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MORGAN AND DEESE'S CLASSIC HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

HOW TO STUDY

THIRD EDITION REVISED

MES DEESE AND ELLIN K. DEESE

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HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

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Third Edition revised by

James Deese
Ellin K. Deese

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PREFACE

Knowing how to study efficiently doesn't come naturally. Even students who are eager to learn and who want to do well in college don't always know what to do. They may not know how much to study or how to distribute their time wisely. Many students don't know how to read a textbook, particularly the kinds of textbooks they are likely to encounter in college. They don't know how to absorb and remember information from lectures. Indeed, they may not be prepared for the lecture style of teaching at all.

Furthermore, many potentially good students are deficient in basic skills; they may not be able to read well enough for college-level material. They may have only the vaguest notions about English grammar. And many students have trouble putting their ideas into words in such a way that other people can understand them. Large numbers of students fear and avoid mathematics and science.

Still others have sufficient preparation and are good at studying but don't know some particular things essential for success in college. They may not know, for example, how to use all of the resources of the college library.

This book is intended for all of these students. It is for students still in high school intending to go on to college, for students entering college, for older people returning to college, and even for students who aren't ready for college yet.

We have made some points by recounting brief case histories of students and their problems. These are all drawn from life, though of course the details have been altered. One or more of them may ring a bell for you. If so, we hope that you will find something that will help you over your particular difficulties.

This book is a practical guide to studying. It tells you how to plan for and use time, how to get the most out of textbooks, how to make and outline notes, and how to prepare for and take examinations. It also gives directions for dealing with foreign languages, the sciences, and mathematics. It tells you how to write papers and reports, and it tells you what you can do to improve your use of language and your ability to read.

It is never too late to improve your study skills and hardly ever too early to begin. If you are a high school student planning to continue your studies beyond high school, you should master the techniques presented here. Use the book to evaluate your study skills and to help you decide whether you have the motivation to face a difficult academic program. Your parents might want to read the book or portions of it, too. It may help them to appreciate some of the problems you are up against.

This edition, we believe, is an improvement over the previous ones. Students and colleges change, and

we have altered the book to accommodate these changes. We have improved various sections as the result of advice from critics and students. We particularly wish to thank Natalie K. Moyle and Joan E. Gore, both of the University of Virginia, for critical readings of particular chapters. Several anonymous reviewers provided us with invaluable insights into weak points of the previous edition.

James Deese
Ellin K. Deese

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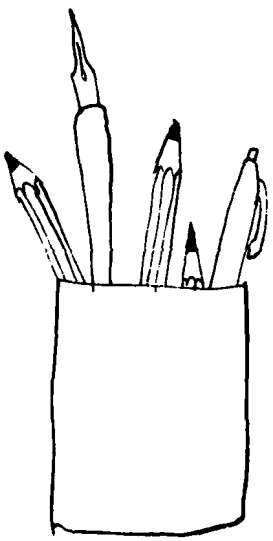
CHAPTER ONE

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START



WHY GO TO COLLEGE?

Going to college is one of the good things of American life. Turn-of-the-century books such as *Dink Stover at Yale,* Hollywood musicals of the thirties, and even TV series portray college as one of the best times of life, a time when exuberant young people come together for fun and the adventure of learning. Even though that image is now tarnished a bit by the explosive growth in colleges and by the intense competition among college students for getting into professional schools, it is still there. Many people blossom socially for the first time in college. For most Americans, it is the first time they are really challenged by ideas. It is the time of the end of growing up and the beginning of adult life. It is the time many people look back on as the most exciting, significant, and enjoyable in their lives.

Perhaps because going to college is so much a part of the American dream, many people go for no particular reason. Some go because their parents expect it, others because it is what their friends are doing. Then, there is the belief that a college degree will automatically ensure a good job and high pay.

Some students drift through four years, attending classes, or skipping them as the case may be, reading only what can't be avoided, looking for "gut" courses, and never being touched or changed in any important way. For a few of these people, college provides no satisfaction, yet because of parental or peer pressure, they cannot voluntarily leave. They stop trying in the hope that their teachers will make the decision for them by failing them.

