

## Success in BIO 211/212

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Students committed to learning will find many possible paths to success. No path is error free, but the path best for you may not look like the same path as another student. For this reason, students should continuously assess their academic progress in courses and adjust their academic strategies accordingly.

While there is no magic formula, the following suggestions may improve your ability to succeed in Biology and increase your retention of knowledge.

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1. **Embrace repetition and review:** Learning biology requires many individual contacts with the material. Regardless of your learning preferences, embrace the variety all opportunities to learn aurally, visually, orally, through reading and writing, and labs. Divide up your studying. It is a TERRIBLE idea to wait until the day before or even a couple days before the test to start studying. Study a little bit every day. Then, when you are about a week from the test, start studying for a bit longer and focus specifically on getting ready for the test.
2. **Create and review note cards:** Creating notecards for biology will help you summarize information in small, manageable amounts. Notecards are more valuable than reviewing your notes because you can test yourself on terms or definitions and mix up the order. A great way to get vocabulary down is to make flash cards. Every day when you are done with class, take some time to go over the PowerPoints, and make flash cards of the most important content. Quizlet works well for this, but it is most effective to make old style flash cards. That's right – we're talking pen and paper. Research shows that if you actually write something down, you will remember it better!
3. **Vocabulary is the key:** Learn to look for patterns and roots in words. Never underestimate the value of any vocabulary term. It's best to presume each term is likely to reappear later in the semester and in future other courses. Rewrite terms in your own words. When you are going over vocabulary, don't just stare at the words in your book. This also connects back to the flash cards. When you are writing definitions, try to write them in ways that make sense to you and will help you remember it

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4. **Attend class:** This is stating the obvious, but there is a lot of content in Biology classes that may be presented to you for the first (and possibly only) time in-class. If you skip class, you may never know what you missed until the exam.
5. **Prepare for class:** Download the notes that are on Canvas before coming to class (if they are available), and either print them or annotate them on your computer. This will save you a lot of time trying to scramble and write down everything that the professor says. With the slides in front of you, you have the framework, and you can jot down any extra tid bits that the professor mentions in class.
6. **Attend Supplemental Instruction:** This is a great way to review the material in a different way and with other people. Even if you know what is going on in the class, go to SI and help teach the other students who don't know what is going on. SI creates a more interactive learning opportunity where questions are welcomed. Your SI leader attends your class and knows what is covered and emphasized and their goal is to help you master the material. It has been proven that re-teaching to peers is one of the best ways to retain material.
7. **Listen to your instructor's cues for important concepts:** Your instructors will emphasize certain concepts in the syllabus, lectures, and exam study guides. Focus your study time on these concepts.
8. **Utilize book resources:** Read the book before lecture! You don't have to have complete understanding of everything that is said in the book, but reading through the chapter before you come to class will give you a better understanding of what we are going to be talking about and will allow for you think of any questions you might need to ask during class as well.
9. **Draw diagrams:** Practice drawing diagrams (when appropriate) to enhance your memory and boosts your visual learning. Make copies of blank diagrams to self-test yourself.
10. **Read test questions carefully:** Many students make mistakes by not following the test instructions. Read the instructions and each question carefully to ensure you are answering the actual questions. After completing your exam, go over the exam a second time. This can minimize any mistakes.
11. **Study in pairs or groups:** Discussion of biology enhances your knowledge in a way that individual review can never achieve. You will learn more about correct pronunciation and use of terms.
12. **Sleep:** This seems trivial, but it is so important to get a good night's sleep the night before you are going to take a test. If you don't know something at noon the day before a test, chances are you won't know it by midnight the day of the test.