habits for success

reality check
In this chapter...

you explore answers to the following questions:

WHERE are you headed, and how will college get you there?  p. 4

HOW can you transition to college-level work?  p. 6

HOW can habits change your life for the better?  p. 12

WHAT habits fuel college success?  p. 16

alan does his best to stay on top of his assignments, but when he feels burned out he tends to avoid schoolwork completely. Last night, instead of reading the chapter assigned for today, he watched some TV and then got caught up on his favorite leisure-time activity—instant messaging with some friends. Before he knew it, the clock read 1:00 a.m. He planned to get up early to read. Instead, he woke up late. He made it to class on time, but he is totally unprepared to participate or even grasp what the teacher is talking about. He sits in his chair not asking questions and not interacting with his classmates, trying to quietly get through the class period.
Habit for Success

Persist

*Keep moving ahead no matter the obstacles to get what you want from school and life.*

- Real People Persist  p. 15
- Powerful Questions about Persisting  p. 19
- Habit Summary  p. 21
- Test Prep: Start It Now  p. 25

Where Are You Headed, and How Will College Get You There?

Start by congratulating yourself, because your persistence has paid off. You may have just completed high school or its equivalent. You may be returning after staying at home with young children. You may have worked in one or more jobs or served in the armed forces or any combination of possibilities. Whatever your situation, you have been building life skills from experience. Now you have enrolled in college, found a way to pay for it, signed up for courses, and shown up for class. And, in deciding to pursue a degree, you chose to believe you can accomplish important goals. You have earned this opportunity to be a college student.

Focus for a moment on Alan, the student you read about on the opening page of this chapter. Ask yourself these questions:

- If you were Alan’s teacher, what credit would you give him for class participation? For preparation? What would you say if he asked you to write a job recommendation?
- If you were in a study group with Alan after class and were depending on his contribution, what would you say to him if he showed up empty-handed?
- What do Alan’s actions say about his approach toward college?
- If you were a business owner, would you be likely to hire someone like Alan?

Alan may have a tough time passing courses and earning a degree if he doesn’t make some adjustments. Although you are not Alan, you may be making one or more similar choices. Now is the time to consider what these behaviors and attitudes mean for you and—more importantly—what you plan to do about them.
To make the most of your college opportunities, take your coursework seriously and work hard to prepare for the future.

Think of college as a training ground in which you acquire skills that will enable you to compete in the global marketplace, where workers in the United States are on a level playing field with workers in other parts of the world. Thomas Friedman, author of *The World Is Flat*, explains how the digital revolution has transformed the working environment you will enter after college:

> It is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world—using computers, e-mail, fiber-optic networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software.¹

These developments in communication, combined with an enormous increase in knowledge work such as Internet technology and decrease in labor-based work such as factory jobs, mean that you may compete for information-based jobs with highly trained and motivated people from around the globe. To achieve your goals in this new “flat” world, you will need to acquire solid skills, commit to lifelong learning, persevere despite obstacles, perform high-quality work consistently, and embrace change as a way of life. If you gather and hone your tools in college, you will receive the maximum benefit and be a ready-for-hire package when you graduate.

Now think about yourself right now. Complete the short self-assessment at the top of the next page. Then consider: Would you hire yourself? If you answered no, all is not lost. The work you do in this course will prepare you to succeed in college and get the job you want after graduation. If you answered yes, this course will help you get even better. As you think about the value of your work in this course, look at Key 1.1, which shows what employers look for in new employees.

Back to Alan: If you see yourself in him, you may have some behaviors that are leading you away from, rather than toward, success. The good news is that you are on your way to identifying and changing these behaviors. First, look at the transition to college-level work and how this text will help you through it.

Habits for Success
Chapter 1

How Can You Transition to College-Level Work?

The “typical” path of the student—graduating from high school at 18, attending college for two to four years, and then finding a job right after graduation—is no longer typical. Today students follow different paths and different time schedules to reach their goals. However, whether high school graduation was last year, 10 years ago, or achieved by working toward a GED, every student faces the challenge of transitioning to college-level work.

Knowing what to expect will enable you to prepare your attitude and skills. As the saying goes, “forewarned is forearmed.” Here are some general differences everyone will face (spend some time with your college’s student handbook to get informed about details specific to your school).

- **More independence and responsibility.** Perhaps the single most significant difference between high school and college is the extent to which you are responsible for your actions. Your college instructors will not provide the level of guidance and support that you had in high school. It takes time to adjust to a college classroom experience. Pay close attention to your instructor and syllabus so you know what to expect.

