

Writing Sample: LING 3B

At the beginning of college life, most freshmen dream of getting a 4.0 overall GPA. However, most college students fail to do well academically. Why? The reason for their failure may vary, but, usually, the major cause of undesirable learning outcomes is student's bad habits. In contrast, a good habit will significantly increase a student's studying efficiency, and thus considerably improve a student's academic performance. Due to the great advantage that a good habit brings academically, I would like to introduce an effective method to form good habits.

To start with, there is no doubt that students with good habits are able to study more efficiently. One of the good habits that enables students to increase efficiency is breaking up their studying into small fragments of time and distributing them over several days. According to Geoffrey Keppel's nonsense-word memorizing experiment, students that break up their study time into small fragments remember twice as many words as other students who try to remember those words in a single period of time (qtd in Daniel T. Willingham, "Allocating Student Study Time: 'Massed' versus 'Distributed' Practice"). In addition, according to recent research from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), "a study of 266 undergraduates showed higher GPAs among those who more often engaged in at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity" (qtd in Alexis Bomar, "Exercise Linked to Better Grades"). From these examples, we can safely come to the conclusion that students having good habits, such as allocating their time and doing adequate exercise, will study much more efficiently than students with bad habits.

Only understanding the importance of forming good habits is not sufficient for students to improve their academic performance. Students must also be capable of distinguishing good habits from bad ones. Good habits are defined as habits that either increase student's studying efficiency or reduce students' workload. The Huffington Post sums up "9 Awesome Study Tips for College Students," which lists nine useful good habits. Among these tips, my favorites are sleeping well, managing time and always going to class. First, a tired mind makes studying much more ineffective. Thus, adequate sleeping is especially essential to students. Furthermore, students should manage their time, which means not leaving their homework to the last minute before the deadline. In this way, students will be able to manage their workload more easily. Finally, students should attend every lecture because professors will mention essential tips and knowledge in every lecture, which makes missing a lecture a great loss for students.