To put it bluntly, unless you are willing to make your college years count, you might be better off doing something else. Not everyone should attend college, nor should everyone who does attend begin right after high school. Many college students profit greatly from taking a year or so off. A year out in the world helps some people to sort out their priorities and goals. If you are really going to get something out of going to college, you have to make it mean something, and to do that you must have some idea why you are there, what you hope to get out of it, and perhaps even what you hope to become.

EVALUATING YOUR PRIORITIES

Put yourself in the position of a high school student wondering whether or not he ought to go to college, or an older person trying to decide whether to return to college, or even in the fix of a college student trying to decide whether she should stick it out or not. If you think about it, you will realize that these are the kinds

of situations in which you need the most thorough self-examination.

Are you interested in ideas, books, science, or art? You don't have to have the enthusiasm of a specialist in some subject to enjoy it and profit from its study, but if you would rather be repairing machines than studying, maybe you had better give a thought to what you are doing. There are a lot of good occupations that don't require a college education. Furthermore, people often develop an interest in ideas, books, and intellectual pursuits when they have been out of school for a while.

High school is not the kind of place where many students develop intellectual interests. Take Bill. He finished high school with satisfactory grades and very high SAT scores. He would have been a good prospect for many selective colleges. Wisely, however, he saw that he wasn't at that point interested in learning from books. He liked working with his hands, and he liked being out of doors. His father was a physician, so you can imagine that he was under a lot of pressure to go to college. But he managed to weather the pressure, and he got himself a construction job. There he discovered that he had a real talent for carpentry. He began doing free-lance cabinetry work and made a success of it. After five years he found himself developing an interest in science. The kinds of books that had bored him in high school now were interesting. He went into bookstores and bought books on physics, the weather, and chemistry. It dawned on him that there were a lot of exciting occupations in which he could combine his love of doing things with his hands with intellectual pursuits. By the time he applied for college at age twenty-three, his goals were clear, and he had a strong urge to do well. The four years he spent as an undergraduate were happy and productive. He graduated with honors, and he ended up doing top-notch work in the medical school where his father had gone. For Bill and for a lot of other students, taking a break between high school and college was the right thing to do.

One of the things Bill did was to think a lot about what he was interested in during his last year of high school. Many students need to do that, but in addition, they need to take stock of their abilities. College requires abilities that are sometimes not touched at all in high school or at best are underused. A lot of studies tell us students tend to overrate themselves on those kinds of traits and skills that make for success in college. One of the most important things you can do is to make an honest appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses. You will find a table on page 3, which you can use to rate your traits and abilities. This will help you make such an appraisal.

Check where you honestly think you stand on the traits and abilities listed. Discuss your ratings with people who really know you well—your friends, counselors, teachers—people who can tell you where you might have overestimated or underestimated yourself.

Most students take standardized tests in school. If you can learn your scores, you can use them to evaluate yourself. In doing so, take into account the people who take a particular test and who establish the norms for it. You may have scored on some test, for example, at the 90th percentile for high school seniors. That means that you scored better than 90 percent of the students who took the test. Remember, however, that not all high school seniors go on to college. For those students who actually go on to college, you might have scored at only the 50th percentile. Because some colleges are more selective than others, you might find that the same score puts you only at the 30th percentile among the entering freshmen at the college of your choice. The meaning of a score is usually relative to the population in which you find yourself. When evaluating your abilities, you need to take into account what kind of college you are at, or plan to attend.

Usually, your college's counseling service or your high school counselors can help you evaluate your test scores accurately. Nearly every college has a counseling center for interviewing, testing, and counseling students about their academic and personal problems. Trained counselors know not only how to give and interpret tests but also how to put together a total picture of your academic and personal qualifications. Remember that tests by themselves are not infallible, and they always need to be interpreted. Counselors are aware of this and know how to put your test scores in their proper context.

EXAMINING ALTERNATIVES

To sum up: Going to college or staying in college once you are there are not your only alternatives. You might want to enter the job market right after high school. If you have a particular aptitude for, or you want to learn, a particular trade, you can go into a vocational training or apprenticeship program. Postponing college for a definite—or indefinite—period of years is increasingly popular among high school graduates. Even jobs that are temporary and not particularly interesting may help develop personal maturity that will make college more meaningful later on. And if you are in college and feel that you are only marking time, see your dean or advisor about the possibility of a leave of absence. Most colleges have flexible leave policies.