If you were a hiring manager and could only hire one person in your small company this year, what qualities would you most want in that employee? For example, would you require strong communication skills, a self-starter personality, or a good attitude about teamwork? Write your top five qualities in the spaces that follow and rank their levels of importance from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest.

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<th>Quality</th>
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Compare your list with one or more classmates. Ask the following questions: What qualities from other lists would you include on your own? Would you change your rankings?
Employers rate the importance of candidate qualities and skills

Items ranked on a 5-point scale, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = extremely important.

- Communication skills (verbal, written)
- Teamwork skills (working with others)
- Strong work ethic
- Analytical skills
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Interpersonal skills (relating to others)
- Motivation/Initiative
- Computer skills
- Detail-oriented
- Organizational skills
- Leadership skills
- Self-confidence
- Well-mannered/polite
- Friendly/outgoing personality
- Tactfulness
- Creativity
- GPA (3.0 or better)
- Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker
- Sense of humor

Source: NACE Research: Job Outlook 2006, p.18

School. You will be expected to make the following—and more—happen on your own:

- Buy books and other assigned materials for your courses.
- Use your syllabi to set up your schedule for the term.
- Keep on top of deadlines and important dates so you can turn in projects on time and be prepared for exams.
- Get help when you need it.
- Complete assigned coursework.
- Set up study group meetings.
- Get to class and everywhere else on time and with the stuff you need.

Increased workload. College means more work per course. You will be required to read more material in your textbooks and other resources than you did in high school and to move faster through those materials. This

Habits for Success
workload and the speed at which courses move demand more study time. A rule of thumb is to study at least two hours for each hour spent in class, meaning that if you are in class for 9 hours a week, you need to schedule at least 18 hours of studying through the week, every week.

**More challenging work.** Your work will be more challenging on every level. Reading will be more difficult, assignments will be more involved, and your brain will consistently have to go beyond simple recall into higher levels of thinking—analyzing, comparing and contrasting materials to what you know, evaluating, generating new ideas. (Chapter 5 will focus on the different thinking skills that foster college success.)

**More out-of-class time to manage.** Whereas a high school day generally keeps you in the building all day five days a week, college courses meet fewer times per week and are each scheduled individually. You might have days when your classes end at noon or don’t begin until 2:00 in the afternoon or don’t meet at all. It will be up to you to use these blocks of free time effectively as you juggle your other responsibilities, including perhaps a job and family.

You are not alone as you face these challenges. Look to the people around you, the technology available to you, and this book for support.

**People Can Help**

Faculty and staff are among the most valuable—but underused—sources of help. A recent survey of college freshmen indicated that only 25% of students asked a teacher for advice after class throughout the term, and only 8% considered seeking counseling.³ That means that 75% would not ask their instructor for help, and 92% would never seek counseling, no matter the need.

Don’t let these important sources of support go untapped. Make it a point to connect with instructors, teaching assistants, advisors, tutoring centers, and counselors throughout your college career.

**Instructors and Teaching Assistants**

You have the greatest contact with instructors, whom you may see in class from one to five times a week. Instructors and the teaching assistants who support them see your work, and, if your class size is small, they may get to know you quite well. Consult them to:

- Clarify material presented in class
- Help with homework
- Find out how to prepare for a test
- Ask about a paper while you are working on it

**By the way . . .**

out of all the factors linked to a long and healthy life, education is the one that helps the most.²
Habits for Success

- Find out why you received a particular grade on a test or assignment
- Get advice about the department—courses, majoring—or related career areas

Before or after class works well for a quick question. When you want to speak personally with an instructor for longer than a minute or two, make an appointment during office hours, send e-mail, or leave voice-mail messages.

Office hours. Instructors’ regular office hours appear on your syllabi, on office doors, and on instructors’ or departmental Web pages. Always make an appointment for a conference. Face-to-face conferences are ideal for working through ideas and problems or asking for advice.

E-mail. Instructors’ e-mail addresses are generally posted on the first day of class and on your syllabus. Use e-mail to clarify assignments and assignment deadlines, to ask questions about lectures or readings, and to clarify what will be covered on a test.

Voice mail. If something comes up at the last minute, you can leave a message in your instructor’s voice mailbox. Make your message short and specific. Avoid calling instructors at home unless they give specific permission to do so.

