

StudyReport

Study Report For
Example Study Report

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ShadowmatchStudyReport

Introduction

Don't let anybody tell you anything about shortcut study methods and quick exam tricks. They do not exist, and it will only put your studies at risk. There is only one way to be successful with studies: hard work. Sometimes one has to work strenuous, long hours, get through significant volumes of study material as well as complex content. The only way to succeed is to spend long and hard hours with your study material and to work relentlessly until you are ready for your exam. This guide will help you by matching your best method of studying with your existing set of habits. There is however, more in the report. Work through all the detail and watch the videos. Remember, the best study method is the one that gives optimal success with minimal effort. This is the aim of this guide.

Should you study for long sessions, or should you instead work in short, intense sprints?

The question is whether to try and work with a very high intensity, like a sprint for a relatively short period of time, or whether you should rather work for longer periods but not with the all-out intensity of a sprint - more like a marathon approach.

You have a somewhat unique situation. You will have to combine the two approaches of a slower less intense study-work-out and a short, intense study-sprint. For learning facts as is required in subjects like history, biology, economics, psychology and so on, go for the longer endurance type study sessions. But be careful, never longer than an hour. Take a fifteen-minute break after every endurance session. For the mathematical, bookkeeping, and science type studying, go for short sprints. Plan your study sessions and keep each session to about twenty-minutes with a five to ten-minute break in between. Keep your eye on a watch and stick to your plans. Remember, it is easy to work very hard for twenty minutes. Use every twenty-minute session as a goal and decide how much study work you plan on doing during each session.

Is it best to study in a group with fellow students or instead study alone?

Sometimes students are, against their choice, forced to work as part of a study group. This is not right because all people are not equally comfortable with group dynamics and the challenges a group holds for them. What then happens is that the group takes up valuable time that individual members of the group could rather have spent on their study material.

Some students experience group studying as frustrating and some experience it as stimulating. This is normal. You have a unique situation. Your habits of working and studying in a group and your habits of working and studying alone are almost in perfect balance. This is how you should use this to benefit your study methods. You need to be part of a study group, but the group should only function when necessary. For the rest of the time, you should rather study alone. The question is why will it be necessary for the group to come together? There are a few reasons to come together. When the work is very complex and group members experience difficulties in understanding the content, then the group must get together to help each other. If you are the one who understands the work, then you need to help the group. If the workload is very tough in terms of the volume of work, the study group should come together to help each other. The group could also get together to review the academic content by sharing what they think will be important and how to approach specific parts of the work. For the rest, study alone!

Preparing for Mathematics, Calculus, Statistics, Science and Bookkeeping-type exams

[Watch the Video](#)

This is the only part of this guideline that Shadowmatch provides to all students as a subject-specific guideline. For these type of subjects, this seems to be the only method that works. Step one, you must memorize all formulas. This is absolutely imperative! See it as your ticket to the match. The match is not the exam; it is the process of studying successfully. The exam is only the match result. Then step two. Work through previous exam papers. If you can't find previous exam papers, get a group of fellow students together, and each one must compile an exam paper as if they are lecturers or teachers and they want to test the knowledge of their students. Then make all the exams available to all members of the group. Write the exams, mark your own exam papers and if you can't figure out what some of the answers are, get help from either a more senior student or your lecturer/teacher. Or simply Google it! Your preparation is practice-based. You learn the theory by practising it with real subject exercises.

Don't try to figure out how these algorithms work and why they work the way they do. You will just be wasting valuable time. Say to yourself: 'This is a new language and I need to learn the spelling of new words' - then just get the formulas in your memory despite the frustrations.

Irrespective of the above, you must practice by working through real tests, previous exam papers and even self-testing exercises. The idea that you can't study for these subjects is not true. Or maybe the statement is technically correct; although very misleading. Preparing for an exam in these subjects takes much more time and effort than many other subjects. This is probably why so many experience difficulties with these and other similar subjects. You have to practice like you are practising to become a good tennis player. There is a simple principle: if you work through ten exam papers, mark all ten of them and correct your mistakes every time, you are ready for your exam. Do it!