SELF-RATING OF TRAITS AND ABILITIES

In the spaces below, check where you honestly think you stand on the traits and abilities listed. After you have done that, discuss your ratings with some other people who know you really well—students, friends, parents, counselors—and who might show you where you have overestimated or underestimated yourself.

In my college, I think I am in the—

Upper fifth	Middle three-fifths	Lower fifth	
			in speed of reading textbooks
			in ability to understand textbooks
			in ability to take notes
			in general preparation for college
			in amount of time I study
			in not wasting time
			in work habits
			in vocabulary (words I know and use)
			in grammar and punctuation
			in spelling
			in mathematical skills

Students and parents often get upset about any departure from the traditional sequence of high school, college, and then graduate or professional school. They tend to think that this is all just preparation for life and that it should be gotten through as quickly as possible. But we don't just prepare for life, we live it. We live it from the moment we are born to the day we die. The trick is to live it well—responsibly, productively, happily, meaningfully. Everyone is different. People do not develop at the same rate. Some experiences are wasted at one stage and significant at another. If college is right for you now, fine. If not, postpone or interrupt your education, or find out what you can do to make it better. In the next few pages we will deal with some of the things that might help make it better for you.

WHAT TO EXPECT

There are more than 2,600 colleges and universities in the United States, and no two are exactly alike. Some serve mainly local students; others have national and international student bodies. Many have fewer than 1,000 students, and there are some with more than 45,000 students. Some are private, some public. Some are four-year, some two-year, and some four-year with affiliated graduate and professional schools. Some are church-related and others nonsectarian. Some are very hard to get into, while others will take any high school graduate. If you are still facing a choice of a college, you might want to consult one of the books that describes each institution. These books are avail-

able in any bookstore, and they are brought up to date each year. College counselors in high schools make frequent use of them. A decision as to which institution to attend may depend upon cost, distance from home, size, programs offered, and whether it will offer the kind of social life you want. Whatever your decision is or has been, you should remember that no institution is perfect. Problems you may have had in high school aren't going to disappear because you are in college. Furthermore, college life means a new set of demands.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Living at Home. If you are attending a local college, especially one without residence halls, you will probably live at home and commute to classes. This arrangement has a lot of advantages. It is cheaper. It provides a comfortable and familiar setting, and it means you'll get the kind of home cooking you are used to instead of the monotony that characterizes even the best institutional food.

However, commuting students need to go out of their way to become involved in the life of their college and to take special steps to meet their fellow students. Often, this means seeking out those kinds of college functions designed to introduce students to one another. It means a certain amount of initiative on your part in seeking out and talking to people in your classes whom you think you might like.

One problem that commuting students sometimes face is their parents' unwillingness to recognize that they are adults. The transition from high school to college is a big one, and if you live at home you need to develop the same kind of independence you would have if you were living away. Home rules that might have been appropriate when you were in high school don't apply. If your parents are reluctant to renegotiate, you can speed the process along by letting your behavior show that you have the responsibility that goes with maturity. Parents are more willing to acknowledge their children as adults when they behave like adults. If, however, there is so much friction at home that it interferes with your academic work, you might want to consider sharing an apartment with one or more friends. Sometimes this is a happy solution when family tensions make everyone miserable.

Living in a Dormitory. If you have decided to attend a college away from home, the odds are that you will spend at least your freshman year in a dormitory. For some students, dormitory life is the greatest thing ever; others find it less to their liking. Not all dormitories are alike. Some consist of suites of four or five rooms which share a common living room, while others consist of individual rooms, usually shared by two students, opening onto a corridor. Some contain complete apartments for four to six persons, often in a high-rise building. Probably the most common arrangement is a double room, and that means a roommate. Students who have their own room at home and are used to a lot of privacy sometimes find it difficult to adapt to living with someone else. Usually college housing offices try to match people with similar interests and values, but they don't always succeed. And even when people are well matched, a certain amount of give-and-take is necessary.

