

Half-hour PASS strategy

Ever sat down to study and feel your mind drifting away and you don't recall what you have studied?

Here is a tried and proven way to help you remain in control of your study. It can help your stress levels as well.

PASS has four main steps

Plan for 2 minutes

Act for 25 minutes

Survey for 3 minutes

Stop for a short break



Planning



Action



Surveying



Stopping

Plan for 2 minutes

The first 2 minutes of your half-hour you spend noting what you are going to do or learn in the remainder of the half-hour. Your plan needs to consider four things:

Assessment - be clear why you are studying this particular material in this half-hour, what assessment task and module objective/s does this work relate to.

Action - decide on what action you will take in studying, e.g. take notes, do activities.

Aim - choose a specific section of your study materials.

Achievable - plan so that you can achieve the amount of work you have set in the 25 minutes available. At the beginning of your studies, this will be a matter of trial and error as you learn how long it takes you to complete each type of activity or section of the material.

Act for 25 minutes

DO IT! You now carry out your planned actions on the specific sections of your study material for the next 25 minutes.

Remember to be actively engaged by doing activities, highlighting, underlining, making notes, tables, or diagrams, seeing how these ideas fit with the module objectives and other ideas in the subject.

Some of the questions you may ask yourself to help you focus during the 25 minute active study session are:

- Is this a process/technique? Are there clear steps?
- What are they and how can I arrange and remember them?
- Is this a key concept?
- What is a definition for this concept/idea?
- Can I explain this concept in my own words?
- What is a good example of this concept?
- Is there a relevant diagram, graph, formula?
- Can I draw and explain this?
- Am I applying a concept? Can I do the activities?
- What past exam questions are there on this?
- Can I answer these past exam questions?

Survey for 3 minutes

Spend the final 3 minutes surveying or reviewing what you have just done, making some record of what you have learned. This step is a crucial one in reinforcing what you have just covered and making it easier to remember.

Your survey also needs to be an active one.

- Reorganise what you have just covered into a table or diagram
- Rewrite the main points
- Make a **mnemonic**
- Recite or explain the main points to someone else or yourself
- If you have completed any quizzes, self-assessment questions or past examination questions, revise the items you were unsure of or answered incorrectly

Mnemonic

A short-hand memory aid
e.g., using the first letter
of words to remember a
rule in grammar or maths
or other subjects

Stop for a short break

Take a 2-minute break. Relax, stretch, get a drink, give yourself a small reward. Then begin another effective and efficient half-hour!

Putting it all together

- After two PASS half-hours, take a longer break of 5 minutes.
- After three PASS half-hours, have a good break of 20 minutes and perhaps a change of subject.
- After five PASS half-hours it is probably time to finish study until later in the day, or carry over to the next day.

Need more help?

Study Support, USQ Library can help you to develop your academic learning language and maths skills for success at university. Consultations are available face-to-face, via video chat, by phone or email.

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