Optimal Practical Study Method

Shadowmatch has a well-researched method of helping you to optimize your personal study methods. A study method that works for one person doesn't necessarily work for the next individual. We are just too complex and different in our ways. Shadowmatch looks at your habits and how they function in combination with each other to indicate specific preferred methods of working and/or studying. Your specific method of studying is unique to your habits. But please remember, in studying there are no shortcuts.

Method Number One: Practice/Exercise

[Watch the Video](#)

There is a very old saying: "Learning is a process of repetition" - this is very true, but we don't want to hear it, and we don't want to believe it. Why not? Because it is very hard work, it could be frustrating, and it may even be unsuccessful. I'm afraid that's not right. Repetition is one of the more powerful ways of learning. In fact, there is no other way of learning. But, if we do it incorrectly, it fails us. Here is how you should do it. The first aspect to remember is not to ask too many questions and also not to think too much. The moment we start thinking we can create ten reasons why we don't want to do it and why it doesn't work. Don't think too much. Follow a rigid process. Round one: go through your scope of work and create an index with main topics, sub-topics and, where applicable, sub-sub-topics, exactly like the index of a book. But you have to write it down, even if you work from a book with an index. Try to improve on the index and create the most complete index possible. Once you've done this, take a break because you've done a lot. Round two: go through your scope of work and, on your index, write down some keywords under each heading and sub-heading that will remind you of the content. Round three: go through your scope of work again and try to improve on the detail of your index with all the fact-word reminders. See if you can improve your index in terms of completeness. Round four: go through your index and number it. This is how: number the main topics, say from one to ten or whatever it is. Then number the sub-topics and number the sub-sub topics. Then number all the fact reminding words related to the index headings and sub-headings. The reason is so that you know how many facts there are under each of the headings or sub-headings. You must know that under a specific heading there are six or eight (or however many) facts to remember. Round five: put your index away and write down everything you remember about the index and all the information on the index sheet. Check what you have missed and repeat. Carry on until you can write down the index and all its detail to the point of at least 90% memory. Sleep for at least seven hours, go through your index twice and write your exam.

Method Number Two: Test Writing

Watch the Video

Your habits put you in the perfect position to use one of the most tested methods of studying. Shadowmatch refers to it as repeated self-testing. For most students, six tests are enough, but you must determine your minimum number of tests by starting with rather too many than too few numbers of repeated testing. The process is very simple. Firstly, don't spend too much time trying to fully understand everything you need to study. Rather spend your time to memorize what you need to know. With that in mind, phase one of your preparation is to go through your scope of studying and imagine that you are the teacher/lecturer for this coming exam. As you go through your work, write down good questions that you think your students will experience as difficult. But, don't write down the answers. This is absolutely important. Don't write down the answers! Just the questions. Cover every aspect of your academic scope of work. Don't leave anything out and be as complete as possible. Once you have created your exam, make four additional copies of the test. Once you've done this, you are done with the most challenging part of your preparation, and you should take a break of at least thirty minutes. Back at your study desk, put your books away and write your own test exactly as you would do it in the exam. When you are done, put everything down and take a fifteen-minute break. Back from your break, take your books and mark your exam answers and check your study material for the correct answer to each question. Calculate your points as a percentage, and throw your completed exam answer and question sheets in the rubbish bin. Take the same but second exam test, and write the exam again. Do everything exactly as the first round and write the exam in full. Don't take shortcuts and don't skip questions because you don't like the content or you may think you know the answer. Be determined. Write the full exam. It would be best if you scored ten percent more with every exam you write. Your final exam should be well above 80% before you go and write your real exam. The fact that you have a preference to work as part of a study group has immense value for this process. Try to get three or four fellow students to also compile tests, every member of the groups must write the test compiled by every other member of the group, and you should mark each other's answers. The moment you've scored above 80% for a complete test, you are ready to go and write your exam. Sleep seven hours and on the day of your exam, just read through the test questions and think of the answers. Be very relaxed because your exam should go well

Careful of these...