Academic Advisors
In most colleges, every student is assigned an advisor who is the student’s personal connection with the college. (At some schools, students receive help at an advising center.) Your advisor will help you choose courses every term, plan your overall academic program, and understand college regulations, including graduation requirements. You may be required to meet with your advisor once each term. However, don’t hesitate to schedule additional meetings if and when you need your advisor.

Tutors and Academic Centers
Tutors can give you valuable and detailed help on specific academic subjects. Most campuses have private tutoring available, and many schools offer free peer tutoring. If you feel you could benefit from the kind of one-on-one work a tutor can give, ask your instructor or your academic advisor to recommend a tutor. If your school has one or more academic centers, you may be able to find a tutor there. Academic centers, including reading, writing, math, and study-skills centers, offer consultations and tutoring to help students improve skills at all levels.

Counseling
College counseling services can help you address academic problems, stress, and psychological problems. As stated on one school’s counseling services Web site, “counseling services are designed to assist students with addressing the difficulties that they encounter during these years and to promote greater overall wellness within the student population.”

Counseling is confidential, focused on your particular needs, and directed toward helping you handle what is bothering you. In most cases it is not ongoing

Habits for Success
and ends when you have achieved the goals that you and your counselor have defined. Whatever type of problem you encounter in college, a counselor can help you get through it.

Knowing How to Use Technology Can Help

Transitioning to college requires that you become comfortable with technology. In a given day you might access a syllabus online, e-mail a student, use the Internet to tap into a library database, draft an assignment on a computer, and e-mail a paper to an instructor. Most dorm rooms are wired for computers, and an increasing number of campuses have wireless networks. Some schools are even moving to a “paperless” system where all student notifications are sent via e-mail, requiring every student to activate an e-mail account and check it regularly. Here are some suggestions for using technology to ease your transition into college:

Get trained. Register for an e-mail account at your school and connect to the college network. Learn how to work in a course management system, such as Blackboard, if your school uses one. Register your cell phone number with the school so you can get emergency alerts.

Use computers to find information. Frequent the college Web site, and use library databases. If they are available, download podcasts of lectures.

Be a cautious user. Save your work periodically onto a primary or backup hard drive, CD, or flash drive. In addition, install an antivirus program and update it regularly.

Stay on task. During study time, try to limit Internet surfing, instant messaging, visiting Facebook pages, and playing computer games.

Follow guidelines when contacting instructors via e-mail. When you submit assignments, take exams, or ask questions electronically, rules of etiquette
promote civility and respect. Try these suggestions the next time you e-mail an instructor:

- **Use your school account.** Instructors may delete unfamiliar e-mails. “Helen_Miller@yourschool.edu” will get read, but “disastergirl@yahoo.com” may not.

- **Don’t ask for information you can find on your own.** Flooding your instructor with unnecessary e-mails may work against you when you really need help.

- **Write a clear subject line.** State exactly what the e-mail is about.

- **Address the instructor by name and use his or her title.** “Hello, Professor Smith,” or “Hi, Dr. Reynolds,” is better than “Hey.”

- **Be clear and comprehensive.** First, state your question or problem and what you want to achieve. Next, if necessary, support your position, using bullet points if you have a number of statements. Finally, end by thanking the instructor and signing your full name.

- **Use complete sentences, correct punctuation, and capitalization.** Avoid abbreviations and acronyms. Write as though you were crafting a business letter, not a text message to a friend.

- **Give the instructor time to respond.** Don’t expect a reply within two hours. If you hear nothing after a couple of days, send a follow-up note that contains the full text of your first message.

**This Book Can Help**

This book is designed to give you a set of skills with which you can manage the challenges of the college transition. Here’s what your reading and work will build:

- **A sense of how you learn.** Chapter 2 helps you discover your learning styles, and the following chapters invite you to look at how to use those styles to make your best study and life choices.

- **Critical thinking and problem-solving skills.** If you can analyze information, come up with new ideas, and work through problems effectively, you will be ready for any challenge. Chapter 5, as well as exercises in every chapter, will help you in this area.

- **Self-management and resource management.** Planning your time, making sure you can pay tuition and expenses, setting goals, and handling stress are basics no college student can do without. Chapters 3 and 4 get you off on the right foot.

- **Solid academic skills.** The bulk of this text—Chapters 6 through 11—is devoted to all kinds of ways for you to become a better reader, note taker, test taker, listener, team member, and project manager.

In the theme of this book—the Habits for Success—is one final important tool for you: the ability to build positive habits that will help you achieve your goals in college and beyond. First, take a look at how habits affect your life and what you can do to improve them.
Chapter 1

By the way . . .

