



Dear Students,

When you get good grades, your parents and teachers are proud of you. School is more fun, and you feel good about yourself. Whether you get As or only dream of getting As, this booklet can help you get better grades.

If you read and follow the suggestions in this booklet, you will be on your way to getting great grades!

Linda O'Brien

In this book you will find quotes from a number of 5th grade students. These students have some excellent tips and advice for you!

Table of Contents

What Kind of Student Are You?	2
Step 1 Believe in Yourself	3
Step 2 Be Organized	4
Step 3 Manage Your Time Well	6
Step 4 Be Successful in Class	7
Step 5 Take Notes & Organize Handouts	11
Step 6 Read to Learn	13
Step 7 Study Smart	17
Step 8 Be a Good Test Taker	22
Step 9 Don't Sweat the Test	25
Step 10 Get Help When You Need It	27
Review	28
Tips for Parents	29

WOODBURN PRESS

Copyrighted Material
All Rights Reserved

What Kind of Student Are You?

To find out what kind of student you are, answer these questions. Write **Y** for Yes, **S** for Sometimes, or **N** for No.

I complete all of my homework. _____

I keep my papers organized. _____

I use my time wisely. _____

I ask and answer questions in class. _____

I understand what I read. _____

I pay attention in class. _____

I am good at taking tests. _____

I am happy with my grades. _____

Give yourself 2 points for each **Y**, 1 point for each **S**, and 0 for each **N**. Add up your points.

What is your score? _____

The closer your score is to 16, the better student you are. Whatever your score, this book can help you be a better student and get better grades!

Step 1

Believe in Yourself

“To succeed, we must first believe that we can.” M. Korda

In order for you to succeed, you have to believe in yourself and in your abilities. Here’s a little story to show how important it is to believe in yourself.

Two students are getting ready to race each other. They are about same size and they are both very fast. Everyone thinks that it will be an exciting race.



The first student runs out to the starting line. He looks confident. The people nearby hear him say, “I’m ready. I can win this.”

The second student appears. He slowly walks to the starting line. His head is down. He mumbles to himself, “I know I’m gonna lose.”

Two students – same size – same abilities. Even before the race starts, everyone knows who is going to win!

Whether you are a runner preparing for a race or a student trying to understand a difficult subject, it’s important that you believe in yourself. *Believe in your talents and abilities—and believe that you can succeed!*

Step 2

Be Organized

Do you always know what homework you have? Do you waste time looking for things?

To be a good student, you must be organized. Here are some great ideas on how you can be more organized.

Use a Student Planner or Assignment Notebook

A student planner or assignment notebook will help you keep track of your homework. When your teacher gives you an assignment, write it below the date it's given. Also write down the date it's due. When you finish an assignment, check it off.



Be sure to bring your planner to school every day and take it home each night.

Use your student planner to break large assignments down into smaller parts. For example, if you have an English paper due at the end of the week, you could break it down into these four parts.

Monday – Get information at library

Tuesday – Create outline

Wednesday – Write first draft

Thursday – Write final copy

"I look at my planner at the end of each day. It reminds me which books I need to take home." Maria

Use Folders for Schoolwork

Use a different color pocket folder for each subject (math, science, social studies, etc.). Keep your handouts and the assignments you're working on in one side of the folder. Put all returned homework papers and tests in the other side.

When a folder starts to get full, throw out the papers you don't need and put the rest in a safe place at home.

"I write down my homework and test grades in the front of my folders. That way I always know how I'm doing in all of my classes." Kate

Keep Your Desk and Backpack Neat

Never put loose homework, worksheets, or handouts in your desk or backpack. Always put these papers in the correct folders.



Keep your desk and backpack neat and clean—things will be much easier to find. Throw out papers you don't need, and put anything you want to keep in a file at home.

Get Organized Before You Go to Bed

Before you go to bed, get everything organized for the next day. Put your backpack and anything else you'll need in the same place each night.

If there is something you need to remember to do in the morning, write yourself a note.

Step 3

Manage Your Time Well

If you manage your time wisely, you have time for the things you have to do—and you still have time for the things you want to do.

Use Class Time Wisely

Always use the time your teachers give you in class to start on your homework, ask questions, or get help.