Unique and very specific road-blocks that could frustrate your academic journey.

Most students have some form of stress trigger that for some weird reason, lets them disengage from studying. The reasons are difficult to understand. Shadowmatch can help you to minimize this risk. Your habits might leave you in a situation where studying just becomes something you don't want to do. Or you may, in a specific situation, just lose interest in the academic content. Shadowmatch will now describe your specific risk experiences and what to do about it.

Becoming anxious

Anxiousness amongst students is one of the most common challenges. It happens when you become so stressed that physical, biological functions of your body feel compromised. For instance, you feel short of breath, you suffer from headaches, stomach pains, neck muscle spasms, and you experience the feeling of someone standing on your chest. You might also experience sweating, an increased heartbeat, suffer panic attacks, etc. This absorbs so much energy that it becomes impossible to study effectively. Anxiousness amongst students is mostly fear-related. This fear is in many instances based on a feeling of being unsure whether you will pass a test or exam.

The solution: Shadowmatch has good news; if you do what your study method recommends, your chances of success with your exam is much higher than your chances to fail. This should have a calming effect on you. Relax, do what you should do, follow the process and you should be OK. Remember, preparing for an exam is a process! Listen to music from the sixties, watch a few funny cartoons, drink ice-cold water and become physically active. Walk briskly for about thirty minutes, jog, do a short but hard cardio workout. Try to stay in the moment and determine exactly what you need to do. Use the advice, actions or methods below to better manage this frustration:

- Identify the most frustrating components of your work and leave those for last.
- Identify the things you are comfortable to do or study without any help and study those portions of your work first.
- Work out a study programme that you are comfortable with before you start studying. Then stick to your programme.
- You have to start earlier with your preparation. You need enough time to prepare, and if exams are close to each other in terms of timelines and dates, you need to start much earlier.

Losing track of the work

Many students experience a situation where they have lost track of the study material, the composition of the study material or even what they need to study or prepare for an exam. Notes they made, books, copies they got from lecturers and discussions with fellow students are all over their minds and all over the place in terms of where they study and how they organize their work. You are at risk that this might happen to you. It becomes a chaotic situation.

The solution: Take a long-life high-quality notebook or even the notes functionality on your phone and create notes on the high-level themes that you have to study. Check your notes with your fellow students, and if possible, with your lecturer. Then, well in advance of your exam, make sure that you have all the content as per your list of themes you need to study.

Poor efficiencies

Some students struggle to get through their study material efficiently and effectively, and the slow progress unnecessarily consumes time. This is extremely frustrating because as time goes by, you may experience that you are falling behind and you run the risk of not being able to catch up.

The solution: Unfortunately, there is only one solution to this challenge. It would be best if you started preparing earlier in the process of studying. What you can do is to have your reading speed assessed and, if necessary, do a short course in speed reading. There are many available on the Internet.

Fatigue

Study fatigue is a big challenge for many students. In some student communities, it became part of student jokes. 'I had sleeping problems, but my lecturers cured me' or, 'I never realized that multitasking means studying and sleeping simultaneously!'. Study fatigue is normal, unless you feel tired after less than an hour of studying. That is a bit too quick. If you struggle with study fatigue, keep in mind that the problem could be somewhere else.