Many roommates, even when randomly matched, become close friends, and most get along well enough through the year. But in a few cases, hostility springs up almost from the beginning. If you have a roommate problem, try to solve it. The first step is to make an effort to work it out between yourselves. Often the offending student doesn't know that things he or she says and does bother other people. Sometimes, just bringing grievances out in the open in as pleasant and unemotional a way as possible helps. If the problem persists, the resident staff member, typically an upperclassman or graduate student living in the dormitory, may be able to help. If things are really bad, the resident counselor can tell you what you have to do to initiate a change.

Dormitory life offers a lot of tempting distractions. Something interesting is always going on, and it is easy to postpone studying in favor of a card game, a gossip session, or even just watching TV. Learning to resist these temptations when you have work to do can be the single most important step in a successful college career.

At many colleges, students have a choice between coeducational and single-sex dormitories. Typically, the relationships between men and women in coeducational dormitories is that of being good friends. Pairing off is the exception rather than the rule, and dating is usually with persons who live elsewhere.

Most schools have rules prohibiting alcohol and drugs in the dormitories. These are often ignored by the residents. Although this book isn't meant to deal with problems of alcohol and drug abuse, we have to say something about them, for they often play a role in poor study habits. You have to make a personal decision about whether or not you are going to drink. But if you do drink or take drugs, you should know the difference between use and abuse. Students who regularly drink beyond their capacity or spend a lot of time stoned inevitably will end up in academic trouble. Disciplinary action or even arrest may be a result. If you don't drink or take drugs, don't feel socially

inadequate or be tempted to do something that doesn't fit your personal values. Life styles differ, and sooner or later at any institution you will find people you can be comfortable with.

One of the best aspects of dormitory living is that it gives you a chance to get to know many different kinds of people and to form relationships that are satisfying and that enrich your life. Often students make their closest friends during their freshman year, and these are usually from among the people on their hall or in their suite.

ORIENTATION AND ADVISING

Every college or university has some kind of orientation program for entering students. Don't skip any part of this program if you can help it, even if the speakers are boring and repetitive. You may miss out on some useful information. Also, you can get to know other incoming students. Everyone is floundering around together, and it is easy to strike up conversations with the people around you, even if only to exchange gripes.

You're likely to be handed a lot of miscellaneous printed and mimeographed material. Read it through and save it, because later in the year you'll have questions that didn't occur to you at first. If you have some question that the handouts don't answer, go to official sources—resident staff, faculty advisors, deans—rather than rely on guesses or the student grapevine.

Usually orientation includes a tour of the campus. Get to know the layout and the surrounding student community. You'll feel at home sooner when you know something about the place. Check out the library. You will be spending a lot of time there; the sooner you know how it works, the more efficient your studying will be. Explore the student union, if there is one. On most campuses, this is the hub of student activities. Wander through the classroom buildings. This is a good time to find out how long it will take you to bike or walk from your dormitory to where your classes will be.

The orientation issue of the student newspaper will have a lot of useful information. Most students read the student paper daily or weekly, depending upon its publication schedule. It is the best and most up-to-date source for what's going on, and usually there is a lot going on—lectures, concerts, films, plays. Usually during orientation there will be a number of events of this sort—along with parties. Be sure to go. It will help you get over homesickness, and it will establish a good pattern.

Placement tests in subjects such as mathematics, foreign languages, and English are usually given during the orientation period. Find out what tests you are required to take and which ones might be advantageous to take even if not required. Placement policies vary from school to school, but many colleges will give credit in addition to advanced placement if you score high enough. If you're still in high school and have taken any advanced placement courses, be sure to take the CEEB Advanced Placement Tests. If you do, you may find yourself exempt from some college requirements and ahead on credits.

LEARNING TO COPE

ACADEMIC DEMANDS

Your high school classmates probably represented a fair cross section of American young people, and the student body undoubtedly included many students not headed for college. For this and a lot of other reasons, the pace and standards of work in high school tend to be geared to the average student, not the superior one. You may have discovered that you could do very well without having to work very hard. Or even if you did work hard, the competition probably was not all that stiff, and you didn't have to be too efficient about studying in order to do well.

