



Chemistry Study Skills

Selecting the Correct Chemistry Course for You!

Illinois State offers a range of introductory chemistry courses for students. Picking the correct course is vital for a successful chemistry experience and, if your major requires chemistry, for moving through your program in a timely way. Please check out this website for details about the introductory chemistry courses:

<http://chemistry.illinoisstate.edu/advising/nonmajor.shtml>

If you think you may be in an inappropriate chemistry course, please talk with your academic advisor immediately to discuss your concerns and your options.

11 Basic Tips For Succeeding In Your Chemistry Course:

1. **Don't PROCRASTINATE!!!:** Procrastination makes everything harder, especially in a challenging course like Chemistry. Setting a schedule and task list for yourself will help you manage time and keep on track.
2. **Look over the Syllabus and Textbook:** It is important to know what you are getting into. Pay attention to what subjects you will be discussing over the course of the semester and review your chapters before class.
3. **Attend Class:** It is difficult to learn if you aren't present. Professors often give examples and point out questions that will be on exams.
4. **Be an Active Participant in your Learning:** Take responsibility for your actions and your learning. If you don't know something... ASK... do not expect the professor to have ESP and read your mind if you are struggling.
5. **Chemistry builds upon the knowledge that you are getting from every course:** Pay attention to the information that you are receiving... it builds the foundation for the rest of the course. Do Not think that you can wipe your mind after every test and not worry about the material you just tested on.
6. **Learn, Practice and Repeat:** Learn the material, practice it often so it is fresh in your mind, and repeat it to others so that you can retain it.
7. **Write out definitions in your own words:** Just make sure that your definitions correspond to the material that you are learning
8. **Review your notes immediately after class and 8 hours later:** You retain more information when study immediately after a class and within the same day, than you do when you put it off and cram before an exam.
9. **Try to study for a bit every day (or at least 5 times a week)**
10. **Incorporate Problem Solving into every practice session:** This keeps problems fresh in your mind and helps you practice for the tests, where you might not have a lot of time to complete problems.
11. **Relate the things that you learn to everyday life:** This makes it easier for you to remember things, especially if you are thinking outside of the Chemistry text or classroom realm.

Check out this website for short and effective lectures on Chemistry!

<http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Pay attention to the Basics:

(Including but not limited to)

- Simple Algebra
- Significant Numbers
- Metric System
- Temperature Measurements
- Chemical Symbols and Names of the commonly used elements
 - Symbols/ Formulas
- Names of Commonly used simple and polyatomic ions
- Writing and Naming chemical formulas or ionic and molecular substances
 - Factor-label Method

Preparing For Tests:

- Never put yourself in a position where you have to cram for an exam, especially not a Chemistry exam. It is not beneficial to pull an all nighter before the exam since that affects your concentration. Studying daily and reviewing your notes will keep you on track
- One or two weeks out from the exam, ask your professor for a study guide, and then work your way through that. If there is no study guide, create one by analyzing your notes, syllabus, and textbook.
- Find a group of people that you can review and study with.
- Create practice tests or find sample ones on-line so that you can practice.

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Sources & Additional Resources:

http://chemistry.about.com/od/chemistrystudyskills/Chemistry_Study_Skills.htm

<http://chemistry.about.com/od/homeworkhelp/a/studytips.htm>

<http://chemistry.about.com/od/homeworkhelp/a/how-to-pass-chemistry.htm>

<http://chemistry.about.com/od/homeworkhelp/tp/blfailchem.htm>

http://www.academictips.org/acad/chemistry/chemistry_study_skills.html

Taking the Test:

- Get sleep before the exam...just make sure to set an alarm
- Read through the test before starting. Make sure you understand the directions and have an idea of you can expect.
- Answer the high point questions first, especially if you are worried that you will run out of time.
- Review your exams and understand what you missed so that you can correct that next time.