



CHAPTER 3
COLLEGE
STUDENT
SUCCESS

schedule serves them well.

A thoughtfully planned calendar can turn an overwhelming situation into a rich and interesting week that balances work and play, quiet time and socializing, challenge and fun.

Tip: Deliberately overestimate how much time it will take to complete long or important projects. For example, if you think it should take about six hours to complete a paper for your History class, allocate nine hours to finish it. If you finish the assignment in less time than need, you'll probably be happy about having some unexpected free time. If you underestimate how long it will take, you may find yourself staying up late, skipping a cool movie with friends, or turning in inferior academic work (when you know you could have done much better).

TIME MANAGEMENT

College students are busy

There are classes and labs to attend, homework to do, projects to finish, papers to write, and exams to study for. There are events on campus, activities in your hall or living group, and meetings for the clubs and organizations you join. The happiest and most successful students also make time for eating well, sleeping through the night, exercising regularly, spending time with friends, and relaxing and having fun. So how do you figure out how to make everything fit into the day, week, or semester? Here are a few tried and true strategies.

1. Make a plan

Get an organizer, planner, app, or calendar, and plan out each hour (or half hour) of the entire week. When will you be attending class? When will you do your reading, preparation, homework, writing, and projects and presentations? When will you be getting about eight hours of sleep each night? When will you eat, exercise, and hang out with friends? When will you be working? Which meetings and campus events will you attend that week? What's due that week?

The experts recommend studying about two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. For example, if you are enrolled in 14 credit hours, you should plan about 28 hours outside of class each week to complete assignments and study. Most successful students report that beginning the semester with a more rigid and generous study

Organization

From my experience, the best advice I can give is to stay organized. I have found that the more organized I am, the less stressed I feel. On the first day of classes, take your syllabus from each class and combine the course schedules into one spreadsheet. By having all of your due dates listed in one place, it is easy to see when you have exams or big projects coming up. Rather than waiting to the last minute to start studying for an exam you forgot about, this centralized assignment sheet will help you prepare ahead of time. If you are prone to procrastination, this is a way to ensure you will not fall behind.

– Jenna Snell, Residential Learning Assistant for the Healthcare for the Heartland: Rural Medicine CAT Community

2. Prioritize

Put your time and energy into those efforts that you care most about and those that are most closely connected to your goals. Be aware of deadlines, and do your best to make sure you arrive at events on time and hand in assignments by the due date. But you'll also want to prioritize important work whose deadline might seem further away at the moment—papers and exams that carry a lot of points, concepts or skills that you'll need to master to do well in the rest of the class, or topics that are fundamentally important to the career you're preparing for or the kind of person you want to be.

Careful prioritizing can reduce stress. By deciding what's important to you and your goals at college, you are often better prepared to say "no" to commitments or obligations of lesser importance for which you really don't have the time.

Tip: Don't spend too much time on activities or projects that really don't matter that much. Gaming and social media can consume a lot of time, when they're not made a part of a larger time management plan that can include such activities but prioritizes big exams, class attendance, and sleep. But even within important activities—an essential class, for example—figure out what to prioritize. For example, what's more important: claiming a few extra credit points that require attendance at a two-hour event plus a paper that takes an hour to write, or spending that time on the final term paper that will make up 30% of your final grade?

3. Figure out your daily rhythms and habits and find your flow

The best students often get lost in working on their most difficult, challenging, and important academic projects. They get in "the zone," and they produce impressively high quality work. Though it can be hard sometimes to figure out how to get in the zone, there are some things you can try to increase your chances of finding that groove or that flow that will produce your best work.

Focus. Devote your attention and energy to the task before you. Multitasking doesn't really help produce the best work.

Get rid of distractions. Ignore your Twitter feed, close the door if it's noisy, silence your phone. Do whatever you need to keep your energy focused on your project. Your emails and texts will be there for you when you're done.

