

Benefits of Study Groups

Helps with Procrastination: Many students tend to cram for exams the night before or begin projects with little time before the due date. When in a study group, meeting at scheduled times can keep you from procrastinating; you are less likely to put off assignments because other people are relying on you.

Understand/Absorb Information More Efficiently: Students tend to learn faster working within a group versus working alone. When working on your own, a lot of time can be wasted puzzling over difficult material. However, when working in groups, you can explain concepts, review material, exchange ideas, and disagree/reason with one another about why one person's answer differs from another. Therefore, you can seek clarification and learn faster while also gaining personal skills.

Minimizes Test Anxiety: Test anxiety is an uneasiness experienced before, during, or after an examination because of concern, worry, or fear. Some students find that anxiety interferes with their learning and test taking to such an extent that their grades are seriously affected. Being in a study group with motivated classmates is often helpful. Instructors agree that study groups improve student performance on tests and in classroom discussions.

Improve/Develop New Study Skills: One way to enhance your studying methods/techniques is by joining a study group, which will provide you the opportunity to observe a wide variety of study methods and incorporate them into your regimen. Also, note-taking and organization skills are major study components often shown to improve through study groups.

Different Perspectives: Each group member has different qualities/ideas to offer to the study group. Studying by yourself will always get you one perspective; yet, in groups, you receive various viewpoints which can assist in helping you reach your own conclusions. Listening and asking questions will provide more food for thought developing your critical skills.

Good Company: Studying by yourself can be boring and monotonous. Study groups bring on a positive social aspect. Talking things over with a group can help make studying a little more enjoyable.

Enhances your personal/professional skills: Study groups can help you develop as a student, person, and professional. Study groups encourage members to think creatively and build strong communication skills. It has been proven that those who participate in study groups feel more confident and comfortable about reaching their academic goals. Overall, most professional careers require collaboration with colleagues on projects, so study groups are excellent practice in preparation for the work world.

Tips for Study Groups

Limit the group size

As study groups grow in size, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep everyone involved. Keeping your group members limited to 3-5 students ensures a functional dynamic.

Come prepared

It will be much easier as a group to help each other if each member comes to the session with a list of questions or topics to discuss.

Empower each other

It is a good sign if you seem to grasp concepts of a certain class easier than your other study group members. If so, don't hesitate to help your fellow classmates out. Studies show that tutor-tutee relationships are beneficial in both directions. In other words, help someone else, and it will help you!

Quiz each other

Quizzing each other on facts and concepts is a valuable way to prepare for an exam. This could also mean designing practice tests together.

Work independently but together

Working as a group does not mean you have an excuse to shut down your thinking cap. If you work hard on your own before meeting as a group, your time spent together will be even more rewarding. Remember, exams are not a group effort; you must master concepts on your own to do well in a course.

Form friendships

Sometimes there is nothing more encouraging or motivating than working alongside a classmate who is going through the same thing as you. We often think that fellow classmates are simply not there to become meaningful friends, but the opposite is true. Genuine connections can leave you feeling more motivated than ever before, and it makes the studying process enjoyable.

Stick to a schedule

Set a time, day, place, and duration of each study session.

Common Pitfalls of Study Groups

Choosing group members who are not reliable, prepared, cooperative, or available

Not staying on task during designated work time

Not setting goals for your group

Not communicating as a team

Letting one person not participate or letting one person do all the work