

# STUDY-IT!

A HANDBOOK OF STUDY TIPS FOR  
STUDENTS AT CHERRY CREEK HIGH SCHOOL



Cherry Creek High School

When I started at Cherry  
Creek High School, it would  
have been helpful to have had  
good study habits and to know  
how much harder CCHS was  
than middle school.

-CCHS Junior



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Dear Students,

Welcome to Cherry Creek High School (a.k.a. Creek), home of the Bruins. You have an opportunity for an exciting and productive high school experience. As you will see our campus is a large one – the size of 82 football fields. In the center of the campus near the West building, you will find a large, chubby sculptured bruin, a baby bear, the gift from the class of 2003. After many months of researching and interviewing sculptors the class officers' made their decision based on three criteria: it must be happy, solid, and eager to learn. The class of '03 wanted a sculpture that was playful, but served an academic purpose as well. Folklore tells us that if you touch the bruin's nose during final exams good fortune will result. Reality, however, tells us that nothing wonderful happens at Creek without hard work and solid study skills.

Developing effective study skills at Cherry Creek High School requires hard work, practice, and discipline. The purpose of this guide is to help students handle the academic rigors of high school, while at the same time, learning the study strategies necessary to be college-ready.

Our goal at CCHS is to graduate young independent thinkers who are able to academically compete with their worldwide counterparts and who are good citizens who know how to give back to their communities. We want our graduates to be proficient in analyzing, reasoning, problem-solving, interpreting, evaluating and writing about a myriad of topics. The purpose of this pamphlet is twofold. First, it will provide tips from students on survival at CCHS. Secondly, it will dispel many of the perceived mysteries of study skills. In it the reader will find ways to more effectively write, solve algebraic concepts, and better understand the essential ideas/questions from five core subjects (i.e. with math, English, science, social studies and world language). The reader will learn to be more mindful of managing one's time, the importance of being persistent and assertive, how to study using many resources and will have a better awareness of his/her own academic behaviors and overall performance.

Our aim is that each student will recognize the academic behaviors needed for success and be able to do them. Preparing for class and tests and studying for different kinds of exams and presentations are critical skills necessary for success. Every student has a unique learning style, and consequently, a unique studying style. Our hope is that students use this information to enhance their academic survival and make high school a productive experience. A group of teachers, students, and administrators collaborated to develop this study guide. Use it, pass it along, rub the baby Bruin's nose and DO WELL! We believe in you – invest in yourself.

-Going to class freshman year is most important so you don't mess up your freshman year.

-People have to have their own realizations that your teachers aren't your babysitters anymore and you have to do the work yourself.

-Use your off periods wisely. Don't put work off or it will just build.

-I needed a kick start. I was used to coasting through middle school and then my grades dropped dramatically my freshman year. So really put emphasis on keeping track of grades and working hard.

-There is a myth that if you have to work - you are not smart. That is opposite from the truth. Hard work is how to be smart.



## I. Managing Your Time

### Time Management

School – especially at Cherry Creek High School – is a full-time job. Managing your time efficiently and effectively, is important. Patrick, a 1998 graduate, spoke to freshmen during his senior year about studying. He recommended that they spend 40 hours a week on school. In other words, the average Creeker takes six classes at 50 minutes a class for a total of five hours of direct schooling. So he spent 3 hours on average every day studying. A good plan is to study Sunday through Thursday night and take Friday night and Saturday off. If you are working a job, or participating in clubs or athletics, subtract those hours from your free time, not from your study time! So, the average Creek student should study three hours per day.

#### **Develop a Schedule**

Developing a schedule is important because it provides an overview of your day. It will help you keep on task and reach your goals.

Determine how you spend a typical 24-hour day by entering the hours you spend on each activity.

- Classes
- Studying
- Sleeping
- Exercise /sports
- Work/internship
- Family Commitments
- Personal care/grooming
- Meal preparation/eating/clean-up
- Transportation (school, work, etc.)
- Relaxing/TV/video games, etc. (alone)
- Socializing/entertainment (with friends)
- Other

Total = 24 hours

Then, decide what you want the schedule to look like.

**Goal Setting** You need a target. If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else.

Goals should be simple and clear cut and specific to your behavior.

A simple, clear, and specific example

*I will increase my time on history homework to 30 minutes per day and see my history teacher for help once a week.*

Not simple, clear and specific.

*I will get better grades.*

List three goals or objectives that are most important to you, and indicate whether they are long range, medium range, or immediate:

Long range (what you want to be)	Example - I want to be a chemist.
Mid range (what you'll do after high school)	Example – After high school, I will attend college and work for a degree in chemistry.
Now! (this week to get there)	I have a test in Spanish and I will study ½ hour each day for it because the grade in the class is important for admission to college.

## Organizing Tasks

- Use your Bear Facts – it's your survival manual.  
Use for referral and review, and to mark your progress  
Each week develop a daily schedule that includes routines and important dates.  
Review each day's schedule that morning  
Each evening develop a schedule to help you organize the next day, include routines, errands and important appointments
- Develop a calendar of important dates for your classes:  
Tests, papers, projects, reading, mid-term and final exams, holidays, breaks, study days, etc.
- Enter important dates for your social and family life.

-I use my Bear Facts - and when I finish something, I cross it off.

-Everyday I use Bear Facts to notice what I need to do.

-Normally the teachers give you calendars. If you have time, do the extras. Remember to pace yourself. Little breaks can keep you from going insane.

