

Teacher Toolkit

Featuring...
25 Student-Friendly Tips...
That Will Make YOUR Life Easier



S.O.A.R.
STUDY SKILLS

If you are a teacher who is tired of seeing students NOT work to their potential due to disorganization and poor homework/study habits, the resources in this Teacher Toolkit will be helpful for you, your students, and their parents.

Pages 4-8 of this Toolkit contain a Homework Scorecard survey and evaluation form to be copied and distributed to your students. This scorecard will help students to determine which of our 25 Student-Friendly Tips will make the most difference for them.

Pages 9-12 are our 25 Student-Friendly Tips. Feel free to copy and distribute these pages to your students and their parents.

Pages 13-18 contain further information that is useful for teachers. You may also be interested in visiting the "Educators" section of our website, www.StudySkills.com. On this page you will have the opportunity to request a free digital review copy of our Study Skills Curriculum and learn more about the simple, teacher and student-friendly system that you can incorporate into your classroom.

If you are a parent or student, please visit www.StudySkills.com/parents/ to sign up to receive our Homework Rx[®] Toolkit for parents and students.

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Which study skills are the best for your students? To find out, have them complete our Homework Scorecard!

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Are you tired of seeing your students NOT work to their potential? Incomplete and lost homework assignments are a major complaint we hear from teachers. Your students need study skills! Find out how a few simple strategies can make a big difference for them.

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If you enjoy this Toolkit, you will LOVE our other resources.

Homework Scorecard

Note for Teachers: Reproduce this scorecard and distribute to your students.

Which study skills are best for you? Answer the questions below by writing "yes" or "no" in the blank spaces before each question. When you are finished, you can analyze your score on page 6.

Have you ever...

- _____ 1. Felt "dumb" or "stupid" because of difficulties in school?
- _____ 2. Felt like you do not have many talents?
- _____ 3. Felt like homework takes longer than it should?
- _____ 4. Wanted to earn better grades while still having time for extra-curricular activities and socializing?
- _____ 5. Forgotten to do a homework assignment?
- _____ 6. Forgotten certain books, notebooks, or folders at school that you needed for homework?
- _____ 7. Been annoyed as your parents 'nagged' you about homework or studying?
- _____ 8. Brought the wrong folder or notebook to class?
- _____ 9. Misplaced a homework assignment that you knew you did?
- _____ 10. Looked inside your bag or locker to find a sea of randomly stashed papers staring back at you?
- _____ 11. Had a hard time keeping your room neat and organized?
- _____ 12. Felt rushed or frustrated getting ready for school in the morning?
- _____ 13. Been unsure of how to ask questions in class or talk to your teacher?

Homework Scorecard-Continued

- _____ 14. Had a hard time remembering information when you read a textbook?
- _____ 15. Felt completely overwhelmed when you have had to write a paper?
- _____ 16. Thought “There must be a better way to prepare for tests!”?
- _____ 17. Studied hard for a test, only to be disappointed with your score?
- _____ 18. Been shocked, and occasionally disappointed, by the grades on your report card?
- _____ 19. Had good intentions of doing well in school, but lost track of your goals?
- _____ 20. Learned a few “study skills,” but did not know how or when to use them?

Turn to the next page to discover how the answers on this scorecard can help you find the study tips and strategies that will make homework easier – and faster – for you.

Evaluate Your Scorecard

If you answered “no” to all of the questions on the previous page, then you are a perfect student who: gets homework done *quickly*, earns *great* grades on tests, and has *all* papers organized so that every assignment is turned on time.

If, however, you answered “yes” to ANY of the Scorecard questions, you are not alone! Nearly every student can afford to learn a few things about how to make homework easier. (After all, *most* students are never taught how to do homework and study efficiently.) If you answered “yes” to questions #:

1 or 2... you might be surprised to learn that most problems students experience in school are related to simply not knowing *how* to study.

