

# 10 WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILD LEARN

Avon High School

Avon, IN

## *1. Understanding the importance of vocabulary to academic achievement*

- When your child is struggling with homework, chances are there are tough vocabulary words getting in the way of comprehension. Help your child figure out the meaning by using context clues, class notes, and their phone to quickly look up the words they don't know.

## *2. Ask questions*

- Your child may say, "Nothing" when you ask, "What did you learn at school today?" All kids say this. Instead, be specific. Ask, "What time period did you learn about in US History today?" Every week or so, skim through your child's textbooks to get a feel for what they are studying so you can ask more specific questions.
- Ask who, what, where, when, why and how questions. Let your child speak and try to figure out big ideas and essential information through their answers.
- Prompt conversations by saying, "Tell me about..." Keep the conversation going by asking, "Why is that?" These are open-ended questions that will get your child talking about what he/she is learning in school.
- Here are some tips for coming up with practice questions:
  - Help your child develop questions using main titles, headlines, highlighted, and starred items
  - Use various question words such as why, what, who, how, where and when. Remember that questions generate more thinking than answers do.
  - Be sure to take advantage of review of chapter questions in the textbook
  - There are two types of information you should come up with questions for.
    - Main topics or content ideas
    - Words, vocabulary, ideas, and their meanings

## *3. Gather answers*

- Ideally, your child should read no more than a page without writing something down
- Encourage them to summarize what he has read; not copy it word for word
- Responding to reading is the best way to remember it
- If your child has difficulty summarizing, have them tell you orally what they have just read before writing it down

## *4. Get involved with student writing assignments*

- Often times, your child may need another set of eyes to find the little mistakes we all make, and suggestions to help make their writing clearer by adding details explanations

## *5. Establish physical and psychological structures for the child's homework performance*

- Specify regular times for homework, establish structures for time use
- Articulate and enforce expectations, rules, and standards for homework behavior
- Help your child structure time, space, and materials for homework
- Structure homework within the flow of family life; ensure parental "availability on demand"

## Parents

Please use this tip sheet as a guide and starting point to help your child with learning.

## 6. Buy a Cornell notebook

- Staples sells them as TOPS Focus Notes. Watch this video to learn how to teach your child how to do Cornell notes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtW9lyE04OQ>
- This system of note-taking is proven to be effective in helping students learn content

## 7. Read what your child is reading

- Most Avon English classes read from their Springboard books throughout the year. These are excerpts from novels, essays, and non-fiction writings. Ask to read what your child is reading and then have casual discussions about the texts. When your child starts reading one of the following grade-level texts, get your own copy and read along with them

- 9th — To Kill a Mockingbird, Romeo & Juliet
- 10th — Of Mice and Men and Into the Wild
- 11th — Things Fall Apart
- 12th — Anthem and Othello

## 8. Understand how the brain learns

- Students must think about what they're working on in order to remember it later
- Encourage your child to "chunk" activities by working on one section only and then taking a break, or summarizing each page before moving on
- Your child should also ask themselves questions about their notes or class readings and try to answer their own questions before looking for the answer. This is much more effective than simply rereading notes and texts or reviewing class notes.

## 9. Engage in meta-strategies helping your child learn processes conducive to achievement

- Support your child's self-regulation skills, strategies, and personal responsibility for homework processes and outcomes
- Help your child organize personal thinking about assignments
- Encourage your child to self-monitor, and focus their attention
- Teach and encourage your child to regulate emotional responses to homework

## 10. Be a good model

- Let your child see you reading and learning something new
- Talk about what you are reading and learning
- Insist on a no phone policy at dinner and in the car. Use those times to talk.

### Thank you

We hope that this guide offers you a starting point to help your child with their learning. Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Sections 2, 4 & 5 were used by permission of Peel School District, February 22, 2016

## Test-Prep Strategies That Work

### Remember Your Stuff

#### 1. Study when sleepy.

Try studying for a few minutes right before hitting the hay. During sleep, the brain strengthens new memories, so there's a good chance we'll remember whatever we review right before dozing off.

