

Technical English, Lecture 2: Study skills

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Goal definition

There are four main components to any goal.

who: The person responsible to achieve the goal.

what: The specific action needed. This must be a measurable quantity and you must clearly define how to measure it.

when: The time at which the goal should be achieved. For some tasks this is a hard limit. For others, a later accomplishment is acceptable.

how: What are the conditions under which the person operates?

Before starting any action, you must define your goal.

Think for yourself:

- Why am I studying for this degree?
- Why am I here today (and not studying at home instead for example)?
- When do I expect to finish this degree?
- What do I want to achieve?

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Will I remember?

In some cases, we study to memorize. We must understand the human's memory system to achieve this goal. Is your memory

- ROM or RAM?
- Static or Dynamic?
- Linearly addressed or associative?

Let us plan

In order to remember what you study you need to plan for it on several steps.

- What shall I do *before* I study?
- When I am starting, how do I *prepare*?
- Ok, once I am in the middle of everything, what do I do *during* the study period?
- Once done, is there something I should do *after* studying?

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Preparation

- You must select the order and quantity of the material you are going to study.
- The brain cannot remember too many things at once. A good method that works with many people is to organize the material into groups with 5 to 7 items per group.

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Before studying

There are three issues here:

- Think about your interest in the subject.
- Decide to remember!
- Build some background about the topic. (Your memory is associative!)

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During

- Involving more senses allows your brain to remember. Try reciting what you are reading.
- Otherwise, try to visualize it.
- Always associate the new material with the old one.

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After

- You should revise and consolidate what you learned. The best is to revise on the following day (10 min) then to review it in a week (5 min) and finally in a month (2–4 min).
- Practice what you learned! Use it often.

Otherwise, the material will decay in your memory.

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Time management and Direction management

Both a clock and a compass must be used.

A quick movement in the wrong direction may be worse than no movement!

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Do I have enough time?

The simple answer is *YES*.

You have 24 hours per day just as everyone else. Eight of these should be used for sleeping. You just need to plan the rest correctly.

Sleeping?!

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Schedules

Our body works well with repeated schedules.

- Study at the same time every day.
- Plan the study periods to follow the class periods.
- Take a break for 10 min every hour.
- Plan for weekly reviews.
- Allow yourself some flexibility in your weekly schedule.
- Allow for some recreation time.

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Contractual time management

You are a trader with a large capital, use it wisely.

1. Establish a contract with yourself.
2. Observe your behavior.
3. Account yourself at the end of the task.
4. Punish or Compensate yourself.
5. Strive to improve next time.
6. Keep on checking yourself (a little blame will prevent you from becoming overconfident).