What to do:

- Take a close look at all of the tips in “25 Student-Friendly Study Tips... That Will Make YOUR Life Easier!” Choose two and try them today!
- Take our “How Are You Smart?” Inventory in the [SOAR® Study Skills Program](#) to learn more about your unique sets of intelligence and how you can build on those to achieve school success.

3, 4, 5, 6, or 7... then you need to learn how to set goals and manage your time so you can get your homework done in a flash *without* sacrificing good grades.

What to do:

- Many of the items in the “25 Tips” guide will be helpful for you, especially #s: 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21. Highlight these tips and try two today.
- The “Set goals” section of the [SOAR® Study Skills Program](#) is a simple, systematic way to set goals for yourself and/or with your family. You will also learn an easy routine to help you manage your time so you can have better grades AND more time for fun!

Evaluate Your Scorecard-Continued

8, 9, 10, 11, or 12... then you could use some help with organization. Don't fret, though...You can *learn* how to get organized easily and painlessly.

What to do:

- Take a closer look at tip #s 2, 10, 22, 23, 24, and 25 in the "25 Tips" guide.
- With the "Organize" section of the [SOAR® Study Skills Program](#), you will be amazed at how easy it is to get organized; your papers, book bag, locker, and even your bedroom can be whipped into shape –and *kept* in shape- with our simple system.

13, 14, 15, 16, or 17...then you can use some help with the nitty-gritty stuff like studying for and taking tests, reading textbooks, writing papers, and working with teachers.

What to do:

- Tip #s 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, and 17 of the "25 Tips" guide provide helpful study suggestions.
- The "Ask questions" section of the [SOAR® Study Skills Program](#) will show you how asking questions is a simple strategy for: working with teachers, reading textbooks, preparing for tests, and taking tests. This section is easy to learn, easy to use, and is VERY effective.

18, 19, or 20... then you need to learn how to keep track of your grades and your goals. You also need help getting started with a homework plan that will work for **you**.

Evaluate Your Scorecard-Continued

What to do:

- You will find the best resource for these problems is the “**R**ecord your progress” section of the [SOAR® Study Skills Program](#). Here, you will find helpful tips for improving your grades by tracking them, integrating all of the study skills you know (and may learn) while keeping focused on your goals, and tips for getting started.



On the next page, you will find our helpful homework guide, “25 Student-Friendly Study Tips... That Will Make Your Life Easier!” We encourage you to read all of the strategies, but pay particular attention to the ones best suited for you, according to your Homework Scorecard.

25 Student-Friendly Study Tips... That Will Make Your Life Easier!

Note for Teachers: Reproduce these 25 Student-Friendly Study Tips and share them with your students.

If you are like most students, chances are good that homework is not anywhere near the top of their list of favorite things to do! One major reason that homework can be such a drag is that most people are never actually taught *how* to learn and study.

The ideas that follow are just a few things you can do to make homework easier. Start by choosing two or three strategies, using your *Study Skills Scorecard* to help you identify the best tips for you. Not every tip will work for *everybody*, but you will be amazed at how quickly a few simple strategies can make a big difference for them!

1. **Do the most important things first.** The hours between 3 PM and 6 PM are usually the most wasted hours of the day. Challenge yourself to make them the most productive hours by doing your homework with-in one hour of arriving home. Then, you can have a full evening of free-time for yourself.
2. **When you first sit down to do your homework, take 2 minutes to put loose papers into the proper folders.** Make this a part of your daily routine so you can save valuable time (instead of searching for lost assignments) and avoid losing points on missing work.
3. **Use the next 8 minutes to reread any notes you took in school earlier that day.** Reviewing your notes for a few minutes every day saves hours of studying when test-time comes around.
4. **As you read your notes, underline or *star* any content that you do not understand.** Ask your teacher for clarification about it the next day. Teachers love these questions because they indicate that you care about your school work. A few good questions can earn you a lot of respect from your teachers.
5. **When reviewing your notes, read them out loud.** Your brain will remember the information in your notes better because it will be processing the information in three ways: through your eyes as you

