

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR STUDY GROUP

Food for Thought

WHY STUDY IN GROUPS?



- × When you explain an idea, you need to think more deeply about it
- × Groups help you think out loud
- × Groups help you share ideas
- × Groups help you learn from one another

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY GROUPS

× Reinforce note-taking

- + If your notes are unclear, you can ask a member of your study group to help fill in the gaps

× Share Talents

- + Each person brings different strengths, such as organizational skills, the ability to stick to a task or the capacity for memorization

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY GROUPS

- × Cover more ground

- + Group members may be able to solve a calculus problem together that none would have solved alone

- × Benefit from a support system

- + Members often have common goals, such as good grades. Each person's work affects other members, which results in making members supportive of one another

THE BENEFITS OF STUDY GROUPS

× Socialize

- + It's more fun to study with others; the give-and-take makes it more interesting. And because it's more fun, you spend more time studying!
- + Also, developing friendships with people who have similar interests and goals can help motivate you to push through those “tough times”

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× How many?

- + Create a group of 4 – 6 people. In a larger group, it's easy for someone to get left out and smaller groups can too easily get off track (or disappear)



GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× Who?

- + Pick classmates who seem to share your interest in doing well academically. Look for people who stay alert in class, take notes, ask questions and respond to the teacher's questions. Include someone who understands the material better than you and can explain the concepts and someone who doesn't understand it as well, to whom you can explain the material.

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× Who? (cont.)

+ Remember everyone possesses different:

- × Organizational skills
- × Knowledge base
- × Question-asking ability
- × Note taking ability
- × Personal attributes (age, gender, appearance, ethnicity)
- × Cultural perspective
- × Points of view
- × Life and school experience
- × Class participation level and style
- × Preparation thoroughness
- × Verbal and written skills

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× Who? (cont.)

+ You should be able to answer YES for each of the following questions:

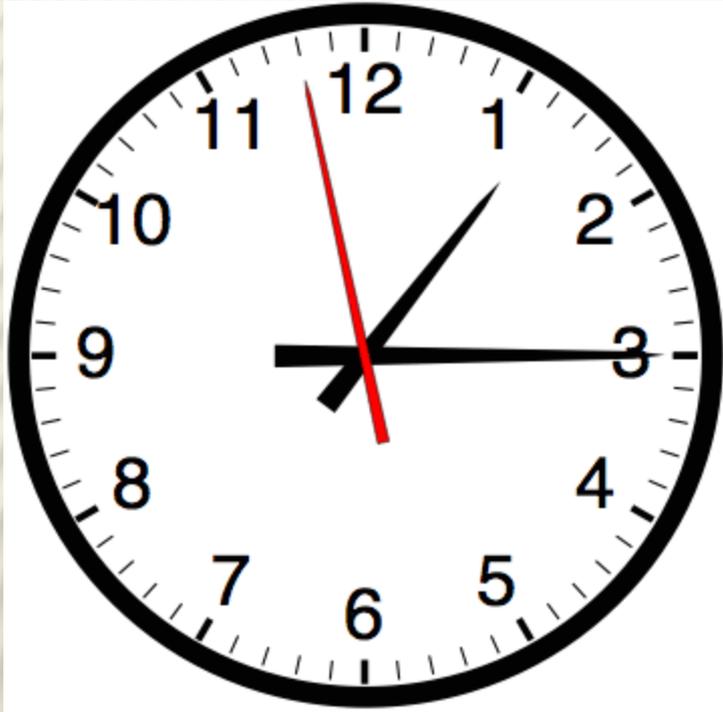
- × Is this classmate motivated to do well?
- × Does this classmate understand the material?
- × Is this classmate dependable?
- × Would this classmate be tolerant of the ideas of others?
- × Would you like to work with this classmate?

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× Where?

- + Hold study group sessions in a place that is free of distractions and that has room to spread out books and notes
 - × The KEY Center (members-only)
 - × The Library
 - × The Tutoring Center
 - × The Reading Room
 - × Local coffee shop (for evening or weekend groups)
 - × Any other ideas?

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP



× How long?

