3. BEGIN TO TAKE NOTES

Have a notebook for each class. Write down ideas the teacher puts on the board. At the end of the day, spend a few minutes reading the notes you took. A few minutes of reviewing helps lock it into your brain. Put a star by points that the teacher spent a lot of time on. These might show up on tests. Ask your teacher to go over anything you did not fully understand.

Pro Tip: Spend a few minutes daily studying or reviewing content in subjects where you want to improve your grades. It's okay to ask for help.

4. SET SMART GOALS

What do you want to learn? S.M.A.R.T. goals help you move in the right direction.

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Reasonable
- Timed

I will practice my spelling words 10 minutes a night on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursdays for the month of September.

Pro Tip: Reaching small goals helps build confidence and momentum. Write your goals down and review progress regularly. Celebrate your successes.

5. BE "FIRST GEN"

Be the first in your family to go to college.

Having GEAR UP in your school means extra support to help students get college ready. Ask about:

- Tutoring.
- Science Clubs.
- Academic Competitions.
- Campus Visits.
- How to finance college.

Pro Tip: Get to know your GEAR UP liaison. They can tell you about upcoming events and services that are available to help you succeed.

GEAR UP gives you a planner

In elementary school teachers managed your time, in Junior High you begin to be more responsible for your academics.

At the beginning of each term, put all homework and test deadlines in your planner. Designate time for study, play, and family responsibilities.

Pro Tip: Ask someone who uses a planner to show you how they organize their time.

Remember Key Ideas

1. Have a notebook for each class.
2. Write down ideas the teacher puts on the board.
3. At the end of the day, spend a few minutes reading the notes you took. A few minutes of reviewing helps lock it into your brain.
4. Put a star by points that the teacher spent a lot of time on. These might show up on tests.
5. Ask your teacher to go over anything you did not fully understand.

Pro Tip: Anything you get excited about learning can be a hint that you might enjoy a career doing that.

1. PLAN YOUR TIME

Everyone Can Grow

Some people think that you are born talented, or you’re not, but everyone can improve their skills.

People who think, “Either you have it or you don’t,” quit when things get hard.

People who believe they can grow, see setbacks as opportunities to keep trying harder. Over time they see progress.

Pro Tip: Ask someone who uses a planner to show you how they organize their time.

2. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Pro Tip:

Spend a few minutes daily studying or reviewing content in subjects where you want to improve your grades. It’s okay to ask for help.

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EFFECTIVE WAYS OF STUDYING BEFORE EXAMS

TALKING POINTS
Talk about how current events relate to what they are learning in school.
Talk about how their classroom learning relates to real life.
If they are excited about a subject discuss how that might be used in a career.
Share articles you find interesting.
Be a role model of curiosity and life long learning.
Provide opportunities to access reading for fun.
Take them to the library. Get magazine subscriptions.
Eat meals together. Make meals a fun time for conversation about life and current events. (Eating meals together helps has the added benefit of reducing undesired behaviors like substance use.)

SHARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS
Repeat Often
Tell them you want them to graduate high school. Tell them you want them to go to technical school or college. Take them to visit a campus.
Monitor their homework and grades. Students who fall behind in middle school lack the foundation to succeed in high school.
Tell them you expect them to be in class every day. Students who miss days are more likely to drop out.
Help them see how education can help them reach their goals.

ENCOURAGE A LEARNING MINDSET
Praise Effort, Not Smarts
Teach your child that skills are built over time and through effort. “Look how studying your spelling every day, helped improve your grade.” is better than saying, “Nice grade.”
A fixed mindset believes either you have it or you don’t. It gives up easily and when there is failure, the person’s self-esteem suffers.
A learning mindset believes that improvement comes over time, through work and effort.

TEACH ACADEMIC SKILLS
Help Your Child Learn
Teach them how to use a planner. Show them how to set aside time to study.
Help them break big assignments into small steps. Help them identify small steps to reach goals.
Provide a work space. Fill it with supplies (pencils, highlighters, sticky notes, stapler, etc.)

TEACH THEM TO ASK FOR HELP
You Won’t Always Be There
Encourage them to ask teachers for help with homework or get them to tutoring through the school.
Encourage your student to use online resources. The Khan Academy offers free how-to videos on almost any subject.
Teach them to problem solve. Who might be able to help you with this?

