



FROM INFORMATION TO KNOWLEDGE

**A Guide to Become a
Better Student**

**AKSHAT KAKADE
BOOKGEST**

REVIEWS

*“The book is a must read for all teenage students !!
It's so apt and at the same time written so innocently. His perspective of writing every chapter comes directly from his experience, his life and that's why it's so fresh and real .
What I loved the most is that he was able to analyse everything happening with him as a student and then could also relate to others of his same age. This requires not only observation but also empathy for people around you !!
He has been so firm on his views at this young age that even though we as adults may disagree with some of his views , his honesty and conviction touches us .
I have seen Akshat growing from a shy child to a matured , confident youngster who stands firmly on his feet . His involvement and dedication in everything he picks up to do makes him a future leader for sure !!
All the best for everything you want to try your hands on !!”*

By Dr Ashwini Kulkarni
Director of City Pride School, Nigdi

*For my brother Aarit,
you taught me that happiness is a choice*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page Number
Introduction	3
The Mentality	4
The Ideal Studying Environment	6
Habits	11
Staying Interested	14
Types of Learners	16
Techniques	20
Things that you shouldn't do	25

INTRODUCTION

There are students who are genius and there are students who get good marks. Both of these qualities are rarely seen together. The difference between these people is that the people who are genius strive for knowledge, while people who get good marks have information. Information is often forgotten, while knowledge remains with you forever.

People see me as an all-rounder. Well, I am not an all-rounder, I am a generalist. The difference between an all-rounder and generalist is that an all-rounder is good at everything while a generalist is good at many things. Nobody is an all-rounder, because everybody has their own weaknesses. In the current education system, the worth of a person is judged by his academic skill, not his generalist skill.

Most of the time, students are good at things other than studies. This shouldn't be the case for a generalist. This book is aimed to make you a generalist. You must be good at other things, but with this book I try to make you good at studies and finally make you a generalist. If you already are good at studies, this isn't a book for you, but if you want to still improve and become better, start reading. Hope you find it useful!

Akshat Kakade

Author, Blogger and Student

THE MENTALITY

I have talked about many study techniques in this book. But techniques cannot be used if you don't have the proper tools. The tools here are the mentality with which you are tackling the activity of studying.

Answer the Why

Once, me and my friends were joking around about school. We had just grazed the topic of math. One of my friends said "Why? Why should we learn Math? How will it help me when I grow up?". That's when I realised that the most important thing you need to do before studying is that you need to find why you are studying.

Let me give you an example, whenever I think about why I am studying this, I find the answer in my goal. My goal is to become successful. The best part of my goal is that there is no limit to success. So I will never know whether I have become successful, and I will keep going and going.

Without knowing about this why you will never do something, you will never see the point in what you are learning and will take it lightly.

Know that studying is going to benefit you

One thing that nobody talks about is the dark part of studying. As a student, I feel this every day. After juggling studies, competitive exams, sports, social life and spending time with my family, I feel burned out. I feel that I won't be able to repeat this the next day. But I still do it. You know why? Because I know that if I study hard, giving it everything I got, for all the years of my education, I am going to hit a point in my life where all of this will benefit me. Neither the teachers who encourage me nor the parents who support me even the people who compete with me. It will benefit me and only me.

Once you understand this, you will look at study in an entirely different manner. Those burn-outs will assure you that you are doing it right. Those dark thoughts will look like jokes and those people who de-motivate you will look like pebbles that you can kick in any which ways you want, once you achieve your goals.

Don't compare yourself with anybody else

I know that this advice is the most common advice you are given in your whole life of being a student. "Compete with yourself" is the truth that is drilled into our mind and then the same truth is falsified by the same people who drilled it into your head.

Whenever someone compares me with someone else, I just think to myself that these people are either jealous of me, or they are jealous of the person whom they are comparing me with.

THE IDEAL STUDYING ENVIRONMENT

Before actually starting the process of learning, a student also needs to focus on the environment in which he is studying. According to psychologists, the environment in which the students are studying is an important aspect in the process of learning as it can hamper their efficiency and also can increase or decrease the speed at which they intake knowledge.

In this chapter, I have discussed the best environment for the student.

Making Schedules



Scheduling is a very important part of the environment. While making schedules, always keep in mind that you need to also decide what you are going to do in that particular session.