College graduates are more likely to make healthy decisions, volunteer in their communities, vote, and donate blood.5

**Bad and Good Habits**

What makes a habit “bad” or “good”? **Bad habits** have negative effects. Some, like alcohol and drug abuse, are destructive to your health and well-being. Other bad habits prevent you from reaching important goals. A common example: Leaving studying until late in the evening after classes, your work shift, and social time may leave you with almost no energy to do schoolwork well or on time. **Good habits**, in contrast, have positive effects. If you are in the habit of keeping your books with you throughout the day and taking them out whenever you have a block of time, you’ll be more able to stay on top of your assignments.

Alan probably came to college equipped with a set of habits that he has had for years, including doing no schoolwork at all when he’s feeling overloaded, letting his social time online run too long, and so on. Alan’s challenge is to break these habits and replace them with a set of positive habits that foster success (tackling challenging assignments one small concrete step at a time, putting a time limit on instant messaging).

**How to Change Habits**

Changing habits is a challenge for anyone, but determination combined with self-knowledge can bring change. In fact, recent brain research shows that when people work to change old habits and solidify new habits, they actually create new brain cells and new neural pathways that move currents from cell to cell.6 There are two ways to adjust your habits:

*Replace or change an existing habit.* When an existing habit has negative effects, it is not enough to just ditch it. You have to substitute something in its place, says Scott H. Young, a student who is a habits expert: “If you opened up your computer and started removing hardware, what would happen? Chances are your computer wouldn’t work. Similarly, you can’t just pull out habits without replacing the needs they fulfill. Giving up television might mean you need to find a new way to relax, socialize or get information.”7

*Begin a new habit.* When you create a new habit, you are starting from the ground up, deciding on the specific nature of the habit as well as when, where, and how to use it.

**Habits** form much of your day-to-day life including what you eat, what you wear, what you do and when, where you put things, and much more. People perform habits over and over again without really thinking about what they are doing.
Whether you are replacing or generating a habit, use the following steps to make the change:

1. **Identify what you want to change and why.** Get specific. What do you want to accomplish? Would it require changing an existing habit or beginning a new habit? Make the goal concrete by writing it down. Use positive terms: “I will use my time between classes to study” is more motivating than “I need to stop wasting time between classes.”

2. **Name specific, short-term actions related to this habit change.** For example, if you aim to use between-class time to study, specific behaviors might be “Bring my psychology book on Tuesdays so I can study between algebra and lunch” or “Head to the library after psych class on Wednesdays.”

3. **Set up support.** You are more likely to succeed if your friends or family help you stay on track. Start by letting them know what you are trying to do. Then set up a progress-report plan. Maybe you’ll post a note on an online networking site, like Facebook, or call once a week. You can also ask them to leave encouraging messages on your phone or e-mail.

4. **Get started, and keep it up for at least 21 days—maybe 30.** Habits experts note that it takes at least 21 days of consistently performing a new or changed habit to get it to stick. Personal development expert Steve Pavlina, noting how software companies give consumers 30 days to try out a new product, recommends that you follow that lead and beef up your “trial period” to 30 days.

5. **Be accountable as you go.** Note your actions and your progress in writing, to yourself as well as to your supporters. Use whatever works for you—your planner, a separate notebook, e-mails, a computer document.

6. **Evaluate your progress.** Step back and evaluate how the process is going, and ask your support person or people to give you feedback if possible.

7. **If necessary, switch gears.** If a new habit isn’t sticking or your attempts to change are making you so miserable that you want to give up, go back to the beginning of this process and adjust your habit goal. For example, although some people respond well to a “cold turkey” approach, a student who has always pulled all-nighters before exams might not be able to cut out all late-night cramming. Instead, she could build in three hours of study time the night before the exam as part of a week-long study schedule. Over time and through trial and error, you will find what works for you.

As you work to establish new habits, remember to keep it simple. Work on only one or maybe two habits at a time. If you attempt more, you run the risk of overloading and not successfully changing any of them.
Think of a habit that gets in the way of your ability to succeed in college—one that you would call a bad habit (in Chapter 2, you’ll learn that you are using your interpersonal intelligence as you do this). Write it here: ______________________________

Why do you want to change this habit—in other words, what negative effect does it have on your academic performance? _________________________________________________________________________

Describe the new or changed habit you would like to adopt. ____________________________________________

Name two specific, short-term actions you will take to create this habit.