In most colleges you are going to find yourself in a much faster league. Most college students stood in at least the upper half of their high school classes. In colleges with high admission standards, your fellow students will have been in the upper tenth or above of their high school classes. In short, in college you are likely to be surrounded by students who were at the top of their high school classes. Many of them were also student leaders—class officers, student body presidents, newspaper editors, in short, doers and achievers. Furthermore, college professors are less likely to gear the work to the average student. They may aim their courses at the superior students, and they will expect everyone to meet high standards. The kind of work that got you A's and B's in high school can easily get you C's, D's, and even F's in college.

It is surprising how many students have no idea what demands they will face in college. Because they aren't prepared for a much tougher job of studying, they do badly in their first semester. The result is they are disappointed and discouraged. That's why we think this book is especially useful for the student entering college. If you have a realistic idea of what lies ahead and how to prepare for it, your chances of liking college and of doing well your first semester will be very much better. Many of the students who drop out before graduating are just as able and just as motivated as the

people who finish. They might have stayed if they had known a little about how to study properly.

Aside from the competition and standards of work, there's another big difference between high school and college. In high school, even if you have a lot of work, it's pretty well laid out for you. A lot of it is covered in class, and homework can be completed in study halls. Long-range projects, such as term papers, are fewer and less demanding. To a large extent, high school students are graded on what they do in class and in daily homework.

All this is reversed in college. You spend relatively few hours in class, and except for labs, discussion sections, and seminars, you are hardly graded at all for what you do in class. Instead of an hour or two of homework for five classes, you have two or three hours of outside work for every hour in class. Therefore, if you are carrying a course load of fifteen semester hours, you can expect to spend about thirty hours a week in study and preparation. There are no supervised study halls in which you have little choice but to do your work. Instead you will have time between classes that you can use profitably or waste, as you choose.

In most courses you won't be required to do your homework on a daily basis. Rather, you are likely to be given a syllabus outlining an entire semester's work. Nobody checks to see if you are keeping up with the reading or working on the required term paper. You might have an occasional quiz or a midterm exam, but in some courses there will be only one exam, the final. If you let all the reading go to the end of the term, you won't be able to do enough cramming before the exam to perform well, even if the course is only moderately difficult.

You will be thrown on your own, treated like an adult who can be given some general directions and then left to figure out how and when to do what needs to be done. Many college students aren't prepared to take the responsibility that goes with this freedom. To make matters worse, college abounds in distractions and diversions that encourage procrastination. In later chapters we'll deal with the problem of structuring your time so that you can get the most out of studying and still have plenty of time for other things.

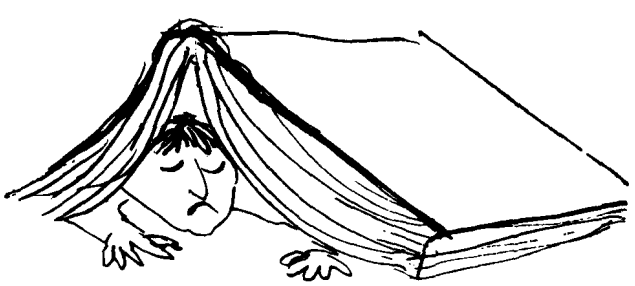
SOCIAL PRESSURES

Everyone likes to be liked, and everyone needs friends. Making and keeping new friends will be one of the best aspects of your college years. But if you run into problems in your social life, your academic work will suffer.

Take Suzy, for example. A bright, hard-working student in the small-town high school she attended, Suzy was respected by her high school classmates. Although she was not the most popular girl in her class, she had a few close friends from school and from her church youth group. She was satisfied with her life. When Suzy entered the state university, she was placed on a dormitory hall whose residents all came from urban areas. They were an unusually sophisticated group of girls. All of them drank. Two were experimenting with drugs, and several of them talked freely about their sexual experiences. Suzy had not faced this sort of thing before, and she felt awkward and uncomfortable. Her roommate, with no intention of being unkind, dubbed her the "country mouse," and one of the other girls changed this to the "church mouse." She could not feel close to anyone, and she became more and more the outsider. As she withdrew from social contacts with them, the other girls became increasingly hostile. Lacking the social skills and the confidence to seek friends elsewhere, Suzy spent most of her time alone. Although she studied diligently, it became harder and harder for her to concentrate. Most of the time she was depressed and anxious. She began to wonder if she were out of step with the rest of the world. By late October she was thoroughly miserable. After a long, tearful weekend at home, she decided to withdraw from the university.

