

GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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studying

The
**Study
Skills**
Handbook

Jay Amberg

SKILLS

 GOOD YEAR BOOKS



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Opening

Welcome to The Study Skills Handbook. Learning depends on ability, of course, but it also involves the desire to succeed and the skills to learn. In fact, for success in school, the eagerness to learn and the knowledge of how to learn are far more important than ability. Whatever your age and ability, you can learn better than you do now.

This book will help you sharpen skills and develop habits that, in turn, will enable you to learn more efficiently and effectively. You'll learn how to work *smart* as well as work hard. This guide presents a series of **learning hints**, ideas and methods that will improve your skills dramatically. When you understand and use these learning hints, you'll be far better prepared to:

- Take control of your education
- Manage your time effectively
- Memorize information easily
- Read textbooks efficiently
- Listen actively
- Take notes productively
- Readily build vocabulary
- Take objective tests intelligently
- Write clear essays

Each chapter presents the learning hints to one of these skill areas. At the end of each chapter, a section called *Putting It All Together* asks you to use the learning hints together to complete an activity. These activities will help you become confident when you apply the learning hints to each of your classes in school.

These learning skills will provide you with a crucial advantage: you'll be able to work *smart* as well as work hard. There is, certainly, no substitute for hard work, but some ways of learning are far more effective than others. As you develop learning skills, you'll discover that you can learn more quickly and more easily.

Finally, **Motivation** is the master key that unlocks and opens the doors to all of the learning skills presented in this book. The *desire* to succeed is crucial to success. The hints in this book will show you *how* to learn, but neither this book nor your teachers nor anyone or anything else can help you unless you *want* to learn. Starting right now, build your desire to learn!

Good luck! Remember, work hard—and work smart.

This book is dedicated to the Scholars of Boy's Hope Chicago who pioneered the learning activities presented in each unit.

Unit 1: Taking Control

To succeed in school, you must **take control** of your education. Become an active learner. Stop thinking of school as something that happens, something that is *done to you*. Start thinking of each of your classes as something you do that improves your skills and enhances your learning. Remember, every assignment provides you with the opportunity to prove to yourself and to others that you are learning. Your teachers don't *give* you grades, you *earn* them.

Taking Control

As in athletics and many other areas of life, **consistency** is the key to success in school. Winners—whether in gymnastics, basketball, or education—perform consistently well. In this unit, you’ll learn the hints to becoming an active learner who takes control and becomes consistent. First, understand your personal learning strengths. Then, create a learning environment, make goals, organize a master list, and devise a weekly plan. Finally, become effective in all aspects of your life.

Hint One: Understand your personal learning strengths.

There are many different kinds of intelligence. Some people are excellent writers and accurate spellers, others are math all-stars and computer wizards, and still others are artistic or dramatic. Some play musical instruments, others excel in sports, and still others have lots of friends. All of these activities require different skills and have real value in life.

Schools, however, do not reward all forms of intelligence equally. Teachers tend, for instance, to place more value on writing and mathematics than they do on having lots of friends. To succeed in school, you’ll have to focus on the more academic forms of intelligence.

Know yourself. Some people are better learners in one subject, and others are better in another. People also learn in different ways and at varying rates. In order to take control of your education and improve your learning skills, come to understand how you learn best.

Here is a list of twelve statements about learning. Place a check next to the four statements that best describe you.

1. _____ I like to read.
2. _____ I like to discuss issues.
3. _____ I like to be involved in whatever is going on.
4. _____ I am good at making plans and outlines.
5. _____ I remember by reciting things.
6. _____ I move around while studying.
7. _____ I like order and neatness.
8. _____ I like to talk things over.
9. _____ I move my hands a lot while talking.
10. _____ I learn best by watching.
11. _____ I learn best by listening.
12. _____ I learn best by doing.

Although everyone learns by watching, listening, and doing, experts who have studied learning have concluded that most people are most comfortable with and learn best through one of the three. Look back at the checks you made. Most people will have mixed results, but you will probably see a trend—two or more checks that indicate a particular learning style.

If you checked **1, 4, 7,** and **10**, you're primarily a *visual learner*, a person who learns best by watching others and examining information. If you checked **2, 5, 8,** and **11**, you're primarily an *auditory learner*, a person who learns best by listening to others and reciting information. If you checked **3, 6, 9,** and **12**, you're primarily a *kinesthetic learner*, a person who learns best by moving and doing.

Now use the information above to draw a conclusion about how you learn best. In the space below, write three to five sentences describing yourself as a learner.