Figure out when you do your best work. Are you an early bird or a night owl? When do you feel at your best, confident and ready to take on anything? When during the day do you slump or lose your energy? If your daily routine has you energized in the late morning or early evening, then block off those times for doing your very best work. Use this time to tackle your most important and most

challenging academic work (your hardest class, a challenging book, that final term paper). If you slump after lunch or feel a little too relaxed late at night, you might use these times for less important or less consuming kinds of activities (catching up on email, for example, or planning your weekend).

Tip: Once you figure out when during the day you're at your best, make it your own time. Don't let Netflix viewing, busy work, unexpected interruptions, an extra shift at your job, or other lower priority activities take over. This is *your* time. Use it for what's most important to you and your goals at college.

Organization

Get a planner and get in the habit of using it daily. At the beginning of each semester, write down all important dates like tests, quizzes, papers, etc., This way you can stay on top of everything and manage your time well. Also, never complain about the Derby, because you will miss it as soon as you move out of the residence halls.

— Sarah Pennington, Residential Learning Assistant for the What Not to Wear: the Psychology of Fashion CAT Community

INFORMATION LITERACY

What is information literacy?

Information literacy is knowing when you need information, being able to find the information you need, and then using information effectively.

Why should I care?

You will be writing papers, preparing speeches, creating art, and/or conducting research in college. You will need information for these projects to:

- discover new ideas
- provide context for your ideas
- confirm (or question) ideas

We are swimming in a world of information so deep it might as well be the Marianas Trench (<http://xkcd.com/1040/>). It's in books, on the internet, and in the memory banks of our elders.

There is so much information that you can access, and so many places that you can search that it can be overwhelming if you don't have a plan. Information literacy is the plan that will help you.

How do I do it?

Here are some steps to improving your information literacy:

1. Define the problem or task

What are you looking for? If your problem or question, also known as a thesis, is too broad or vague, you may be overwhelmed with information. If your question is too narrow, you might not find anything at all. Take a moment to refine your question. This step will help you focus your search and zero in on what you need to find. An easy rule of thumb is that if someone has written an entire book on your topic, it's too broad. If it's something that only your aunt has ever talked about, it may be too narrow.

Question: Being tall makes you a better person.

Discussion: First, is that even a question? No. It's an assumption. Make it a question that invites investigating multiple perspectives (because, really, is a short person going to agree with that statement?) And, while you're at it, better in what ways? How do you define tall?

Better question: Does being taller than average have advantages in the workplace?

2. Locate information

Now that you have your question, where will you find background information, research, and other information to help you answer your question?

There are many places to access information: other people, books, journal articles, websites, videos, etc. You go to certain types of websites for different types of information you want for your personal life (Reddit, Tumblr, Instagram, Hulu). You will also go to different resources for your research in college, depending on what you need. A book is helpful for some information needs, but other times articles or a music recording will be more relevant.

A good starting point is to go to the library's homepage (www.lib.k-state.edu) and use Search It. It's like Google, but searches for items (books, articles, videos, etc.) the library has access to physically and electronically.

Not all information is equal. Once you find what you need, it's up to you to decide if the information is accurate, current, relevant, and unbiased.

Note taking

Research the different methods of note-taking to see which will work best for you. Make sure you keep all your notes in one place so you don't lose any. If you can find the time, rewrite your notes after class in a bullet-pointed summary (it takes less than five minutes). Doing this will help you reinforce and organize the information you just learned. Also, take notes when you are reading your textbook. If you keep all of these notes together, it will help you reduce your study time because 1) it's all together in one place and 2) you will actually know more of the information.

– Jael Whitney, Residential Learning Assistant for the Talking Physics CAT Community

3. Analyze the found information

Once you have your information, you need to verify that it's legit.

- *Currency:* Check the publication date and determine whether it is sufficiently current for your topic.
- *Coverage* (relevance): Consider whether the source is relevant to your research and whether it covers the topic adequately for your needs.
- *Authority:* Discover the credentials of the authors of the source and determine their level of expertise and knowledge about the subject.
- *Accuracy:* Consider whether the source presents accurate information and whether you can verify that information.
- *Objectivity* (purpose): Think about the author's purpose in creating the source and consider how that affects its usefulness to your research.