25 Student-Friendly Study Tips - Continued

- read it, your mouth as you say it, and your ears as you hear your own voice.
6. **Create potential test questions out of your notes.** Creating questions helps you learn better than simply reciting or memorizing information because the *process* of creating questions forces you to think about the information at a higher level.
 7. **Do you find it hard to sit still?** Get up and walk around while reviewing your notes! Movement improves the circulation to your brain and also helps active people focus better.
 8. **Get involved!** It can be difficult to stay motivated if academic work is the only thing you take away from school. Get involved in at least one extra-curricular activity (sports, band, clubs, etc...) to help you develop good friendships and a positive attitude about school.
 9. **Remove distractions from your study area.** Turn off your cell phone, put your iPod® away, and do not log on to email until your homework is done. You will get your homework done much faster and then have much *more* time to enjoy these things once your homework is complete.
 10. **Fill a bucket or basket with a pair of scissors, set of markers, ruler, calculator, glue, stapler, and several pens and pencils.** Take this container with you wherever you do your homework. With all of your supplies handy, you will not have to run around your home to find things you need and risk getting side-tracked by the TV, video games, computer, phone calls, refrigerator, etc.
 11. **Does homework take too long?** Invest in an electronic timer (approximately \$7 at most superstores) and set it for the amount of time you think it *should* take you to do each assignment. Challenge yourself to beat the timer.
 12. **As you do your homework, constantly ask yourself, "How can this assignment help me study for the next test?"** This question will help you stay focused on the purpose of your assignment and encourage you to do your best work, while still working to beat your timer! It will also save a lot of study time when it comes time to prepare for a test.

25 Student-Friendly Study Tips - Continued

13. **When you come to a question (or group of questions) that you do not understand, skip it!** Why waste a lot of time/energy fretting over a few questions/problems? Move on to the items you can do and then come back to the skipped questions later. Quite often, you will be able to figure out these answers after completing the rest of the assignment.
14. **Keep a bottle of cool water on hand while you study.** Water keeps your body and most importantly, your brain, hydrated.
15. **Move often.** Your circulation slows down and your brain becomes stagnant after you have been sitting still for 40-45 minutes. You will actually be more efficient if you take a short, 1-2 minute break every 40 minutes. Stand up, do some jumping jacks, listen to ONE song on your radio or iPod®, and return to your homework. Do not let yourself turn on your cell phone or watch TV because you will be less likely to return to your homework quickly.
16. **Reward yourself.** It can be hard, even for the most motivated students, to stay disciplined. Determine a reward for yourself every night. For example, "I will get my math and social studies homework done and then I will treat myself to some ice cream." Or, "If I can get my homework done by 6:00, then I will have time to shoot some hoops with my friends, call a couple of friends, then watch my favorite TV show at 8:00 PM."
17. **Make your homework easier tomorrow night by reading the next section of your textbook for each class tonight (or at least read the pictures, captions, and summary questions).** When you read before class, you will anticipate more about what is going on in class, which will make it easier to stay focused and understand the topic more quickly.
18. **As soon as you finish a homework assignment, take 12 seconds to put it in the correct folder.** Do not let your homework get left behind at home or even lost in the wrong folder. Put it away immediately and you will save many headaches.
19. **Communicate with your parents and other family members.** Tell them what you plan to do so they can support your plan. The more information you volunteer, the less likely your parents will be to "nag" you with questions.