These schedules need to be very specific and also should be strict and should not be changed at the last moment.

You can schedule on paper or even on the hundreds of calendar apps available for making sessions. In these apps, you can specify the details in the description like the timing and the topic. It looks like too much to do, however, do it consciously until it becomes a habit.

Setting Place and Time

[Some articles](#) say that sitting in one place each and every time you study, makes your brain tell that place is for study only and that you can't do anything else in that place, this will help you concentrate better while studying.

[Other studies](#) say that if you change the place you are studying in, it helps in better memory recall.

Both of these look like they are contradicting each other but actually, they are different. In the first study, it helps in better concentration and according to the second one, helps in better recall and retaining the taught knowledge.

What I would recommend is that you do your homework assignments in the same place and while revising notes or while studying for tests and exams, you should change the place.



As for the time, you need to set a time when you study, your brain becomes active if this time is consistent, for example- you decide that you will study from 8 am to 3 pm in school, then you study from 5 pm to 6 pm at home about whatever you were taught that day and from 7 pm to 9 pm you complete the homework and prepare for tests for the next day. Now the question is when to do other things? Well this is my time table, you can try something different.

Study Consistently

Studying is not an impulsive decision that you make, it is something that you have made prior decisions about. You need to study every day, even on weekends.



This makes sure that your brain understands that this task is important and won't take it lightly.

Our brain is just like a machine, if you don't use it for a long period of time, it will become rusty and won't function properly, but if you maintain it, grease it with thoughts and hard problems, it will work smoothly.

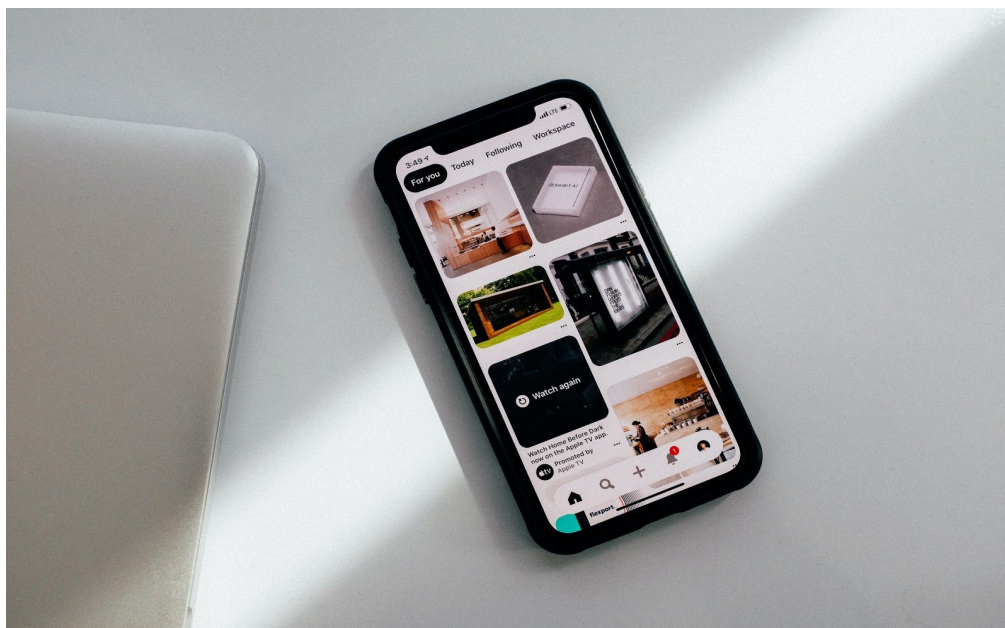
Also, when I say that a brain is like a machine, it doesn't mean that you will study for long periods of time without breaks. Even this

hampers with efficiency. Anything excess is harmful, applies here too.

Make Distractions your Enemy

Distractions are what keeps our mind out of the task that we are doing. This doesn't help us while studying at all.

Having distractions while studying is like juggling 4 or 5 balls while dancing and reading a book at the same time, it's not impossible but plain hard and also distractive. This will take away all the concentration out of the work that you are doing and this should not be the case if you want a higher efficiency.



While studying, I keep my phone on Do Not Disturb and try to keep it out of the room. I also practice something called dopamine detox, about which you can read [here](#).

