if you have an emergency and miss class, this person should be able to give you a copy of notes for the

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class so you can insert them in your 3-ring notebook. One important thing to remember about this though is that whoever your contact person is, this should be a reliable, solid student. You don't want to ask someone who doesn't take good notes, or isn't attentive, because that person won't be much help, even if he is your best friend.

Designate and organize a place to study:

The first stop here is to determine whether you can effectively study in your dorm room, or if you need to find an alternate location. Many students find it difficult to study in the dorm room either because of the noise and distractions, or they find the bed just a little too comfortable. Whenever you sit on the bed to do work, you subconsciously connect the bed with sleeping, and will probably get tired. You need to sit somewhere you can really focus on your work without falling asleep. This effective spot might be the library, a lounge area of the dorm, or a study area in one of the academic buildings. The point is, find a spot and use it regularly!

When studying, make sure you have everything you need for the task. Before you begin, determine if you need a pencil or pen, calculator, dictionary, notebooks, etc. In addition, keep your study materials organized and neat. If you keep your work for each class neatly together and organized, you will save yourself a lot of time, stress, and misery when you need to study or work on a paper. Before you go to sleep at night, lay out the things you'll need for the next day. If you need to remember something out of the ordinary, write yourself a note. When leaving a note for yourself, it's important to put it in a place where you can't avoid seeing it. Put it on the bathroom mirror, your door as you leave the room, your toothbrush --- something you HAVE to look at.

KEY # 2:***LEARN HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME***

Time management is one of the most difficult aspects in the life of the college student. You suddenly have what *appears* to be more free time on your hands, and need to learn effective ways of using this time. If you keep it free, you won't be successful!

Be realistic:

College is your full-time job, and as such, you should devote 35-40 hours a week, over seven days, to your school work. However, many of you will also have part-time jobs to add into your schedule. If you are working, and taking classes, it is even more important to follow a schedule. You would readily follow a work schedule laid out by your boss, so why not follow a study/class schedule as diligently? When creating your schedule, make sure you build in enough leisure time to enjoy college life. You have to have some fun too.



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Plan ahead and be organized:

Take a look at the big picture, and plan accordingly each week as you make your schedule. Be sure to accommodate time needed for large projects, and revise your schedule as needed as you go through the week. If you are a list maker, mark things off of your list as you complete them.

How are you spending your time?:

Keep a daily time log for a week and see how you are spending your time. Where are you wasting time that could be used more effectively? How many hours a week are you spending on your course work? Is it enough time? Make adjustments and plan a new schedule. A good rule of thumb is to plan two hours of study time for each hour spent in the classroom.

KEY #3: MAKE THE MOST OF THE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

ATTEND ALL CLASSES!:

However tempting it may be some mornings, it is incredibly important that you ATTEND EVERY CLASS!! Your attendance leaves a big impression on your instructor. If you don't attend, the natural assumption is that you don't care. If you constantly have excuses, the same impression sets in. We are a small enough college that your absence in class is noticed, even if the instructor doesn't formally take attendance.

When you miss class, you miss the lecture and notes, and the notes of another student are never as good. You also miss important class discussion, assignment explanations, and all sorts of information that you might not otherwise get. It is very difficult to fail a class if you have attended each class and paid attention! You're bound to soak up something!

The bottom line is this: YOU NEED TO GO TO CLASS!

Adapt to the style of the professor:

Some professors will lecture for a majority of the class time, but some will require small group work, discussion, and participation. You need to be prepared for whatever style awaits you. Most classes will have a portion of the final grade designated for "participation." Keep in mind that this doesn't just mean raising your hand and adding a comment or two. It may have different meanings in different classes, so be aware of what your professor expects.

Notes**Be prepared for class:**

You should read assignments before class so you know what is being discussed in class. The lecture will make much more sense with a little background and preparation beforehand. So, do your readings, give the instructor your full attention, and be physically and mentally alert.

Be on time:

If possible, arrive a few minutes early for class. If you have a few minutes to review your notes from the previous class, and get prepared for the current class, you will be more relaxed and ready to get started. Instructors don't appreciate students arriving after they have already begun class. It is distracting not only to the instructor, but also to the other students. Additionally, if you miss the first few minutes of class, you will likely miss important announcements and opening remarks. If you miss it, you miss it. Basically, when you're late for class, it gives the impression that you're not serious about the class, and it's not a priority. This isn't a helpful impression.

