

How to Form a Study Group

A study group can be defined as, "...a small group of students (no more than five) who get together on a regular basis to discuss course information" (Elmhurst College Learning Center, n.d.). Research shows that if study groups are created in a meaningful and thoughtful way they can be extremely beneficial.

Four important initial steps in creating a successful study group:

1. Be certain that students in your study group are taking the same class with the same professor. If students are in different sections, you might find that assignments, due dates, and material covered are different.
2. Select dependable students who regularly attend and participate in class.
3. Limit your study group to four or five members. This will make finding mutual meeting times much easier. Also, be sure to elicit comments, concerns, and suggestions from all group members so that everyone has a voice.
4. How often do you want to meet? Depending on if you are studying for a test next week, a test in three weeks, or a research project, your desired number of meetings will vary.

Now that you have created your study group, how can you make it successful?

Ideas for creating ground rules to help your group run smoothly:

1. Arrive on time and be prepared to work.
2. Create and stick to a specific and detailed agenda for each study session.
3. Keep on task and do not waste time being overly social.
4. Determine how long you wish each session to last and stick to that set time. An hour or hour and a half is typically a good amount of time for a study group. If you are having long study group meetings, be sure to schedule in breaks to stretch and move around.
5. When you select a meeting place, be sure that it is free from unnecessary distractions. Choose a quiet area where you will not be bothered, or bother others, with your talking. You can often find rooms in the library where groups can meet.
6. Before you leave the study group set a date, time, place, and goals for the next group meeting.

How do you now communicate with your group? Turn over for more tips!

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A few simple tips to help your group function well:

1. Learn names of your group members and use them.
2. Practice active listening with all group members and let members participate and share.
3. Anytime criticism is used make sure that it is constructive and will help move ideas forward. Be courteous to all members and work together.
4. Keep a positive attitude in the group and work together to learn material.
5. Keep a list of group members and how to contact them (name, phone, e-mail address).

A chart to help you keep track of your group members:

Name	E-mail Address	Telephone #	Best time to meet
Susan Wrecker (<i>Example</i>)	swrecker@blah.com	813.334.2233	M - 4 to 6 T- 4 to 7 Th- after 5

A chart to keep track of all meeting days, times, places, and goals:

When is the next meeting	Where is the next meeting	Goals for next meeting
10/10/2007 (Wednesday) at 6:00 PM (<i>Example</i>)	Library Room 3022	Review and quiz each other over chapters 4, 5, and 6

Content adapted from:

Elmhurst College Learning Center. (n.d.). *Forming a study group*. Retrieved October 18, 2007 from: www.elmhurst.edu/library/learningcenter/Study%20Groups/forming_a_study_group.htm

Harvard College. (n.d.). *Creating an effective study group*. Retrieved October 18, 2007 from: <http://www.extension.harvard.edu/2006-07/forms/ext06ces.pdf>