HABITS

Studying consists of many other aspects than studying itself. These aspects can either give you a boost while studying or can even pull you down. These are not particularly hard but they do require you to have a lot of willpower.

Review

Reviews help you not to forget what you learnt. You need to practice every day. During reviews, you need to recollect whatever you were taught and also re-read the notes you made during the lecture. Try to get deep into the concepts of the topics taught.

This helps you retain the content you were taught in the long term. This is very beneficial especially during surprise tests where you don't know when the test is going to be conducted. It also helps when you have multiple tests on the same day so that you just need to skim through the portion for the test, hence you get more time to prepare for all the tests.

I have found this very beneficial and have written about it [here](#).

Sleep is your Best Friend

Do you know a person who can go for months without sleeping? Of course not, because sleep is what gives rest to the brain. Good sleep is needed to reach higher performance.

8-10 hours of sleep is the bare minimum. Waking up late is not possible because most schools begin in the morning, so you need to sleep early. If you need to wake up at 6, aim to sleep at least at 10.

Many people use the term ‘sleep on it’ which basically means that they sleep if they get tired after doing a lot of work and still couldn’t solve a problem. They say this because in the morning their mind is fresh and can think properly.

Some people even believe that before sleeping if you think about one particular problem and then sleep. Your subconscious mind solves it when you are sleeping and when you wake up, you have the answer to the problem. I wouldn’t do this because in today’s world we have hundreds of problems every day, so if we sleep on that, our subconscious mind will not be able to solve all those. If that could be done, most of the people would be sleeping in school.

Exercise

In 2016, 73.9% of Indian children didn’t get “sufficient physical activity” increasing the probability of diseases in the future. Read about this study [here](#).

If you exercise each day after waking up and before school, your heart pumps oxygen and nutrients to the brain. This helps you focus, improves your memory and also increases the usage of your brain.



Imagine that you aren't exercising your body but are exercising your brain. Also, exercise doesn't mean that you should do one particular activity like yoga or aerobics. You can even play the sport of your choice. Like football, basketball and tennis.

STAYING INTERESTED

The biggest struggle while studying is procrastination, procrastination is the process in which you say, “let’s do this tomorrow” or “this is not important, I will do it while revising”.

Procrastination happens because you are either not interested in what you are learning or when you are interested but temporarily bored. In this chapter, I have discussed 3 techniques that I use to battle procrastination.

Take Breaks

Breaks help in preventing getting bored. They refresh your mind and also make it believe that it isn’t doing long stuff but actually is working for a short period of time.

I use something called the Pomodoro system for breaks which basically is working for some time and then taking a short break. After four such cycles, you can take a long break. I have written about the apps you can use for this and even discussed it a little further in [this post](#).

Keep Changing Subjects

We get bored by doing the same thing for a long time. By changing subjects, your brain gets some rest from the other subject. I do

subjects like English which are very easy and can save me from the long answers that I need to memorise for Political Science.

This even makes me look forward to completing the work of Political Science so that I can get to the easier subject and can do easy things while having fun at the same time.

But if you want to like doing hard things read my post about [How to like Doing Hard Things?](#)

Do Harder Things

I used to hate solving the hard question that my school gave me, especially in Math. That's why I used to hate maths. I wasn't even good at it. Which made Math my weak subject

Therefore, I participated in competitive exams and quizzes in the hope of becoming better at Math. The questions that I needed to practice for this were around 10 times harder than the questions I had in school. But I wanted to be better so I still did it.

I won my first math competition. This gave me confidence in Math. Another benefit was that I didn't need to practice for my school exams and still got very good marks because I had solved harder questions.

Now Math is my favourite subject and I get good marks in it.

TYPES OF LEARNERS

There are 4 basic types of learners - Visual, Auditory, Verbal and Kinesthetic. There are some more which you can read about [here](#).

I have discussed how to identify your type and individual tips to that specific type of learner in this chapter. You can also have multiple traits, for example, I am a visual, auditory and verbal learner.

Visual Learners

These are the learners who retain things that they have seen, like the shape of words or diagrams. If you remember that funny cartoon your friend made of your teacher or if you remember diagrams properly, you are a visual learner.

