

Super Study Skills

“But I already studied!” How often have you heard your middle grader say that, after maybe 10 minutes of studying? Teaching your child ways to study that are fun and effective will help her now and for her lifetime.

Share the following methods to put your middle grader on the road to studying—and succeeding!

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Organization

Before your child can begin studying, she needs to be organized. Here's how you can help:

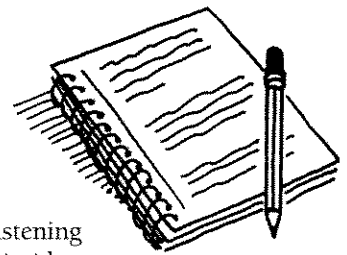
- Designate a place for studying. Your middle grader may prefer sitting in a quiet corner of the kitchen or sprawling on the floor in her room. The important thing is to have a place that has “Study here” written all over it. This means a clutter-free surface, good lighting, a comfortable place to sit, and a computer (if available). Have reference materials handy, such as a dictionary, a thesaurus, a foreign language dictionary, and U.S. and world maps. *Tip:* Keep distractions to a minimum. Switch off the television, turn music down, and keep siblings from playing nearby.
- Put a stocked supply box in the study area. In addition to pencils, pens, and notebook paper, supplies should include colored highlighters, a ruler, scissors, glue, Scotch tape, a calculator, a compass, and graph paper.
- Encourage your middle grader to write quiz, test, and project due dates on a calendar. Every Monday, have her write down what is due each day of that week. Help her divide the work to be done into small, manageable blocks, and set goals for each day. *Example:* Study vocabulary words on Monday and review history notes on Tuesday for Wednesday's quizzes.

energy-boosting snack that includes both protein and carbohydrates. Try peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit smoothies, or English muffin pizzas.

- Is your middle grader the most focused when she gets home from school, or is she more attentive after dinner? To find out, vary her study times for a week, and keep track of how long it takes her to finish her assignments. Then, choose a study time based on what works best for her.
- Getting the most difficult work done first can give your child a sense of accomplishment that will help him get through the rest. For example, suggest that he work on a creative-writing assignment before studying his list of science terms. *Hint:* He will be freshest when he first sits down to work.

Note taking

When your child reaches middle school, it becomes even more important for her to have good note-taking skills. Have her try these ideas:



- While reading a chapter or listening to a teacher, write down the main ideas. Jot down keywords, and fill in the details later.
- Leave room between your notes so you can add more information as you study or reread the material.
- Use “shorthand” to save time during note taking. *Examples:* “w/” for “with,” “o” for “over,” “bc” for “because,” “b4” for “before.”

Concentration

When your middle grader learns how to concentrate, he has won half the battle. Use these suggestions to strengthen your child's concentration skills:

- Many children have trouble focusing with an empty stomach. Before your youngster begins studying, give him a healthy,



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