The saddest part of her story is that Suzy made no attempt to seek solutions to her personal problems but rather chose to escape from them. Her problems could have been dealt with. If she had sought the help of her resident advisor, her dean, or someone at the counseling center, she might have been able to rescue her college career. The only way she knew how to do it on her own was to control her environment by withdrawing to the safe, circumscribed world she knew.

There are all kinds of social pressures in college. You will encounter people with different ideas, values, and ways of living. These will challenge things you have always taken for granted. The experience can be a painful and threatening one. But it can be important to you. Perhaps some of your views should be challenged, and those that you stick to can't really be your



own until you have examined them for yourself. The wider social horizons of college can help you do that. Be prepared for some uncomfortable moments. You may be the only person of your race or from your part of the country in your dormitory. You may feel unhappy and isolated. But there are ways of dealing with that problem without giving up or without continuing to be miserable. If you are having trouble coping with social pressures, seek out the help of the support services at your institution.

PARENTAL PRESSURE

Pressure sometimes comes from parents. Most parents are well meaning, but some of them aren't very helpful with the problems their sons and daughters have in adjusting to college, and a few of them seem to go out of their way to add to their children's difficulties.

For one thing, parents are often not aware of the kinds of problems their children face. They don't realize that the competition is keener, that the standards of work are higher, and that their children may not be prepared for the change. Accustomed to seeing A's and B's on high school report cards, they may be upset when their children's first semester college grades are below that level. At their kindest, they may gently inquire why John or Mary isn't doing better, whether he or she is trying as hard as he or she should, and so on. At their worst, they may threaten to take their children out of college, or cut off funds.

Sometimes parents regard their children as extensions of themselves and think it only right and natural that they determine what their sons and daughters do with their lives. In their involvement and identification with their children, they forget that everyone is different and that each person must develop in his or her own way. They forget that their children, who are now young adults, must be the ones responsible for what they do and what they are. When students do things that their parents regard as unacceptable, there is resentment and anger, even when the student feels that whatever he or she is doing is perfectly consistent with his or her own values. If you are in this kind of conflict with your parents, you can help make things better if you acknowledge and respect their feelings without sacrificing your right to live according to your own standards. If you are considerate about small but important things such as letter writing, telephoning, and so forth, and if you demonstrate your adult status by doing your work and handling your finances, you may not eliminate the conflict, but you will keep it to the minimum.

Another big source of conflict between parents and students is the matter of program of studies and course choice. Some parents are convinced that only certain subjects are worth studying and that others are foolish and frivolous. The engineer who can't understand why his son takes courses in art and music, the artist who is horrified by his daughter's enthusiasm for economics and accounting, the physician who insists that his son follow a premedical curriculum, the lawyer who is upset because her daughter has no professional aspiration, the mother who is shocked because her daughter wants to be an electrical engineer are all cases in point. The list could go on and on. In matters of course selection and career planning, students must be guided by their own aspirations, interests, and abilities. Students who merely accept the course that their parents map out for them are usually headed for trouble. They are living out someone else's aspirations, not their own. Sometimes students get entirely through college on someone else's plan. Such people may discover when they are thirty-five or forty that they really don't like what they are doing. A few of the more courageous ones will go back to school to correct the mistake they made earlier.

College is a time for exploring alternatives, for examining life, for moving gradually and smoothly from parental direction to autonomous commitment. At times it is a hard task, hard for students, hard for parents. We hope that some parents will read this book, so that they can have some idea of what college life is for their children and know what they can do to make things as smooth as possible.

FINANCIAL PRESSURES

If you're lucky, you'll have had some experience in managing money before you get to college. Some students, however, have no idea how to budget their funds, and they may discover for the first time in their lives that no one is around to dole out cash when they run out. You'll save yourself a lot of headaches if you learn how to manage your money effectively. College is expensive, and if your parents are supporting you in whole or part, you do them a big favor by not adding to their financial burdens by being careless with money.