Create a Study Plan

Some students study best at night. Others like to study earlier in the day. Many students also have activities and sports they need to work around.



At the end of each school day, look at how much homework you have. Then make a study plan.

For example:

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 3:00 – 5:00 | Baseball practice |
| 5:00 – 6:00 | Do math homework |
| 6:00 – 7:00 | Dinner |
| 7:00 – 8:00 | Study for science test |

Think of anything that might interrupt your study plan. Then figure out how to avoid it.

“I can’t watch TV until I have all of my homework done. If I do, my homework probably won’t get done.” John

Step 4

Be Successful in Class

If you follow the advice in this section, you'll enjoy school more. You will also get better grades.

Be in School, on Time, Every Day

When you miss school, you miss assignments, class projects, notes, class discussions, quizzes, and tests. You can never make up all of what you miss. *To get good grades, you must be in school every day.*

Unless you have a long illness or a health problem, you should miss no more than a few days of school each year.

Be Prepared for Each Subject

Have everything you need with you when class begins (textbook, paper, pencils). *Also have all of your homework completed.*

When you have your homework done, you get much more out of your classes. Class discussions make more sense, and you can ask and answer questions. If you haven't done your homework, you may not even understand the class discussion.

Of course, being prepared also means that you come to school well rested and ready to learn.



Pay Attention in Class

It's important to pay attention and stay focused in your classes. When you don't pay attention, you miss out on important information. Not paying attention in class makes it difficult to do well in school—and more difficult to get good grades.

You may not realize it, but when teachers are up in front of a classroom, they can see everything. They know who is paying attention, who is doing their work, and who is listening to the class discussion. They also know who is writing personal notes, talking to their neighbor, or daydreaming. If you do any of these things, your teachers will know.

It's not enough to say that you want to get good grades. Your attitude and actions have to show it also.

Always Do Your Homework

Don't think of homework as something you should do. Think of homework as something you **must** do.

Much of your final grade is based on your homework. *This means that your grade drops every time you don't turn in an assignment.* Your grade also drops when you hurry through your homework and don't do your best.

Doing your homework not only helps you get better grades, it makes you a better, smarter student.

"If you don't do your homework, it kills your grade." TJ



Participate in Class

When you participate in class, the class is more interesting and you learn more. Asking and answering questions also helps you pay attention. Many teachers give participation points, so participating in class can also help you get a better grade.

“When I participate, the time goes a lot faster.” Alexis

Be a Good Group Member

It is important to know how to work well in a group. Whenever you’re involved in a group project or activity, be sure that you do the following.



- ▶ Do your share of the work, and do it well.
- ▶ Listen to other people’s ideas.
- ▶ Have a positive attitude.
- ▶ Support and help the other members of your group.

Treat Others With Respect

Treat your teachers and classmates the same way that you want to be treated. Be polite, look at your teachers when they’re speaking, and listen when others are talking. Also, be aware of your tone of voice. The same words in a different tone of voice can give a different message.

Remember that teachers are people too. They like it when students show an interest in them. If your teacher has been out ill, a simple comment such as, *“I hope you’re feeling better”* can brighten your teacher’s day.

Involve Your Parents

When your parents ask you what you did in school, tell them. You might say something like, *"We just started a new chapter in science. We're learning all about ..."* Your parents will be happy that you are talking to them about what's going on in school.

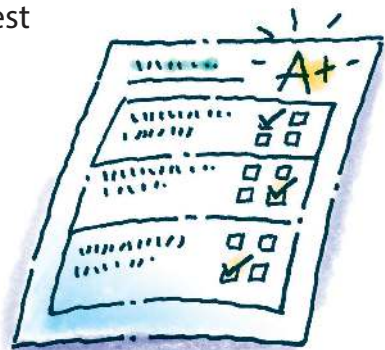
Involve your parents by having them help you with your homework from time to time. Ask a parent to help you practice your spelling words or check your math homework. A parent can also listen to you practice a speech or help you study for a test. You'll get better grades, and your parents will see that you're really trying in school.

If you ever have a problem with a teacher, class, or another student, let your parents know. They can help you figure out what to do. If necessary, they can get involved and help take care of the problem.

Take Responsibility for Your Grades

If you get a good grade on a test or your homework, be proud of your accomplishment.

