

**How to Study**The **BIG** Idea

- What can I do in class and at home to be successful in school?

**AGENDA**

Approx. 45 minutes

- I. Warm Up (5 minutes)
- II. Making the Most of Class (15 minutes)
- III. What's On the Test? (10 minutes)
- IV. Helpful Memory Aids (10 minutes)
- V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

**MATERIALS**
 **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

- Student Handbook page 30, How to Get Better Grades
- Student Handbook page 31, Review Your Notes
- Student Handbook page 32, What's On the Test?
- Student Handbook page 33, Test-taking Strategies

 **FACILITATOR RESOURCE**

- Facilitator Resource 1, The Digestive System

**OBJECTIVES**

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Understand classroom behavior and preparation shown to be effective for learning.
- Identify and practice strategies to prepare for tests.

## OVERVIEW .....

In this lesson, students will discuss ways to improve their study habits and get better grades. They'll begin with a quick quiz about how they interact with course material, in class and after school. Then they'll focus on everyday habits that will help them learn the material before it's test time, like how they prepare for class, participate in class, and review what they learn each day. Next, they'll focus on effective strategies to use when it's time to study for the test, especially ways to identify what will be covered. They will also discuss and practice how to review their notes, and fill in missing details from the reading material. Then students will review a few basic strategies for remembering many facts and details, and end the lesson by trying out one of these strategies with a partner.

## PREPARATION .....

- List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- Copy **Facilitator Resource 1, The Digestive System** (one class set)
- The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
  - **Student Handbook page 31, Review Your Notes**
  - **Student Handbook page 32, What's On the Test?**

## IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS .....

In **Activity II, Making the Most of Class**, students will compare notes about the digestive system with the background reading adapted from KidsHealth. The notes and reading material include basic information about the digestive system for younger students, so this will likely not be new material for seventh-graders. However, you may choose to cover a different topic, such as one your class is currently studying in science or social studies.

You may prefer to complete **Activity II** as a whole-class activity, if you feel students will need help finding the missing information in the reading material.

In **Activity IV, Helpful Memory Aids**, you may choose to have students write down their examples from **Student Handbook page 33, Test-taking Strategies** onto sticky notes. Students can then post one of their examples on chart paper or the board. You can then review these as a class.

## ACTIVITY STEPS

### I. Warm Up (5 minutes)

1. [To begin this lesson, as students enter the classroom, hand out the DO NOW activity, **Student Handbook Page 30, How to Get Better Grades**. Give students about five minutes to complete the quiz.]
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Welcome, everybody. OK, I'd like to see a show of hands. Who would like to get better grades? Wow, that looks like just about everybody! Well, that's what we're going to talk about today.

[Display the list below on chart paper or an overhead projector. While you are reviewing the answers from the quiz, discuss these points.

Things a good student does every day—not just when he or she is studying for a test:

- Goes to every class (and gets there on time!)
- Reads the material before class
- Completes homework assignments
- Listens in class, asks questions, and participates in discussion
- Reviews notes after each class
- Asks teacher or another student if something's not clear]

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** In today's class, we're going to talk about how to improve your study habits, and get better grades. Now, this might seem obvious, but your grades reflect how well you learn the material. And there are two important aspects of learning the material: First, there's what you do everyday—how you prepare for class, participate in class, and review what you learned in class. Second, there's how you review this material when it's test time.

### II. Making the Most of Class (15 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I'd like to see another show of hands: Who here has ever waited until the night before a test to study? Who has ever waited until the night before a test to even read the material?

Too often, students put too much emphasis on cramming right before the test, rather than spending time to learn the material as they go. As you've probably discovered, it's really difficult to try to learn all the material if the first time you think about it is a day or two before the test.

2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** So, if there's one message I want you to take away today, it would be this: Getting better grades isn't just about how you study for a test, it's about what you do to learn the material the rest of the time: how you prepare for class, participate in class, and review what you learn in class.
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** I really want to emphasize one of those points—reviewing your notes. Many students wait to look at their class notes until they're studying for a test. But when you wait this long, sometimes your notes don't make much sense, do they? That's why it's so important to review your notes as you go. You don't need to spend a lot of time doing this. Just take 15 minutes as soon as you get a chance, like in your next study hall or that evening when you're doing homework.
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** When you look back at your notes, focus on one topic at a time. As you read through your notes, underline the terms or ideas you think are most important. Then try to summarize the main point in your own words.