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________

Name someone who will support your efforts. _______________________________________________________

Finally, describe how you will track your progress.

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Hold this plan in your mind—you will revisit it in one of the Time for a Change exercises at the end of Chapters 3, 6, and 9.

Now that you know more about habits, you are ready to consider the set of habits that forms the backbone of this book. You will explore them throughout your reading and work in this course. Any of them that you make your own will benefit you throughout your life.
Growing up with two loving, dedicated but uneducated parents, Yvette Gomez learned some important life lessons early on.

“My parents never stopped reminding me of how crucial an education is to a stable future by telling me how difficult it was for them to get where they are now,” says Yvette. Without a solid knowledge of English or a high school diploma, it was difficult for her parents to realize their potential in the working world. Because they did not want their daughter to experience the same hardships, they encouraged her to do whatever it took to get through high school and then go to college.

Stop and Think
Like Yvette, you can benefit from the support of people who care about you. With whom in your life do you share basic values that will help you persist?

Despite her determination, Yvette found that it was tough to succeed in high school. She had doubts about her abilities, and initially her motivation was dampened by seeing many friends lose steam and even drop out. Not wanting to give up made her feel like an “oddball.”

The turning point for Yvette came when her best friend, then 16 years old, became pregnant and subsequently left school. Yvette watched as her friend became a mother and struggled to earn money to support her child. She saw similarities between her friend and her parents, and realized that this friend would have to make familiar sacrifices on the road ahead. She became determined that she would do whatever it took to get through high school and continue on to college.

Stop and Think
Yvette found out how tough it can be to make different choices from those close friends have made. Is there a path you want to follow that would take you away from friends or family? If so, what is it, and what difference would it make in your life?

Yvette shifted away from the friends she was hanging out with and focused her energy on her studies, facing academic roadblocks with a positive attitude. “I always kept my head up to the sky, even if things weren’t looking too good,” she says. “I knew that if I didn’t [keep myself strong], I would be the person to be affected by the consequences.”

Yvette’s work paid off. Her high school grades were good enough for her to enter the University of South Florida, where she earned a B.A. in public relations and political science. Her advice to students everywhere struggling to persist: “Never give up. Education is the key to a successful future. Learn not to follow others because your future only depends on yourself. Stay strong and focus, and soon you will reap the benefits of the hard work that you put in.”

Think about Yvette and Think about Yourself

- Yvette had strong images of what would happen if she stuck to her goal—and what would happen if she didn’t. Why are you more likely to persist when you know what you will gain from your hard work or what you will lose if you give up?
- Her parents’ experience, and the choices her friends made, motivated Yvette to stay strong toward her goal. What experience or knowledge might motivate you to persist in your education?

Source: USF Latino Scholarship & Community/Mental Health Counseling Program (adapted with permission from original story, ©2003, online at http://www.coedu.usf.edu/zalaquett/ls/lsiv.html).

Oprah Winfrey’s life is a study in persistence. From a childhood marked by abuse and difficulty, she forged a career in journalism, acting, and television that has enabled her to help people around the globe. When abuse surfaced in the staff of the school for girls she had opened in South Africa, she persisted in making improvements and keeping the dream of education alive for the students.
What Habits Fuel College Success?

Problems of all sorts are a fact of life. Being able to solve them effectively is a key ingredient of academic, career, and life success. Art Costa, professor emeritus of education at California State University, Sacramento, and co-director of the Institute for Intelligent Behavior in El Dorado Hills, California, studied how students respond to problems, looking specifically at what they did when faced with unfamiliar information and situations. He found that successful students tend to rely on a certain group of positive habits to think through and solve problems. Like the “apple a day” that (as the saying goes) keeps you healthy, these habits promote success when used regularly and consistently.

The Habits for Success

To help you solve problems successfully and achieve your college and life goals, Keys to Effective Learning features 11 Habits for Success based on Costa’s work. Key 1.2 describes the habits and some ways in which you might use them. Start now to practice these habits so you can:

- Get the grades you want this term and from now on
- Manage yourself—your time, money, and responsibilities—effectively
- Maximize your learning potential
- Work well with others at school and elsewhere
- Succeed in your coursework for your major
- Graduate and get a job that suits you and fulfills you

The chapters of Keys to Effective Learning introduce you to these habits and give you opportunities to explore them. In each chapter, you will find:

- An introduction to the chapter’s featured habit
- Features and exercises that incorporate the habit, both within the chapter and at the end (see the bulleted list next to the habit introduction for page numbers)
- A visual organizer to close the chapter, showing ways to put the habit into action
- An apple image representing the habit, used throughout the chapter wherever the habit appears

Finally, in the last chapter, you will have the opportunity to revisit all 11 habits—to apply each, evaluate your development, and plan how to make progress in the future.

