

Academic Challenges - Monday 10/7

The Basics	Objectives	Start Here
Grade 9 - 12 Theme: Success Skills Duration: 15-20 Minutes	Students recognize and address their academic hurdles by developing habits for success in school and at home.	Recognizing the areas that need improvement and having the skills to succeed in school is essential to success. Learn how to make simple strategies into habits for academic success..

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES:

1. Team Building Activity: **Zoom**
 - a. Zoom is a classic classroom cooperative game that never seems to go out of style. Simply form students into a circle and give each a unique picture of an object, animal or whatever else suits your fancy. You begin a story that incorporates whatever happens to be on your assigned photo. The next student continues the story, incorporating their photo, and so on.
 - b. *Skills: Communication; creative collaboration*
2. Students learn about how to improve academic challenges and develop successful habits, including
 - a. Talk with your teacher
 - b. Find connections with subjects you like
 - c. Use a calendar or planner
 - d. Talk with your classmates
 - e. Use your time wisely
 - f. Change your thinking
 - g. Practice
 - h. Schedule time in your day for homework
3. Use Marking the Text strategy with students to read the article "Successful High School Students Do These 10 Things".
4. Students reflect on their success habits, including:
 - a. Which habits to you do well?
 - b. Which habits still need to be developed?
 - c. Choose a habit to begin working on developing. What steps will you take?

(See page 2 for additional activity suggestions)

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Create a discussion on why certain subjects are challenging.
2. Share your own story about your academic challenges.
3. Talk about your own experience in school related to the success habits.
4. Allow students to share the success habit they chose to develop.
5. Find a date to follow up on progress of students addressing challenges or establishing habits..

ADDITIONAL ESSAY

1. Describe your favorite subject. What do you like best about it? Why do you feel you succeed in this subject?
2. Describe one thing that has held you back from achieving success in school?

What is it?

Marking the text is an active reading strategy that asks students to identify information in the text that is relevant to the reading purpose. This strategy has three distinct marks: numbering paragraphs, underlining, and circling.

How do I use it?

Based on the reading purpose, students will use marking the text to identify information as they read. They will begin by numbering the paragraphs they have been asked to read. Then, as they identify information that is relevant to the reading task, they will underline or circle this information, making it easier to locate for notes or discussion.

Even though the reading purpose will determine what students mark, the types of marks should not change. A student's ability to learn and apply a reading strategy relies heavily on the consistency of the strategy. If marking the text is understood to mean any pen or pencil mark on the paper, the student will never learn how this particular strategy aids his or her comprehension of the text.

When should I use it?

A fundamental strategy, marking the text ought to be used whenever students are asked to read academic texts. When students are asked to read arguments, students should underline the author's claims and circle key terms and names of people who are essential to the argument. While reading passages from a textbook, students should underline information that pertains to the reading purpose and circle names, places, and dates that are relevant to the topic being studied.

In the beginning, encourage students to read the text one time before they go back and mark the text while they read it a second time. Eventually, students will become comfortable with this strategy and begin marking the text during their first read.

Why should I use it?

When students mark texts purposefully, they are actively engaged in meaning making. To mark texts effectively, students must evaluate an entire passage and begin to recognize and isolate the key information. Once the text is marked, students will be able to quickly reference information that pertains to the reading purpose. Students might also use their markings to assist in summary writing, to connect ideas presented within the text, or to investigate claims, evidence, or rhetorical devices. Numbering paragraphs is also essential for class discussions. Once paragraphs are numbered, students can easily direct others to those places where they have found relevant information.

Marking the Text¹

AVID Teacher Reference

Number the Paragraphs

- ① Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indention and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.
- ② Like page numbers, paragraph numbers will act as a reference so you can easily refer to specific sections of the text.

Circle Key Terms, Names of People, Names of Places, and or Dates

In order to identify a **key term**, consider if the word or phrase is...