#### 2. Space it out.

A new learning technique called "spaced repetition" involves breaking up information into small chunks and reviewing them consistently over a long period of time. So don't try to memorize the entire periodic table in one sitting—instead learn a few rows every day and review each lesson before starting anything new.

#### 3. Tell a tale.

Turning the details you need to remember into a crazy story helps make the information more meaningful. For example, remember the order of mathematic operations PEMDAS this way: Philip (P) wanted to eat (E) his friend Mary (M) but he died (D) from arsenic (AS) poisoning.

#### 4. Move around.

Research suggests studying the same stuff in a different place every day makes us less likely to forget that information. Every time we move around, we force the brain to form new associations with the same material so it becomes a stronger memory.

#### 5. Switch it up.

Don't stick to one topic; instead, study a bunch of different material in one sitting. For example, doing a bunch of division problems in a row means every time we approach a problem, we know it'll require some division. But doing a series of problems that require multiplication, division, or addition means we have to stop and think about which strategy is best.

#### 6. Put yourself to the test.

Quizzing ourselves may be one of the best ways to prepare for the real deal. And don't worry about breaking a sweat while trying to remember the name of the 37th U.S. president (FYI, it's Nixon): **The harder it is to remember a piece of information in practice mode, the more likely we are to remember it in the future.**

#### 7. Write it out.

Research suggests we store information more securely when we write it out by hand than when we type it. Start by recopying the most important notes from the semester onto a new sheet of paper.

**8. Be like Lincoln.**

Lincoln drove his law partners crazy because every morning he would read a couple of newspapers – out loud. Reading information out loud means mentally storing it in two ways: seeing it and hearing it.

**Stay Focused****9. Drink up.**

There's lots of research suggesting coffee (and tea) keeps us alert.

**10. Treat yo'self!**

A healthy holiday cookie, a walk around the block, five minutes on Twitter—whatever floats your boat. Knowing there's a little reward waiting for us at the end of just a few pages makes it easier to beat procrastination while slogging through a semester's worth of notes.

**11. Come together.**

Group work doesn't fly with everyone, but for those who benefit from a little team effort, a study group's the way to go. Pick a few studious pals and get together every few days to review the material. Put one person in charge of delegating tasks and keeping the group on target with its goals.

**12. Take a time out.**

Taking time to plan is one of the most important skills a student can have. Don't just start the week with the vague goal of studying for a history exam—instead, break up that goal into smaller tasks. Pencil it in on the calendar like a regular class: For example, allot every day from 1 to 3 p.m. to review.

**13. Say “om.”**

Just before staring at a piece of paper for three hours, stare at a wall for three minutes. Research suggests meditation can reduce anxiety and boost attention span. While those studies focus mostly on regular meditation, there's no harm in trying it out for a few minutes to calm pre-test jitters.

**14. Work it out.**

Get stronger and brainier at the same time. Research has found just half an hour of aerobic exercise can improve our brain-processing speed and other important cognitive abilities. Jog a few laps around the block and see if you don't come back with a few more IQ points.

**15. Own the omegas.**

Omega-3 fatty acids, found in certain fish, nuts, and olive oil, are known for their brain-boosting potential. One study found that eating a combination of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids before an exam reduced test anxiety.

**16. Gimme a break.**

The KitKat guys said it, and so does science: Taking regular breaks can boost productivity and improve our ability to focus on a single task. For a real productivity boost, step away from the screen and break a sweat during a midday gym session.

**17. Doze off.**

All-nighters rarely lead to an automatic A; in fact, they've been linked to impaired cognitive performance and greater sensitivity to stress. In the days leading up to a big exam, aim to get those seven to nine hours a night so sleep deprivation doesn't undo all the hard work you've put in.

**18. Nix the 'net.**

We've all been there, facing the siren call of a friend's Facebook wall on the eve of a giant exam. If a computer's necessary for studying, try an app (such as <http://selfcontrolapp.com>) that blocks the Internet for a short period of time and see how much more you get done.