You may already use some of the Habits for Success comfortably and successfully. Keep in mind that trying to acquire too many new habits at once can
### Habits for Success

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<th>APPLY IT TO THE CHAPTER...</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO LIFE...</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PERSIST.</strong> Stick to whatever you are doing until you complete it. Keep moving ahead.</td>
<td>Chapter 1&lt;brHING for Success</td>
<td>Stick to your goal of earning a college degree.</td>
<td>Persist in working on a relationship that means a lot to you.</td>
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<td><strong>KEEP LEARNING.</strong> Be a lifelong learner, always seeking to know more. See problems and circumstances as valuable opportunities to learn and grow.</td>
<td>Chapter 2&lt;brLearning Styles</td>
<td>As your strengths and challenges change over time, lifelong learning allows you to respond to those changes.</td>
<td>Be ready to learn new skills and knowledge to stay employable in an era of rapid workplace change.</td>
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<td><strong>THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.</strong> Manage impulsive behavior by creating a plan of action and defining your specific goals before beginning.</td>
<td>Chapter 3&lt;brTime and Money</td>
<td>Plan out your class meetings, work times, and other responsibilities at the beginning of each week.</td>
<td>Before rushing into a big purchase such as a car, research what will get you the most bang for your buck.</td>
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<td><strong>REACH OUT TO OTHERS.</strong> Learn to ask for help and give help when you can. Experience the power of achieving a goal as part of a team.</td>
<td>Chapter 4&lt;brSetting and Reaching Goals</td>
<td>Friends and classmates can help hold you accountable for steps toward an important goal.</td>
<td>Ask for ideas about how others manage stress through food and exercise choices.</td>
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<td><strong>CREATE AND IMAGINE.</strong> Come up with new, original, and clever ideas, solutions, and techniques.</td>
<td>Chapter 5&lt;brCritical and Creative Thinking</td>
<td>Brainstorm possible ways to get the courses you need to fulfill requirements.</td>
<td>Risk trying out a new idea in your home life, and let it be okay if you make a mistake.</td>
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<td><strong>PUT YOUR SENSES TO WORK.</strong> Note—and then look past—what you see and hear. Open your sensory pathways up to all kinds of information you can use in your life.</td>
<td>Chapter 6&lt;brMemory</td>
<td>Use senses-based mnemonic devices to remember science and math facts.</td>
<td>Engage your vision, hearing, and other senses to strengthen your ability to remember procedures and people’s names on the job.</td>
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<th>APPLY IT TO THE CHAPTER...</th>
<th>APPLY IT TO LIFE...</th>
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<td><strong>ASK QUESTIONS.</strong> Use questions to fill in the gaps between what is known and what is not. Use questions to identify problems before they stop you in your tracks.</td>
<td>Chapter 7 Reading and Studying</td>
<td>Ask questions before reading (while skimming material) or during reading (in margins) in order to maximize your understanding of what you read.</td>
<td>In any conversation, take time to ask questions that help you understand the situation and the person better.</td>
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<td><strong>USE WHAT YOU KNOW.</strong> Build on your past knowledge and experiences to learn new materials and solve problems.</td>
<td>Chapter 8 Reading Across the Disciplines</td>
<td>Concepts in one course can apply to another; for example, you can use psychology ideas when analyzing a character in a book.</td>
<td>When you are stopped short by a problem, recall and use how you’ve approached similar problems in the past.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LISTEN ACTIVELY.</strong> Consider what others have to say, and work to understand perspectives that differ from yours. Consider new ideas.</td>
<td>Chapter 9 Active Listening and Note Taking</td>
<td>When classmates speak up in class, listen to and consider their questions and ideas as you would those of your instructor.</td>
<td>Let coworkers have a say when a situation comes up, and consider their ideas carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TAKE RESPONSIBLE RISKS.</strong> Challenge your limits, but do it wisely. When you have thought through a risk and the likelihood of success is strong, dive in.</td>
<td>Chapter 10 Test Taking I: Test Preparation and Objective Tests</td>
<td>Use test preparation strategies to make the risk of test taking a responsible one, with a strong likelihood of success.</td>
<td>Before making a drastic life change, consider whether your chances of success are good enough for you to take the plunge.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BE FLEXIBLE.</strong> Be ready and able to adjust your actions and change your mind to fit a changing situation.</td>
<td>Chapter 11 Test Taking II: Getting Results on Essay Tests and Graded Projects</td>
<td>When you encounter a tricky essay question, a flexible mind will help you approach it comprehensively.</td>
<td>When a health problem throws you a curve ball, think flexibly to come up with a new course of action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted with permission from Discovering & Exploring Habits of Mind (pp. 22–37), by Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. © 2000 by ASCD. Learn more about ASCD at www.ascd.org.*
Here is a list of the Habits for Success. First, rate each based on how much you think you have and use that habit right now—from 1 (I don’t have it at all) to 10 (I live this habit).

