

How to stay on top of pre-lecture work & assignments

Balancing academic work with a social life might sound like a challenge, but with a little structure and routine, it's manageable. As someone who's been through it, I want to share some tips on how you can prepare for university life and stay on top of your studies while still enjoying your downtime.

Why Pre-Lecture Work Matters

At university, pre-lecture readings play a huge role in your success. Here's why:

- **You'll understand lectures better.** Instead of feeling lost, you can actively engage with the material and participate in discussions.
- **You'll retain information longer.** Thinking critically about what you've read helps transfer knowledge from short-term to long-term memory.

Building a strong habit of completing pre-lecture work during college can set you up for success at university!

My Routine for Staying Organised

Here's a glimpse of how I manage my pre-lecture work and assignments. You can adapt this routine to your current college studies to build strong habits before starting uni.



1. Use a Weekly Planner

Start by planning your week. It doesn't have to be fancy—a Notes app or a simple calendar works wonders. For example:

- **Monday:** Review material on a topic you the competitive advantage model (or any topic you're currently studying).
- **Tuesday:** Allocate time for group projects or lighter tasks like preparing flashcards.
- **Other Days:** Balance assignments and revision with extracurricular activities.

2. Prioritise Tasks by Time of Day

- **Mornings and Afternoons:** Save these for heavier tasks like reading or essay writing when your energy levels are high.
- **Evenings:** Use this time for lighter activities, such as revising your notes or preparing for the next day.

3. Stay Flexible

Life is unpredictable, and the university is no exception! Leave gaps in your schedule for spontaneous social events or unexpected tasks. This flexibility will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.



Keeping Notes and Resources Organised

Getting into the habit of organising your materials now will make uni life much easier later. Here's my system:

- **OneDrive or Google Drive:** Store all your readings and notes online so you can access them anywhere.
- **Separate Documents for Each Lecture and Seminar:** This makes it easy to search for key terms or concepts when revising.

These habits will save you so much time when working on assignments or prepping for exams!

Maintaining Productivity

1. Create a Dedicated Study Space

Once you're at university, the library is your best friend. After lectures, I like to take a quick break with friends and then head to the library to stay in "work mode." You can adopt this practice in college by dedicating a space at home or your local library for focused study sessions.



2. Plan Social Time as a Reward

Studying doesn't mean giving up your social life! Use plans with friends as motivation to finish your tasks. For example:

- **Afternoons:** Grab coffee during a study break.
- **Evenings:** Plan a dinner or movie night after completing your to-do list.

This balance helps you stay productive while enjoying downtime with friends.

Starting university can feel overwhelming, but building good habits now will make the transition much smoother. By staying organised, completing pre-lecture work, and rewarding yourself with social time, you'll be ready to thrive both academically and socially.

By Sophia for the University of Reading Unibuddy site