

Tips for Succeeding in General Chemistry

This is a fast-paced and rigorous course, but you can succeed if you use proven study strategies. I find that some students spend hours studying, but do not do so effectively causing them to perform below expectations. You can improve your outcomes by using the following strategies.

- Keep up with the material. Do not get behind, as it can be nearly impossible to catch up. A good way to do this is to follow this schedule:
 1. **Before each lecture:** quickly read the material that you expect I will cover in class. Write down the definitions of all words that are in bold. Look at all of the figures and try to figure out what they are showing. Try to solve each sample problem without looking at the solution, and then check your work by viewing the solution.
 2. **During each lecture:** Come to class, with the lecture outline notes for the correct chapter, and your scientific calculator. Be an active participant during class. Take good notes. Attempt to work the example problems given in class before I show you the solution. Ask questions.
 3. **After each lecture, and before the next one,**
 - a. Review your notes. Rewrite relevant sections and do the example problems on your own while covering up the solution from class. If there is anything that you don't understand, look in your textbook or ask a friend, tutor, or your teacher.
 - b. Reread any sections of the book that are not clear to you.
 - c. Do a few worksheet problems, until you reach a problem that has not been covered in class. Check your answers with the back of the worksheet. If you can't figure out how to solve the problem, look for a similar problem in your notes and/or textbook, and then ask a friend, tutor, or your teacher. Think about the process of solving the problem, don't just memorize the steps.
 - d. Log into Mastering Chemistry and answer some of the appropriate homework assignment. You may complete part of the assignment and save it to return later. It is advisable that you complete the assignments in several sessions, rather than all at once. Pace yourself so that you will finish by the deadline without struggling at the end.
 4. Before the next class, start this process over again by reading the material for the next lecture.
- Do all of the assigned homework problems and worksheet problems. If you don't do well on them, do more problems. When you do the problems, if you cannot do them on your own (if you look at your notes, the example in the book, or someone else helps you) this should tell you that you do not understand the material well enough yet. Keep doing problems until you can do them completely on your own, just like you will have to do on exams and quizzes. Study groups are great, but should be a *supplement* to **independent work**, not take its place.
- The most effective way to study is to spend about half your study time studying in groups (the Student Success Center is a great place to find other students studying chemistry!) and about half your time studying alone. Do not spend too much time either in a group or on your own. Find the right balance that works for you. When you are studying alone, find a quiet place where you can study without interruptions or tempting distractions such as your electronic devices.
- Finally, if you're having problems, please come and see me as soon as possible. **Please do not wait until it is too late.** If my Student Help Hours don't fit with your schedule, look for a tutor in the Student Success Center or make an appointment with me for a different time.