**19. Learn what works.**

Some people are early birds, some are night owls; some prefer to study with a pal, others need complete and total silence. Experiment to find what's most effective for you, and then stick with it!

Source: <http://greatist.com/happiness/better-study-tips-test>

# Defining Common Exam Instruction Words

Use these terms as formative assessments, such as Exit Cards.

<b>Instruction word</b>	<b>What you have to do</b>
<b>Analyze</b>	Take apart an idea, concept or statement and examine and criticize its sub-parts in detail. You have to be methodical and logical.
<b>Argue</b>	Present both sides of a debatable issue and then respectfully explain why the side you agree with is better than the opposing side.
<b>Assess</b>	Describe a topic's positive and negative aspects and say how useful or successful it is, or consider its contribution to knowledge, events or processes (this is usually about how important something is).
<b>Criticize</b>	Point out a topic's mistakes or weaknesses as well as its favorable aspects. Give a balanced answer (this will involve some <i>analysis</i> first).
<b>Compare</b>	Put items side by side to see their similarities and differences – a balanced (objective) answer is required.
<b>Contrast</b>	Emphasize the differences between two things.
<b>Define</b>	Give the meaning of an idea, either a dictionary definition or from an academic authority in your subject of study (technical definition).
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Provide a step-by-step procedure to show how to do something. Have your students explain how to do or make something.
<b>Describe</b>	Give details of processes, properties, events and so on.
<b>Discuss</b>	Describe, explain, give examples, points for and against, then analyze and evaluate the results.

<b>Evaluate</b>	Similar to <i>discuss</i> , but with more emphasis on a judgment in the conclusion.
<b>Examine</b>	Take apart and describe a concept in great detail.
<b>Explain</b>	Give detailed reasons for an idea, principle or result, situation, attitude and so on. You may need to give some analysis as well.
<b>Illustrate</b>	Give concrete examples – including figures or diagrams. <i>Illustrate</i> is usually added on to another instruction.
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain and comment on the subject and make a judgement (evaluation).
<b>Infer</b>	Read between the lines; the answer is not in the passage. The reader derives meaning from information or clues the author provides. This can be very hard for reluctant readers and even poses a problem for fairly good readers sometimes. Students have to be able to figure out the author's clues.
<b>Justify</b>	Give reasons to support a statement – it may be a negative statement, so be careful!
<b>List</b>	Provide an itemized series of parts, reasons or qualities, possibly in a table.
<b>Persuade</b>	Give a point of view! Take a stand and defend one side of an issue. Give facts, statistics, beliefs, opinions, and your personal view. Show passion when you are defending your side.
<b>Prove/disprove</b>	Provide evidence for or against and demonstrate logical argument and reasoning – you often have to do this for abstract or scientific subjects.
<b>Relate</b>	Emphasize the links, connections and associations, probably with some analysis.
<b>Review</b>	Analyze and comment briefly, in organized sequences – sentences, paragraphs or lists – on the main aspects of a subject.

<b>State</b>	Give the relevant points briefly – you don't need to make a lengthy discussion or give minor details.
<b>Suggest</b>	Give possible reasons – analyze, interpret and evaluate. (This is also the verb most commonly used to quote another author.)
<b>Summarize or outline</b>	Just give the main points, not the details.
<b>Trace</b>	Give a brief description of the logical or chronological stages of the development of a theory, process, a person's life and so on. Often used in historical questions.

Word Sources:

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/defining-common-exam-instruction-words.html> &

[http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/top-10-terms-students-need-know-be-successful-](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/top-10-terms-students-need-know-be-successful-standardized-tests)

[standardized-tests](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/top-10-terms-students-need-know-be-successful-standardized-tests)



Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date  
Class  
period

Key Words

NOTES:

• Main  
Idea

• Key  
Questions

- Key words & ideas
- Important dates / people / places
- Repeated / stressed info
- Ideas / brainstorming written on board
- Info from textbooks / stories
- Diagrams & Pictures "
- Formulas

Summary/Reflection:

summary of your notes in  
your own words

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Words**

**NOTES:**

**Summary/Reflection:**