The solution: Check your general health situation. Check your lifestyle. Too many hours with friends, too many late nights, too much exercise, long hours working and studying, and many other things can be the reason. But, your habits are at least part of the reason for study fatigue. Set yourself very specific short goals with breaks. Work for a maximum of twenty minutes and take a ten-minute activity break. An activity break is a good break away from the study material but not doing nothing; you must do something. Especially something physical like watering flowers, mowing a lawn, working on a furniture restoration project for ten minutes, tidying up your clothes, washing a car, etc. After four study sprints of twenty minutes with a ten-minute active break in between, take a break of at least thirty minutes. This thirty-minute break could either be passive or, once again, an activity break. Whatever you feel like. Then start again with four study sprints.

I can't

Your risk is an experience of being overwhelmed by the work in terms of volume or complexity. This happens with the vast majority of students. Somewhere in their academic journey, they feel that the workload and or the complexities of the material is just too much for them. Your risk is that an overload of work could push you towards an experience of things being just too much.

The solution: This is tough advice, but it is the only workable approach. You must plan your workload well in advance. You must also learn the discipline to work every day, from Monday to Friday and, if necessary, also on Saturdays. The third tip is to work with smaller portions of the work and aim to get through the workload in small manageable chunks. When you experience the complexities of the work to be a bit daunting, focus on the parts of the work that you do understand, and use that as a foundation to understand the more advanced stuff. Always start with those aspects you do understand and build one additional component to your understanding before you move to the next component. The key is small steps!

Ten tips

The following are general tips. The ones in bold are especially important to you.

▪ *Mobile Phone*

The direct advice is to put it away and only use it during your breaks. If you can't put it away, give it to someone to keep it for you. Maybe you feel that you use your mobile phone to communicate with fellow students. This slows you down, and it is a distraction. Rather communicate with fellow students during your breaks.

- *Good Light*

This is critical. Your light must be very good. Eye fatigue is a crisis for students. The light must not be too bright, it must not flicker in any way, and it should not be coloured. Don't study from your computer screen in a dark room; it aggravates eye fatigue.

- *Well-Structured Learning Content*

Sometimes the learning material is not properly structured and can even be a bit of a mess. It could be very unorganized with no logic flow. This creates a feeling of meaningless random information that must be memorised. This could become an exam-jam. This is a term used to say the work is a mess. Organize your work!

- *Silence or Noise and Music*

Some students study with music or even a radio in the background. Research indicates that listening to music with lyrics is not a good idea. But some research indicates that soft background music could actually help. Don't listen to music because you like it. Make sure that you listen because it helps.

- *Rest and Sleep*

All students can tell stories of studying through the night before an exam. It is good, it is an adventure to share with friends, but it is not clever. If your workload is tough, try to sleep at least one hour and thirty minutes during the early evening, then study through the night if you have to. In general, try to sleep at least seven hours during the night before your exam.

- *Space and Place*

It would be best if you had a dedicated place to study. It must be such that you can place all your study material on the desk, and you must have a comfortable chair.

- *Shower/wash your Face with Cold Water*

This is very good advice for when you feel tired or demotivated.

- *Stress Management*

There is actually only one way to properly manage exam stress. Start studying well in advance.

- *Progress Targets*

This is one of the critical tips. You must continuously make progress. Don't get stuck within some aspect of your scope of work. Sometimes students get stuck with something and they can't move on or they become so frustrated with the fact that they are stuck that they struggle to get back into progress. Make sure that you continuously make progress. If you get stuck, set a time limit of maximum 15 minutes and move on. Come back to the problem where you got stuck later. Another tip to help you is to set targets of progress and make your targets a priority. If you get stuck, remind yourself of the fact that you won't make your progress target if you waste too much time on this 'academic traffic jam'. This is a term students use to describe the frustration of getting trapped in the progress towards a successful exam.

▪ *Eating and Drinking*

Don't mix studying and eating. It creates a brain path that could become a habit. This brain path instructs you to eat in order to be able to work. This is not good for your health, and it is not good for your work. Keep cold drinking water at your desk and drink slightly more water than what you need. Neuroscientists have found that the brain is very dependent on water to function optimally.