-CCHS Juniors



## **II. Studying Outside the Classroom**

### **Effective Study Habits**

- Take responsibility for yourself.
- Don't let friends dictate what you consider important.
- Don't let them distract you from your goals.
- When and where are you the most productive?
  - Morning, afternoon, or evening?
  - Find spaces where you can be the most focused and productive.
  - No background noise or dead quiet
- First understand others, then attempt to be understood
  - When you have an issue with an instructor (a questionable grade, an assignment deadline, etc.) put yourself in the instructor's place.
  - Now ask yourself how you can best make your argument given his/her situation.
  - Practice this argument with a counselor, parent or other adult.

### **Concentrating While Studying**

- "Here I study"
  - Get a dedicated space, chair, table, lighting and environment.
  - Avoid your cellphone or telephone - even put it in another room.
  - Put up a sign to avoid being disturbed or interrupted.
  - If you like music in the background, OK, but don't let it be a distraction. (Research on productivity with music versus without music is inconclusive).
  - Close your chat rooms, Myspace, email or other disruptions while studying - every interruption causes three times the delay as your brain detaches, attaches, detaches and attaches again.
- Focus
  - Before you begin studying, take a few minutes to summarize what you want to do and gather what you will need – even write that one on a card and put it in front of you.
- Incentives
  - Create a reward for successfully completing a task, such as calling a friend, a food treat, a walk, etc.
  - For special projects such as term papers, or projects, or long book reviews, set up a special incentive.
- Change topics
  - Change the subject you study every one to two hours for variety or every 30 minutes if concentration is more difficult. Research shows that this change helps you learn the material faster, i.e., your brain is more efficient.
- Vary your study activities
  - Alternate reading with more active learning exercises.
  - If you have a lot of reading, try the SQ3R method. See the chart on page 10.
  - Ask yourself how you could increase your activity level while studying? Perhaps a group will be best? Create study questions?
  - Ask your teacher for alternative strategies for learning. The more active your learning, the better.
  - Take regular scheduled breaks that fit you.
  - Do something different from what you've been doing (e.g., walk around if you've been sitting), and in a different area.
- Rewards
  - Give yourself a reward when you've completed a task.
- Do hard things first
  - Don't save tough reading for the end of studying. If you are tired already, you will "zone" out.

### **Using Flashcards While Studying**

For any subject at Cherry Creek High School, you can make a set of "flash cards". One way is to write a term or question on one side and its definition or answer on the other side. Another way is to use a regular 8 1/2" x 11" notebook paper and divide it in half vertically. On the left side write a question that requires an answer (e.g. the name of a theorem). On the right side, write the answer (e.g. the statement of the theorem). Then memorize the questions and answers – but do not recite them by heart. Instead, write down the answers: cover the right hand side

with a blank sheet of paper, and write down the answer. When you finish a page, check your work and repeat writing the answers to the questions you missed until you get them correct. Then ask someone else to test you on them.

-Studying for different classes was at first the hardest thing for me. Study skills are key for doing well at Creek. You need to learn what works for you.

-It was confusing at first, but I got the hang of it - read over notes and make flashcards.

-Each of my teachers had a different way of teaching, so I studied the way they taught me.

-CCHS Senior



### III. Classroom Participation

#### Preparing for the Classroom

##### Before class

- Do your homework!
  - Read critically: form your own opinions
- Review your notes from the previous lecture and reading for the day
- Communicate immediately with teachers about any study problems
- Focus on the task at hand before class:
  - Quietly gather your thoughts and mentally prepare yourself for the topic.
- Write any questions that come to mind at the head of your notepaper.

##### In Class Habits

- Arrive on time for class. Teachers hate it when you're late as it disrupts the class and you've missed important information
- Position yourself in the classroom  
To focus on the subject matter; consider the best location for:
  - Listening
  - Asking questions
  - Seeing visual materials
  - Discussing—not only with the teacher but also your classmates
- Avoid distractions that may interfere with your concentration such as daydreaming, looking around the room, talking to a friend, passing notes, dozing.
- Evaluate as you listen:
  - Decide what is important and should be placed in your notes and what can be left out;
  - Listen long enough to be sure you understand what was said before writing.

##### Paying Attention

If you have difficulty paying attention to what is being said in the classroom:

- Try to anticipate the main ideas of the coming lecture
  - Look over your notes of the previous lecture and read the course material.
- If you have questions about material from the previous class or text, ask the instructor.
  - Prepare a few questions - asking questions helps keep you engaged and alert.
- Shift position in your seat every so often
  - Don't sit frozen in one position. Shifting on occasion will help keep the blood circulating, will send more oxygen to your brain, and will help you remain alert.
- When appropriate, ask a question, ask for more clarity, or engage an instructor and the class in dialogue.

##### Classroom Discussions

Student participation at Cherry Creek High School has always been an expectation. Below are suggestions about how to effectively contribute to a discussion.

- In class, listen carefully to what a teacher or other students are saying.
- Mark or make notes of the points you wish to **answer** or **discuss** or **question**.
  - Remember: a question is as valuable as an opinion. It shows that you are trying to understand others, as well as be understood.
- Quickly summarize a point... "As I understand it..."
  - Restating the discussion/author's main idea also shows that you are trying to understand, and shows where you are in understanding.
  - It is very likely that if you have questions or information, others will share them.
- Be certain it is clear to the class and teacher when you are summarizing and when you are giving your opinion.
- Try to keep your comments to the point and refer to your notes.
- In making an argument, begin with examples from the author or teacher (imitation can be a form of flattery), but generally use your own examples to show your agreement with their point of view. This demonstrates independent thinking.

- Defend every opinion or argument, no matter how common, sensible or logical. Use concrete, factual, and provable examples to support your argument.

## Taking Notes during Lectures

### Cornell note-taking

The most common note-taking method is Cornell note-taking.

- Rule your paper with a 2 ½ inch margin on the left leaving a six inch area on the right in which to write your notes. The left is where you write questions for later.
- When the teacher moves to a new point, skip a few lines. After class, complete phrases and sentences.
- To review, cover your notes with a card, leaving the cues exposed. Say the cue out loud, then say as much as you can of the material underneath the card. If you can say it, you know it.

