

How to Cope With a Subject You Hate

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School curriculums are designed to teach students a wide range of subjects to prepare them for life outside of school. Unfortunately, there will be some subjects that you will like and others that you dislike. Learning to cope with a school subject that you dislike is an important part of progressing through school. You can do this by changing your study habits and using motivational tools and incentives to change your approach to the subject you dislike.

Part
1

Part 1 of 3: Changing Your Approach to the Subject You Dislike



1 Contextualize the subject. Sit down and ask yourself why you don't enjoy this particular subject. When you're able to identify and contextualize what you don't like about a subject, you can take steps to correct the issue.

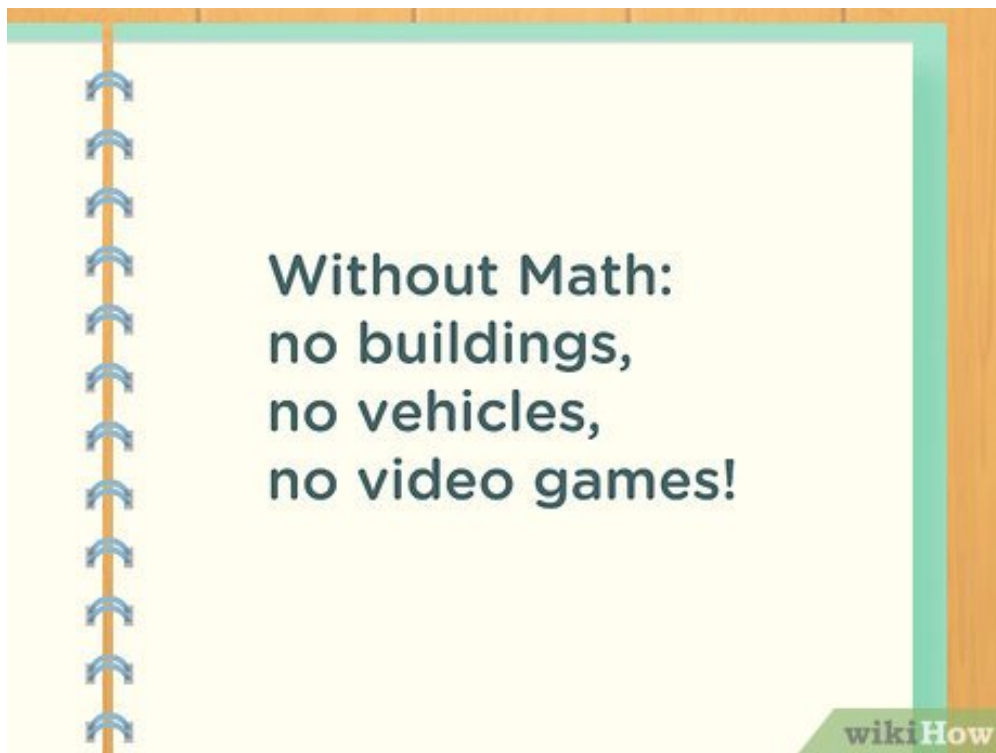
- Ask yourself why you're having trouble with this subject or class. Is it because you don't understand a particular concept? Do you dislike the instructor or your classmates? Are you bored?
- If you dislike the instructor or your classmates, understand that classes do have time limits. Even if you dislike the class now, you may have a different instructor or classmates next semester or year.

2 Speak to your instructor about your feelings. Be honest with your teacher and explain that you've never been very interested in the subject. Ask them if they can provide resources, like newspaper articles, documentaries, websites or YouTube videos, that can help you get engaged with the subject.

- Your teacher may even be able to demonstrate how the subject applies to real-world situations, which can help you see the value in the class.