Emergency Exam Preparation Tips

This part will help you improve your exam results in a situation of crisis. This happens when you have forgotten about a test or an exam, and you have very limited time to prepare. You must be aware of the fact that any exam you write without enough time to prepare is a risk exam. You may succeed, but you may also fail. This doesn't mean that enough time to prepare takes the risk of failure away; it reduces it. Exams are in a way like an endurance sports event. Things can go wrong. Below are some tips on how to minimize the risk of things that might go wrong. The aim of this paragraph is to help you optimize your chances to succeed when you have to prepare for an exam with limited time available.

Step one: memorize the big overall structure of themes. Let's say you have to write an exam on the digestive system of the human body. Memorize the overall aspects of the system - like this: mouth, stomach, small intestines, and the large intestines. Step two: from your general knowledge and attendance of lectures, (without looking at your study material) write down what you know about these four high-level parts of the work. Now you know what you know. If you have time, go to step three. This would be to quickly scan your study material and see if you can pick up three to five facts about each part of the digestive system. For most exams, this could be done in about two to three hours. Here is a summary: memorize the headings and subheadings of your scope of work. Write down what you know related to each part of the work. Scan for easy to remember facts about each heading to a minimum of five or as many as you can easily remember.

If your exam is average in difficulty, you have a chance to be successful. If the exam is tough, you might (with a bit of luck) even make it. But, you have at least given yourself a chance to pass. Go for it!

Exam Writing Tips

It is important to write an exam with a good understanding of the optimal way of exam writing. Remember, lecturers and teachers are just ordinary people. They get tired, frustrated and even sometimes negative towards the job of marking exam papers. On top of this, marking exam papers is a very frustrating and tedious task. If you help your lecturer to mark your exam paper with ease, you lower the risk of points you might lose as a result of a poorly written exam answering strategy. This is what you must do.

Firstly, show the lecturer that you know the big structure of your work and show that you know where a specific question fits into the bigger structure of your scope of work. Secondly, show what you know about the portion of the work you've been asked to answer. Thirdly, give your interpretation of what you've studied. Even if it wasn't asked explicitly. If you have limited time to prepare for an exam and your knowledge of the subject is thin, your interpretation of the what you know might give you one or two extra points, but keep it short and don't repeat. Long-winded answers with a lot of repetition frustrate the person who marks your answers, and that could only count against you.

Online students, distance learning and home-schooling

Please note that this part of the Study Method Report is specifically to help students who have to study from home, attend online lectures and predominantly work independently. They study without physically attending lectures with fellow students at a physical campus where they can engage fellow students and get face-to-face student and academic support.

The world is moving towards online, solo-students studying without physical classrooms, lecturers and fellow students. It is not only a change of scenery, but it also poses a new reality for students and studying. Some students experience this as a positive new development; some work hard, and they are successful - but they don't like it; and some just can't do it. In your specific situation, the following components will make it challenging for you to study with optimal success. This will be followed by specific behaviors that you can focus on to make it easy. Let's start with the areas that might be a challenge for you:

- *Finding things to do other than studying*

Many students studying online experience that they think about other things to do rather than studying. You shouldn't experience this as too much of a challenge. It would be relatively easy for you to keep yourself engaged with the academic content. If you experience difficulties to stay focussed, it is probably related to the fact that you struggle to see the value of studying a specific subject or because the subject needs a very engaging approach. Work with small portions of the academic content and make sure you stay focussed.

- *Studying is about problems*

To study is to live, work through and understand problems. The list of problems students face is just too long for this space. Here are a few. The academic content is, by nature, problem saturated. Timelines and deadlines are problems. The enormous workload is a problem; so is time management. There are many more. Fact is, this aspect can compromise your progress, especially as an online solo-student. Do the following: list your academic problems; these are problems with subjects and learning material as well as subject content like mathematics, science, etc. Please start with the small ones and solve them one by one. Celebrate each win!