### Outlining method

This is a good overall notetaking method, except for some science and math classes.

- General information begins at the left - more specific facts are indented with spaces to the right, (see example below).
- The relationship between the different parts is carried out through indenting.
- No number, letters, or Roman numerals are needed.
- Listen and then write in points in an organized pattern based on space indentation. Place **major** points farthest to the left. Indent each more specific point to the right.

### When to use

The outline format can be used if the lecture is presented in outline organization. There are 2 formats.

### Example:

Extrasensory perception

-Definition: means of perceiving without use of sense organs.

-three kinds

-telepathy: sending messages

-clairvoyance: forecasting the future

-psychokinesis: perceiving events external to situation

-current status

-no current research to support or refute

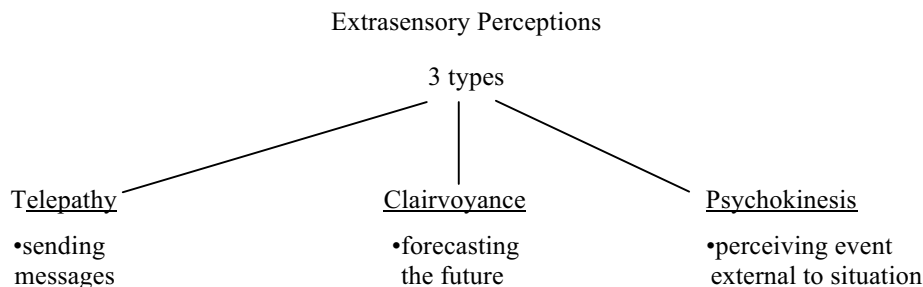
-few psychologists say impossible

-door open to future

### Classification Method

Use this method when the lecture content is heavy and well-organized. It may also be used effectively when you have a guest lecturer and have no idea how the lecture is going to be presented.

### Example:



## IV. Reading Skills

### The SQ3R Reading Method

<p>Before you read, <b><u>S</u>urvey the chapter:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the title, heading, and subheading</li> <li>• captions under pictures, charts, graphs, or maps</li> <li>• review questions or teacher-made study guides</li> <li>• introductory and concluding paragraphs</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Q</u>uestion while you are surveying:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• turn the title, heading, and/or subheadings into questions</li> <li>• read questions at the end of the chapters or after each heading</li> <li>• ask yourself, "What did my instructor say about this chapter or subject when it was assigned?"</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> If it is helpful to you, write out these questions for consideration. This variation is called SQW3R</p>
<p>When you begin to <b><u>R</u>ead</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for answers to the questions you first raised</li> <li>• Answer questions at the beginning or end of chapters or study guides</li> <li>• Reread captions under pictures, graphs, etc.</li> <li>• Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases</li> <li>• Study graphic aids</li> <li>• Reduce your speed for difficult passages</li> <li>• Stop and reread parts which are not clear</li> <li>• Read only a section at a time and recite after each section</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>R</u>ecite after you've read a section</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read or summarize, in your own words, what you read</li> <li>• Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words</li> <li>• Underline or highlight important points you've just read</li> <li>• Use the method or recitation which best suits your particular learning style but remember, the more senses you use the more likely you are to remember what you read</li> </ul> <p>TRIPLE STRENGTH LEARNING: Seeing, saying hearing</p> <p>QUADRUPLE STRENGTH LEARNING: Seeing, saying, hearing, writing!!!</p>
<p><b><u>R</u>eview: an ongoing process</b></p>	<p><b>Day One</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After you have read and recited the entire chapter, write questions in the margins for those points you have highlighted or underlined.</li> <li>• If you took notes while reciting, write questions for the notes you have taken in the left hand margins of your notebook.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day Two</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page through the text and/or your notebook to re-acquaint yourself with the important points.</li> <li>• Cover the right hand column of your text/note-book and orally ask yourself the questions in the left hand margins.</li> <li>• Orally recite or write the answers from memory.</li> <li>• Make "flash cards" for those questions which give you difficulty.</li> <li>• Develop mnemonic devices for material which need to be memorized.</li> </ul> <p><b>Day Three, Four and Five</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternate between your flash cards and notes and test yourself (orally or in writing) on the questions you formulated</li> <li>• Make additional flash cards if necessary.</li> </ul>

**Weekend**

- Using the text and notebook, make a Table of Contents – list all the topics and sub-topics you need to know from the chapter.
- From the Table of Contents, make a Study Sheet/Spatial Map
- Recite the information orally and in your own words as you put the Study Sheet/Map together.

Now that you have consolidated all the information you need for that chapter, periodically review the Sheet/Map so that at test time you will not have to cram.

-If I need help, I go to my teacher's office during my off period or I go in before or after school to see them.

-I didn't understand that getting help wasn't a bad thing.

-Write down teacher's off periods, their email, and office number.

-Go in with a prepared list of questions and ask for help.

-CCHS Sophomore



## V. Tests

### Preparing for Tests

#### General Test Prep

- Take good notes as your teacher tells you what will be on the test.
- Organize your notes, texts, and assignments according to what will be on the test.
- Estimate the hours you'll need to review materials.
- Draw up a schedule that blocks units of time and material.
- Test yourself on the material.
- Finish your studying the day before the exam.
- **Get a good night's sleep!**

#### Anticipating Test Content

- Pay particular attention to any study guides that the instructor hands out in class before the exam, or even at the beginning of the course! For example: key points, particular chapters or parts of chapters, handouts, etc.
- Ask the instructor what to anticipate on the test if he/she does not volunteer the information.
- Pay particular attention—just prior to the exam—to points the instructor brings up during class lectures.
- Generate a list of possible questions you would ask if you were writing the exam, then see if you can answer the questions.
- Work with other students to predict what will be on the test.
- Pay particular attention to clues that indicate an instructor might test for a particular idea, as when an instructor:
  - says something more than once
  - writes material on the board
  - pauses to review notes
  - asks questions of the class
  - says "This will be on the test!"

