



# Effective Study Habits for EFL Students

How to get the best results from the time that you spend  
studying

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# TIP #1: KEEP STUDY SESSIONS SHORT AND FREQUENT

- If you only study one or two times per week, you will have difficulty remembering the material.
- Long study sessions make you tired and do not help you to remember the material.
  - For example, 25 minutes of studying on four different days during the week is much better than 2 hours of studying on one day.

## TIP #2: REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

- Silence your cell phone and pause notifications on your computer.
- Give yourself 25 minutes of study time with no interruptions. This will make a big difference in your ability to focus.

## TIP #3: TEST YOURSELF REGULARLY

- Flash cards can help a lot. My favorite flash card application is Anki. It is free to use on desktop and laptop machines. You can download it at: <https://apps.ankiweb.net/>
  - You can find my Anki decks about irregular verbs and pronunciation practice at: [https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B2QgheTo\\_xG6T2h0bWpfVUpPSTA](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B2QgheTo_xG6T2h0bWpfVUpPSTA)
- Make your own flash cards to help you remember important ideas. Test yourself with flash cards regularly.

## TIP #4: CREATE IMAGES IN YOUR MIND

- Avoid the temptation to translate words of English into words of your native language. They are rarely the same.
- Imagine a picture or a short scene where you would use a particular word or grammatical structure. Write a description of the image and try to recall it regularly.
  - Example: I remember the correct usage of the verb “trocar” in Portuguese using an image of my living room. I imagine my current sofa floating out of the front door and a different sofa entering the living room.

# TIP #5: PRACTICE BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SKILLS

- To be proficient in English, you need to be able to speak, listen, read, and write.
- In each study session, try to practice a different skill. Keep a journal so that you remember what you have practiced. Some suggestions are:
  - Speaking: Watch a short video. Record yourself explaining the main ideas of what you just saw. Share the recording with your peers and teacher. Make a note of any questions.
  - Writing: Read a short article. Without looking at the article, write a short summary of what you just read. Share it with your peers and teacher.
- Most students over-practice the passive skills of listening and reading and under-practice the active skills of speaking and writing. Do not fall into this trap!

## TIP #6: MAKE CONNECTIONS

- The best way to remember material is to connect it to something that you already know.
  - Example: If you want to learn the names of different foods, take a recipe in your native language that is very familiar to you. Write the names of the ingredients in English. Practice explaining the recipe with English words. This helps you to connect the English words to something that is already familiar to you.
  - Example: Take two different verb forms, like the present simple and the present continuous. Make a list of the ways that they are the same and the ways that they are different. Imagine situations where you would choose one and not the other.



Happy Studying!

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# REFERENCES

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