If you receive a poor grade, don't make excuses. Take responsibility for your grade and then figure out how you can do better.



Always do your own work.

You'll learn more, and you can be proud of the grades that you get.

Step 5

Take Notes and Organize Handouts

Teachers often write notes on the board, and sometimes they give you handouts containing information they want you to know. The notes you take and the handouts you're given can help you study for tests.

Pay Attention in Class

Pay attention to what your teacher says in class. As you listen, don't just hear the words your teacher is saying. Think about and try to understand the material that's being taught.

Copy Notes from the Board

Write down anything your teacher writes on the board. You might need to know it for a test.

Underline or put a star next to the information you think is most important. When you're studying later, you'll know to give this information special attention.

Take Notes That Are Easy to Read

- ▶ Write the date and the subject at the top of each page of notes.
- ▶ To help keep your notes neat and easy to read, only use one side of the paper and skip a line between topics.

Organize Your Handouts

Class handouts contain information teachers want you to know and remember. Write your name and the date at the top of each handout. So that your handouts don't get lost or misplaced, put them in the correct folders.

Review Your Notes and Handouts

As soon as you have time, read over your notes and handouts. Make sure your notes are complete, and that you understand everything you've written down. *Going over your notes and handouts will help the information "stick" in your memory.*

You can also rewrite your notes at home. This takes time, but when you are done, you will have notes that are easy to read and easy to understand. Of course, as you rewrite your notes, you will also be learning the material.



If You're Absent...

If you miss a day of school, it's your responsibility to ask your teacher about what you missed. *Be sure to make up the work as soon as possible.*

"If I'm out sick, I get the work and the notes I missed the very next day. But I really try not to miss school—it's such a pain to make things up." Kiara

Step 6

Read to Learn

When you know how to read a textbook, it's easier to understand and remember what you read.

A textbook is designed to help you learn. Section headings are usually in large bold print. They tell you what you're going to be reading about. Important words are in **bold** or *italic* print to make them easy to find.

Textbooks have charts, pictures, and graphs. They also have introductions, summaries, and review questions. The people who write textbooks have added all of these things to make it easier for you to learn the material they are presenting.

In this section, you will learn how to **Survey, Read, and Review**. If you go through each of these three steps when you read a textbook, you will remember much more of what you read.

Step 1 - Survey

Surveying gives you a quick idea of what you're going to be reading about. *You also learn a lot when you survey an assignment.*

To survey a textbook assignment, read all of the section headings and everything in **bold** and *italic* print. Look at the pictures, graphs, and charts. Also read the introduction, summary, and Review Questions.

SURVEY – You Try It!

To survey the text below, read the headings, the words in **bold** and *italic* print, and the Review Questions.

The Ring-Tailed Lemur

Lemur Characteristics

Like monkeys and apes, a lemur is a kind of **primate**. The ring-tailed lemur is about the size of a small house cat. Lemurs are usually gray or brown and they have large ears and eyes. Their tails have 13 stripes, and can be up to 2 feet long!

The Ring-Tailed Lemur's Habitat

Ring-tailed lemurs are found in only one place in the world: on the island of **Madagascar**. Madagascar is located off of the southeast coast of *Africa* in the Indian Ocean.

Ring-tailed lemurs live in the island's dry, open areas so they can lie in the sun. They also spend time moving from tree to tree in the forests.

Ring-Tailed Lemur Behaviors

Ring-tailed lemurs live in groups called **troops**. Troops usually have 6 to 30 members, with one female leader. Groups travel together with their tails raised like flags as they search for food.

Lemurs are mainly **herbivores**, or *plant-eaters*, but they sometimes eat small animals or insects.

Ring-tailed lemurs especially enjoy *sunbathing*. In the early morning, they move to a sunny area and turn their white bellies to the sun. This helps warm their bodies after a cold night in the forest.



Ring-Tailed Lemurs

- are found in Madagascar
- enjoy sunbathing
- are herbivores
- live in troops
- have long, striped tails

Review Questions

1. To which animal group do lemurs belong?
2. In which part of the world are ring-tailed lemurs found?
3. What is a herbivore?
4. What is a ring-tailed lemur's favorite activity?

Step 2 - Read

After you've surveyed an assignment, you're ready to begin reading.