25 Student-Friendly Study Tips – Continued

20. **Use a planner.** Make your life easier by using a planner in school to record your homework and any other things that you have to do. Using a planner will help you complete assignments (and turn them in) on time, reducing lost points on late assignments.
21. **Make the planner easy to use.** Mark your place by using a binder clip as a “bookmark.” A binder clip works better than a paper clip or bookmark because it stays in place and is easy to grab when you are in a hurry.
22. **Check your planner before you go to bed to make sure you took care of everything.** Reviewing your planner at night is a great habit to develop because it ensures that you will be well prepared for school the next day. The more prepared you are, the better day you will have.
23. **Gather all of your folders, books, notebooks, supplies, etc... and put them in your bag before you go to sleep.** Mornings are chaotic and most people are still a bit groggy before they leave for school, so it is very easy to forget important things at home in the morning. Avoid this problem by gathering everything you need the next day *before* you go to bed.
24. **Lay out your clothes (including coat and shoes) for tomorrow.** When you start the day feeling prepared, you will *be* prepared throughout the day.
25. **Get sleep.** Most students do not get enough sleep. The more rested you are, the more you will be able to enjoy your time in school, pay attention in class, work more efficiently, and ultimately...learn more in less time!



If you found these tips helpful OR if you are looking for more powerful solutions, check out our other resources at www.StudySkills.com.

Study Skills Are Boring! ...Or, Are They?

"Study skills are boring!" That is what most students tell me when I first meet them.

Boring!? These are skills that can help them get better grades and spend less time on homework...how can they be boring?

Honestly, there is a good explanation for the bad rap that study skills have developed over the years because a lot of boring things are labeled as "study skills." Learning how to use guide words in a dictionary...a necessary skill, but boring! SQ3R...a reading strategy with many merits, but leaves me asking, "Who wants to take the time to do all five steps?" Boring! Identifying the main idea and supporting details on endless worksheets? Another important skill, but still boring.

There is a broader and more important role study skills should be playing in the lives of our middle and high school students, especially in our current Information Age, when we must prepare students for many careers and jobs that do not even exist yet.

Study skills are:

- The skills required to be an independent learner.
- Skills that build confidence.
- Skills that develop efficiency.
- Skills that improve performance to prepare our students for high-stakes tests and the globally competitive job market of the future.
- Skills that enable students to be proactive, make good decisions, and think critically.

The LAST thing they should be is boring!

We were all born with a natural desire to learn. Infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers love to explore their world and take pride in learning new things. Just yesterday, my four-year-old was so excited about learning that he stood on top of his chair and raised both arms in triumph exclaiming in a

'na-na-na-na-na-na' tone, "I learned a new wo-rd! I learned a new wo-rd!" THAT was utter exhilaration over learning!

But, sometime in the elementary years, most students lose that enthusiasm for learning, usually because they lose all of their choices. Learning becomes dictated by their teachers, school districts, and state-mandated curriculum. They are suddenly swallowed into a bureaucracy of texts, tests, and lectures that would bore any rational human being.

Much of these mandates and "lack of choices" are and will remain out of students' control, but there is a vital component we can offer students to bring some pizzazz back to learning. Teach them study skills... principles and strategies to be organized and learn efficiently. Show them they have the power to beat the system. Well, maybe not beat the system, but at least work with the system strategically to be successful.

When strategic learning enters the picture, students regain some control. They develop personal power. And they learn important life-long skills that will someday help them manage a home and career.

These may sound like lofty concepts, but they have real, concrete implications. For example, as parents and educators:

- We can acknowledge that organizing papers and school-work is difficult because traditional systems actually complicate the process. We can then explore principles for organizing and strategies to simplify the process.
- We can acknowledge that textbooks are boring. But, if students understand how to maximize their brain's learning process, they can be strategic readers and exponentially increase their reading comprehension while only reading a fraction of the text.
- When we want to say, "Why can't you plan ahead?!" we can pause and understand that they have never really learned how to plan ahead. Armed with that perspective, we can help them discover how to prioritize their time and think proactively.

There is a commercial that depicts two professionals heading into their office building at the beginning of the day. They are both neatly groomed and dressed professionally. You can presume from their appearance and

surroundings that they are well-educated people. They are both half-way up an escalator when the escalator suddenly stops.

They look shocked and bewildered. "I don't need this!" complains the woman. "Figures!" grumbles the man. They look around in panic and start feeling around for their cell phones, but both discover they have forgotten their phones.

As the commercial continues, these two "smart professionals" remain stranded for what appears to be hours, yelling and screaming for help and wallowing in their unfortunate sorrow that they are stuck on an escalator.

