

Tips for Online Students Taking an online class? That's great. Be aware that taking online courses is often more difficult than going to a traditional classroom. The amount of reading and writing is amplified, and you must be extremely disciplined. To be successful in an online class, consider the following:

1. **Check into your online class often.** Recommendation: Check in at least three times per week, if not more.
2. **Read your email.** Daily. This is your primary means of communication with your instructor and student services (registration, financial aid, etc.).
3. **Read the syllabus.** Yes, it may be long. However, you are responsible for understanding the work required in the class, due dates, policies, etc. Read this document closely and refer back to it and read it again several times during the semester.
4. **Be intrinsically motivated.** You are the one responsible for checking in, doing the work, and following up.
5. **Schedule your time.** Set aside time every day to work on your online classes. It is too easy to get behind in an online setting.
6. **Be organized and know when your assignments are due.** Not all of your courses will have the same due dates for assignments. Get a calendar and use it! A.M. or P.M.? It does make a difference.
7. **Do NOT wait until the last minute to turn in assignments.** If it's late, it's late. Some instructors will not accept. Plan for the unexpected (computer or Internet issues, for example), and turn assignments in early.
8. **Communicate well in writing.** Discussions, emails, etc. must be clear and concise. If you don't have good writing skills, this will cause you difficulty.
9. **Use your reading skills.** There is a great deal of reading in the online classroom (content, presentations, discussions, etc.). Don't skip reading the discussions – you'll miss out on a great learning opportunity.
10. **Write in an appropriate way in an online college classroom.** Proper grammar and mechanics are expected in all writing. Texting language is not acceptable in an online classroom. Expect to be docked if you choose to write in this way. Also, don't write something that you wouldn't say to someone if face to face. The relatively anonymity of the online classroom emboldens people to say things they shouldn't, and this will not end well for you.
11. **Understand how to interact with your instructor.** If you need help, telling the instructor that he or she is the worst instructor ever, and then asking for help, probably isn't a good strategy. Calm down before you send an inflammatory email.
12. **Know when and how to ask for help.** In addition to your instructor, there are tutors (through peer tutoring and through SmartThinking) to assist you in many courses. Don't wait until you are failing to ask for help.
13. **Be able to use technology well,** including computers, the Web, email, and word processing software (Word). If you don't like computers and they don't like you, an online class probably isn't the best fit for you.
14. **Be proactive.** Ask questions on assignments. Interact with your classmates. Don't wait until week 14 of the semester to ask for help.