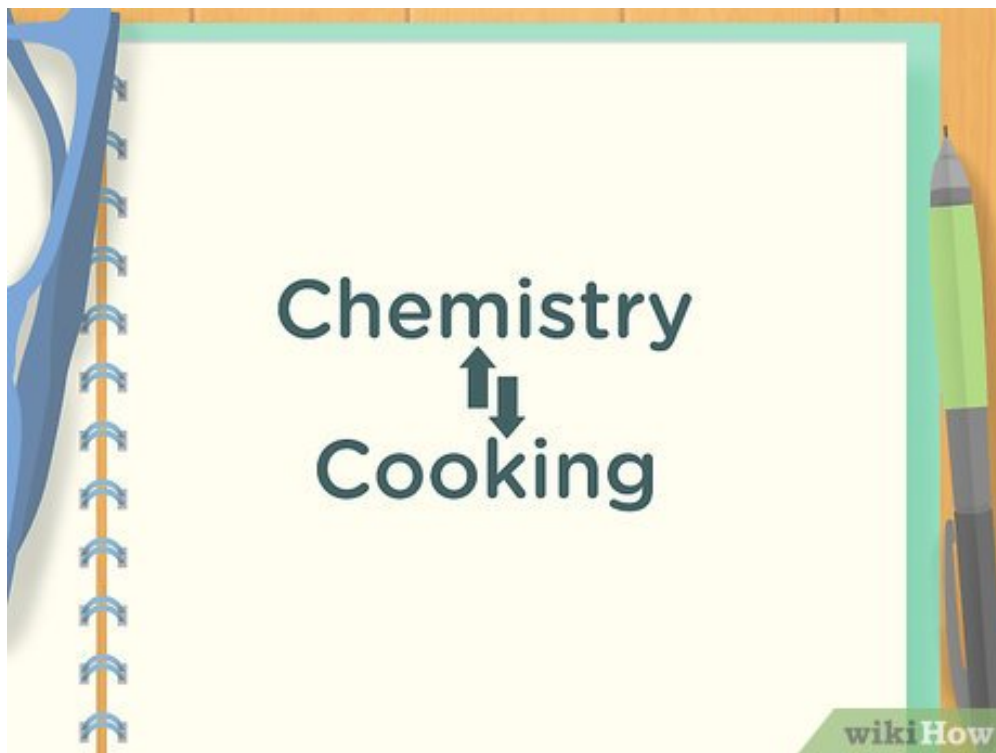


- 3 Alleviate classroom boredom.** If you are bored with the class, look for ways to enhance your understanding of the topic. You might, for example, ask the instructor for books or materials that you can read and use outside of the classroom.
- If you are bored in class because you already understand the material, inquire with your teacher about moving to a more advanced course on the subject.
 - Try studying with a friend who is interested in the subject and enjoys learning about the concepts that you may struggle with.



4 Recognize the importance of the subject. School curriculums are designed to teach a broad scope of subjects but every subject you learn is important in some way. Ask a friend, relative, or even a teacher why they enjoy the subject. Their answers may help you to change your perspective on the class.

- When we identify the importance of a subject, we are more likely to devote time to learning the subject and its concepts. Look for key concepts that are important to the course to understand why it is important.
- For example, if you dislike English as a subject, understanding that English classes are a great way to learn communication skills and to relate to others.



5 Identify translatable skills. Translatable skills are concepts that one subject teaches that can be applied to another subject or situation.

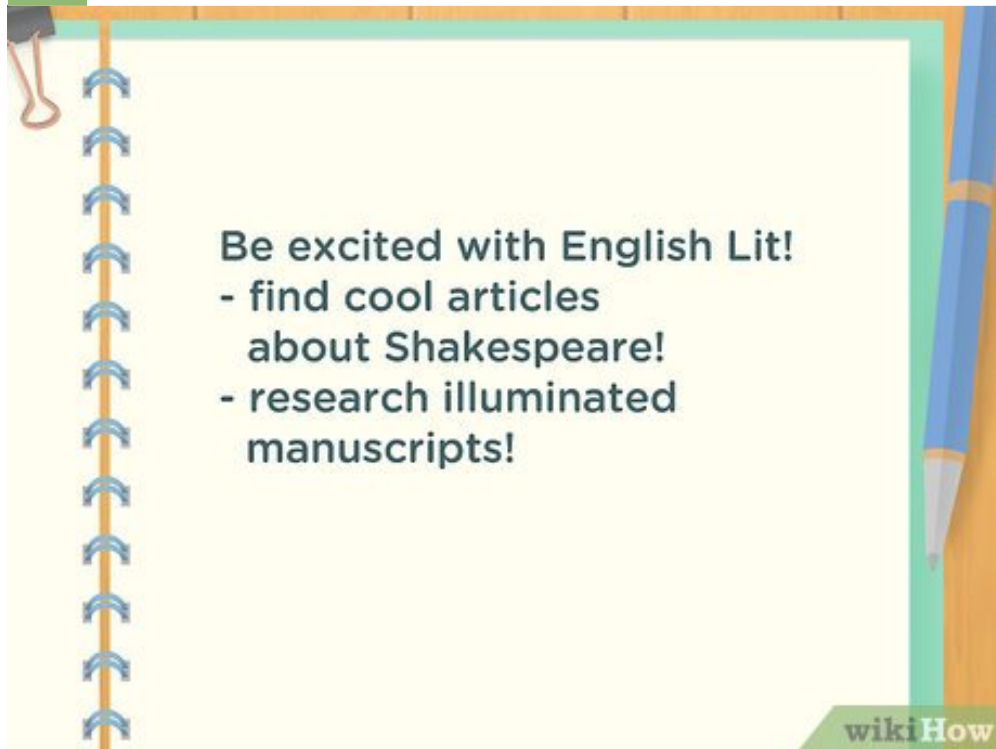
- Identifying translatable skills helps you to understand how the subject fits in with the big picture. While you may not need to know the noble gases outside of chemistry class, studying chemistry will teach you how to identify reactions and to understand how substances interact with each other. This is important when you're cooking or mixing cleaning products. [1]
- Translatable skills that you learn in one subject can help you to succeed in other subjects or in your everyday life.