#### Test Anxiety

Test preparation to reduce anxiety:

- Approach the exam with confidence:
  - Use whatever strategies you can to personalize success: visualization, logic, talking to your self, practice, team work, journaling, etc.
  - View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done.
- Be prepared!
  - Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test. Use a checklist.
- Choose a comfortable location for taking the test with good lighting and minimal distractions.
- Allow yourself plenty of time, especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early.
- Avoid thinking you need to cram just before the test.
- Strive for a relaxed state of concentration
  - Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, or who will distract your preparation.

During the test:

- Read the directions carefully
- Budget your test taking time
- Change position to help you relax
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on

- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind.
- Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no academic reward for being the first one finished.

If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test

- Relax; you are in control.
  - Take slow deep breaths
- Don't think about the fear
  - Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step
- Use positive reinforcement for yourself:
  - Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best
- Expect *some* anxiety
  - It's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy. Just keep it manageable.
- Realize that anxiety can be a "habit" and that it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed

After the test, review how you did

- List what worked, and hold onto these strategies. It does not matter how small the items are, they are building blocks to success.
- List what did not work for improvement.
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle.

### **Tips for Successful Test Taking**

#### Preparation

- Analyze how you did on a similar test in the past
- Arrive early for tests
- Be comfortable but alert
- Stay relaxed and confident

#### Test Taking

- Read the directions carefully
- If there is time, quickly look through the test for an overview
- Answer questions in a strategic order:
  1. Answer easy questions first
  2. Then difficult questions or those with the most point value
- Review

-When a teacher says something will be on a test - believe him.

-Organization is crucial, especially for finals

-You will need a lot of time to organize notes and to study.

-Try your hardest on everything.

-CCHS Senior



## VI. Taking Tests

### True/False Tests

Every part of a true sentence must be "true".

Negatives can be confusing

- If the question contains negatives, as "no, not, cannot"
  - Drop the negative and read what remains
  - Decide whether that sentence is true or false.
  - If it is true, its opposite, or negative is usually false
- Long sentences often include groups of words set off by punctuation.
  - Pay attention to the "truth" of each of these phrases.
  - If one is false, it usually indicates a "false" answer

-You have to work for the grades you want.

-Homework really is what makes your grade what you want.

-The teachers will help you if you take time to set up appointments.

-Going to class freshman year is the most important, and the GPA's are really hard to get up so don't mess up your freshman year.

-CCHS

Junior



### Multiple Choice Tests

**Multiple choice questions usually include a phrase or stem followed by three to five options:**

#### **Test strategies:**

- Read the directions carefully
  - Know if each question has one or more correct options
  - Know if you are penalized for guessing
  - Know how much time is allowed (this governs your strategy)
- Preview the test
  - Read through the test quickly and answer the easiest questions first
  - Mark those you think you know in some way that is appropriate
- Read through the test a second time and answer more difficult questions
  - You may pick up cues for answers from the first reading, or become more comfortable in the testing situation
- If time allows, review both questions and answers from end to beginning – in reverse.
  - It is possible you mis-read questions the first time

### Strategies to answer difficult questions:

- Eliminate options you know to be incorrect.
- Give each option of a question the "true-false test". (See page 12)
- If the choice/answer is grammatically incorrect, eliminate it.
- Question options that are totally unfamiliar to you.
- Question options that contain negative or absolute words such as *always*, *never*, or *every*.
- "All of the above" If you know two of three options seem correct, "all of the above" is a strong possibility.
- Number answers:
- "Look alike options"
- Echo options: If two options are opposite, chances are one of them is correct
- If two alternatives seem correct, compare them for differences, to find your best answer

### Short Answer Tests

#### Preparing for the test

- Develop summary sheets of the course material information.
- Focus on key words, events, vocabulary, concepts
- Organize and categorize the material in an outline, then review

#### Taking the test

- Respond directly to the question, prompt or directive
  - Read the question carefully and focus on keywords and ideas called for
  - Eliminate those that do not directly address the information requested in the test item
- Respond and write concise answers
  - Connect key facts into short sentences according to the test instructions
- Make guess based on common sense. This could get you more test points than if you leave an answer blank.

-Hardly any teachers give study guides for tests.

-Your grades matter - even as a freshman, it affects your overall GPA and your college choices.

-I didn't know how to study. Some people can get it and some don't all through freshman year. It takes time and trying new ways of studying.

-CCHS Senior



## English

### Structuring a Paper

A good paper moves towards a clear goal. Every idea and paragraph should be related to that goal. Cut out peripheral facts and ideas, no matter how fascinating. Cut out plot summaries, descriptions, or discussion of previous research that does not contribute to your main argument.

### Getting Started

Well written papers begin with carefully thought out questions.

As you read and do research, write down your questions.

- What interests me about this topic?
- What passages, phrases, quotes in the text do I underline or highlight?
- Is there a common theme that connects the highlighted ideas?
- What does my teacher, someone else in the class, or a secondary source say about the topic with which I disagree?
- Where there's disagreement there may be a paper topic.
- How can I make these questions more specific?
- How can you tell where your paper should begin?
  - The first paragraph should establish the tone and attitude you plan to take throughout the rest of the paper.
  - The first paragraph is a chance to catch your reader's attention and make your reader start thinking with you.

Do a Free Write – this is a way to break the ice and get you thinking.

