

Concentration



AESC
Academic Enrichment
& Support Center

“I can’t concentrate” is a common student complaint. Although learning to focus your attention may not be a simple task, you’ll probably agree with most students that it’s a skill well worth developing. Quality study time leads to better grades and extra hours in the day.

Check over the causes of poor concentration listed below, then experiment with the active learning strategies suggested for each problem area.

If you	Try to
Lack interest in the subject	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read actively. Converse mentally with your textbook authors: question their viewpoints, anticipate their conclusions, and attempt to disprove their ideas. 2. Learn to use an effective method of reading. Survey the material before you begin. Raise questions, then read for answers. Recite what you have learned. 3. Relate the course to your life, your goals, and your future.
Lack background knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use inexpensive review books available at the bookstore or online Sparks notes. 2. Check out a less complex book on the same subject from the library. 3. Ask a friend or a tutor who has the background to help you fill in the gaps.
Lack goals for each study session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan ahead exactly what you expect to accomplish in a study session. Keep working until you accomplish your goals. Plan an enjoyable activity as a reward for a job well done.
Have poor reading and study skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the Academic Enrichment & Support Center in HC324 for individual assistance in developing these skills.
Have trouble getting started	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose one place to study. Keep pencils, paper, dictionary, and necessary supplies on hand. 2. Set a definite starting time. The sooner you begin, the sooner you will be free to do other things. 3. Warm up to studying with a brief review.

If you	Try to
Are generally fatigued	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make proper rest, good diet, and exercise part of your regular schedule so that you'll have the energy necessary to study efficiently. 2. Determine the time of day that is best for you and use this time for your most difficult assignments.
Get sleepy while studying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study in a well ventilated room. 2. Take regular breaks. 3. Change subjects, or change your approach to studying the same subject
Worry about personal problems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to the appropriate student service office for help—Student Life or Counseling Services
Daydream (to escape from work)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep only one courses' material on your desk at a time. Keep visual (photographs, souvenirs), and auditory (Favorite music) cues to a minimum. 2. Jot down your irrelevant thoughts on a scratch pad and come back to them later. 3. Study more actively (take notes, read aloud, etc.)
Worry about poor grades	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See your professor to talk over low grades or unclear assignments. 2. Talk to your academic advisor to evaluate your program and to discuss difficulties you are experiencing. 3. Make an appointment to see someone in the Academic Enrichment & Support Center.
Worry about deadlines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep a calendar of assignment deadlines and appointments. 2. Make a schedule for studying and completing assignments, then stick to your schedule.
Find it too noisy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a study room, an empty classroom, or a corner in the library—somewhere tucked away from campus traffic. Two or three hours of efficient study in quiet surroundings do more good than ten hours of study in a noisy place.