You might find sources that disagree with each other. When that happens, review the criteria listed above to figure out why. You can discuss this disagreement in your paper.

4. Back yourself up (a.k.a. cite it)

Citing your information sources

- gives credit to the work you used
- provides a paper trail that will help others find the information
- helps you avoid plagiarism

Think of it this way: a paper (or an argument) is like an outfit. You put it together using a lot of different designers. A bibliography is your way of giving credit to the designers who made the clothes you used to complete your look. You're not claiming that you hand-sewed each piece, you just knew how to put it together.

The [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) at Purdue University is a great place to learn about citing your sources.

5. Review your thesis

Sometimes everything you find perfectly answers or supports your original question. Other times, you discover that the evidence causes you to question or revise your thesis. This is okay! It means that you've learned something about your topic, which is why you are doing the research. If the focus of your project will be dramatically changed or if you were assigned a specific topic, be sure to talk to your professor. But usually you can just refine your thesis and project to account for your new knowledge.

You don't need to know everything; you just need to know how to find it

A lot of the research you will be doing will be to write papers for your classes. For help with finding information and writing your paper, you can use the [Writing a Research Paper Guide](#) as a place to start.

If you need help at any time, you can always ask a librarian: www.lib.k-state.edu. You can chat one-on-one with them!

WRITING

Writing is hard...

and don't let anyone tell you differently. Typing, tweeting, and texting are easy because you practice them. So college-level writing will only become

easier if you practice. The process of putting your ideas on paper in a developed, cohesive manner that effectively translates the thoughts in your mind to your reader's mind is ridiculously hard, so make sure you practice as much as possible. This is true whether you are writing a research paper, a love letter, a job application, or anything that has passion, truth, and substance.

Have you labeled yourself a "bad writer"? You shouldn't; what happened to you in the past does not define your identity as a college-level writer. Writers become good through reading and writing. Good writers aren't born; students become good writers through the choices they make. As a new college student, you can choose to read the homework and assignment guidelines, meet with your professor, sign up for a tutoring session, and grow as a writer, or you can choose to keep all of your bad habits and your mediocre writing skills. Students at K-State have become better writers in the first month, after the first semester, or even after four entire years. Their secret? Hard work. And one place that can help you with your writing is not secret at all:

K-State Writing Center

Enthusiastic and highly trained tutors will spend 30 minutes helping you brainstorm, develop, or revise your papers. Scheduled, walk-in, and online appointments are all options. These tutoring sessions are FREE, and you can find out more information about getting a tutor at [K-State's tutoring web site](#). The Writing Center is located in Rm 122D in the English/Counseling Services Building.

Remember, students don't go to the Writing Center because they are bad writers; they go because they want to become better writers.

CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking means thinking completely, deeply, and open-mindedly

College is not about teaching you *what* to think. College should teach you *how* to think.

You cannot rely on your parents, your professors,

or your friends to think for you. You are capable of making your own decisions, choosing your own actions, and forging your own education. You must learn to craft what you think, what you say, and what you do so you can be the best version of yourself.

This isn't meant to pressure you, but to challenge and free you. If you accomplish one thing your first year, strive to develop the sense of curiosity that comes with honing critical thinking skills. A dedication to intellectual curiosity will serve you for the rest of your life. You can start with everyday decisions. Don't like your major? Be curious enough to look in to other options. Afraid of joining a club? Be curious and ask a professor or RA what clubs they recommend. Intimidated by the course material in a difficult class? Be curious and find a classmate or tutor to review some concepts. Critical thinking is about never hiding from knowledge and being motivated enough to get the resources you need to make the best decision possible. Critical thinking is being aware of others and knowing how your decision affects them as well as yourself; it's about abandoning selfishness and thinking for the greater good.