To help you stay focused while you read, try giving yourself questions to answer. One way to do this is to turn each section heading into a question. For example, you could turn the heading **Lemur Characteristics** into the question, "*What characteristics do lemurs have?*" Think about your question as you read. When you've finished reading the section, see if you can answer your question.

Before you start to read a section, look for words in **bold** or *italic* print. Ask yourself, "*Why is this word, person, place, or event important?*" When you're finished reading the section, you should be able to answer that question. For example, after reading about the **Ring-Tailed Lemur Behaviors**, you should know what a **troop** is.

READ – You Try It!

Read the textbook page on the Ring-Tailed Lemur. As you read each section, have a question in mind.



When you're finished reading, see if you can answer the **Review Questions**.

"Sometimes when I'm reading, my mind wanders. Sometimes I don't even remember what I just read. Reading out loud really helps me pay attention to what I'm reading." Chris

Step 3 - Review

Okay. You've scanned and read the material. This is when most students will say, "I'm done," and close their books. Instead of closing your book, take a few minutes to review what you've read.



To review, read each section heading and try to remember the main idea of that section. Look at the words in **bold** and *italic* print and think about what they mean and why they are important.

When you review, you lock the information into your brain before it has a chance to escape!

REVIEW - You Try It!

Go back and review the **The Ring-Tailed Lemur** page.

If you really want to lock what you read into your brain, review everything again the next day. When you study for the test, you will be amazed at how well you already know the material.

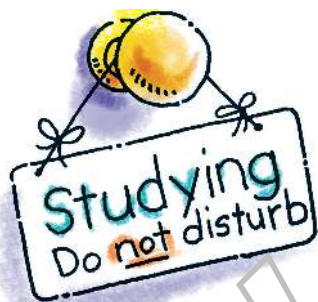
It may take a little practice to learn how to **Survey**, **Read**, and **Review**. But you'll soon find out that doing these three things doesn't mean more work.

It just means better grades!

Step 7

Study Smart

Students who “study smart” spend less time studying, but yet they get better grades.



Find a Good Place to Study

It's best to have one place where you study most of the time. Your study area should be quiet, well-lit, comfortable, and have a surface for writing. This area should also have paper, pens, pencils, a calculator, and a dictionary.

“The library is a really good place for me to study. It's quiet, and I don't have my little brother and sister running around—or the TV bothering me.” Jordan

Have a Good Attitude

It's important to have a good attitude about studying. Try to stay positive and focused on your work. If you have trouble with something, ask a parent for help, call a classmate, or ask your teacher for help the next day.

Get Started

Sometimes it is hard to get started on your studying. Don't put it off. Don't make excuses. If you have a hard time getting started, begin with something simple. You can also try starting with a subject you like.

Organize Your Study Time

- ▶ Before you start to study, make a plan. Decide what you need to get done and the order you are going to do it.

For example, here is Emma's study plan for tonight.

- 1) Go over spelling words
- 2) Do math worksheet
- 3) Read science – pages 10-14
- 4) Go over spelling words again



- ▶ Always allow more time than you think you'll need.
- ▶ Break large assignments down into smaller parts.
- ▶ If you have something to memorize, work on that first. Then go over it again at the end of your study session.
- ▶ Do difficult assignments while you're still fresh.
- ▶ Alternate types of homework (read story, do math, read social studies, work on project).
- ▶ Know when and how to take breaks. Students learn the most during the first and last 10 minutes of any study session. After studying for 20 minutes, take a short break.

"I take short breaks between subjects. I usually get snack or play with my dog." Darius

Know How to Study for Tests

- ▶ Know what the test is going to cover so that you'll know what to study.
- ▶ When reviewing a topic, ask yourself, *Who? What? When? Where? Why?* and *How?* (5Ws + H).
- ▶ Pay close attention in class the day before a test. This is when teachers usually go over information that's important for you to know.
- ▶ Do all of your reading ahead of time.
"I try to get all of my reading done a day or two before the test. Then I just need to review." Antonio
- ▶ If your textbook has review questions, know the answers to all of the questions. Also, make sure that you know the meanings of all the words in **bold** and *italic* print.
- ▶ If your teacher gives you a review sheet, study it until you know everything on it. Then use it to come up with questions you think might be on the test.
- ▶ Take the most important information and use it to make your own flash cards and review sheets.
- ▶ You really know something if you can explain it in your own words. Try teaching material to yourself in front of a mirror or to a family member.
- ▶ Review often and review out loud. *Review is the key to learning and remembering anything!*

Know How to Memorize Information

- ▶ Use flashcards to memorize vocabulary words, facts, and lists.