- Write for 10 minutes (or as long as you can) about your subject without stopping, without lifting your pen from the paper, without worrying about word choice or spelling – let the ideas flow.
- Stop, reread, outline, and delete the weak ideas and keep the strong ones.

### Outlines – a step in the process

There are various kinds of outlines. See the page that follows for examples. Try them to see what works for you.

### Refining your topic; defining your thesis

The number one problem with many high school papers is refining or narrowing the topic. Most Cherry Creek High School students will write a paper about Joseph Conrad's, The Heart of Darkness. To write about Conrad as an author or The Heart of Darkness as a novel is too broad a focus – narrow your focus by writing about animal imagery in The Heart of Darkness. Next, make sure you have something to say about the topic, a point or thesis. In other words, don't just give examples of Conrad's animal images without also discussing why he uses them.

Example:

Thesis: Marlow uses animal imagery for even the best of his characters to show the hypocrisy of European civilization.

In order to check to see if you have a thesis try the following formula; *Although* such and such, *nevertheless* so and so is true, *because*: reason one, reason two, reason three. The although section is the first paragraph, the nevertheless section is the second, then create a paragraph or two for each of the because's.

Example:

*Although* Marlow rarely critiques European civilization directly, *nevertheless* his animal imagery shows the hypocrisy of its civilized facades, *because*...

This formula should not be used in the paper, but provides a tentative outline for the thoughts.

The although section is the first paragraph, the nevertheless section is the second, then create a paragraph or two for each of the because's.

### **Rough Drafts**

It will be easier and more effective in the long run if you remind yourself that it's a draft. Your first attempt will be changed, reorganized, or thrown out. Just start.

### **Ending**

Your last paragraph should not mirror the first paragraph. If you find yourself merely restating the first paragraph – STOP. Go back to your first paragraph to see if you can re-write it to make it suggestive rather than conclusive.

General advice - some writers ask a question in the first paragraph and finally answer it in the last one. Sometimes you can give an example, illustration, or quotation in the first paragraph that you can reintroduce or refer to at the end in order to show your reader how much better he/she understands it.

- Ask yourself what you have learned while writing it, what you now know or see more clearly.
- Your last paragraph is the last chance to present your ideas in a convincing way.
- Pull together your arguments, draw conclusions.
- Your last sentence must be forceful and interesting.
- Conclusions should pull together what has gone before and round off your paper.

### **Compare and Contrast Papers**

At CCHS, compare and contrast papers are often assigned. There are two ways to structure these papers:

- Point-to-Point – begin with a discussion of the ways in which your topics are alike then move to ways they differ.
- Chunk-to-Chunk – first, discuss one of the things you are comparing completely, then discuss the other, in the same order, constantly referring to the first. Remember to treat the same subjects in the same order, though they need not get equal time. This method works best when one subject is less important than the other; you can get it out of the way quickly and concentrate on the second, more important subject.

### **Methods of argument**

- In each paper you will define, analyze, explain, compare and evaluate your thesis. Re-evaluate your strategy, a method of argument, after you have written your first draft.
- Ask yourself these questions:
  - Which methods have I used here?
  - Are there other methods I could have used?
  - Does this comparison make a difference?
  - How does my analysis support my point?
  - If I change the paper's strategy, would it be an improvement?

### **Order of argument**

- Each paper you write may have a different order.
- Some papers (processes, personal experience, narrative history) can be organized chronologically and in sequential order.
- Papers that are proving an opinion can be organized with order of difficulty. Put the simplest and most obvious point first and move to the more complex and interesting ones later in the paper.

### **Logic of Argument**

- Precision demands that your ideas are explicit and logical.
- Don't contradict yourself throughout the paper.
- As you write your paper, ask yourself what are you writing that makes your thesis convincing.
- Make sure the reader will have enough evidence to believe your arguments are valid.

### **Coherence of argument**

Each sentence, each paragraph, each idea must be firmly linked to what precedes and follows it.

- Connect one part of your argument to the next one. Sometimes the connections are apparent. Other times, however, you will need to give your reader a signal to show what the connection is.
- Use transitional words or phrases such as:
  - *To show addition: also, further, likewise, moreover*
  - *To show likeness: similarly, likewise, in the same way.*
  - *To show contrast: however, even so, still, nevertheless, but, on the other hand*
  - *To give an example: for instance, in particular, for example*

- *To sum up: finally, in short, brief*
- *To conclude: therefore, then, hence, accordingly*

**Types of Outlines** – there are various kinds of outlines (try them to see what works for you)

**Topic outline**

After you have decided on a general idea and gathered evidence to support it, create an outline.

Example:

Thesis: Except for schools with severe threats of danger, metal detectors should not be used because there is no basis for panic and because there are other, more effective, and less costly alternatives for violence prevention in schools.

- I. Media have created panic over school violence.
  - A. School violence is actually quite rare
  - B. Frequency of weapons being brought to school has declined.
- II. There are many strong arguments against use of metal detectors.
  - A. Metal detectors may violate student rights
    1. Students' own views indicate they feel their rights are being violated by detectors.
    2. Court rulings leave gray areas.
  - B. Metal detectors are easily fooled.
  - C. Metal detectors are costly.
  - D. Metal detectors are unhealthy, psychologically, for students.
- III. A better solution is to use money spent on metal detectors to provide a better school atmosphere.
  - A. Quotations from students show a need to create atmospheres of care and respect in schools.
  - B. Research by social scientists show the need to make schools more personal and to provide more counseling for students.
- IV. Conclusion

**Sentence outline**

Write a sentence for what each paragraph will do. This is called the topic sentence.

Example:

1. The first section of this study guide shows how to deal with focus, organization, and time management.
2. The second section dispels myths and gives advice about how Cherry Creek High School teachers would like students to study.

