

For years I have been teaching all the while observing some of the mistakes being made by students time and time again. Success is more than getting grades; it is creating habits that will help a person thrive in environments outside of the classroom as well. While some of the habits listed below do not translate well beyond the school walls, many of them are universal throughout life. Regardless, developing these habits will increase your success here in Civics & Economics and at Leesville Road High School.

## In Class Habits

1) **Read Directions** The most important step in knowing what to do is knowing the directions. Receiving directions is a gift. Often in life we are told to do something *without* specific directions. Fortunately, at school, directions accompany nearly everything you are asked to do. You can make your life much more simple if you take the time to read directions before beginning a task. I should also mention, it is also just as important to follow those directions.

2) **Pay Attention** By paying attention, you are giving yourself access to more information. Some of that information may be additional directions, but often times it is important information in the curriculum that will eventually be tested on. Teachers do not speak for the sake of speaking, they do not have the time to waste. Teachers speak to give information that will be useful in class. In addition, pay attention to your peers. Your classmates often have important information as well – perhaps they are answering a question, providing a point of view you did not think of, or asking a question you did not understand either. In any case, by paying attention you are increasing your access to new information.

3) **Be Independent** Believe that you can do things on your own. Before you immediately ask for help, give yourself the chance to do it yourself. If after your best attempt you cannot complete a task, then ask for help. Remember, in real life you rarely have someone who will give you help, or the help you seek is not easy to come by. This is your chance, in a closed, safe, and supportive environment, to try on your own before outsourcing the solution.

4) **Think** Before acting, speaking, or asking a question, think about it. Think, maybe you already know the answer. Think, maybe you have access to the answer yourself. Think, what would be the best way to phrase my question or statement? Think, would what I say or do be offensive to someone? Think, what I say and do is a reflection of me, and what I have learned in my life so far.

5) **Be Organized** One of the easiest and most difficult things to increase success is to be organized. Organization is easy if we begin by being organized; it is much more difficult to get reorganized after we get off track. Too often do I see grades slip and opportunities missed because a student does not know where something is.

## Out of Class Habits

1) **Get Enough Sleep** You should arrange, to the best of your ability, to get a sufficient amount of sleep. If you are sleeping in class, you are clearly not paying attention and not reading the directions. Psychological studies also show that the better rested the individual the greater the ability to think clearly, recall information in memory, and concentrate.

2) **Avoid Absences** I understand that we all get sick from time to time. Sometimes it is unavoidable, but there are some things we can do to reduce the chances it happens:

- *get enough sleep* – allow our bodies to rest and recover from the day as well as to have the energy to produce the antibodies to fight possible illness.
- *wash your hands* – the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) says that the best way to avoid illness is to wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- *use hand sanitizer* – when washing your hands is not possible, use hand sanitizer to kill nearly all of the bacteria you may come in contact with.
- *keep hands away from your face* – keeping your hands away from your face keeps bacteria from entering into your body and causing an infection.
- *cover sneezes and coughs* – by using your sleeve, preferable your upper arm. Use tissues when possible, and do not leave them laying around.

3) **Read** There is much information to be learned from reading. The teacher does not have enough time in the course of a semester to provide enough depth of information to make each student expert in the curriculum. As a result, you will need to read everything asked of you by the teacher. It would also be to your benefit to look deeper on line. Search, read, learn.

4) **Reflect** Think about what you have said and done. Always try to find a way to improve on past successes. Try to reflect on mistakes you made and think about what you can do to prevent it from happening again. We all make mistakes; it is what we do with them that makes the difference.

5) **Be Prepared** Being prepared comes in many ways. Being organized and knowing where your things are is one way. Another way is by studying and reviewing the night before. Students are more successful if they prepare for assessments (tests, quizzes, and the EOC) if they review a little each night. Although “cramming” the night before a test or quiz may help you get a good grade, it doesn’t help you learn and remember beyond that day. Remember, you are here to LEARN, not to get good grades. If you learn the material, good grades will happen and you will have knowledge you can take with you after this course is completed. Note: A good way to keep prepared is by using Index Cards, or Note Cards.