Provided by Montana GEAR UP. Paid for with federal funds https://mus.edu/gearup/
**EFFECTIVE WAYS OF STUDYING BEFORE EXAMS**

**1. UNDERSTAND THE GPA**

**Grade Point Average**

Good grades may help you get scholarships.

Generally speaking, a final grade of an A would be worth 4 points, and a D would be 1 point.

As each year passes, your grades are averaged by adding the points and dividing them by the number of classes. This becomes your GPA.

**Pro Tip:** You need at least a 2.5 GPA to get into the Montana University System.

**2. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR ACTIVITIES**

**Volunteer, Join a Club, Play Sports**

If you are in sport, join a club, volunteer in the community, kept track of it. These activities can make you shine on a college application.

Write down your start and stop dates, hours per week.

Keep track of any offices you hold (President, Secretary, etc.)

If you do fundraising how many dollars did you bring in?

**Pro Tip:** Extra curricular activities show you can manage time and demonstrate leadership skills.

**3. TAKE THE RIGHT CLASSES**

**Take the hard classes**

Work with your assigned Academic Advisor to stay on track.

Taking the right classes in 9th grade keeps you on track through 12 grade.

At a minimum, you need this many years with a C or better:

- 3 of Math
- 4 of English
- 2 of Science
- 3 of Social Studies
- 2 Electives

The MUS Rigorous Scholarship, requires more years of math, science, and electives, with your electives recommended as 2 years of one world language.

**4. FIND A MENTOR**

**Ask a teacher to help you stay on track for college**

People who graduated from college know what it takes to succeed. Use them to help you get your questions answered.

Someone who has mentored you can give you a recommendation for scholarships.

Your mentor can can celebrate your successes with you and encourage you when you’re down.

**Pro Tip:** A mentor may be a mandated reporter, who has to report if they suspect you are being hurt or will hurt others. Ask if this is the case.

**5. ASK ABOUT GEAR UP**

**Ask you liaison what GEAR UP is offering in your school**

Do you need help with homework? Find out when tutoring is happening.

Ask if there are any career days or campus visits to help you explore your interests.

Are there any academic clubs to help you get college ready?

**Pro Tip:** Your Liaison is committed to helping students get ready for college.

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**HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMEN**

Provided by Montana GEAR UP https://mus.edu/gearup/
EFFECTIVE WAYS OF STUDYING BEFORE EXAMS

PREPARE FOR COLLEGE

Learn how to finance college. In-state colleges will usually be more affordable.

Certification programs can take less than two years, but increase earning potential through a lifetime.

Here are two websites to explore with your child:

- https://mus.edu/gearup/parents.html
- https://portal.mtcis.intocareers.org/

Students starting at community colleges can take required classes costing less, and then transfer to a 4-year school to finish.

Pro Tip: Most financial aid is need-based. Do not assume your child cannot go. Use the myStudentAid app (apple or android) FAFSA forecaster.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

- Is your child attending class? Students who miss a lot of class are at risk of dropping out.
- Keep the lines of communication open. High School can bring intense peer pressure and sometimes bullying.
- Ask Teachers. Ask your child’s teacher to notify you if grades fall below an acceptable mark. Students with Ds and Fs are at risk to drop out.
- Ask Teachers. Ask your child’s teacher to notify you if grades fall below an acceptable mark. Students with Ds and Fs are at risk to drop out.
- Pro Tip: If your child makes it through 9th grade successfully, he or she is less likely to drop out.

STATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Let your child know you want them to graduate and go to college.

Let them know you want them to graduate. Encourage them to do well in school.

Talk about the benefits of college. Let them know how education can improve their future. Many college graduates can make $40,000 a year more than students with only a high school diploma.

Listen to what they are passionate about. Explore careers related to their interests.

Take them to Campus. If you are near a campus, take them on a tour. Talk with admissions. Help them develop a vision.

What do they need to know at college?

Teach them how to manage money now. Help them learn to prioritize and budget, and understand basics of income and expenses. Have them save receipts so they know where their money goes.

- Show them how to do laundry.
- Show them cheap meals to cook.
- Teach them how to ask for help.