Study Group Starter Kit

Academic Resource Center
Daum Hall 2nd Floor  310-338-2847  lmu.edu/arc

Adapted from materials created by the Center for Academic Success at Louisiana State University
Congratulations on your decision to start a study group! We hope you will find this to be a highly rewarding experience. Connecting with your peers outside of class to review course material and compare notes can drastically increase your retention of knowledge and level of enjoyment in the class. You'll also develop highly desirable skills: the ability to lead and to work as part of a team.

Of course, collaboration with a group is not without challenges. This guide is designed to help you with the initial set-up of your study group. Here you will find instructions, tips, and guidelines for organizing your peers and facilitating productive study sessions. Of course, every group dynamic is different, so we encourage you to adapt the material in this guide to your own individual needs. Remember that you'll get the biggest benefits when you use your members’ strengths. Work through lower-level learning and activities so you can spend the majority of your time developing higher-level knowledge together.

If you need more support developing strong study habits, try watching our short Kickstart videos on MyLMU Connect. Email advising@lmu.edu to get started.

Good luck!

ARC Staff
Study Group Starter Kit

Contents

Pre-Meeting Tools

- Blank Study Group Meeting Schedule
- Group Rules & Responsibilities
- Rules & Expectations Discussion Guide

Post-Meeting Tools

- Study Cycle
- Tips for Success
- Study Group Guidelines
- ARC Message to Group
- First Meeting Agenda
- Sample Study Group Session Guide

7 Steps to a Successful Study Group

Sign-Up Sheet

Group Learning Resources

Blank Study Group Meeting Schedule
1) Download Starter Kit
2) Survey Classmate Interest
3) Advertise 1st Meeting
4) Meet to Organize
5) Study—Hold 1st Session
6) Motivate Each Other
7) Celebrate and Evaluate
**Study Group Starter Kit**

**Sign-up List**

**INTERESTED IN STARTING A STUDY GROUP?**

The Academic Resource Center encourages students to form study groups to help them succeed in their courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Day/Times of Availability</th>
<th>Contact (circle all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

If interested, fill in your information below.

My name is ________________________ and I am interested in starting a study group for this course: ________________________.

The Academic Resource Center encourges students to form study groups to help them succeed in their courses.

**INTERESTED IN STARTING A STUDY GROUP?**

**Study Group Starter Kit**
Study Group Starter Kit
First Meeting Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduce</th>
<th>Names &amp; Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read/View</td>
<td>Special ARC Message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Guidelines, Tips for Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Logistics, Goals &amp; Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select</td>
<td>Times, Dates, Locations &amp; Duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather</td>
<td>Correct &amp; Multiple Forms of Contact Info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decide</td>
<td>Purpose of Next Study Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Group Size and Mix
- 4-5 Members
- Options for selecting group members
  - Similar availability
  - Similar academic goals

### Group Structure
- Choose Group Leader/Facilitator
- Assign roles to each member

### Group Dynamics
- Discuss & Clarify
  - Goals
  - Expectations
  - Rules
  - Responsibilities
Tips: General

- Schedule all meetings well in advance.
- Attend all meetings.
- Arrive, begin, & end on time.
- Be prepared so you can contribute to the group effort.
- Actively participate.
- Work on both lower-level and high-level thinking activities.
- Provide assistance, support, and encouragement.
- Consistently check for productivity and efficiency.

Tips: Quantitative Courses

- Work problems prior to session.
- Each person should teach how he/she solved the problem.
- Focus on reasoning instead of method.
- Gain appreciation for others’ thought processes.
- Do not copy solutions with or without understanding.
- Make tougher, multi-step problems a priority.

Tips: Qualitative Courses

- Begin by quizzing each other on basic terms and facts.
- Progress to explaining whole concepts through writing or drawing.
- Ask hard comparative questions and write your own exam questions.

Learning Processes, Theories, and Major Concepts

Writing Short Answers/Essays

- Break down the prompt and Bloom’s level of critical thinking required for sample questions.
- Critique and proof each other’s work.
- Do not create a group outline for assigned essay questions.

More help for Quantitative and Qualitative Exams can be found in Kickstart Videos.
### Study Group Starter Kit

#### The Study Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set a Goal</th>
<th>1-2 min</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide what you want to accomplish in your study session: focus on small tasks</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study with Focus</th>
<th>20-30 min</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with material - organize, concept map, summarize, process, re-read, fill-in notes, reflect, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review</th>
<th>5-10 min</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go over, summarize, and wrap-up what you just studied</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reward Yourself</th>
<th>5 min</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a break, walk around, get a snack, and relax. Then return and begin next Intense Study Session</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Intense Study Sessions

1. Use the Study Cycle (right).
2. Employ "Intense Study Sessions" during regular study time after classes.
3. Work in 3-5 “Intense Study Sessions” per day: rotate subjects and tasks.

**For your weekly studying**

1. Use the Study Cycle (right).
2. Employ “Intense Study Sessions” during regular study time after classes.
3. Work in 3-5 “Intense Study Sessions” per day: rotate subjects and tasks.

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Study a little bit throughout the day and avoid hours of work at night.

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**The Study Cycle**

**Study Group Starter Kit**
**PURPOSE**

Which of the following purposes do we want our study group to be used for?

- Complete all steps in the Study Cycle
- Preview information before class
- Compare notes
- Review material: (Circle all that apply)
  - After Class
  - Weekly
  - Before a Test
- Hold “Intense Study Sessions” ______ times per week
- Complete homework assignments

**TIME, DATES, & SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long should sessions last?</th>
<th>When are the best times to hold sessions?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Hr (no Breaks)</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10 min break)</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Hrs</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20 min Break)</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least an hr, but until we are finished</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How far in advance do we want to schedule?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until midterms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until finals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group Goals, Standards & Dynamics**

How do we want to relate to each other? What standards do we want to set?

