



## How to Be Successful in Your College Science Class

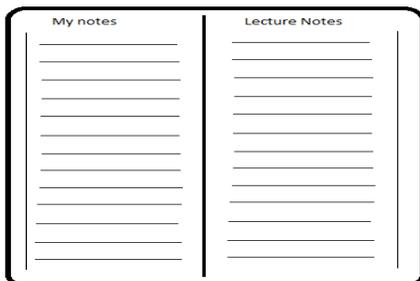
Taking a science class in college can be intimidating. There are several reasons why students struggle to succeed in science classes. Take a look at these tips below. Try using these skills and techniques throughout the semester. We hope this will help you feel more confident.

### Before and after class...

- **Read ALL the material before each class**, including notes and handouts given to you by your instructor. Don't stress about understanding the material the first time you read it. The goal is for you to have an idea of what the instructor plans to discuss.
  - While reading over the material, look at graphs, pictures, important terms, and concepts.
  - Highlight things you don't understand. Write down questions you have about the material.
- **After class, reread your notes and practice!**
  - Look over your notes again after class. Rewrite your notes if they are too sloppy and/or unorganized.
  - Visit your instructor during office hours or utilize tutoring if necessary. The ALC offers free tutoring for all science classes offered at CPMC.

### How to study on your own...

- **First, establish a study routine.**
  - Your study space should be quiet, with minimal distractions.
  - Create a schedule and choose a consistent time to study daily/weekly.
  - Commit to at least 2 hours of study time per class hour.
- While reading your textbook, **the goal is not to memorize what you are reading! Rather, it is to understand what you are reading.** You want to be able to explain and apply the concepts you're reading about.
- **Organize your notes!**
  - Make sure your notes are neat and legible. Instructors suggest organizing your notes in a way that allows you to easily compare information presented in class to your own notes. If your instructor discusses information you've already written in your own notes, you don't have to scramble to write down everything they say. You can pay more attention to the lecture and only write down key points. *See illustration below.*





### How to study on your own cont'd...

- **Look at the pictures, graphs, and tables in your book**
  - Try to draw the illustration or photo copy it. This will come in handy while studying for an exam.
- **Studying for exams**
  - **Determine the type of test it will be:** Multiple choice, short-answer, vocabulary, etc.
    - **For memory-based tests, i.e. vocabulary tests,** try using flashcards. Write the word on one side, the definition on the opposite side.
    - **Some tests might be concept-based, meaning you may be required to understand an important scientific process,** i.e. photosynthesis.
      - Try tracing or copying an illustration of the process from your book. Write down the important terms that correlate with the illustration. Then place the terms in the right place on the illustration you drew.
      - Now try placing the terms on the illustration without looking at the words first.
      - Next, see if you can draw the illustration from scratch, without a copy of the picture or terms in front of you.
      - Or, instead of drawing a picture and labeling it, try writing a short paragraph explaining the process in your own words. Read your explanation to a friend to see if they understand it.
  - **Complete practice problems.** You may find them in the back of your book.
  - **Quiz yourself.** You can usually find quizzes online.
- **Give yourself breaks.** Try to study in one-hour increments. Then take a 15-minute break to stretch, get a snack, etc.

### During class/lab...

- **Attend all classes and lab**
  - If you need to miss a class, give your instructor advance notice when possible.
  - Take initiative to retrieve the information you missed. Ask a classmate if you can receive a copy of their notes.
- **Come prepared with all materials.**
  - Bring your textbook, notes, lab materials, etc.
  - Wear the appropriate attire to lab. Read the lab beforehand to know what to expect.
- **Sit near or in the front of the class.**
- **Note-taking during class is important.**
  - You don't need to write down **EVERYTHING** the instructor says during the lecture. Use the note-taking outline demonstrated on page one of this tip sheet. During class, listen for key words or phrases. If your instructor says things like "this is important" or "this will be on the exam" then you should probably write that down. Also, most anything that the instructor writes on the board during the lecture is important to note.
- **Lastly, ask questions** or ask your instructor to clarify what they said if you don't understand.

**If you have additional questions, feel free to call to speak with a STAR coach at 704-330-6754 or email [star.success@cpcc.edu](mailto:star.success@cpcc.edu). Check out the rest of our tip sheets on our website <http://www.cpcc.edu/star>.**