6 Look for things that you *do* enjoy about the class or subject. By focusing on the positive aspects of the subject, you can change your approach to learning and studying the subject. And while great teachers can make even subjects you find dull more interesting, even if you do not enjoy the teacher's style, you can change your own perspective on the subject.

- For example, if you are struggling with English, look for books and papers to read and write reports on that are dedicated to subjects that you do enjoy, like history or art.

Part 2 of 3: Studying a Subject You Dislike



1 Create an action plan. Often, we dislike a certain subject because we struggle to learn the subject or certain key concepts. When we try to cope with disliking a subject, we can't ignore the fact that we still have to learn the subject. ^[2]

- An action plan is essentially a plan to ensure that you will pass the course and complete all of your work. While changing your feelings about the subject may take time, you need to continue to follow the class syllabus and to complete your assigned work.
- Work with your instructor to create a schedule that you will follow to make up any missed work and to complete future assignments.
- Set a study schedule that uses incentives to positively reinforce your studying habits. Follow this study schedule and ask the instructor for outside sources to enhance your understanding of the topic, like online lectures or interesting articles.



2 Incentivize learning the subject. Incentivizing the subject goes hand in hand with identifying your motivators. When you incentivize doing tasks that you dislike, you motivate yourself to complete them.

- Economists argue that higher incentives lead to more effort and higher performance levels. [3]
- Incentives do not need to be material or monetary. Intrinsic incentives, or incentives that come from within the student, are also motivating. An example of an intrinsic incentive would be a positive feeling you get when you receive a good grade on a paper that encourages you to work as hard on the next assignment.



3 Associate the subject with something you do like. If you're struggling to incentivize yourself to study the subject, try to draw positive associations with the subject that you dislike with something that you do like.

- A positive mood can help your brain to think more creatively and helps with your ability to recall facts.^[4]
- When you consistently incentivize yourself and motivate yourself to learn a subject you dislike, you begin to associate studying the subject with positive things you do like. For example, if you treat yourself to your favorite snack after you study your disliked subject, eventually you may associate studying with the happy feelings you get when you have your favorite food.^[5]



- 4 Hire a tutor if necessary.** If you dislike the subject because you are struggling to learn a concept, ask the instructor for extra help or consider hiring a tutor.^[6]
- If your school offers tutoring services or if there is a Teaching Assistant (TA) for the course, take advantage of these resources.
 - A tutor can help to explain complicated concepts if you're having trouble grasping them and can help you work through your homework.
 - Teaching Assistants are usually found in advanced college courses. They often hold office hours where students are able to come by and ask them questions about the course material. Take advantage of this resource if it is available to you. Professors may also hold office hours for their students.

Part 3 of 3: Reconsidering Your Learning Style



1 Identify your learning style. Your learning style refers to the ways that you learn things the best, and you can use your style to try different studying methods for the best results. Once you've identified what your learning style is, you can experiment with it.