I am a Visual Learner, I use spider diagrams and try to convert information into graphs and visually appealing things. If my notes are very scattered and look bad, it hampers with my efficiency. If you are a visual learner, I would highly recommend the YouTube channel of a University Student called [Samuel Suresh](#). This is how his notes look like:



His notes look amazing, these are the perfect notes for visual learners. So I suggest that you go to his [YouTube channel](#) where he gives tutorials for making these kinds of notes.

Auditory Learners

Auditory Learners are the people who learn from listening. These kinds of learners retain knowledge that they hear. If you learn better by listening to the teacher, by repeating answers again and again or even if you remember songs by listening to them just once you are an auditory learner.

If you are an auditory learner I will suggest that you record a voice of you reading out your notes. Then you can listen to this whenever you are out of the house, or if you have time to spare or even while commuting.

Verbal Learners

Verbal Learners learn from reading, writing or even speaking. If you are a verbal learner, you will like word games, poems etc.

You can try to summarise the whole topic into a small paragraph and write it down on a piece of paper. You can speak the answers out loud or even read the topic multiple times.

Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners learn by doing a particular thing or experiencing it. If you learn from doing things hands-on, you are a kinesthetic learner. These type of learners tend to be well-coordinated and are good at sports and arts.



If you are a kinesthetic learner, I am sorry but the current traditional education system is not meant for you. The current system uses the ability to hear and picture to teach, practical knowledge is close to nil.

But you can still use some techniques like flashcards. You should also use plenty of examples while studying. You can read more about techniques for kinesthetic learners by clicking [here](#).

TECHNIQUES

Finally, we are here. The section you all have been waiting for, where I discuss the techniques and ways in which you can learn. There is a lot of content in this chapter. You don't need to do all of that, but you experiment a bit and choose whichever technique fits you the best.

So, see this as a menu of sorts. You can choose whichever dish you want. There is no, this technique is better or that technique is better. It is all about, this technique works for me and this doesn't. I have written these techniques in the order that you should practice them.

Better Note-taking

There are many ways to take notes. Keeping a clean notebook improves grades. There are many different note-taking systems (which I didn't know about before researching for this book) but I use something called [The Outline Method](#) which basically is separating the notes in the heading, sub-headings, sub-sub headings and so on.



Taking notes is very crucial to understanding the concepts later. It can help you in revision. Many teachers also give you extra information which may or may not be useful, you should note that down too. A really good video about note-taking can be found [here](#).

You can read about more note-taking methods [here](#).