It is also important to continue giving the professor your complete attention until the class has been dismissed by the professor. The last several minutes of class can often contain important summaries and plans for the next class period.

Sit in the front of the class:

When possible, sit as close to the front of the class as you can. It is much easier to pay attention when you have fewer distractions between you and the instructor. If you sit in the back of the room, you have lots of people between you and the professor to distract your attention. You may also not be able to see what's on the projector screen or other references used by the professor.

Develop a working relationship with your professor:

Professors will give you their contact information on the syllabus. They give it to you and expect you to use it if you have questions or concerns. Also listed on the syllabus will be the office hours for the professor. It is a good idea to stop by during office hours and get to know the professor, and allow them to get to know you. When you make this effort, it speaks volumes. If you establish a good relationship, you will feel much more comfortable asking for help when you need it, which everyone does at one point or another. Use email to ask questions and touch base when needed.

PARTICIPATE!

As mentioned above, participation isn't just raising your hand every now and then to answer or ask a question. It might mean your classroom behavior of arriving on time, being alert, and fulfilling all requirements. It could also mean that you actively participate by asking and answering questions, and by offering observations and comments. Additionally, if you have group work to do, be sure that you do your part. Professors always know who doesn't carry their weight in a group project or discussion. Not only will you bring your own grade down, but you will also lower the grades of your classmates. This doesn't make for good friendships or good impressions on the professor.

When you actively participate in class, you will find the course more enjoyable, rewarding, and successful. You will also show your professor that you are giving the course your best efforts.

Notes***KEY # 4:
TAKE GOOD, MEANINGFUL
NOTES*****Attendance, again?!**

You can't take good notes if you're not in class!

Active listening is key:

An active listener is thinking about what is being said and processing the information. A passive listener is simply hearing the words, and maybe even writing some of them down, but isn't really thinking about it. A passive listener will daydream, stare out the window, or be distracted in some other way. An active listener will focus on the speaker, keep their focus on the front of the room, and be a part of the discussion. In fact, active listening can help you take better notes, and taking notes can help you become an active listener. In other words, if you're spending lecture time taking notes, you have less time to think about something distracting.

Listen for important information:

Completing your reading assignments prior to class will always help you determine what is and isn't most important to know because you already have a background in the topic of discussion. Listen for the verbal cues that tell you the instructor is stressing an important point. For example, phrases like, "The main reason," "The cause was . . . and the effect was," "the most important thing is," "there are three reasons for," etc. are all key points in the lecture. Also, the speaker may speak louder when stressing an important point or repeat a point more than once. If the instructor writes something on the board, it's probably something you should know. Basically, when you are paying close attention to the lecture, you will begin to notice how each instructor stresses the important information you need to know.



Notes**Take legible, organized notes:**

Good notes aren't really much good if you can't read them. You can keep them organized by following some of these practices:

- Don't take notes for multiple classes in the same notebook.
- Always write the date at the top of your notes so you know what day they were from.
- Write on one side of the paper. When you start studying, it will be easier to flip through the pages or spread them out without having to flip them around all the time.
- If you have a habit of making mistakes, write with something erasable so you don't have a lot of scratch outs to distract you.
- Skip lines in between topics.
- Use symbols and abbreviations, and don't try to write EVERY word. Below are some of the standard abbreviations and symbols, but you can also make up your own, as long as you always know what they mean:

= same or equal	≠ not equal	› greater than, ‹ less than
~ approximately	→ leads to, results	♀ female, ♂ male
w/o without	b/c because, became	esp especially
ie that is	eg for example	w/i within
↑ increasing, ↓ decreasing	*most importantly	w/ with

- Leave a wide margin on the left side of the page to make comments about your notes later. You can also write the key words for each topic in the margin so that when you go back to study, you can cover up the notes, seeing only the key words, and quiz yourself.

Review your notes:

You should review your notes before, and as soon after class as possible. Reviewing your notes before class will jog your memory to where the discussion last left off and prepare you for the coming lecture. Reviewing your notes soon after class will help the information sink into your mind better. If you wait too long to review, you may not recognize what you're reading.

Some students find it very productive to review their notes by either re-writing them, or typing them out. This practice allows you to fill in gaps, remove things that aren't really necessary, and organize the topics of discussion. It's just like back in elementary school when you had to write your spelling words ten times. The more you wrote it, the more it became common practice. The same thing still holds true.