That's right...it's an escalator, NOT an elevator.

Are you wondering why they don't just stand up and walk off?

That's the point of the commercial...some solutions are so blatantly obvious to some, but not to all. Students, in particular, are commonly stuck on their own escalators, running for help every time they get stuck and not employing any strategies or critical thinking to move forward.

Arming students with study skills --skills for thinking strategically about organizing, managing time, and learning—gives them the power to simply stand up and walk off their own escalator.

Taking control over their learning? Learning how to 'play in the system' with strategy? There is nothing boring about that!

About the Author

Susan Kruger, M.Ed.

While Susan has extensive professional experience and training, she will tell you that her greatest asset as a teacher and study skills coach is that she has been a student for a VERY LONG time.

Growing up, Susan was always the youngest member of her class and struggled in school. She was frequently frustrated with her grades that, after spending a lot of time preparing for tests or projects, never seemed to reflect her effort. She often felt frustrated and unmotivated.

However, Susan is living proof that it is possible to get better grades in less time! During her first semester of college, Susan learned several study strategies that taught her how to study smarter *-not* harder- enabling her to earn a 3.9 GPA that first semester. Susan was amazed to discover that these great grades were actually *easier* to earn than her mediocre grades from high school!

Susan has now spent the last 18 years teaching hundreds of students how to achieve success in school while also creating time for fun! She began tutoring individual students in study skills but the demand for her expertise grew, so she created the SOAR® Study Skills Workshops to reach more students. She used her experience as a teacher, tutor, and of course, as a student, to identify the core strategies students need to be successful in school. Her workshops were a great success in her community and rendered a lot of attention from schools, parents, and the local media.

Susan now has programs and resources for families across the country and around the world. Her books, classes, and audio programs provide easy and realistic solutions to the most common study problems that students and their families face. She helps students discover how to develop confidence and be successful in school, helps families tackle homework together peacefully, and enables teachers to provide tangible and successful strategies for their students.

Susan is a Certified Teacher with a Master's Degree as a Reading/Learning Specialist. She travels the country training teachers in study skills/language arts learning and lends her talents as a consultant for a major textbook company. When she is not "working," Susan enjoys the company of her son, daughter, husband (a fellow educator), and her large extended family.

Additional Resources

[SOAR® Study Skills: A simple and efficient system for earning better grades in less time](#) – Resource book for students & educators

[SOAR® Study Skills Multi-Media Teacher's Guide](#) – Curriculum guide for educators

[SOAR® Study Skills for Primary Students \(K-2\): Teacher Training Video](#) – Educators will learn SOAR® strategies tailored to meet their student's developmental needs.

[SOAR® Study Skills for Intermediate Students \(3-5\): Teacher Training Video](#) – Educators will learn SOAR® strategies tailored to meet their student's developmental needs.

[SOAR® Study Skills for Elementary Students \(K-5\): Parent Presentation](#) – A ready-to-go presentation specifically designed to introduce the SOAR® Study Skills Program to the parents of Kindergarten-5th grade students.

[Teaching Writing \(K-5\): Efficient & Effective Strategies for Time-Strapped Teachers](#) – Educators will learn the fundamentals of the SOAR® Writing Skills program.

[SOAR® Study Skills for Middle and High School Students \(6-12\): Teacher Training Video](#) – Educators will learn SOAR® strategies tailored to meet their student's developmental needs.

[SOAR® Study Skills for Middle and High School Students \(6-12\): Parent Presentation](#) – A ready-to-go presentation specifically designed to introduce the SOAR® Study Skills Program to the parents of 6th-12th grade students.

[SOAR® Study Skills Tutoring Enrichment Guide](#) – A Multi-Media Guide to be used for Tutoring, After-School Programs, Summer Programs, and Enrichment Classes.

[SOAR® Professional Development](#) – Topics include Study Skills, Organizing for Teachers, and Literacy. Live and web-based sessions available.