



What Instructors Expect of Students

We can't say that all instructors expect the same things of their students, but here are some general guidelines you should consider when you're building and maintaining your relationships with your instructors.

Choice & Self-discipline

- ✓ Instructors know that being in college is a choice. They know that students have a right to quit college or drop a class any time, and they also know that they cannot force students to do their work.
- ✓ Though some instructors will be authoritarian, most college instructors will assume you are an adult and will treat you as such. They will not, generally speaking, hold a great deal of authority over students.
- ✓ If you make a choice that's bad for your education, your instructor is not likely to intervene. For example, if you miss an exam, your instructor might assume it's your right to do so and isn't likely to pull you aside and talk with you about it. Rather, it's your responsibility to talk with them about it if you choose to.
- ✓ Instructors expect students to be self-disciplined. It's your responsibility, then, to get your work done and turned in on time.

Homework & Follow-through

- ✓ Instructors expect you will do the bulk of your schoolwork outside of class – 6 hours/week for each 3 unit course.
- ✓ Instructors expect that you will do your homework and reading assignments for the class without being reminded.
- ✓ When instructors say in their syllabus to “read” certain pages, they mean much more than just “read.” You will need to find concepts, principles and examples of them. You will need to bring together related ideas and concepts that are spread over many pages. You will need find big ideas, major principles, and organizing frameworks. You will need to translate verbal knowledge into steps to use in cognitive skills. You will need to memorize certain things. And more. See earlier study tips for more information.
- ✓ Plan on doing a few hours reading and study each week for each course that has reading assignments. And you should plan on needing extra time when teachers require written papers and homework. Finally, you should allow for a few hours of review to prepare for each test.
- ✓ Many students who get poor grades simply do not realize how hard the students work who get high grades. Some can study 10 to 15 hours a week outside of a difficult class. More for very hard classes!



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Ask Questions In & Out of Class

- ✓ Ask questions in class and participate in class activities.
- ✓ You should ask your questions when they occur to you, unless your teacher says not to. Doing so will help your classmates who have the same question, and it will let your instructor know how well you and the other students are grasping the material.
- ✓ If you read your textbook on the day's topic before class, you can pinpoint areas of difficulty and plan questions to ask your instructor. Write them down and bring them to class.
- ✓ When you ask questions, stay on the subject. Honor the norms that no one student should talk too much. However, apart from these warnings, you should talk in class. After all, you are paying good money to buy this knowledge and these skills! So insist on getting your money's worth. If the teacher wants you to lessen the number of questions, let him or her tell you.
- ✓ When you have trouble understanding certain ideas and when you have longer questions that you don't want to ask in class, you should visit the instructor. It is perfectly right and proper to visit an instructor's office.
- ✓ Attend all classes and take notes. Instructors usually give information in class that you will not find in your textbooks. They will expect you to learn things from class lectures and to answer questions on tests.
- ✓ Review your notes often and ask questions about them in class or in the instructor's office hours if you don't understand something.
- ✓ Teachers expect students to take charge of their own learning by being active learners. An active learner is someone who wants to learn, asks questions, works to understand new ideas, practices new skills many times, and tries to make connections between new and old ideas.

Set Goals

- ✓ Don't be a perfectionist! Everything is a process, and we all have to start somewhere. Don't expect to start with perfection!
- ✓ Be realistic about what you can do in the time you have.
- ✓ Don't over-schedule. Allow some flexible time for crises and interruptions.
- ✓ Fight procrastination. Do it now!
- ✓ Get the job done right the first time.
- ✓ Do difficult things quickly. Remember that procrastinating on these things does not make them easier!
- ✓ Think things through before acting on them. This can help you avoid the problem of having to do something over again.