“If you have a lot to memorize, spread it out over time, and just keep going over and over it.” Alyssa

- ▶ Write down what you want to memorize. Stare at it. Close your eyes. See it in your mind. Say it. Then look at it again. Do this until you know it.
- ▶ Right before you go to sleep, go over what you want to remember. Your brain will put it in your memory while you sleep.

- ▶ Use the first letter of the words you want to remember to make up a silly sentence.

For example, imagine that you need to remember the names of the planets for a test. This silly sentence can help you. “My Very Elegant Mother Juggled Seven Ugly Neckties.”

(**M**ercury, **V**enus, **E**arth, **M**ars, **J**upiter, **S**aturn, **U**ranus, **N**eptune)



As soon as you get your test, say this sentence to yourself and write down **MVEMJSUN** at the top of your test. When you need to write the names of the planets, these letters will remind you of each planet’s name. Making up silly sentences to remember things is fun, and it works.

Know How to Write an Essay

Use these ten steps when you have to write an essay.

1. Choose a topic.
2. Gather information.
3. Make an outline.
4. Write a first draft.
5. Read your essay out loud.
6. Think of ways to improve your essay and revise it.
7. Ask someone else to read your essay.
8. Write the final copy.
9. Check for errors, and make sure it looks neat.
10. Turn in your essay on time.

Don't write your essay all at one time. Work on it and then put it away for awhile. When you come back to it, you'll see and hear things you didn't notice before. If you have permission to use the internet for research, make sure that you use trustworthy sites. Also, always put another person's words in quotation marks.

Use These Tips to Make a Good Presentation

- ▶ Pretend that you are telling your best friend something really important. This will add excitement and energy to your voice.
- ▶ Make eye contact with your audience. If this is hard for you to do, look at their foreheads instead.

Step 8

Be a Good Test Taker

To do well on any test, study hard and be prepared. Then use these test-taking tips. These tips will help you get the highest grade possible.

Get Off to a Good Start

Have everything you need for the test (pencil, calculator, etc.). If you have time before the test starts, try to relax.

As soon as you get your test, write anything you need to remember at the top of your test. Be sure to read the directions carefully.



Make a Plan

Before you begin, quickly look over the test. Then make a plan. For example, let's say that you have 30 minutes to finish a test that has 20 multiple-choice questions and 5 short-answer questions.

You could plan to spend

10 minutes on the multiple-choice questions

10 minutes on the short-answer questions

10 minutes checking your answers

Mark the Questions You Want to Come Back To

As you go through the test, put a check or dot by any answer you aren't sure of. Later, go back to the ones you've marked and try them again.

If you don't know the answers to the first few questions, don't panic. Sometimes it takes a few minutes for your brain to get in gear.

"If you're not sure of an answer, go with your first choice" Brad

Increase Your Odds on Multiple Choice Questions

- ▶ When you read a multiple-choice question, try to come up with the answer in your head *before* you look at the answer choices.
- ▶ Read all of the answer choices. Don't just mark the first answer that sounds good.
- ▶ If you're not sure of an answer, cross out the choices you know are wrong. Then make your best guess.

Look for Clue Words in True/False Questions

True/False questions can be tricky. Clue words can help you. Sentences with *always*, *never*, *all*, and *none* are usually false. Sentences with *often*, *sometimes*, and *most* are usually true.

Read True/False questions very carefully. Just one word can make the difference.

Know How to Answer Essay Questions

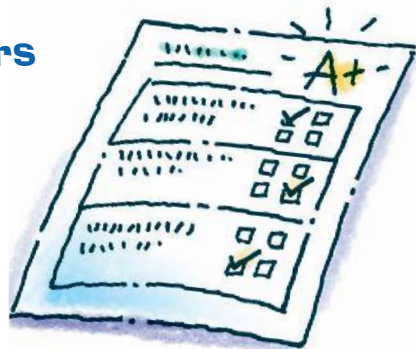
- ▶ Read each question. Then start with the easiest one. This will help get you going.
- ▶ Before you start writing, brainstorm. Jot down the key words, ideas, and points you want to cover.
- ▶ Use complete sentences and write neatly. When you're done, reread your essay and make corrections.
- ▶ If you don't know the answer, write what you do know about the subject—you might get partial credit.