Of course, your notes are just a starting point; after all, it's impossible to capture all the important points from class. That's why it's important to “fill in” missing definitions, dates, or other details from your textbook. When you review your notes, add question marks in places where information is missing or confusing. When your notes aren't clear, reread the textbook or ask someone for help.

5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's see how this works. You're going to review some sample notes and fill in the missing details. Please turn to your **Student Handbook page 31, Review Your Notes**. [Give each student a copy of **Facilitator Resource 1, The Digestive System**.]

Let's say these are your notes from a science class about the basic parts of a digestive system. You looked back over your notes after class, but there are a few things that aren't clear, and several missing details. These are the things marked with a question mark. Compare these notes with the reading material, and see if you can fill in the missing information wherever you see a question mark.

6. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's look at the first one together. I'm reviewing my notes and I see that I didn't catch the name of the “stuff” in food that the body needs. So I go to the reading material to find out. I see that the first paragraph introduces the digestive system, and it even identifies what your body needs from food. [You may want to read this sentence aloud.] So the “stuff” your body needs from food is nutrients and energy!

7. [Give students about 10 minutes for the activity, then have volunteers share the answers.]

### III. What's On the Test? (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Let's say you've been doing all those things—reading the material, participating in class, reviewing your notes—and now the test is just around the corner. This is the time to review everything you've learned, and your final chance to figure out the stuff you still don't quite understand.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** When you sit down to study for a test, what's the first thing you do? [You may want to take answers from a few students.] Here's my suggestion: The first thing you should do is figure out what's on the test!

You can start by making a checklist of the main points you think will be on the test. Next to each main point, include the key words or terms you need to learn about that concept. At first, don't worry about filling in all the details—just list the big ideas and important terms.

3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** How do you know what's going to be on a test? What are some sources you can use to figure this out? [Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 32, What's On the Test?** and fill in the blanks based on the information discussed below. You may also wish to project this page on an overhead.]:
  - **Your Teacher:** Sometimes teachers provide study questions. If not, you can always ask your teacher to identify important concepts or textbook chapters covered on the test.
  - **Your Textbook:** Look at the main concepts within chapters, words in bold (new vocabulary words or concepts), and end-of-chapter questions.
  - **Your Notes:** Look for key points in your notes. After all, if your teacher spent time talking about it in class, you know he or she thought it was important.
  - **Your Classmates:** Ask classmates what they think were the most important points. It may help to compare notes—you may have missed something.
  - **Yourself:** Consider what questions you would ask if you were the teacher, and write down a list of your own questions.
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Once you have a list of the main topics and terms that will be on the test, it's time to make sure you really understand them. And chances are, your notes and your textbook will be the main place to find these details. Remember, your

notes are a great starting point for studying because they reflect what your teacher covered in class—in other words, what he or she thought was the most important material.

#### IV. Helpful Memory Aids (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** When you study for a test, it's important to understand the “big picture,” but you'll often find yourself having to memorize lots of little facts. Chances are, you already have a few tricks to remember things, like a phone number, a birthday, or a new friend's name. Next, we'll review a few different ways to help you memorize lists and details. [You may wish to share your own strategies. For example, you might use an acronym to remember a short grocery list, like CAB for cheese, apples, bread.]
  
2. [Have students turn to **Student Handbook page 33, Test-taking Strategies** as you review the following memory devices. Encourage students to take notes on this page and write down some of their own ideas. (See **Implementation Options** for suggestions.)]
  
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Flash cards are great tools for remembering important words or concepts, and all it takes is a stack of index cards. To make a flash card, write a key word on one side, and important information—like who, what, when, where, or why—on the other. You might write a vocabulary word on one side, and the definition on the other. For example, say you're studying angles for a geometry test. One flash card might read “acute” on one side, and the definition (“an angle with a measure between  $0^\circ$  and  $90^\circ$ ”) on the other.
  