**Question outline** Begin each paragraph with a question you are trying to answer.

Example:

1. What is the purpose of a study guide?
  - A. Idea 1
  - B. Idea 2
2. How can I be successful using a study guide?
  - A. Idea 1
  - B. Idea 2
3. How can I use the study guide to my best advantage?
  - A. Idea 1
  - B. Idea 2

-I make sure I read the pages for my English homework.

-You need to read the books in English. That's the biggest thing.

-Read the book in English. Do not rely on Sparks Notes.

-Studying vocabularies was important in English class.

-Take sticky notes.

-CCHS Junior



## Answering In-Class Essay Questions

At Cherry Creek High School, in your English and Social Studies classes, you will answer in-class essay questions in a limited time period. You may be asked to write an essay about a given topic, other times you will be asked to compare and contrast two poems, two pictures, or two laws. Often you will be asked to agree or disagree with a given statement. What are strategies to best answer these questions?

- Give yourself a certain amount of time to work on each question and stick to it.
- Leave space after each answer to expand if need be.
- You must have a plan for your topic.
  - Be sure to make an outline.
  - Don't just argue the differences between two philosophers, but compare their statements/philosophies to show where they disagree.
  - You must have an idea – a position to defend.

### Before Writing

- Decide how long you have for each question.
- Sketch an outline or write an "although, nevertheless, because" formula to clarify your thesis. (See page 14 – refining your topic: defending your thesis)

### During Writing

- Begin with a statement of your thesis.
- Indicate what is problematic about the question.
- Then reason about the problem, defining terms and giving carefully chosen evidence and examples.
- Conclude by showing what you have proved.

### After Writing

- Reread your answers carefully.
  - Check your argument, your definitions, the validity and relevance of your examples.
  - Check for missing words or sentences.
  - A good essay answer is concise, precise, and to the point.



-I had no clue that studying for math would be different than studying for English.  
-CCHS Sophomore

## Social Studies

### Tips for success

- Always know your purpose for reading by asking the 4 W's and 1 H questions
  - Who?
  - What?
  - Where?
  - Why?
  - How?
- Ask yourself, "Why am I reading this? What is it going to tell me?"
- Teachers often will help. If they give you a question, answer it thoroughly
- Only highlight or underline the ideas that relate to what you need to know
- Underline or highlight only words or phrases, not entire sentences
- Understand three common ways information is organized in history textbooks: chronologically (time), geographical order (location), thematic (by major concepts or ideas).

Preview a textbook chapter before reading

- Title, list of terms and names
- Introductory information near title
- Skim first and last paragraphs and headings
- Skim names, dates, words, or terms that are repeated
- Look at photos, maps or pictures

1. Make sure you can define, and explain (how and why), any bold terms. These are the people, places, events, and ideas that are the most important.

2. Go back through and look at sections without bolded terms. Make notes of what you think would be a legitimate question on a test.

3. Pause and reflect after reading. Think about what you have learned about the topic.

4. Re-reading is not studying. If you are re-reading, it is to find NEW information. Re-reading helps fill in the gaps, but studying is based upon thinking about the issue, committing it to memory, thinking about why it is important, and testing yourself on it. Then do that a few more times but remember re-reading is not studying!

5. Study when you are rested and alert, not when you are tired.

6. SQ3R –

- Survey
  - Question
  - Read
  - Recite
  - Review
- Study formula for Social Studies

7. Many textbooks have websites with practice test questions. Make sure you bookmark this website on your computer and practice taking tests at home.

### What to do during lectures. Stay focused!

When you listen to a lecture, formulate questions as you listen. Your main job is to be a good listener. To do that you need to focus and concentrate on the main points. Don't think about after school activities, what you will have for lunch, etc. Stay focused. When the lecture is over, review your notes; make corrections, notations, or write questions to ask. Always write a summary. Rewrite the notes if necessary.

## Research Tips

As a Creek student, you will be required to write analytical research papers. You will need to locate, evaluate, and analyze information to answer an essential question or to prove a thesis. This entails finding, reading and synthesizing facts and opinions of others to formulate your own conclusions.

When you **quote** – directly copy word for word – or **paraphrase** – using your own words to restate the author's words or ideas – you must cite the original source. If you do not give credit to the original author it is considered **plagiarism**.

English and history classes at Creek use the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for creating citations.

The Library Tech Center has available online and in print, MLA citation and research guides. In the Reading, English and Social Studies sections of this guide, you are given tips on how to read for understanding, write persuasively, refine your topics and organize your paper.

Doing the homework and turning it in is sooo important!

-CCHS Freshman

I figure out what I need help on and go see my teacher during an off period.

-CCHS Junior



## **Foreign Language**

In order to be a success, the Foreign Language learner needs to be actively involved in learning inside and outside the classroom. Foreign Language study is a cumulative endeavor building upon the language skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and culture. Students must engage in daily practice to secure a strong foundation in order to continue their study of the target language.

Understanding and communicating in a foreign language is a skill and must be treated as one. Start studying a few nights in advance. To master any skill takes practice. Think of getting your driver's license, you can't just get on the road once and pass the test! Learning a different language is cumulative. A person can't memorize a chapter and forget it if they want to be successful in a language.