Students who go away to college usually open a checking account in the town where their college is located. A common arrangement is for a parent to deposit a certain amount of money in the student's account on a regular basis, usually once a month. The initial expenses are likely to be heavy because you will be buying books and supplies. After a few months, however, you will have a good idea about how much it costs you to live. If you don't get enough money

from home, consider looking for a part-time job to help meet your expenses. These are often surprisingly easy to find in a college community. You may have heard—and it's true—that college students who work earn, on the average, better grades than those who don't. Perhaps it is because students who pay part of their own way are more motivated than those who do not. And then, a part-time job forces a student to budget time more effectively. Management of time is the most important aspect of effective studying.

If you've never learned how to balance a checkbook, get some instruction from your parents or your bank. Keeping accurate records is important. It can save you the embarrassment and cost of a bounced check. And get into the habit of drawing enough cash on a weekly basis to meet your ordinary expenses. Most banks charge from ten to twenty cents per check, and if you write a check for every little two-dollar purchase, you are wasting a high proportion of your money.

Many students receive financial aid from their colleges. A typical pattern is to have some funds in direct scholarship, some as a loan, and some in the form of a work-study job. Every institution has a financial aid officer to whom a student can turn if it is necessary to have his or her aid package changed. In addition, many institutions have an emergency loan fund to assist students with temporary difficulties.

Meet your financial obligations promptly. In our credit-oriented society, a good credit rating is a strong asset and a bad one a genuine burden. Delinquency in paying college bills, library and parking fines, etc., may result in some disciplinary action. In any event, your college won't grant you a degree or send out a transcript until you have paid all your bills.

BEING INVOLVED

By now you should be aware that college life has many facets. If you spend fifteen hours a week in the classroom, thirty or so hours in study and review, fifty-six or sixty hours sleeping, you will have more than sixty hours a week left for other activities. You can use that extra time to learn a lot of things that are not part of the formal curriculum, particularly how to work with and relate to other people.

Our advice at the outset is, Take it easy. Don't get involved in too many extracurricular activities during your first few weeks. There is a lot of waste motion in getting started in college, and you may have to work harder at first to learn new study habits and to get into the swing of college life. You will need the time to assess just how hard college work will be for you. Take most of the first semester getting used to the academic schedule and making new friends. Don't throw yourself into every activity that looks interesting or profitable.

Budget time for recreation. Relaxation is essential to good mental and physical condition. The consensus of a lot of research on work is that productivity declines after fifty-five or sixty hours a week. So, plan on doing something else rather than working beyond sensible limits.

Somewhere in your schedule, allow time for regular exercise. At the minimum, medical experts tell us, it should be the equivalent of a half-hour a day of walking. Jogging is all the rage now, and recent studies show that in addition to its physical benefits, it is a good antidote for depression. If you enjoy some sport, plan to play on a regular schedule. Some colleges even require physical education. If this is the case at your institution, try to get into something that is beneficial or that you enjoy. Or use the opportunity to learn a new sport, such as tennis or golf.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Every campus is crowded with clubs and organizations. There is something for every taste. If drama isn't your thing, how about working on the campus radio station? Some schools even have a TV studio. There is always a student newspaper. There may be a debating society, a chess club, a war games club, a folk dancing club, and even a mountain climbing club on some big campuses. Investigate those things that interest you. Find out what the people are like who are in organizations you might be interested in.

There are two particular reasons for choosing an organization to join. One is to do something you enjoy. The other is to give you experience at something you might want to do later in life or something related to your choice of a profession. If you are headed for medical school, you may join the drama club for fun and the premedical society because it sponsors activities that will help you in your professional goals. And of course, organizations provide opportunities for leadership and for learning how to work comfortably with other people.