Critical thinking is also an important concept in developing as a scholar. Scholars are people who do more than just memorize for the test; they learn new concepts and connect their learning between different subjects and classes. Making connections between seemingly unrelated subjects gives you access to a whole new world of knowledge and the application of that knowledge is what creates a great academic experience.

The old saying goes "curiosity killed the cat," but for K-State Wildcats, that's not true. Curiosity and the determination to satisfy that curiosity through participating in class, engaging with course material, attending lectures and plays and sporting events and striking up conversations with other students sitting next to you in class instead of choosing mindless interactions with electronic devices – none of these will kill you. Curiosity and critical thinking skills don't kill the 'Cats; they create them. Critical thinking is part of the Wildcat Way.

DIVERSITY

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."

-Audre Lorde

What does it mean?

What is diversity? It is a word you might hear a lot, but how can we define it in a meaningful way, and how can we integrate it into our lives so we're not just checking off the "diversity" box?

Diversity, in its most basic definition, is simply a group of people with different social and cultural identities working, learning, playing, and living together. You might hear the term diversity together with multiculturalism. Here at K-State, and in most university settings, multiculturalism means we work to foster respect and understanding of varying social groups, races, religions, ethnicities, sexualities, and cultures. Culture encompasses the beliefs, arts, and ways of thinking or behaving of a particular group; for example, part of the culture of K-State is that we are a family. You should not simply be surrounding, or "collecting", people who are different from you, but engaging with them to understand knowledge and ideas from varying perspectives.

Some of the forms and categories that we use when discussing diversity are:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Sex/Gender
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation
- (Dis)ability
- Age
- Socioeconomic Class
- Religion
- Political Affiliation

Think of the other students, staff, and faculty of K-State as your community. We all have different backgrounds, but we are working together with the common goal of furthering our education and continually engaging in critical thinking. This is an easier task when working respectfully

with a group of people. Part of being an educated person is knowing about others and working effectively with people who are different from you – college is a great place to gain practice for your future professional work and place in diverse communities.

Looking in before reaching out

Oftentimes when we think of diversity our minds immediately go to others, and how they are different from us. However, an important first step is to look inwards and examine our own identities and biases before engaging with someone else.

Who are you? There are a variety of different identity categories that influence the ways that we shape ourselves. These categories can also inform our actions in the world and how we respond to those that differ from us. These include, but aren't limited to, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, class, and religion. Try to think critically about the personal values and beliefs you hold. Some ways to get started are to ask yourself the following questions:

What informs you? Who influences your understandings of yourself and of others? List some out, and try to add some specific examples (we made a short list to get you started):

- Parents
- Peers
- Media (television, movies, social media, advertising, etc)
- Specific personal experiences

After looking at some of your influences, work to examine your ideas and beliefs more critically. Do you hold any biases or believe stereotypes about certain groups of people? Where might these be coming from? How can you move beyond those?

Try to keep in mind that mere tolerance should not be your end goal. Go beyond tolerance and begin to respect and celebrate the differences among people. Enhance your understanding, and the ways in which you learn. Remember that you are not an individual learning in the vast vacuum of space; rather you are part of a larger community, and other people will help to shape you and the culture you engage with.

Seeking and celebrating diversity

“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer... education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.”

- bell hooks

Classes:

Within the university you have a unique opportunity for engaged learning. While here at K-State, many different people from varying backgrounds surround you. A world of difference is at your fingertips. Actively seek out any chance you can to learn from those around you.

When focusing on learning within the classroom, K-State has an inclusive curriculum and many opportunities for you to explore:

The K-State 8 general education program helps students widen their perspectives, explore relationships among subjects and build critical and analytical thinking skills. K-State 8 exposes students to a broad range of knowledge in different academic areas. The program shapes well-rounded thinkers and helps prepare students for careers, graduate school and other post-graduate experiences.

One of the 8 Areas is Human Diversity within the U.S. in which many classes focus on diverse perspectives. When deciding on your class schedule with your advisor you can actively seek out classes that fall into this category.