### **Study tips specific to foreign language**

- Study the same way the test will be given. If the teacher will give you a translation test, study the word translations.
- Read the word, write the word and say the word.
- Put the vocabulary words in sentences that have meaning to you.
- Go to the textbook's website or the links on the school's website. There is a lot of good practice on these sites.
- Pay attention in class by keeping your eyes focused forward. Focus on the words you understand and try to not let the words you don't understand take over your attention. Latch onto cognates (the Spanish word "*educacio n*" is the English word "education" just pronounced a bit differently)
- Resist the temptation to translate or have someone translate for you. Guess at the meaning before asking someone what a word means.
- Always have your book paper and something to write with when you go to class.
- For a new chapter, look over the entire chapter for about five or ten minutes, paying close attention to the vocabulary.
- When you get back work you have turned in, be sure you understand why you lost points. Keep all of your work for the entire semester in a notebook so you can refer back to your work before tests and quizzes. ALL tests and quizzes are cumulative in a foreign language.
- Find a study buddy in class to meet with. Look over each other's notes, quiz each other on the vocabulary and try to speak the target language as much as possible together. Use English only when you're desperate!
- Work with your class materials in a variety of ways and in small chunks of time and get active. Write or say the word in a sentence.
- Make flash cards.
- Teach someone else what you are learning.
- Make it your own. Use the words you learn in class to express yourself.
- Most Importantly: HAVE FUN! Keep a positive attitude!

### **Some DONT'S**

- Don't go on-line to a translator for help. Go to an on-line dictionary (such as WordReference.com). Translators don't work very well and you are robbing yourself of the opportunity to learn.
- Don't stress out if you don't "master" a concept right away. The nature of foreign language learning is that your mind needs to progress through the material in its own way. Just because you don't "get" one particular grammar point doesn't mean you won't understand another one. Eventually you will understand it all, if you keep working at it. And don't stress out if you need to repeat a level. It is a very common thing to have to do and does not mean you are "dumb" or "not good at foreign languages." You can do this!
- It is normal to learn to read and listen before you are comfortable speaking. Listen to music. Write in a journal without worrying if your grammar is correct. Expect that it will take time and experience before you will feel successful and comfortable communicating in a foreign language.

# Math

## Preparation

Do assigned homework problems

- Math is a building process
- To understand the next step, you must understand the current, and previous ones.

Simulate test conditions

- After you have studied, practice under test conditions
- Solve unassigned homework problems and see how quickly you can finish.

Form a study group of 3-4 students

- Not only will other students be able to help you with problems, you can help them
- If you can teach it, you know it. If you can't teach it – you don't know it.

## Note-taking

Write down the steps, not just the answer, because you won't remember later how you got the answer.

- Label the section of your text or workbook that corresponds to the notes.
- Include key definitions, notations, etc. in addition to problems.
- Review your notes regularly, add to them and personalize them, rewrite if you have time.

Help-seeking strategies

- If you need help, start by seeing your teacher.
- Additional strategies might include finding a study buddy in your class.
- You can also get help from an NHS peer tutor in the Math-Science Resource Center.

Homework

- Be sure to keep up with your assignments on a daily basis
- Your teacher makes an effort to assign an appropriate number of exercises and problems for you to reach understanding. Therefore, you should make an effort to understand each item on an assignment.
- If you don't know how to do a problem, make sure to ask question or get help. Re-do any problem you got wrong once you've seen the answer.
- You should work at least 45 minutes per day on math – regardless of your course.

Solving Word Problems

- Read the problem all the way through
  - Get a feel for the whole problem.
    - Identify and list information and variables.
  - Attach units of measure to the variables (gallons, miles, inches, etc.)
    - Define what answer you need, and the units of measure needed.
- Work in an organized manner
  - Draw and label all graphs and pictures clearly
  - Note or explain each step of your process.
    - This will help you track variables and remember their meanings
  - Look for "key" words that indicate certain mathematical operations:
    - Example: "per" means "divided by"
    - "I drove 90 miles on three gallons of gas, so I got 30 miles per gallon" (Also 30 miles/gallon)*
    - Example: "a" sometimes means "divided by"
    - "When I tanked up, I paid \$3.90 for three gallons, so the gas was \$1.30 a gallon, or \$1.30 /gallon"*

## **Test prep for math**

How to study for a math test

- Organize and review your notes.
- Revisit any topics you have had trouble with.
- Pick out problems you've gotten wrong on daily homework and rework them.

How to use a review sheet

- Don't fool yourself. Be sure you know how to do the problem without looking at the answer or someone else's solution.
- Do the problem yourself first, then check the answer.
- Pick out problems you've gotten wrong on daily homework and rework them.

How to make your own review sheet:

- Check your book or notes for examples of problems you know you need to work on.

## **Testing Strategies**

Read the exam

- With reading through the whole exam you can
  - Know what is expected of you
  - Prioritize items on the test
  - Pace yourself

Read the instructions

- Make sure you answer the question that is being asked!
  - Often students know how to solve a problem, but they misread or misinterpret the question itself.

Check that you have correctly rewritten the problem

- If you use a scratch piece of paper, make sure that you correctly rewrite the problem.
- Don't skip steps - start from the beginning.

Neatly write each step of the solution

- Be neat and don't rush writing numbers down.
- Keep checking your solution as you are working.
- Neatness makes it easier to recheck your work;

Double-check your math, especially your calculator entries.

- Double check your calculator work immediately.
- The chances of hitting a wrong number are high, but the chances of hitting the same wrong number are not.

Don't Waste Time

- If you get stuck on a problem move on and come back to it later.
- When you are finished, recheck all your work.
- Rewrite the solutions to reinforce the method.

-The best thing to do for math is to do math problems. It requires knowledge of and proper application of equations.

-study specifics in math

-I just try to memorize the formulas

-CCHS Juniors



## Science

Following and using the scientific method is key to success in Cherry Creek High School's science classes.

Process of scientific method

1. Observe
2. Research
3. Hypothesize
4. Testing the hypothesis
5. Conclude

### 1. **Observe conditions and state the problem**

Observe or wonder about something in your world, or in your class, and wonder how, why, when something occurs.