Ask Questions

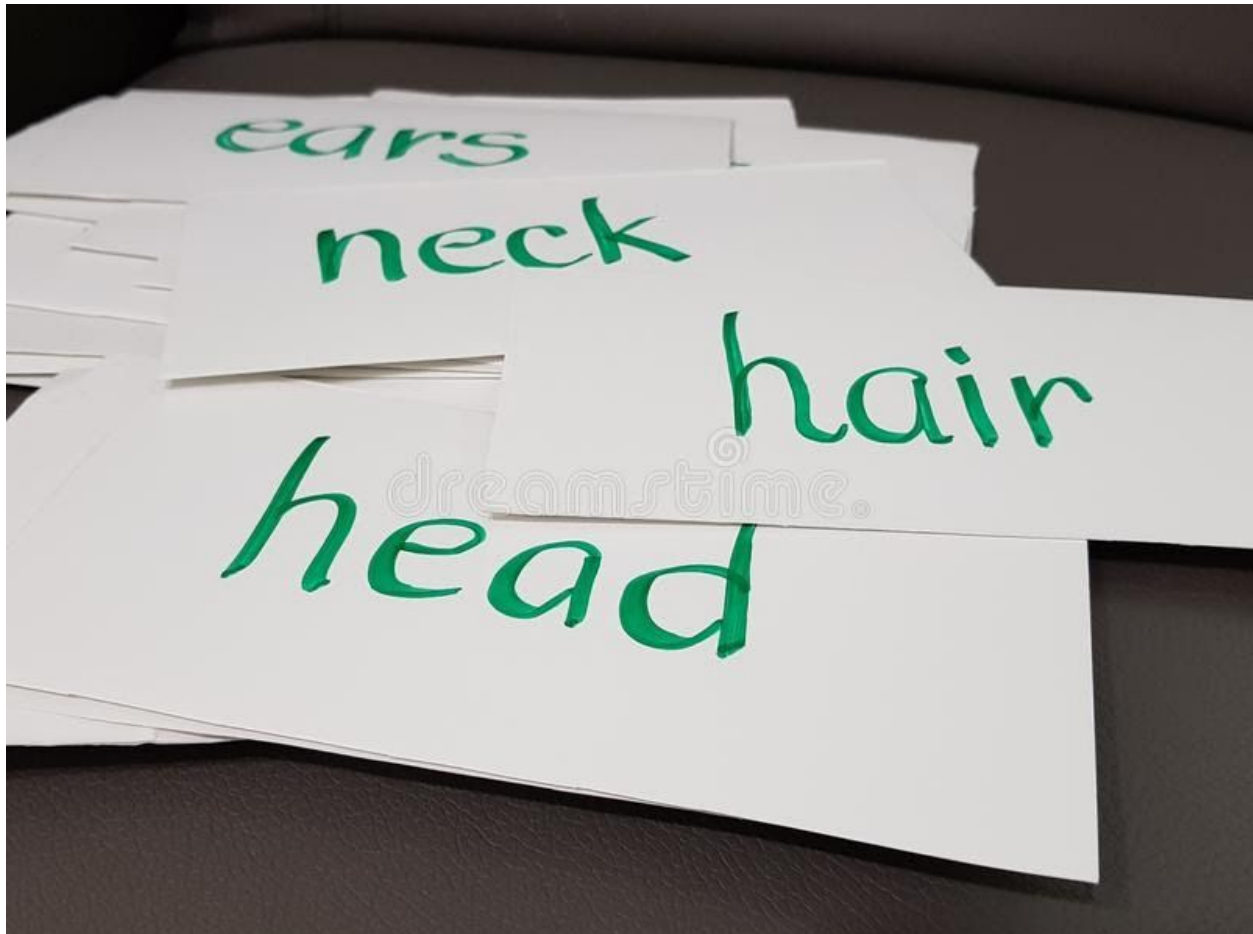
For many people asking questions can be “insulting” but thinking that “I will learn this later” is actually a very bad thing to think. If you have any questions (however silly it may sound to you) ask the teacher about it. Other students will give you looks that convey that this question was silly, but believe me when I say that asking questions is very important. Not only because it solves your doubt but also because during tests, you will think “I had asked this question to the teacher” this will help you remember the answer of that question for a long period of time.

A thing I used to do when I was too shy to ask questions to the teacher was that I would note-down all the questions I had and after the lecture, I would discuss them with my friends or ask the “smart” guys. This would clear up about 90% of my questions and the remaining 10%, I would ask the teacher after the lecture or during the next lecture.

Flashcards with Leitner System

Before explaining what the Leitner System is I will tell you about flashcards. Flashcards are a tool that promotes “[Active Recall](#)” which is basically a principle which stimulates the memory while learning so that you will remember things for a long time.

How to make these flashcards? You need to write a word on one side of the card and then you can write its definition on the other side. Or you can write a math term like “Area of a Rectangle” and then write its formula on the back of the card. You can even write events and on the back, you can write dates for history.



Obtaining physical cards is very hard and they can be easily lost. So I use an app called [Quizlet](#). It's amazing, there are many pre-made flashcards and you can also make your own for personalisation. I have talked about Quizlet in my post [here](#). You can use flashcards when you don't have anything to do like if you are standing in a long queue or when you are commuting.

Moving on to the [Leitner System](#), it is a way to study flashcards. In this system, you divide your cards in different sets like- the first set is an everyday set, the second one is a Tuesday and Thursday set and the last one is the Friday set.

To practice the Leitner System do the following with flashcards:

- 1) Practice your flashcards once, then check the back of the card to see whether you were right.
- 2) If you were right, then put that card in the Tuesday & Thursday set.
- 3) If you were wrong, put that card in the everyday set.
- 4) Practice the everyday cards each and every day and the Tuesday & Thursday set each Tuesday and Thursday.
- 5) The next time if you get the everyday cards right, you can put it in the second set and if you get the Tuesday & Thursday cards right you can put them in the Friday set which you will revise only on Fridays. When all the cards go to the Friday set, you can then revise the cards once every two weeks.