KEY #5:

HOW TO READ YOUR TEXTBOOKS

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For the last 12 years, all of your teachers have told you not to make any marks in your textbooks, or you'd have to pay a fine. You can forget all of that now. In fact, you need to **make use of the textbook and mark it up**, squeezing the most out of it that you possibly can. You've probably heard about students selling their books back to the bookstore at the end of the semester. You won't make any less money from a book that's well marked than you will from one that still looks brand new. So, here's how to read it effectively . . .

Use the arrangement of the book to your advantage:

The authors have arranged the book, and each chapter, in a logical way to help the reader process the information as easily as possible. Pay attention to section titles, sub-section titles, bold faced words, words in italics, questions at the beginning and end of each chapter, pictures, charts, graphs, and all the other tools the authors have provided for you. They're not there just to make the page look nice; they contain useful information to understand what you're reading. Use them!

Scan:

Before you dive into the chapter, scan it. Read the titles, subtitles, and everything else that is designated by bold or italic words, etc. Then look at all the pictures, charts, and graphs. Finally, read the introduction, the review questions, and the summary. Once you have thoroughly scanned and previewed the chapter, you are ready to start reading.

Read:

Read with purpose! Now that you have scanned the chapter, you know what you're reading about, and what some of the questions will be for the chapter. It can also be helpful to change the boldfaced subtitles into questions before you start reading each section. When you're reading, you're going to use another of those elementary school techniques – finding the main idea. Remember all of those exercises when you had identify the main idea of the paragraph? It's time to use that skill again.

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Read the paragraph, or part of the paragraph if it's a really long one, think about what the main idea was, summarize it into your own words, and jot it down in the margin next to the paragraph. The notes you write here will be just as useful as the section and subtitles the authors gave you. Most importantly though, you will be an ACTIVE READER! Being an active reader is just as important as being an active listener. By reading in this manner, you will have better comprehension because you read it, summarized it, changed it into your own words, and physically wrote it down. The more senses you employ in reading, the more it will stick with you.

Review:

After reading a complete chapter section, and then again the whole chapter, review the main idea notes you have made in the margins of your text. Your notes should provide a summary of the chapter. As you review, you should be able to “tell the story” of whatever it is you’re reading about. In telling the story, some find it helpful to recite the “story” out loud, or creating pictures to explain the subject. If you are an auditory or visual learner, these are good practices to follow. Keep telling the story and you’ll be surprised at how much of it, how many details have stuck with you. Make a habit of reviewing regularly, and studying for tests will be a breeze.

Note:

It can take a while to get the scan, read, review process down, but don’t give up. It really works! It takes a little longer to read through a chapter with this process, but it certainly doesn’t take any longer than reading it over twice because you didn’t get it all the first time, and you will have learned so much more. After all, you’ve paid a lot of money for these books; why not get your money’s worth out of them?

KEY # 6: STUDY WELL

A student will often tell a professor that she doesn’t understand why she did so poorly on a test after studying so hard. The problem is, there is a big difference between studying hard and studying well. We want you to study **well**.

**What is your learning style?:**

There are many different learning styles. Auditory learners learn best from hearing the information. Visual learners learn best from seeing the information. Kinesthetic learners learn best by doing and touching, while technological learners learn best through the use of technology. The key is determining which style fits you best and adjusting your study habits accordingly.

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Auditory learners will learn best from lectures, discussions, music, and other auditory modes. Most of us have no problem remembering the words to a popular song. Auditory learners learn easily by putting information to music and remembering the “song.” It can also be helpful to tape record lectures and listen to them outside of class. (If you want to record a lecture, you should always get the permission of the instructor first.) Auditory learners can also convert material to a rhyme format and do a lot of talking out loud as they recite information. **Visual learners** should incorporate notes, flash cards, charts, diagrams, visuals, and colors. The more visual images you can create for the material you’re studying, the more effective you will be at understanding it. **Kinesthetic learners** learn best through hands-on activities and lab settings. They might also learn more through role playing, acting scenarios, or anything else that involves movement. **Technological learners** will learn best through computers, the internet, and other high-tech equipment that will keep them technologically engaged and motivated. As with the suggestions about reading, the more senses you involve, and the more methods you employ, the more you will remember.

Here’s a rule of thumb to keep in mind. According to education experts, the following holds true:

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 someone else.”

(William Glasser)

This brings us to the next rule for studying well.

Take advantage of study groups and tutorials:

If the information in the paragraph above holds true, then involvement in study groups can be very beneficial. Just discussing a common topic and hearing what others think and how they approach it can give you some ideas you hadn’t thought of before. The more you discuss, the more you will learn.