- Create a short, meaningful title of your project.
- Write out a statement of purpose that describes what you want to do .
- Make a careful, step-by-step notation of your observation.
- Be objective! And do not guess why something is happening. (That takes place later.)
- Gather information of similar research. This is called "literature review".
- Identify significant conditions or factors of the situation.
- Summarize the problem in a clear, simple statement. Emphasize the end result or effect.

### 2. **Research options:**

- What are some possible causes for what you observed?
- Could they reliably and consistently predict or determine the same outcome?
- What causes are the least likely to affect the outcome?
- What are the best choices?

### 3. **Form your hypothesis**

You must first observe the world around you in order to come up with a problem that can be tested.

- Statement about what you believe will happen when an experiment is performed to answer your questions.
- It is more than an educated guess.
  - Must be testable and falsifiable
- If your hypothesis can't be proven false or can only be verified, then it is not a good hypothesis...it is not testable.

**Choose the best option** or answer to your problem as your **hypothesis**.

This will be an "educated guess" based upon both your observation and past experiences.

**State your hypothesis** in a simple, clear statement.

Hypothesis: a possible explanation for a cause and effect of a given situation or set of factors that can be tested, and can be repetitively proved right (or wrong!)

### 4. **Test**

**Test your hypothesis**

- The method to test your hypothesis is to develop a controlled experiment.
- The experiment must have a basis for comparison.
- The situation examines the impact of a single difference between two groups.

### **Types of data you need**

- The physical sciences of chemistry and physics rely heavily on numbers as data, and on replicable experimentation to measure and calculate results.
- Sciences such as sociology rely on interviews and observation due to limitations of experimentation with human subjects, and use descriptions and inferences to arrive at results.

### **Design an experiment to test your hypothesis**

- Make a step-by-step procedure with each step's purpose.
- List and obtain materials and equipment you will need.
- Identify two groups in the test: the control group is your reference point; no variables are changed; the experimental group is the focus of changes to affect the outcome.
- Rely on your past experiences to identify variables, but consult with a knowledgeable person for a second opinion.

### **Run a series of experiments**

- Change only one variable in each experiment in order to isolate effects reliably.
- Make and record accurate measurements.
- Repeat the test as often as necessary with the experimental group to verify your results. Always change only one thing, or variable, in each test.
- Repeat successful tests with other groups to verify your findings.

### **Common mistakes**

- The hypothesis is assumed to be the "answer" and is not supported with testing.
- Data is ignored that doesn't support your outcome.
- Beliefs/bias blind you to fatal flaws in the testing phase.
- Systematic errors are not noticed and are repeated within each experiment - these bias the outcome's standard deviation.
- Equipment or conditions are not adequate.

## **5. Draw conclusions**

- Summarize your results and conclusions, use graphs and tables to illustrate these.
- Refer back to your observations, data, and hypothesis for consistency.
- Note difficulties and problems, items for further research, or what you would do differently if you could.

### **If you did not prove your hypothesis, you have succeeded in another sense!**

- Unsuccessful experiments provide information that can lead to answers by eliminating options.
- Save someone the trouble of repeating your experiments.
- Suggest other ways of solving similar problems.

### **Study Tips from the Science Department**

1. Read textbooks strategically –
  - How do textbooks highlight important terms/concepts?
  - Supporting text provides exploration of the terms/concepts with examples.
  - Make and use notecards.
2. Practice weekly study strategies
  - Studying in a chunk-to-chunk method with fifteen minute segments is most effective.

3. Exams cover all of the information in the unit, not just textbook material.
  - Don't assume exams are written from textbook test banks.
  - Everything that is covered in class is worth studying for the test.
4. If a teacher shows you an exam and/or quiz prior to taking them, it's a preview of what's coming next – it's a chance to understand where and what you need to improve on.
5. If a teacher offers an optional "practice test" before the real one – take advantage of this offer.
6. Use your note taking skills like Cornell note-taking.
7. Blackboard is an important study tool – use it. It has daily updates listing the day's agenda and homework and often copies of labs, class syllabi, recommended and required readings, and links to helpful websites.
8. Some science teachers will require you to take book notes as they want you to know how to pick out the important parts of text. They will then provide feedback on what are good/bad book notes and give you examples of good/bad notes.
9. Learn the processes in science – facts are important – but understanding the processes/formulas is also.
10. Follow sequences
  1. Cover the answers
  2. Read the question
  3. Come up with the answer before looking at the options
  4. Look for the answer in the options.
11. Use SQ3R – survey, questions, read, recite, review (page 10)
12. Keep Science Logs that keep track of:
  - Class agenda
  - Class notes
  - Questions you have and/or things causing you confusion
  - Reflection – what did I learn today.
13. Vocabulary cards with definitions - use drawings to help understand the concept. Draw flow charts for labs always visually represent processes.
14. Color-coded notes help to distinguish main point and sub points. This can help you identify at a glance, the main points.
15. Draw – think – write  
This works especially well in Biology.
16. If a teacher models "how to read a science textbook" – pay close attention. To highlight important information:
  - Use reading guides
  - Post-it notes (stickies)
  - Highlighter where permissible

If a teacher asks the class how material will be used on test – formulate an answer. This gives you a chance to think about what has been said and to think of the answer on your own.

- Always check through numerical calculations by estimating.
- Always look over the entire test and work in order of increasing difficulty.
- Lab reports are graded on writing and critical thinking skills – pay attention to the rubrics and the examples of good and bad reports.

In conclusion, to be successful at CCHS,

- do your homework and turn it in
- know that even your freshman year's grades count for college
- find a method of studying and being organized that works for you
- remember that you need to study different ways for different subjects
- get help from your teachers when you need it
- know that you are not alone



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### Acknowledgements

Cherry Creek High School students, teachers, department coordinators, administration

### Illustrations

David Stallings, Cherry Creek High School, Fine Arts' Teacher