- Persist
- Keep learning
- Think before you act
- Reach out to others
- Create and imagine
- Put your senses to work
- Ask questions
- Use what you know
- Listen actively
- Take responsible risks
- Be flexible

Next, underline what you consider to be your three strongest habits. Then, circle what you consider the three habits that need the most work.

Finally, look at the Take Action exercise on page 14 in which you were trying to change a negative habit. What is the relationship between this habit and a Habit for Success you want to develop? Describe the connection here. (Example: Alan’s time-wasting habit of IMing his friends instead of studying is linked to his need to develop the habit of thinking before he acts.)

_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

As you learn about each habit through your work in this book, consider the following: How have your three strongest habits improved your life? How would your life change if you developed your three weakest habits? Remember, with work you can improve and strengthen your habits. You will have a chance to revisit this assessment in the last chapter and measure your progress.

work against you. To succeed, you need to keep your focus narrow and your persistence strong. Two in-text tools will help you to:

- **make each habit specific and concrete.** At the end of each chapter, a Habit Summary puts the habit into action and gives you an opportunity to fill in three examples that apply to you.
- **Explore in depth a few habits that need your special attention.** Three times in the text—at the end of Chapters 3, 6, and 9—you will have the chance to create an in-depth plan for building a habit.

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**POWERFUL QUESTIONS**

People attend college for technical training, for the sake of learning, for increased earning power, and for many other reasons. Ask yourself:

What are your reasons for attending college? Consider the Habit for Success that opened this chapter: Which of the reasons you have for attending college seem most likely to help you persist, and why?
You can use one or more of the Habits for Success to confront academic challenges you will face in college—from learning to understand difficult texts to listening from the perspective of your instructor. In many cases you will use more than one habit at a time. For example, when brainstorming a problem with a study group, you may reach out to others, listen to other perspectives, and communicate clearly. With more practice, the habits will become simpler to apply no matter what the situation and will become an essential part of how you operate in school, in the workplace, and in your personal life.

Inside Tips from the Authors

As you build knowledge, skills, and the Habits for Success throughout the term, the authors stand ready to support you in ways that match their areas of expertise. Look in each chapter for a tip from one of the three. Related podcasts are available at www.mystudentsuccesslab.com. Besides providing helpful tips, these podcasts are a great tool for students who tend to learn best by listening.

Carol Carter is the career coach. Carol was a vice president in the corporate world and now is president of her own company. She has hired hundreds of graduates and has worked with many interns throughout her 25-year career. She will give you the inside story on what employers look for in people they hire.

Dr. Joyce Bishop is the technology coach. Joyce teaches student success both in person and online. If working with online course components is unfamiliar territory, Joyce’s tips can help you manage the ways your courses may require you to use e-mail, book and course Web sites, and Internet research. If you are comfortable with technology, what she has to say can help you become even more tech savvy.

Sarah Lyman Kravits is the self-management coach. Sarah thrived as a student and attributes a large portion of her academic success to her ability to self-manage. She has ideas about how to solidify the self-management skills you have, improve the ones you struggle with, and use these skills to improve your academic performance.

Remember, you have to want to succeed badly enough to rid yourself of habits that limit you and to develop habits that empower you. Think for a moment about your level of motivation to succeed in college. On a scale of 1–10, how badly do you want to get the most out of your education and graduate? If your answer was 7 or higher, fasten your seat belt; you are about to change your
My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the only thing to do was keep swinging.

Hank Aaron, baseball champion

world. If your answer was less than 7, ask yourself why you might not be willing to persist toward a better future. Whether you have spent years struggling academically or not, this book and course will give you the chance to change your reality, opening doors and creating opportunities for the rest of your life.