- *Making things easy to understand*

One of the critical shortfalls of studying in isolation or even semi-isolation is not being able to consult with fellow students. Students discuss the work; they help each other and ask teachers or lecturers questions about the work that does not make sense. For the solo-student, this is a big loss. Shadowmatch has a tip for you. Google videos about some of the academic topics and pay careful attention when watching them. It helps to see a different approach to some of the study material, and it could play an important role to help you get your mind around some of the problem areas. If you can, arrange for a discussion group with students doing the same work.

▪ *An urge to quit*

Be careful of this. Solo, isolated and tough workloads can push to a situation where quitting looks attractive, especially when you suffer one or two setbacks. Don't! Decide now that quitting is not an option. Most solo students battle with this from time to time. Just keep going. The only way out is through. Keep on saying this to yourself!

The following points are related to those habits that will put you in a position of strength when you have to study from home without the privilege of being a campus student:

▪ *To be with people*

Campus and home-bound students have two completely different situations with regards to people engagement. Campus students are with fellow students almost all the time. Solo students who study from home are not. In your case, the absence of too many people should be a benefit. But it would be best if you were not entirely isolated. Rather work without over-exposure to people but keep contact with a few close friends.

▪ *The static solo student*

We use this term to describe an online solo-student, studying from home. It is the opposite of a high school, college or university campus that students experience as a very dynamic place. A campus provides lots of opportunities to engage in campus life, engage with fellow students, and there is an energetic vibe. You may experience this as a loss that could influence your academic success. The fact that you are not very dependent on a dynamic and ever-changing environment is in your favour. Use it like this: if you have to work hard, remind yourself of the fact that a stable workplace helps you to focus.

▪ *Dealing with diverse people*

Most campuses have all kinds of people, different cultures, languages, gender diversity, age diversity, economic diversity and on top of everything, diversity of ideas. All of this could lead to conflict. The conflict doesn't have to manifest, but it can live in the minds of people. The fact that you prefer not to engage conflict makes the study-from-home situation much more productive for you. In a study-from-home situation, conflict doesn't take up too much mind-space, and therefore, the absence of these diversities could count in your favour.

▪ *Adaptive flexibility*

Your attitude towards the context where you are is a very positive habit for a study-from-home, online student situation. The fact that you can adapt your attitude to engage the situation in the most accommodating manner is a habit that you must use to build a successful academic programme. Allow this habit to be your guide by doing the following: focus on your studies but don't be rigid. Work hard but don't allow your studies to become all you do. Create a lifestyle of balanced diversity and become involved in activities that attract you. Engage people with a positive outlook. Allow quiet moments for yourself and allocate enough time to isolate yourself so that you can focus on your academic work. But don't over-do anything. Your attitude is embedded in habits that want flexibility and focus but within borders that make sense, and that is reasonably easy to maintain.

Conclusion on the Study-From-Home Guidelines

Being an online student is tough. It takes lots of energy and a steadfast way of studying. The most important of all is to spend some time on your academic tasks for at least five days a week. You must try and work on your studies almost every day, even if it is only for thirty minutes or an hour. Please keep contact with your study material so that your awareness of the content stays alive. Shadowmatch wishes you success, fulfillment and a positive outcome on your journey.

A Final Word

Studying is hard work. It is a process, not a moment. There are no shortcuts and quick fixes. One of the most important aspects for success is to enjoy it, to become actively involved with the study content and to work with the end goal in mind. This is one of the most important things taught by many (Steven Covey included). Always work with an end goal in mind. Shadowmatch wishes you all of the best with your studies. The Shadowmatch Team has been through many years of studying. They all understand the challenges of studying and the enormous pressure it puts on an individual. Sometimes not only on the individual but also on the family. The team created this report to help make it a bit easier for you. The aim of the report is to help you to be successful. Remember, our obsessive saying and motive is: Success for All!

Learning is the staircase of growth and success. Staircases are tough to climb. So is the way to success.