+ Meet for no more than 2 -3 hours at a time. Having a time limit helps the group focus. If you know you only have an hour, you're more likely to stay on task

× Remember: For every 45 minutes of intense study time, take a 10 - 15 minute break!

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP

× When?

- + Try to meet regularly, on the same day(s) and time(s) each week. Treating the study session as you would other activities helps you keep to a schedule and ensures that everyone attends.
- + Form study groups EARLY in the semester (learning takes TIME and cannot be done only before tests)

GUIDELINES FOR STARTING A GROUP



- × What are the goals?
 - + Try to have a general goal or goals for the group such as updating notes, discuss readings or preparing for exams.

If you were going to start a study group, what subject(s) would you choose and what would the goals of the group be?

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A SESSION

- × Decide what you're going to do in advance
 - + It may help to assign individual roles and responsibilities (note-taker, facilitator, etc.)
 - + Use online resources like Facebook to organize your study group

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

facebook®

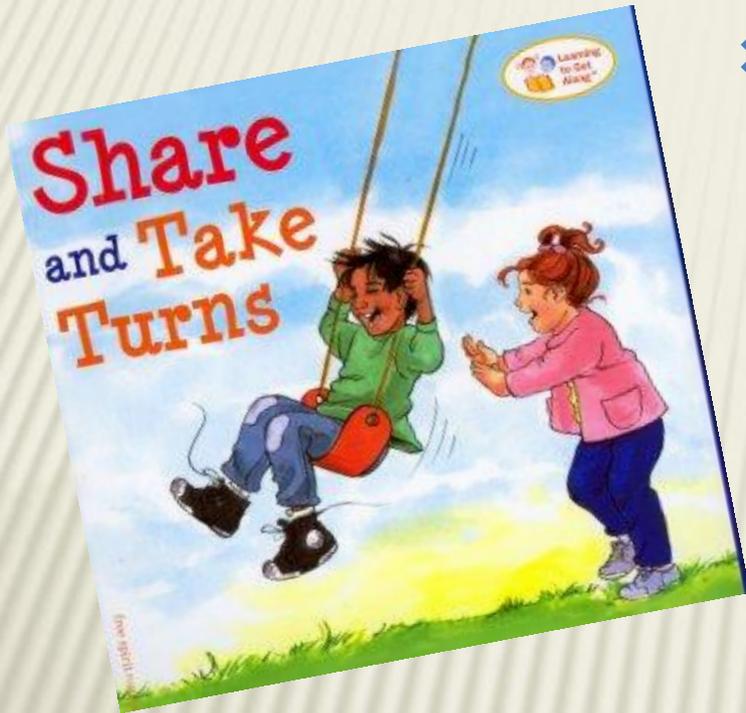
What role do you think you'd like to play?

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A SESSION



- × Prepare for the session, so you can make the most of your time together
 - + Do readings and homework assignments BEFORE the study session so that you can use your time to review and discuss the information
 - + If you do not prepare you are disrespecting the time of other study group members

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A SESSION



- ✘ Take turns teaching, to reinforce your own knowledge
 - + Allow each person time to talk about the material
 - + The group facilitator can monitor participation to be sure all members are able to speak and no one member dominates the study time

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF A SESSION



Pretend your group was going to meet today; think about what topics to cover and make session plan.

- ✗ Stick to the session topic
 - + Decide before the session or right at the start WHAT topics will be covered
 - + Before you end the session, summarize what was discussed to be sure you covered your topic(s)

TROUBLE SHOOTING

- × Feeling excluded from the group?
 - + Persist. Remember that you have as much to contribute to the group as everyone else
 - + Talk with your professor or SI leader (if you have one). They may have suggestions or alternatives
 - + Meet with professors, SI leaders or tutors for ideas
 - + Be innovative: study with another classmate, friend or form your own study group.
 - + Talk to the facilitator or leader of the group about your concerns

TROUBLE SHOOTING

× Other common pitfalls

- + Do not let the study group become a social group.
- + Do not allow members to attend unprepared. To stay in the group, members should be required to do their fair share.
- + Do not let the session become a negative forum for complaining about teachers or assignments.
- + Do not let one or two members dominate the group.