Teach to Learn

There's a Latin proverb that says "By learning you will teach; by teaching, you will learn." Many students wonder, "How can teachers remember the whole chapter so easily?", well the answer to this is quite easy. The teacher has taught that, so while preparing to teach they have prepared for all kinds of doubts or questions they can get.

So by teaching someone else you can clear your own doubts and you can also clear your own concepts. But most of the time, we don't have a person who we can teach this to. So what you can do

is that you can explain the whole topic on a piece of paper, in a way that you would explain to someone else who has no prior knowledge of that topic.

Then you can even revise from this piece of paper before tests and become proficient with the content of that particular topic.

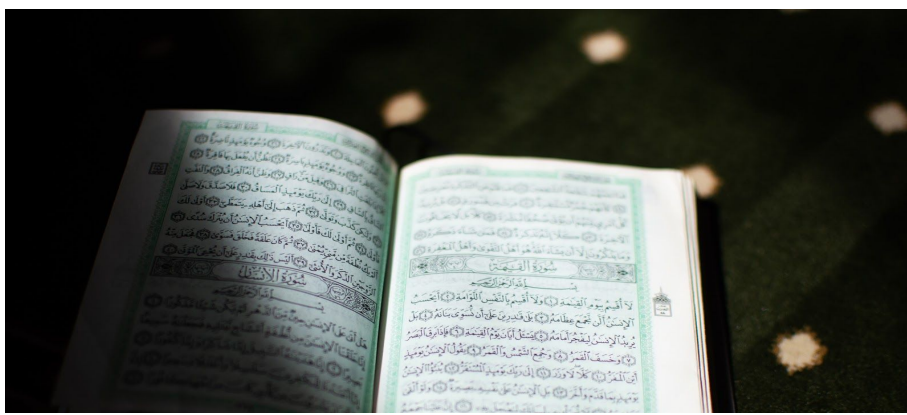
THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T DO

There are some basic things that all of us do without ever thinking about it, these things shouldn't be done while learning. We are given lots of advice while studying, advice given by our parents, teachers, friends and even some people who we don't know but somehow are related to. Some of this advice may have worked for them when they were students, but in today's times, this advice may or may not work.

In this chapter, I am going to tell you some things that you should not do, as it can hamper with your efficiency and may not be good for you.

Overlearning

Remember when you have studied for hours on end and you have covered the whole portion for the exam, you go and sit relaxingly, when somebody comes and says “Why are you relaxing? Go and relearn everything if you have extra time.”



Studies say that you should read your book only once, if you read more than this, you will start forgetting the stuff. I believe that you should read them twice. Read your books once when the teacher teaches the topic and once before the exam. You should read and learn your notes multiple times.

You should review your notes multiple times so that you can understand these concepts.

Don't Search Google

Schools expect you to know what they teach. If you know anything more than what they have taught, that is extra and if you know less than what they have taught, you need to catch up.

All the questions that are asked in your school exams, have been taught. Which means that it is the taught content. If you have a doubt and instead of asking your teacher you search up Google, you will get a lot of unneeded extra information. Some of you must be thinking that this extra information can be helpful sometimes. But it can also confuse you while giving exams.

That extra information isn't in the taught content and won't come in your exams. By searching Google, you are just wasting your time and increasing the chances of you getting confused. Instead of doing this you should go through your textbook, notes and even lecture slides, that will help you more and can also solve the doubt that you had. If your doubt still persists, you can always ask the teacher and most of the teachers will be more than happy to help you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before ending this book I would just like to thank all the people in my life who have made this possible.

The credit of this book (and my blog) goes to my parents who have supported me and have always encouraged me to jump into the unknown.

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To my friends, especially Jaideep, who never let me become egoistic. I know that whatever you guys say, you love me and even I love you.

To all my teachers who have shaped my personality, converted me from a shy introvert kid to a funny extrovert. You have been one of the most important inspirations for me.

Lastly, City Pride School, Nigdi, which has honed all of my skills, introduced me to the extracurriculars that I have fallen in love with, all this while helping me with my academics too.

This is it, guys! Hope you liked this book and found it useful. I post regularly on my blog, it's called [Bookgest](#) and has got some awesome content for teenagers and students. So head over there and read some of my posts, and make sure you subscribe!