



FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATIONS

A PEER LED STUDY-BY-SUBJECT GUIDE

BASIC CHEMISTRY

GETTING STARTED

"To succeed in this sequence, you must constantly repeat and reinforce the skills and content of the class." Nick C., Nursing '13, peer tutor

"Do not cram the weekend before the exam. Start to prepare, study, and read up on exam material at least three weeks beforehand." Lindsay S., Health Psychology '14, peer tutor

"Reading the book before the class is very important. Going through the chapter before the class starts will help with fully understanding the subject." Kate G., Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Business '14, peer tutor

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

- Train your brain to think chemistry with flash cards, practice quizzes, quizzing other people and doing math problems in groups.
- Create flashcards on a weekly basis for the different reactions, structures and definitions that you encounter throughout the course.
- Study on your own in a quiet area, and then teach your friends.
- Write down topics over and over until they are memorized.
- Complete practice problems until they are easy. Pay attention to the method you used to solve the problem, not just the final answer.
- Once you understand the method that you used to solve the problem, find new situations to practice the same method that you used in the original problem. In other words, find new problems that require the same method of solution as the first to make sure you really understand.
- Read and outline chapters before class to familiarize yourself with the material. Pay attention to chapter summaries, bolded words, charts, and graphs to get a 'big picture' idea of the topic before class.
- Make a study guide for every chapter or topic on a weekly basis. That saves a lot of time because you can use them to study for all of your exams.
- Study a little bit at a time. For example, if you study one functional group a day for seven days, you will know seven functional groups by the end of the week.
- Watch videos and draw pictures or concept maps to better understand course content. Make up songs, raps, acronyms and stories, and then repeat them out loud, by yourself and with friends.

TACKLING THE TEST

If you are given scrap paper in the beginning of the exam, jot down important points about key concepts that you need to remember at the start of the test.

Take your laboratory work seriously, because all of it may reappear on the Lab Final.

Attend all exam review sessions. Bring a list of prepared questions to the review sessions.

Complete all practice questions provided by the professor. This gives you an advantage on the exam because you have experience solving problems!

DO'S AND DON'TS

Do...

- Make outlines and read course material before class. This will help you get the most out of the lecture.
- Take reasonable breaks while studying. Eat snacks, chat with friends, or do something fun.
- Formulate a list of questions before attending peer tutoring, recitations, or review sessions.
- Study with friends to conceptualize and understand the course material. Remember that you also need to study alone, and studying with friends does not replace individual effort.
- Complete all practice problems, reading, and homework assigned by the professor.

DON'T...

- Spend too much on just one subject. Focus on everything as a '*big picture*', while also focusing on details.
- Compare yourself with other students. Go at your own pace and see what works best for you.
- Get discouraged by your first exam grade. With hard work and effort, you can always improve.
- Put off getting help! Professors, tutors and the ARC are all here to help.

MEMORY TIPS

- Use repetition to remember definitions, structures, and reactions. Write and recite them over and over.
- Seek out extra problems to make sure you that you can apply the same methods to different situations.
- Create your own study guides for every section by synthesizing all of your course material. When you do this, you revisit all of the information and you become reaccustomed to the content.

FINISHING YOUR FOUNDATION

"In conversations with students from across the college who have taken the Basic Chemistry sequence, they all have declared that the best way to succeed in the course is to attend class, actively study, and attend office hours and test reviews before the date of the examination as scheduled by the course faculty." Nick C., Nursing '13, peer tutor

"I suggest getting to know our professor by attending office hours and asking questions. Going to a teacher's office is scary, but once you've visited once, you will never be as apprehensive about it the second and third time. Even if you just introduce yourself by name, at least the professor can put a face to the name while correcting tests and homework. Never burn bridges because who knows, in four years, she could be writing you a letter of recommendation!" Lindsay S., Health Psychology '14, peer tutor

"In order to be successful, all the students must study on their own first. They need to practice as much as they can and ask others for help when they are stuck. In addition, there are many ways to study. People can sometimes come up with their own very unique way to study." Kate G., Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Business '14, peer tutor

Please note: This handout is a compilation of resources provided by peer tutors and academic support professionals. This information is meant to supplement recommended study techniques provided by course professors, peer tutors, the Math Center, the Writing Center, and the Academic Resource Center. They are not intended as a replacement for MCPHS resources, faculty and staff, class attendance, course syllabi, or course materials. For additional information, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 617.732.2860.