

# Maximize Your Learning

Understanding your personal learning style can help you to reach your goals and succeed in school. There are four common learning types: visual, auditory, reading/writing and tactile. You may be a combination of all four, but generally one learning style will be more effective for you than the others.

## What type of learner are you?

Use the chart below to help you determine which type you are. In each row, circle the answer the best applies to you.

When you...	Visual Questions	Auditory Questions	Read/Write Questions	Tactile Questions
<b>Get together with friends</b>	Do you enjoy going to a museum or gallery?	Do you prefer chatting over coffee?	Do you prefer going to poetry readings or book clubs?	Do you prefer to get together to play a sport or another activity?
<b>Meet someone</b>	Do you remember faces better than names?	Do you remember what you talked about but forget what they looked like?	Do you remember names better if they have name tags on or when they give you their business card?	Do you remember what you did with the person and how you felt about them?
<b>Talk</b>	Do you often use phrases such as <i>picture this</i> , and <i>imagine if</i> ?	Do you use words such as <i>hear</i> and <i>think</i> ?	Do you make notes for yourself as you talk on the phone to help you refer back to the conversation later on?	Do you use gestures often and use words such as <i>feel</i> , <i>touch</i> and <i>hold</i> ?
<b>When you're purchasing a new car</b>	Do you consider how it looks to be the most important?	Do you prefer to go with what you hear on TV commercials and what the sales person says the best features are?	Do you prefer to read up on the features and reviews?	Do you prefer to try it first and see how it works or feels?

<b>Contact people</b>	Do you prefer to meet in person?	Do you prefer to talk on the telephone?	Do you prefer to write a letter or e-mail?	Do you prefer to talk to them while engaging in an activity together?
<b>Learning</b>	Do you prefer a teacher who uses colourful charts and images?	Do you prefer class discussions?	Do you prefer when the teacher assigns readings and gives you handouts?	Do you prefer demonstrations and trial experiments?
<b>Try something new</b>	Do you prefer demonstrations or diagrams?	Do you prefer verbal instructions?	Do you prefer detailed written instructions you can read through to follow?	Do you prefer to jump right in and figure it out?
<b>Choosing something off a menu</b>	Do you look for pictures of the food on the menu or look around the restaurant at other people's food?	Do you prefer to ask the waiter what they recommend and to describe the food?	Do you prefer to read the menu and details about how the food is cooked and what is in it?	Do you prefer to try something new or order something different from everyone else so you can taste test everyone else's food?
	<b>Visual Total</b>	<b>Auditory Total</b>	<b>Read/Write Total</b>	<b>Tactile Total</b>

The column with the highest total is your more common learning type.

*Adapted from Colin Rose (1987) Accelerated Learning*

## Some study tips for your learning type

### Visual Learners:

1. The more pictures, charts and diagrams the better.
2. Study alone and highlight the key points.
3. Use different coloured highlighters.
4. Doodle in your notebooks to emphasize important information.
5. The more graphic images in your notes the better.



6. Use sticky notes to mark off important phrases in your notebook.
7. Watch instructional DVDs.

### Auditory Learners



1. Listen to speakers, record class sessions and listen to them again later.
2. Repeating information out loud will help you remember key points when studying.
3. Talk with someone about your ideas.
4. Summarize your material into a song or phrase.
5. Listen to quiet background music while studying — classical or something mellow is best.

### Reading/Writing Learners:



1. Written lists help.
2. Read sentences over and over until the information “sticks.”
3. Rewrite phrases using other words that mean the same thing.
4. Translate a diagram into a readable format.

### Tactile Learners:



1. Hands-on is the best.
2. Get on the treadmill while studying.
3. Take breaks often and find a way to incorporate movement into your studying.
4. Study while on the go — on the bus or while waiting in line.
5. Jump right in!

## First exams

Your first exams can be stressful. It's important to take good organized notes throughout the year and fully grasp what is being taught. The best way to deal with exam stress is to know your material well and start studying two weeks prior to the exam.

Prior to an exam be sure to ask the teacher what is expected and what format the exam will be in to help you better prepare and plan your review. It is important not just to memorize information, but also to rephrase it so you better understand it. If you really want to know how well you understand something, try and teach it to a friend.

Realize that exams can also be a significant opportunity to learn. Consider the study tips below and you should do fine.

## STUDY TIPS!

- **Ask questions.** Ask your instructors about which areas are most important to review.
- Make **a plan.** Give yourself time to review all material and more time for the areas you have identified as more difficult.
- Organize **yourself.** Put sticky notes on the pages you need to study more carefully and lay out the material so you can easily review.
- Highlight **key points.** This will help for quick scanning of material and the highlighted words may become embedded into your mind.
- Don't **rush.** Be sure not to move on to new topics until you feel confident with the material you just covered.
- Take **breaks.** Go for a walk and get away for just 10 or 15 minutes every hour or so.
- Sleep. If you're tired, nothing is really going to sink in so be sure to get a good night's sleep. Maybe take a short nap if you need to.
- No **distractions.** Study where you know you won't be interrupted. Shut off the TV and avoid studying around other distractions.
- Join **a study group.** Joining a group will help you with difficult areas and challenge you to keep up with the group.
- Avoid **caffeine.** Not just coffee but colas and energy drinks like Red Bull too. Sure caffeine helps you stay awake but it also increases feelings of anxiety and restlessness. So if you feel yourself getting tired, just take a short nap and avoid the caffeine fix.
- Do **not procrastinate.** If you feel overwhelmed with material you need to study, break it down into manageable steps. Putting it off will not help. See time management topic discussed earlier.
- Create **study sheets.** Write down the major concepts in point form for quick reference (like flash cards for reviewing).
- Plan **your answers.** Sometimes it helps to think of questions that might be on the exam and create an outline of the answer.
- Remember **that studying is more than reading.** Studying is active and requires more concentration.

## EXAM DAY IS HERE!

**Check these out:**

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>

<http://studytips.org/>

<http://www.studygs.net/>

<http://www.smu.ca/counselling>

1. Hopefully you got a good night's sleep. This is more important than "pulling an all-nighter" — if not, take a quick nap.
2. Eat a good healthy breakfast. You can't concentrate with a growling belly.
3. Review your study sheets. Do not try to learn new material; it will only confuse you.
4. If you are feeling anxious, go for a brisk walk to clear your mind.
5. Relax and take five slow calming deep breaths if you are feeling uptight. Repeat as needed.
6. Don't be late for the exam. If you get there early you will not have to rush through the questions.
7. Go to the bathroom before going into the exam room. It may seem silly but often instructors will not let you take bathroom breaks during an exam — so go before!
8. Read the entire exam. Before starting to answer questions, it is a good idea to read through the entire exam and decide how much time you will need to spend on each section.
9. Take your time and pace yourself. Read questions twice and beware of tricky wording.
10. If you do not know the answer to a question, don't struggle with it. Move on and go back to it. The answer may come to you later on.
11. Don't second-guess yourself. Moreover, don't be too hard on yourself.
12. If you know that you have a history of extreme exam anxiety, get help before the exam starts. Remember, counselling services can help you improve your exam writing ability and deal with exam anxiety.