Most academic departments will have regularly scheduled tutorial sessions, while others have tutorial assistance available by arrangement. If you are struggling with a subject, make sure you take advantage of this assistance. In addition, you should schedule a time to meet with your instructor outside of class for some one-on-one instruction. One of the great things about a small college like Muskingum is the availability of the faculty and their willingness to assist students, or point them in the right directions for additional help. The key here is ASK FOR HELP! Don’t ever be embarrassed to ask for help. If you knew it all already, there wouldn’t be any point in being here.

Notes**Managing your study time:**

- Make a plan! Know what you need to do and how much time you have to accomplish it. Be realistic and specific, and then actually write it on your daily schedule. For example, don't just write, "Read biology." Instead write, "Read pages 200-225 in biology text and do review questions."
- Prioritize! What is most important? Whatever that is, be sure to schedule time for it first.
- Break it down. For big projects or large reading assignments, break the work down into different segments with different goals. If you try to do a really big assignment all at once, you are likely to be overwhelmed.
- Alternate assignment types. For example, read English, do some math, write on your speech, etc.)
- If you are working on straight memorization of facts, review the information when you first begin studying and then again at the end of the day. Another trick is reviewing the information just before going to sleep at night. It will often stick with you better.
- Schedule your least favorite subject first. Our tendency is to avoid what we don't like, but in this case, you'll be more productive if you get the difficult or unpleasant work out of the way first, otherwise, you'll be likely to procrastinate and not get it done at all. Once you've worked past the hard stuff, you can get to the other subjects without the other hanging over your head.
- Take breaks! You'll find very few people who are capable of sitting down and reading an entire chapter of a textbook, much less know what they were reading about. The typical focus tends to drift after about 10-15 minutes of reading. After that point, you experience a "brain float" where your mind begins to wander off course and focus becomes difficult. Once you realize you're doing this, you snap out it, refocus, and continue reading. Therefore, be sure to take a stretch break about every 20-30 minutes, or whenever you experience "brain float."
- Determine whether you are a night or morning studier. Some students can wake up early in the morning and are ready to study, while others are most productive at night. Be honest with yourself about which one you are. If you're a night person, don't plan on waking up at 6 am to finish a problem. Instead, stay up later at night and get the morning sleep. In other words, study when you are most productive.
- Spread out your studying throughout the day. You don't have to wait until the evening to start your study schedule. By keeping an activity log for yourself over the course of a week, you will be able to see how much unused time you have throughout your day. Take advantage of this time. When you have breaks between classes, find a place to go and work. Down time is important, but wasted time won't help you.

Notes**Studying for tests:**

- NEVER MISS THE CLASS PERIOD BEFORE A TEST! If you have followed the previous rules here about attendance, this won't be a problem, but why would you even consider missing a class where you will get all the juicy hints about what's going to be on the test?
- Know what is going to be on the test. When you have a test coming up, don't wait until the night before to start studying for it. In fact, you should start studying BEFORE the pre-test class session. If you do this, you'll know what you don't know and need to ask more about. Even if your instructor doesn't give you a study guide, you have your notes, text, and other material to review.
- If you're having an essay test, focus on the big picture. Think about the questions the instructor has presented during the course of lecturing. What questions can you create from your notes and text? Generally speaking, you won't be asked about something that wasn't ever mentioned. So, use all that you have and make some possible essay questions. The next step then is to practice writing answers for the questions you've created. The chances are that you'll be pretty close to the target, and will have had enough practice to be able to answer whatever is asked.

When the essay test is distributed to you in class, think about an outline for the question and jot it down inside your blue book or on the test. Also, if there are any key points about one of the questions you're afraid you might forget, jot those down as well. This isn't cheating as long as you do it AFTER the test has been handed out!

Another key is writing an organized essay. Make sure you have an introduction where you paraphrase the question, a body that includes paragraphs with specific topics and supporting details, and a conclusion. A well written essay will always earn you more points than one the instructor has to diagram to figure out what your point is.

- For fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, true/false, etc. tests, you will need to remember more specific information within the big picture. If this is the type of test you're expecting, or at least a portion of the test, study appropriately for this.
- If you've followed the previous rules about keeping up with your reading and making textual notes, you should be able to skim through the chapters without re-reading them completely.
- Organize and use all of the materials you have. For instance, your text, notes, quizzes, etc.
- Review, review, review. The more you review after each class period, the less time you'll need to spend on studying just before the test because you already know it!