Getting involved

1. Grab three or four people and go to at least one Union Program Council event a month.
2. Week Of Welcome is a perfect time to gain some friends and get some free pancakes.
3. Be a lobby person, not a be-alone-in-your-room person, for the first two weeks of college. You won't meet new friends by sitting in your room.

– Parker Heinze, Residential Learning Assistant for the Psychology of Prejudice CAT Community

Student Organizations:

Your education does not end once you walk out of those classroom doors. Consider joining or going to meetings and events held by different student groups and organizations. This is a chance for you to get involved and meet new people!

Examples of student organizations at K-State:

- LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) and Allies
- BSU (Black Student Union)
- Christian Challenge
- International Buddies

K-State has hundreds of student groups that you can get involved with. For a full list of possibilities, check out www.k-state.edu/directories.orgs.

Preventing and responding to discrimination and prejudice

K-State has a very inclusive nondiscrimination policy:

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, ancestry, disability, military status, veteran status, or other non-merit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment, including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

Hate crimes and discrimination are not to be ignored or tolerated. But if you see this happening on campus, what actions can you take? Again, we ask that you look inward and examine your thoughts and feelings on the matter. How might you respond to discrimination? What if it doesn't affect you directly? Have you ever witnessed harassment? What can you, as a bystander, do to prevent or intercede?

While any instance of discrimination is unacceptable and might reflect poorly on your experience at K-State, these instances also allow you the opportunity to unite with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to create a positive impact on your community. Some steps you can

take might be to attend diverse events, training sessions, workshops, symposiums, movies, guest speakers, etc.

Also keep in mind that there are many campus resources available to help you or anyone else that has had to deal with discrimination or harassment, including the [Office of Institutional Equality](#), the [Office of Student Life](#), the [Center for Advocacy Response and Education \(CARE\)](#), the [LGBT Resource Center](#), and the [Campus Police](#).

Using resources

Like most freshmen in college, I found that the major I started in was not the right fit for me. During my first semester, I was very stressed about trying to determine what major to switch into. During the decision making process, I found that K-State had the resources to help me make the right decision. I visited with my advisor, faculty members in each college, and my Resident Assistant, and worked with the Academic and Career Information Center. Eventually, these conversations helped to find the perfect fit for me at K-State, and I know that if they can help me, they can help anyone.

– Erica Schmitz, Learning Assistant for the Art of Engineering CAT Community

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

An important factor in your college success is your overall wellness. Your wellness is a combination of how you are feeling physically and mentally and the interaction of you and your environment. College is a new environment with a new schedule and new friends and new food. All of that “new” can throw off your health and fitness plans.

There are many resources available to promote a healthy lifestyle to keep you feeling like you have every opportunity to be successful.

K-State Recreation Center (a.k.a. The Rec)

recservices.k-state.edu/

The recently renovated and expanded Rec Center offers weight and fitness areas, intramural sports, fitness classes that range from yoga to Zumba, courts for basketball, racquetball and handball, indoor tracks, a 40-foot rock wall, and so much

more! Students access the Rec with their student ID and most activities require no additional cost. The Rec is a very popular place with students and nearly 5,000 people use the Rec each day.

Lafene Student Health Center

www.k-state.edu/lafene/

Lafene is a full service medical provider that offers students affordable, convenient and high quality outpatient healthcare. It is located just west of campus on Sunset Avenue, near the Kramer residence hall community. This service is funded in part by the privilege fee you pay each semester. You do not have to pay to see a doctor and some services (such as prescriptions, lab tests, and physical therapy) are charged to you at a reduced rate.

Counseling Services

www.k-state.edu/counseling/

College is an important and busy time. Some students find that having someone to talk to about issues of stress, homesickness, career-decisions, or relationships is helpful in staying on track to their goals. Students may also discover or seek treatment for existing concerns such as depression or anxiety. You have up to four free sessions per year and additional sessions are very affordable.