4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Acronyms: This is a helpful strategy when you have to remember a list of words. To come up with an acronym:
  - Write the facts you need to remember and underline the first letter in each word.
  - Arrange the letters to make a new word.

One acronym people often use to remember the Great Lakes is HOMES, which uses the first letter of each of the lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior. Another example is ROY G. BIV, which is used to remember the correct order of the colors of the spectrum: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.
  
5. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Acronymic sentences: This is a helpful strategy when you have to remember words in a certain order:

- Write down the words you have to remember and underline the first letter in each word.
- Write a sentence using words that begin with the underlined letters.

Here are two examples of acronymic sentences you may have encountered in science class:

- To remember the order of the planets: “My (Mercury) very (Venus) earthy (Earth) mother (Mars) just (Jupiter) served (Saturn) us (Uranus) noodles (Neptune).”
  - To remember the order of the levels of biological classification: “Kings (Kingdom) play (Phylum) chess (Class) on (Order) fine (Family) green (Genus) sand (Species).”
6. [If time permits, have a few students share one of their examples for acronym or acronymic sentences with the class.]

## V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Before we end for the day, let’s try our hand at some of these memory strategies. Let’s use the example of the digestive system. Say you need to remember the main components of the digestive system—in other words, the organs the food goes through on its way through your body. [Write the following organs on the board:]
  - Mouth
  - Esophagus
  - Stomach
  - Small intestine
  - Large intestine
  - Rectum
2. [Divide students into pairs and give them a few minutes to use an acronymic sentence to remember these organs in order. (For example, “My energetic snake sings lovely rap.”) Come back together as a class, and have a few volunteers share their sentences. Point out that sometimes the craziest sentences are the easiest ones to remember!]
3. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Great job today, everyone. Next week, we’re going to talk about managing stress—so you can stay calm and focused when studying for your next big test!

## THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Question: What's 30 feet long and can transform pizza to poop in a few days or less? (Hint: all humans have one.)

Answer: Your digestive system!

The food you eat provides nutrients and energy to your body. Digestion is the process of breaking down food so your body can use it. Your digestive organs are part of this process. Each organ has a different job.

### MOUTH

The digestion process actually begins before you take a bite. Smelling food—or even thinking about food—causes saliva (spit) to form in your mouth. Saliva helps break down your food. So does chewing. Once the food is mushy, you can swallow it. The food is on its way to your . . .

### ESOPHAGUS

The esophagus is a stretchy tube that allows the food to pass into your stomach. The esophagus is 10 inches long. The muscles in the walls of the esophagus push the food along, kind of like squeezing a tube of toothpaste. It takes two or three seconds for the food to move through the esophagus. Then it's on its way to your . . .

### STOMACH

The stomach is a stretchy sack used to store your food. But that's not all. It also churns and mashes the food. The muscles of the stomach's wall and the stomach's gastric juices break the food into smaller and smaller pieces, until it's a liquid mixture. The stomach's third and final job is to send the food on its way to your . . .

### SMALL INTESTINE

The small intestine is a tube packed underneath your stomach. It's not very thick (one-and-a-half to two inches around), but it's really long. The small intestine of the average adult is about 22 feet long! Here, your food is broken down into a thin, watery mixture. Three other organs, the PANCREAS, LIVER, and GALLBLADDER, help in this process. Now the nutrients from your food can pass into your bloodstream. Some nutrients are stored in your liver, and some are used right away by the rest of your body. What's left over continues on its way to your . . .

## **LARGE INTESTINE**

The large intestine is wide (three to four inches around) compared to the small intestine. But the large intestine is only five feet long. Here, your body gets a last chance to absorb water and minerals from what's left of your food. (This happens in a part of the large intestine known as the COLON.) As the water is absorbed by your body, what's left becomes solid. This solid is on its way out of your body — as poop. But first, it's stored in your . . .

## **RECTUM**

The rectum is the final stop in the digestive system. Waste remains here until you're ready to go to the bathroom, when it's pushed out of your body through an opening called the ANUS.

ADAPTED FROM: [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

## HOW TO GET BETTER GRADES

You are about to start a new school year, and you're determined to turn over a new leaf and get better grades this year. When you find yourself in some of these familiar situations, what will you do? Circle the best answer for each one.