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- Don't keep studying what you already know. If you know it, focus on the stuff you don't know.
- Use visualization, acronyms, connections, silly sentences, etc. to help you remember information. If it makes a connection for you, it works. Don't worry about whether it makes sense to anyone else or not.
- As mentioned earlier, one of the best ways to retain information is to teach it to someone else. One way to do that, without driving your friends crazy, is to pretend that you are teaching it to someone. You might want to sit in front of the mirror while you do this, or talk out loud (but make sure you're not disturbing anyone else.)
- So here's the bottom line, either you know it or you don't! If you think that you can learn everything you need to know the night before the test, and that somehow just by staying up all night, it will magically absorb into your brain, you're fooling yourself. If you stay up too late, you'll be too tired to remember what you've been studying and won't be able to focus during the test. If you've been doing everything along the way, studying for a test is not too big of a deal. If you haven't, you won't know it even if you stay up all night.

KEY #7:
USE SOUND TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

You've spent your time well studying effectively, so now you're ready to take the test. Relax, because you're prepared, but follow these simple rules as you work through the test.

**Don't cram the night before:**

If you didn't follow the previous advice, and waited until the night before the test to study, you have set yourself up for anxiety, stress, and failure. Why do this to yourself? There is no way that you can learn several weeks of material in one night (that's why it took several weeks to cover in the first place!) Instead, follow rule #6 and start getting prepared far in advance, then you can get a good night's sleep before the test and relieve a great deal of test anxiety. You'll also be more coherent to catch any additional directions the instructor gives you about the test, but make sure you read the instructions on the test carefully before you begin.

Notes**Scan the test first:**

Before you begin, scan over the test and see what you have ahead of you. If you have a test with a combination of essay and objective questions, determine which part you should tackle first. If you're concerned about not having enough time for the essay, do it first. Then determine how much time you should spend on each section and monitor to time as you move through the period so you have time to do everything. Make a plan of attack.

What if you don't know the answer?

Don't panic! It will probably come to you eventually. Just skip that one, mark it, and come back to it. Many times another question will jog your memory. On objective tests, you can relieve some anxiety by starting at the end of the test. For example, if you don't know the answer to the first few questions, you'll most likely feel defeated right away. We have a false sense that the first questions should be the easiest and if we can't even answer those, then the whole test will be a flop. When you start at the back, you don't feel as bad about not knowing the answers to the last few questions, after all aren't they usually harder? Well, maybe not, but there goes that false sense again. The key is to fool yourself into feeling more positive and relieving some anxiety.

If you really don't know the answer, guess. It's better to guess and get it wrong than it is to not even try. If you've been studying at all, you just might get it right, or have a lucky guess. If it's left blank, there's no way to receive any points.

Multiple choice tests:

- Try to think of the answer in your head before reading the choices. Sometimes the choices might confuse you.
- Read all the answer choices. Don't be tempted to jump at the first one that seems right, you might find that another choice is really more appropriate.
- If you're not sure of the choices, eliminate any that you know aren't correct and make an educated guess. If it's a total guess, choose (b) or (c). One of those will be correct 40% of the time.

True/False tests:

- Statements which include words such as always, never, every, all, none, etc. are usually false. These words are called words of absolute, and rarely is anything absolute.
- Statements which include words such as sometimes, usually, rarely, often, most, many, etc. are usually true.
- Read the question VERY CAREFULLY!

Open book tests:

Forget the idea that an open book test is an easy test. It will only be "easy" if you've been reading and studying all along. If you have, then you will know just where to go for the answers. If you haven't, you will probably make the common mistake of skimming until you *think* you found the right answer and then write that down. That will often be the wrong answer because you don't know the proper context.

Notes**Math tests:**

- As soon as you get your test, write down formulas, equations, etc. that you need to use so you won't worry about forgetting them.
- If you are struggling on a problem, try to draw a diagram or picture of the problem to help you visualize what is being asked.
- Don't spend too much time on a problem. If you're stumped, move on and come back to this one later. You'll only increase your anxiety by struggling for a long time over the same problem.
- Show all your work. Many instructors will give you partial credit if you were on the right track, but didn't get the right answer. This also shows the instructor where you might have veered off track. That will be helpful later when you get your test back.

Check your work!