Office of Student Life

www.k-state.edu/studentlife/

Difficult situations happen. It is likely that you will encounter a situation where you will need a sounding board or where you just are not sure where to turn for help. The Office of Student Life is your go-to resource for help if you need to leave campus for a personal or medical emergency or if you need an advocate in working with a professor and campus entity. The professionals who work in this office provide support and advice.

Your safety

K-State is a very safe campus. We enjoy a safe environment because faculty, student and staff consider campus safety to be an important, shared responsibility.

The University offer many programs and resources to help keep our environment safe. There is also an expectation that students look after each other

and take a strong personal stance to keep our community safe and supportive for everyone. Utilize the following resources and learn more about how you can enhance your ability to stay safe.

Sign up for K-State Alerts

www.k-state.edu/safety/alerts

Opt-in for K-State Alerts and sign up your parents and loved ones, too. K-State Alerts is a system that will send texts, e-mails, and phone messages in the events of severe weather or other emergencies.

Use Wildcat Walk and SafeRide

Call 785-395-SAFE or use one of the blue light emergency buttons on campus to have a Wildcat Walk safety escort walk you across campus (or up to two blocks off campus). You can also call ahead and have someone meet you in the parking lot to walk you back to your residence hall or another campus building.

SafeRide is a fixed-route shuttle service that runs Thursday through Saturday nights from 11 p.m. to 3 a.m. and offers students a safe ride home. Pick up locations and route maps are available online. www.k-state.edu/osas/saferide.

Be aware of your surroundings

A point of pride at K-State is our tradition of walking across campus and looking people in the eye. Keep your eye out for yourself and each other. The campus is well-lit and we have emergency/information phone boxes or “blue lights” around campus in areas with a lot of student traffic. Use the boxes to request assistance or to report a crime or suspicious behavior.

Protect your possessions

www.k-state.edu/studentlife/campusafety/theft

Theft of personal property is one of the most common crimes on college campuses across the country. Be sure to protect your stuff. Students sometimes are lulled into thinking that Manhattan is a small community and they can be relaxed about the seemingly little things – like locking car doors and residence hall rooms. Purchase a sturdy bike lock, watch your laptop or tablet, and keep other valuables secure. You may benefit from considering more ideas about preventing theft.

Party safe

www.k-state.edu/studentlife/campussafety/decisions

College life offers many occasions to celebrate with friends. Making good decisions around your use of alcohol and drugs is an important part of managing your personal wellness and keeping you on track toward your goals. Check out these tips for staying safe when out with friends.

Prevent sexual violence

www.k-state.edu/studentlife/campussafety/stopsexualviolence

Sexual violence is a very serious and real problem on college campuses across the country. Protect yourself and others by educating yourself about consent, ways to prevent sexual assault, and how to support those affected by sexual violence.

Report suspicious behavior

If you see anything that seems out of the ordinary, tell someone. The Office of Student Life is a good place to begin, 785-532-6432. If it is an emergency, call 911 and you will be connected to the K-State Police. Our police department is on duty 24/7.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Money

Money management might be the most useful skill you gain in college, so start early. You might feel overwhelmed by \$8,000 tuition bills, but remember while you are required to pay bills, you still make the choices about what you buy. Coffee, the food court, and the plethora of good-looking K-State gear available can make your money disappear. You can control your spending; you just might need some tools to help you make healthful financial decisions. Two resources on campus are:

Powercat Financial Counseling

Current students can schedule one-on-one financial advising appointments, and PCFC holds several events geared to educate you about smart financial decisions. The office is located on the first floor of the union in the office of student activities and services. Visiting Powercat Financial Counseling will answer your questions about student loans, budgeting, credit use, identity theft, and other aspects of your financial life.

Financial assistance advisor

You will also find that your personal financial assistance advisor, assigned to every K-State student, is a great resource. Your advisor can assist with questions about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the availability of loans, grants, work study and tuition waivers. Stop by Fairchild Hall to schedule an appointment.