- Every member should be on time for sessions.
- Sessions are to end at set time.
- Sessions are to be productive and free of distractions and idle chatter.
- Members are to notify someone of absences and tardiness.
- Members are to be adequately prepared so that sessions are productive.
- We are willing to contribute the amount of effort necessary to master material.
- Members are to promote each other's learning and success.
- Members are to provide assistance, support and encouragement to group.
- Members are to refrain from just copying answers with/without proper understanding.
- Members are to fully participate during sessions.
- Members are to be open and honest about understanding the information.
- The group should assess productivity and make suggestions for improvement.
- Members are to respect rules of study group.
- Members are not to substitute study groups for missing class.
- We should all respectfully and tactfully deliver comments and critiques.
- It will be a priority to make sure all group members have the same level of understanding.
- We will expect members to get additional help on their own time.
- We will maintain a rigid structure as it relates to roles.
- We will rotate roles regularly so that everyone has equal responsibility.
- We will limit the study group to the people present at the initial organization.
- We will allow, with group’s permission, other people to be involved in our sessions.
- The most dominant person will take the lead on discussions and assignments.
- The most dominant person will take a lesser role in discussions and assignments and will only answer questions when necessary.
- We strive to maintain consistent communication between classes and study sessions as it relates to the course and the study group.
- We only expect to communicate important information as it relates to the study group.
Discuss each role and assign to a group member. If the group has less than five (5) members, some members may share a role. Be sure to note which group member is assigned to each responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Person Responsible:</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader/Facilitator</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensures meeting runs smoothly. Ensures the group goals &amp; expectations are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicator</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reminds members of meetings and assignments. Informs group of members’ absences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorder</td>
<td></td>
<td>Keeps contact information. Keeps notes on study group’s progress. Takes notes on important class information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goes to professor, tutor or TA to get clarity on problems or topics for the group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Keeper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensures sessions are kept within the designated time.</td>
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</table>

**Immediate Responsibilities**  
*After 1st Meeting but before 1st Study Session*

- **Communicator:** Sends everyone a summary of first meeting and reminders for next meeting.
- **Recorder:** Makes notes of assignments and information covered in class.
- **Leader:** Makes proper arrangements if study area is to be reserved.
- **All members:** Put dates on personal calendars and work to complete task assigned by the group.
Utilize or adapt the session guide and agenda to make sure your study session is productive and time efficient.

### Sample Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>Debrief, Socialize, Get Started</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-3 minutes</td>
<td>Set Session Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Independent Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
<td>Group Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 minutes</td>
<td>Independent Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Group/Individual Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 minutes</td>
<td>Review, Plan for Next Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To ensure your study group is productive and effective.

1) Use the suggested learning techniques or adapt them to your group’s needs.
2) Make it a goal to respond to open ended questions verbally and in writing.

### Learn New Information
*Use Collaborative Learning Techniques*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Think / Pair / Share</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Each pair discusses a concept or topic for a specific amount of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Then the pair shares their collective thoughts with others.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Cell</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Each member develops questions to quiz each other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leader can also compile questions for practice quiz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can utilize open-end questions (shown right).</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note-Taking Pairs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compare notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Combine and re-write notes to form an improved partner version.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jigsaw</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Each person learns a part of a concept.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Each person then teaches their part to the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Requires trust and interdependence.</td>
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### Assess Learning/Prepare for Tests
*Answer open-ended questions*

- Explain why _______.
- Explain how _______.
- What is the meaning of ______? Why is ______ happening?
- What is the main idea of ______? What is the solution to the problem of ______? What if ______? What conclusions can I draw about ______? What is the best ______ and why?
- What do you think causes ______? Why? How does ______ affect ______? How does ______ relate to what I’ve learned before?
- What is the difference between ______ and ______? How are ______ and ______ similar?
- How would I use ______ to ______? What are the strengths and weaknesses of ______?
- What is another way to look at ______? What is a new example of ______? What would happen if ______? What are the implications of ______? Why is ______ important? How does ______ apply to everyday life?

Adapted from:
Assessing Your Learning Activities Using Bloom’s Taxonomy

What is Bloom’s?

Bloom’s Taxonomy Pyramid:
- Levels of Critical Thinking Difficulty
- Knowledge - Remember
- Understanding - Develop, Explain
- Application - Apply
- Analysis - Analyze
- Synthesis - Create
- Evaluation - Evaluate

College courses require “apply” at minimum. What can your Study Group do?

Group studies a chapter; each “expert” teaches a group.
Group identifies keywords and then answers each critical thinking question.
Group breaks topic down into small elements.
Group breaks topic into a larger, more challenging argument and selects a mini-project.
Group stages a debate and invites others from classes to contribute to the mini-project.
Group stages a debate and invites others from classes to contribute to the mini-project.
Group stages a debate and invites others from classes to contribute to the mini-project.

Activity Examples

Lower & Higher-Level Study Group Activities

You can remember the basics.

You can explain basics to someone else.

You can apply into new contexts.

You can break your subject into elements and analyze each part in detail.

You can use your analysis to evaluate the ideas.

You can propose well-reasoned, new alternatives, and then carry out the new ideas.

Study Group Starter Kit

You need both higher and lower-levels to succeed.

Place your study group’s activities below.

Assess Your Activities

College courses require “apply” at minimum.
List important details about study group sessions and course. Make sure all members have accurate information to avoid miscommunication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Quiz</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Schedule</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3/Mid-term</td>
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<td>Exam 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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