Check all of your work, even if you think it's all correct. More than likely there will be something you accidentally marked or that you can add to for an improved answer. Careless mistakes can be costly! Make sure you answered the question that is actually being asked. Don't rush to get out of the room, even if you're the last one to finish. Take advantage of the entire testing period. The time will benefit you in the end.

Review your test when you get it back graded:

When you get your test back, correct any answers you may have missed. You might see the question again if your instructor is planning a comprehensive final. Check to make sure the test is graded correctly. Instructors are human too and may have made a simple error in grading. Ask about anything you still don't understand, or if you don't understand why an answer you gave is incorrect. Keep all of your tests and quizzes so you have a record of your scores. Consider what you may need to do differently when beginning to study for the next test. What worked well? What didn't? Finally, start studying the next material right away. It often takes the first test to really know how an instructor grades and what they are expecting from you.

KEY #8:
***ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR
ACADEMIC ADVISOR
AND YOUR
PROFESSORS***

Rules 1-7 are all helpful if you use them regularly, but one of the most important things to do is establish a relationship with your academic advisor and your professors. Muskingum College is unique when it comes to the personal attention you can receive. However, many students don't take advantage of the personal attention offered. If you're having a problem in a specific class, go and talk to the professor. They're there to help, and they don't know how much you care about your work unless you make the effort to

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talk with them and find ways to improve. If you make poor grades and never go by during a professor's office hours until just before the end of the semester, can you really expect them to be much help to you? The personal communication from an early start is rewarding in many ways.

If you find yourself struggling and the course instructor can't help, or isn't really the appropriate person to talk to, speak with your academic advisor. They can offer assistance in a number of areas and can direct you where you need to look. Again, they are there to help, but you need to ask.

**KEY #9:
FOOD IS A NECESSITY!**



You may be wondering why food is listed as one of the secret codes to academic success. Well, food actually does fuel the brain. You've heard for years how important it is to eat a good breakfast, and it's absolutely true. If you just roll out of bed in time to make it to class, without having eaten anything, what will you be thinking of through most of the class period? Food! If you skip lunch, what will you be thinking of during that afternoon class or athletic practice? Food! If you don't eat dinner at night, and start studying or working on a project, what will you wish you had made time for? Food!

Don't skip meals! After all, if you're on a meal plan, you're paying for them anyway. Why waste the money? It's often helpful to eat a snack during study breaks as well. Just keep your body fueled up. Moderation is important though because if you eat too much, you might get sleepy.

Pizza is the staple of life for many college students, and you have a plethora (don't know that word? What should you do? Look it up!) of choices for pizza in town. It's usually pretty cheap, and when consumed in moderation, some of the ingredients are actually good for you. It can also be a good tool to entice others to join you for a study group. There's just something about pizza and college students.

**KEY #10:
KEEP YOUR SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC LIFE
IN BALANCE**

So, when do I get to have fun?

Every college has some traditional "party" nights, and the well rounded college student will be involved in many organizations and activities outside of the classroom. The trick is keeping the academic life and the social life in balance. If either side gets out of balance, one area will suffer. If you know about an upcoming event, build it into your schedule. If something pops up that you really want to do, adjust your schedule if possible. If you really can't make the adjustment and need to go forward with the

Notes

studying you had planned, just suck it up and do it. There will always be another time to party.

Get involved:

It's really important that you find an organization or activity that suits you outside of the classroom. You'll make many of your new social ties through these activities and you'll learn a great deal about the opportunities that await you. This may be a small college in a small town, but there are endless ways to get involved in something productive and meaningful.

CONCLUSION

Most college students arrive on campus with a little anxiety of what lies ahead, but also a lot of excitement and desire to do well. For many, it is the first time to be away from home, the first time to really be totally self-reliant, and the first time to really learn to study. Studying doesn't come automatically. It is a learned process, and now is the time to learn. The keys enclosed here are simple, but can make a profound difference in whether or not you are academically successful. If you go to class, read the material, take good notes, study well, keep balanced, etc. you WILL be successful. It's that easy! The hard part is getting in the habit of doing the right thing. So start early and be consistent, and make sure that when you need it, you ASK FOR HELP!

10 Keys to Academic Success

1. Get organized.
2. Learn how to manage your time.
3. Make the most of the classroom experience.
4. Take good, meaningful notes.
5. How to read your textbooks.
6. Study well.
7. Use sound test-taking strategies.
8. Establish a relationship with your academic advisor and professors.
9. Food is a necessity!
10. Keep you social and academic life in balance.