1. You are supposed to read the first two chapters in your textbook for your social studies class tomorrow. You:
  - a) Read the chapter headings, look at the pictures, and figure you don't really need to read it, since your teacher will talk about it tomorrow anyway.
  - b) Call your friend to talk about your new social studies teacher.
  - c) Read the chapters, highlighting or underlining important points, and noting the parts that don't make sense.
  
2. You just sat through a class about the different types of governments, and you're totally confused. You:
  - a) Complain to your friend about how confusing the class is.
  - b) Try not to think about it—you'll figure it out when it's time to study for the test.
  - c) Read your textbook for clarification, and ask your teacher if you're still confused.
  
3. When you're in class, you usually:
  - a) Stay pretty quiet and only talk if the teacher calls on you.
  - b) Ask questions and participate in class discussions.
  - c) Get homework done for your next class.
  
4. You have a huge test in a couple days. To start studying, you:
  - a) Open up your textbook and start reading the chapters covered on the test (for the first time).
  - b) Look at your notes and textbook and make a list of the main things you think will be covered on the test.
  - c) Make plans with a friend—you'll need to let off steam before you start studying.
  
5. The best time to start reviewing material for a test is:
  - a) The day before the test, so the material will be fresh in your mind.
  - b) Every day, reviewing your notes after each class.
  - c) A couple days before your test, so you have one day to read the material and another day to review it.

## REVIEW YOUR NOTES

Today, your science teacher reviewed the digestive system. You took the notes below, but when you went back to review them, you realized some things weren't clear, and you were missing some details. The reading material for this class was adapted from a website on the digestive system:

[http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/cancer\\_center/HTBW/digestive\\_system.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/cancer_center/HTBW/digestive_system.html)

Compare your notes below with the reading material and fill in the missing information wherever there's a highlighted question mark.

### Digestive System

---

What it does: It breaks down food so your body can get the stuff **[WHAT IS THIS CALLED??]** it needs

### Process of digestion:

---

1. Starts with MOUTH—chewing breaks down food; so does saliva (spit)
2. ESOPHAGUS long tube, pushes food into stomach
3. STOMACH—does three things:
  - stores food
  - breaks up food (muscles and g\_\_\_\_\_ juices [??])
  - **[??]**
4. SMALL INTESTINE really long (over 20 feet!), helps body absorb nutrients; three organs provide juices to help break down food:
  - pancreas
  - liver
  - **[??]**
5. LARGE INTESTINE—**[IS IT LONGER THAN THE SMALL INTESTINE??]** absorbs water, What's left—solid waste (poop!)
6. RECTUM, stores waste before it leaves the body

## WHAT'S ON THE TEST?

Before you start studying for a big test, make a list of the main points that will be covered. How will you know? Complete the following sentences to identify five important sources for figuring out what's on a test.

1. **Your Teacher:** Sometimes teachers provide \_\_\_\_\_ If not, you can always ask your teacher to identify important concepts or textbook chapters covered on the test.
2. **Your Textbook:** Look at the main concepts within chapters, words in bold (new vocabulary words or concepts), and end-of-chapter \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Your Notes:** Look for key points in your notes. After all, if your teacher spent \_\_\_\_\_ talking about it in class, you know she thought it was \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Your Classmates:** Ask classmates what they think were the most \_\_\_\_\_ points. It may help to compare notes—you may have missed something.
5. **Yourself:** Consider what questions you would ask if you were the teacher, and write down a \_\_\_\_\_ of your own questions.

## TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

When you study for a test, you may have to remember a list of facts or details. Here are a few different strategies to help remember information. Write down some of your own examples or strategies.

### 1. Flash Cards

Example: To remember angles for a geometry test, one flash card might read "acute" on one side, and the definition ("an angle with a measure between  $0^\circ$  and  $90^\circ$ ") on the other.

Your example:

### 2. Acronyms

Example: HOMES is an acronym to remember the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior

Your example:

### 3. Acronymic Sentences

Example: To remember the order of the planets: My (Mercury) very (Venus) earthy (Earth) mother (Mars) just (Jupiter) served (Saturn) us (Uranus) noodles (Neptune).

Your example:

### 4. Other Strategies