Habit for Success

**persist**

Below are examples of how you can put this habit into action in different situations. Use the three spaces to add your own ideas for actions you can accomplish now or in the future. Be specific, and be real.

Talk out a problem with a good friend and get back on track.

Follow up on a job application or interview.

Keep up with a plan to exercise at certain times every week.

Meet with a tutor or instructor when you run up against a tough concept in class.

Persist

Habit for Success

Schedule, and plan to attend, weekly study group meetings.
Building Skills
for successful learning

Where are you headed, and how will college get you there?
Describe an important goal that you believe college will help you achieve.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

How can you transition to college-level work?
Name the top two challenges you face in dealing with the difference between college and high school.
________________________________________________________________________________________

How can habits change your life for the better?
How does a bad habit differ from a good habit?
________________________________________________________________________________________
Name two strategies you would use to change or replace a habit that holds you back.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

What habits fuel college success?
What do the Habits for Success help people to do, specifically?
________________________________________________________________________________________
Name the three Habits for Success that you feel you most need to work on.
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
Target Challenges at the Start

Ponder these two points:

- Instructors note that many students, all over the country, lack academic preparation in reading, writing, and math.
- Students note that the amount of work they had to do in high school often does not prepare them for how hard and how much they need to study in college.

FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS THAT GATHER INFORMATION. What are your day-to-day classroom experiences? Do you feel that you lack skill in reading, writing, math, or any other area? How well do you think your high school experience prepared you for the amount of work necessary in college?

NEXT, BRAINSTORM. On a separate piece of paper, generate ideas about how you have addressed academic or workload challenges in the past. What has worked, and what has not? Flip through the text and find chapters and sections that might help you in your particular area of challenge. What catches your eye?

FINALLY, GET MOVING. Make a plan to address a specific challenge. Commit to two strategies from the book, and include page numbers where you can explore them. Look at the syllabus for this course to see when you will cover those topics. Finally, locate one campus resource that can help you and indicate when you will contact them and what you plan to gain. Then, put your plan to work starting now.

Your challenge: __________________________________________________________

Book strategy #1 __________________________________________________________ on page ____

Book strategy #2 __________________________________________________________ on page ____

Syllabus dates/weeks to watch: ________________________ and _________________________

Campus resource: __________________________________________________________

Location: ___________________________ Phone/e-mail: _____________________________

Contact resource by: ___________________________ Goal of contact: _____________________
Shifting to College-Level Work

Gather in a group of three to five students. Together, brainstorm some challenges of transitioning to college-level work—challenges that prevent students from performing well in the classroom or getting work done outside of it. When you have as many challenges as you have group members, each person should choose one and write it at the top of a blank sheet of paper.

Look at the challenge on your page. Under it, write one practical idea about how to overcome it. When everyone is finished, pass the pages one person to the left. Then write an idea about the new challenge at the top of the page you’ve received. If you can’t think of anything, pass the page as is. Continue this way until your original page comes back to you. Then discuss the ideas as a group, analyzing which ideas might work better than others. Add other ideas to the lists if you think of them.

The last step: On your own, keeping in mind your group discussion, list something about the transition that you personally find challenging. Then, name two specific actions that you commit to taking in order to face that challenge.

Challenge: __________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

1. _________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
**Test Prep: Start It Now**

**Persistence Is a Test Preparation Tool**

The preparation for tests scheduled at any time in the term starts on the first day of class. Why? Because everything you do for a course—every fact and idea you hear in class, every concept you read, all the work you generate for your assignments, and everything you talk about with classmates—builds your knowledge, preparing you to show what you know on test day. In addition, the syllabus you receive on the first day gives you the information you need to plan your time.

Make a plan to persist toward test success starting now. Looking at the syllabi for the courses you are taking this semester, determine which test is coming up first. Fill in the following in relation to this test:

**Course:** ____________________________________________________________

**Test date and time (note this in your planner):** __________________________

From what you can tell from the syllabus, topic(s) covered on the test: __________

_______________________________________________________________________

**Time each week you will study for this test (for example, every Thursday from 3:00 to 4:30):**

_______________________________________________________________________ (put this in your planner as well)

**Office hours for the instructor who teaches this course:** ______________________

Use this information to prepare—honor your weekly study times, consult with your instructor, and stay aware of the test date. After the test, evaluate whether organizing your study time, defining your study topics, and knowing how to contact your instructor with questions helped you persist and succeed. Write your evaluation here:

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________