Improve Your Math Test Scores

- ▶ Before you start to solve a problem, try to estimate what the answer will be.
- ▶ If you're having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture.
- ▶ Don't spend too much time on one problem. If you are stumped, go on. Come back to it later.
- ▶ Show all your work. Even if you get the wrong answer, you may get points if you were on the right track.

Check Your Answers

Check all of your answers, even the ones you know are correct. You may have made a careless mistake. *Always use all of the time you're given.*



Step 9

Don't Sweat the Test

Taking a test can be scary. Having a little stress before a test can improve your concentration, but too much stress can hurt your test score.

Your brain is like a computer—it holds a lot of information. Being too worried or stressed out can be like not having the password for your computer. The information is there, but you can't get to it.



These tips will help you do your best on any test.

- ▶ Start studying early. Studying at the last minute can make you more stressed.
- ▶ Close your eyes and imagine that it's time for the test. See yourself sitting calmly in your chair, answering the questions correctly, and getting the grade you want. Go over this in your mind several times before the test.
- ▶ The night before a test, review the material. Then get a good night's sleep.
- ▶ When you get your test, sit up straight and take a deep breath. As you exhale, feel your body relax.

If you worry a lot or get really stressed out over tests, talk to your teacher or to your parent(s).

State Tests

State tests are different than most of the tests you take in school. You can't study for them and you won't get a grade. On these kinds of tests, you get a test score that tells you, your teachers, and your parents how well you did. The results from these tests help teachers and principals find out how much their students are learning from year to year.

Some of these tests are **achievement tests**. Achievement tests measure what you've learned in school up until now. Some are **ability tests**. Ability tests measure how well you are able to learn new things.

Most state tests have time limits. Sometimes students run out of time and are not able to finish the test. Whenever you take a state test, try to remember to organize your time.

State tests are important, and you should try to do your best on them. But these tests are not so important that you should worry about them.

"Get plenty of sleep the night before any test. Eat a good breakfast and get to school on time. Then just relax and do your best." Mrs. Cline, teacher

Step 10

Get Help When You Need It

When you have a problem, ask for help.

Most problems at school can be easily fixed. If you need help with your schoolwork or if you have a problem with a class, talk to your teacher. You can also talk to the school secretary, counselor, or principal if you have a question or problem. All of these people are there to help you.

Some students have more serious problems. They can't pay attention in class or focus on their schoolwork because they are worried or upset. These students should talk to a parent or teacher and try to get some help.

If you're dealing with any of these problems, talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor.

1. Problems with a bully
2. Problems with friends
3. Problems at home, like a sick family member, parents divorcing, or anything else that worries or upsets you



Many students have problems that make them sad, angry, or upset. If you have a problem that's bothering you, talk to an adult you trust.

Review

Here are the most important things you need to do to get great grades.

- ▶ Be in school every day, on time.
- ▶ Use a student planner.
- ▶ Keep your desk and backpack neat.
- ▶ Pay attention in class.
- ▶ Use class time wisely.
- ▶ Participate in class.
- ▶ Be a good group member.
- ▶ Treat others with respect.
- ▶ Do all of your homework.
- ▶ Get help when you need it.



Tips for Parents



Your children need your guidance and support. They also need you to be interested and involved in their academic progress.

Be interested

Talk to your child about what's happening in school and be a good listener. Attend all parent conferences and open houses, monitor your child's grades, and check your school's website often to keep up with what's new.

Be available to help

Be available to help with homework, but don't give more help than is needed. Remember, it's your child's responsibility to be organized, get homework done, and prepare for tests.

Monitor activities

Make sure that your child isn't spending too much time watching TV, playing computer games, talking on the phone, or texting.

Work with your school

If you have a question or concern, contact your child's teacher. *Students are the most successful when parents and teachers work together as a team!*

As a parent, you are the most important person in your child's life. Take the time to support, guide, and enjoy your child during these very important years!