- repeated
- defined by the author
- used to explain or represent an idea
- used in an original (unique) way
- a central concept or idea
- relevant to one's reading purpose

Underline an Author's Claims

A **claim** is an arguable statement or assertion made by the author. Data, facts, or other backing should support an author's assertion.² Consider the following statements:

- A claim may appear anywhere in the text (beginning, middle, or end)

- A claim may not appear explicitly in the argument, so the reader must infer it from the evidence presented in the text
- Often, an author will make several claims throughout his or her argument
- An author may signal his or her claim, letting you know that this is his or her position

Underline Relevant Information

While reading informational texts (i.e., textbooks, reference books, etc.) read carefully to identify information that is relevant to the reading task. Relevant information might include:

- A process
- Evidence
- Definitions
- Explanations
- Descriptions
- Data/Statistics

¹ Marking the text is a strategy used by the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at SDSU.

² For more on this definition see Stephen E. Toulmin's, *The Uses of Argument* (11-13).

Successful High School Students Do These 10 Things

Success in high school isn't easy to quantify. Is it earning a 4.0 GPA? Getting elected class president? Simply being happy and generally successful? Success might look different for every student, but the tools for achieving it are generally the same.

In this post, we outline ten things that successful high school students do to maximize their learning opportunities and prepare for the future. Doing these ten things will not only help you to become a successful high school student, but a successful college student as well. Lay the foundation now for the mindset and work habits necessary in college and you'll not only optimize your high school years but also hit the ground running when you graduate.

1. Set Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

Goal setting is a skill that develops over time. In fact, it can even be described as an art. To become a successful goal setter, you'll need to get to know your own work habits and motivators. Setting unrealistic goals gets discouraging quickly.

Instead, set realistic long-term goals and work backwards from those to set smaller short-term goals to act as stepping stones. Then, make a plan to achieve these goals. Break your work down into manageable chunks and find a way to hold yourself accountable. Sometimes it can even help to coordinate with a group of peers so that you can help to hold one another accountable too.

2. Master Time Management

In order to optimize your performance across multiple aspects of your life, you'll need to develop strong time management skills. This means making and sticking to study schedules, developing systems of organization that work well for you, and learning the art of multitasking.

3. Select a Balanced Course Load

Many students struggle with finding balance. If you commit to the most challenging track of classes and then load up on uber-challenging electives on top of it, you might overextended yourself, and your grades could suffer. On the other hand, if you don't take on a course load that is challenging enough, you might feel bored, or find yourself with limited options when it comes time to apply to colleges. Early in your high school career, try to identify the right balance in course load for you.

4. Be Active Outside the Classroom

Successful high school students don't disappear outside the walls of their classroom. They are also engaged members of their community. Get involved

5. Participate in Class

You might think that this one goes without saying, but many students seem to think that if they study and achieve high grades, their participation will be a secondary factor. Successful students know, though, that class participation is a means towards the end. Students who participate in class are more engaged in their learning and are better able to encode information in their memories, since thoughtful questions and consideration lend context to new information.

6. Take Good Care of Yourself

Getting enough sleep, eating well, and taking good mental care of yourself are all necessary to success. When any one of these fall by the wayside, you are unable to perform at the peak of your ability no matter how prepared you are otherwise. Put yourself first to ensure that you're capable of following through on the rest of your commitments.

7. Find Your Passions

High school isn't just a time to prove your intellect and capability of tackling college level work. You should also think of it as a unique opportunity to figure out what makes you tick. Students who can identify their passions and pursue them are more engaged and motivated to succeed.

8. Learn to Say No

Academics aren't the only area in which you risk overcommitting yourself. Dedicated students and active members of the school community also risk overextending themselves in activities and outside commitments. Sometimes friends invite you to join in illegal or harmful activities. Learning to say no can save not only your life but your friends' lives too.

9. Earn Leadership Roles

What's more impressive than playing on four varsity sports teams? Many admissions committees would argue that they'd rather see you advance in one sport from JV to team captain over the course of four years, or even to team manager if you don't make varsity. The same can be said for other activities, too. Instead of spreading yourself thin and participating in many activities, try to focus on a few and advance to leadership roles. Successful students know that this focus and determination sets you apart more than simply a commitment to attend many weekly meetings.

10. Build and Use a Support Network

Successful students are those who know how to use the resources available. Build strong relationships with teachers and peers, establish connections with learning resources like the writer's center or study hall teachers, and connect with mentors to ensure that you have a support system in place, even if you never use it. Further, don't hesitate to reach out to the appropriate resource should you need a hand. Don't wait until you're drowning to call for help; instead let others know when you're worried or confused and let them help you out before it gets over your head.