A note of caution: Some extracurricular activities place heavy demands on time. Putting out a newspaper or putting on a play is not a small job. You could find yourself giving so much time to these activities that your academic performance suffers. The same applies, of course, to varsity athletics. If you find yourself devoting too much time to some extracurricular activity, curtail it or drop out. Don't run the risk of being put on academic probation.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Student government in college is a lot more important than high school student government. On some campuses, the student government assumes the major responsibility for the quality of student life. It may even have sole responsibility for the nonacademic discipline of students. If you have a political streak, or if you would like to have a say in how things are run, this is something to get into.

You will want to start at the "local" level. Go to your dorm council meetings or their equivalent (there are even such organizations for commuting students) and speak up. If you are active, there is a good chance you will be elected to some position sooner or later. That can give you an opportunity to test your skills at management and leadership. Again, however, remember not to spend too much time at it. Some people who are heavily into student government get swamped by it and neglect everything else.

SORORITIES AND FRATERNITIES

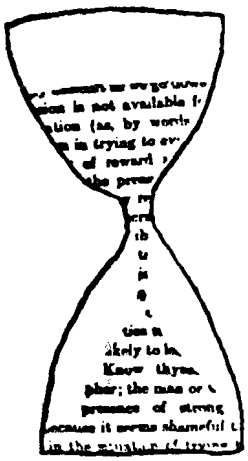
Sororities and fraternities offer a way of life that is attractive to many students. They provide opportunities for friendships and for social activities with people who share your tastes. On some campuses they are very important, and on other campuses they are minor. At some schools the majority of students will belong, and at others only 10 to 15 percent of the students will be in them. Whether they are for you or not depends upon your needs and interests. Don't automatically assume that you should join one or that you should avoid them at all costs, for that matter. For some people they are the most enjoyable part of their college years. For others, they are confining and narrowly conformist. If you participate in rush, the chances are that you will end up either in an organization that suits you or not in one at all. If the latter happens, it is probably for the best. It means that the chances are you would not have been happy in any of the sororities or fraternities on your campus. If you do end up in an organization you don't like, drop out. It's expensive, and if you do drop out, you are more likely to find congenial friends.

Do be involved in some aspect of college life. It will add immeasurably to the quality of your college experience. You will find that you are a part of a living community and not merely an anonymous body in a classroom. And, of course, you know that you will get from an activity what you put into it. If you give some of your time and energy to your college community, you will get back something in return.

Now that we've covered some of the things that help you get off to a good start in college, we're ready to get down to the main topic of this book: how to organize and use your time for effective study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ART OF STUDYING



You may not be interested in any of your courses, or you may be interested in your courses but can't seem to do the work for them. People who aren't interested or who don't study usually feel guilty about it. But that doesn't help. In fact, it probably makes it worse by adding anxiety and depression to the problem. Most people who advise students and who know what their problems are believe that lack of motivation is responsible for more failures than inadequate background or lack of ability. Not being motivated is the most serious problem many students face.

Before we can turn to the specific techniques of efficient study, we need to look at the problem of motivation and what you can do about it. We can't make you want to learn, but we can say some things that might help you want to learn. First of all, you might want to assess your motivation for going to college. On page 11 you will find a list of statements about motivation for college. By ranking these yourself, you can determine what things are important to you and what goals and values you have that may make for success in college. Such a self-examination could lead you to change some of those goals and values in such a way as to make your college career a better and easier one.

IMPROVING MOTIVATION

Why do so many college students find it hard to study? Partly it's because of the great difference between high school and college. In high school someone is usually after you every day to do your work, and hardly any internal push is required. In college external pressure scarcely exists, and you are left to move yourself to get the work done.

Another reason has to do with the absence of long-term goals. Most students who go to college express some kind of career interest: They want to be doctors, lawyers, engineers, business executives, teachers, and so on. But these aims are often pretty vague, and they usually shift from time to time. Few students are absolutely sure of what they want to do in life, and even fewer know exactly what they must do in college to prepare themselves for their chosen career. Not being sure sometimes makes them uncomfortable and anxious, but it doesn't provide any real motivation for studying.

There is nothing wrong with not knowing what you want to do, even after you've been in college for a while. In fact, one of the things college can do for you is to help you find your career goals. But occupational choice is often difficult, especially for students in a liberal arts program. In the absence of such a choice, many students can't work up enthusiasm for studying,