- There are a number of different learning styles, and people can have different learning styles for different subjects. Work with an instructor or a school counselor to identify your learning style, if you do not know what your learning style already is.^[7]
- If you find that you are struggling to learn the subject the way that the instructor teaches it, your learning style may be different than the way the instructor teaches.^[8]
- It may be difficult to completely change your learning style to adapt to the instructor's style. However, you can work around this issue by using different learning styles to approach a subject outside of the classroom. For example, if you are a verbal learner, and you learn best by listening to lectures, you can use the Internet to find recorded lectures on a subject that you are struggling to learn.
- If you are a social learner, and you learn best in groups and working with others, form a study group with other social learners to study for a particular subject.



2 Find motivation. When you feel motivated to learn a subject or concept, you are more likely to devote time to it. You should determine whether you are more motivated by long-term successes or if you prefer short-term gratification.

- If you're more motivated by long-term successes, remember that your grade in this course has an impact on your overall GPA. Your GPA will influence the higher education programs you're accepted to, internship opportunities, job opportunities, and your graduation.
- If you're more motivated by immediate, or short-term, gratification use small items to reward yourself. For example, if you spend one hour studying the subject you dislike you can reward yourself with fifteen minutes of Internet browsing.
- When you begin to feel frustrated with the subject, it is helpful to remind yourself that your success in this course will have positive consequences later on.



3 Prioritize your schedule. When we dislike a subject, it can be tempting to ignore the problem and to avoid working on the subject. Prioritize learning the subject that you dislike or are having difficulty with over subjects that come naturally to you.

- Always complete your homework. Homework is a great way to test your knowledge on a topic and to gauge your ability to use certain concepts.
- Participate in the class discussions and during lessons. Actively engaging with the subject can help you confront your dislike and to understand what concepts you are having trouble with.



Expert Q&A

Question

How can I get a good grade in a difficult subject?



César de León, M.Ed.
Educational Leadership
Consultant
Expert Answer

Many times when you are faced with adversity, the first thing you must do is to rethink your strategy. Try to prepare a well-focused, positive strategy. Number one, are you taking notes in class? It's one of those simple things that sometimes we forget about, but good notes go a long way, especially when you're studying for the test or the assessment that teachers are about to give. Number two, make sure that you're understanding the material and your notes. If you're not understanding the material that's being presented, and your notes don't make sense, talk to your teacher and ask for extra assistance.

Helpful 2 Not Helpful 0

Question

What if working with a tutor and my teacher doesn't help?



César de León, M.Ed.
Educational Leadership
Consultant
Expert Answer

Seek help online. There are many, many free resources online, where teachers, tutors, and companies like Khan Academy and wikiHow have the answer to your questions. When in doubt, go online and see what else is out there. Maybe someone has already asked your question and received a really good answer.

Helpful 0 Not Helpful 0

Question

What should I do if the subject is in a language that I can hardly understand?



Emily Listmann, MA
Test Prep Tutor
Expert Answer

It sounds like maybe you are taking a foreign language class in which your teacher speaks exclusively in that language. It might be the case that you are in too advanced of a level for your understanding of the language. It's a good idea to talk to your teacher and work together to decide which class level is best for you.

Helpful 9 Not Helpful 7

Question

How do I learn a subject I hate quickly?



Community Answer

Everyone has different ways of studying, but in my case I feel motivated if I treat myself after studying at least one chapter. Your treat can be candy, chips, spending some time playing a video game, etc., whatever you like!

Helpful 14 Not Helpful 7

Question

I dislike my instructor because he/she doesn't know anything about the subject. What should I do?



Community Answer

You could do research and try to learn the subject on your own, you could hire a tutor to help, or you could talk to the principal or someone else in the school's administration and let them know how you feel about this instructor and why. They might be able to move you to a different class.

Helpful 10 Not Helpful 7

Question

What if that subject has nothing to do with what I want to be in the future?



Community Answer

Just do your best. If what you want to do in the future involves going to college, the schools you apply to will consider your GPA as a whole, which means it is important to do well in every class.

Helpful 19 Not Helpful 21

Question

What should I do if I want to change my most hated subject, but my parents said no?



Community Answer

If your parents are insistent about it, the subject is probably pretty important. Just do the best you can, and remember that you will not have to study this subject forever. You'll get through it, and you'll probably learn something useful, even if it doesn't seem that way.

Helpful 12 Not Helpful 12

Question

What do I do if I am terrible at a subject, even if I study and try my best?



Community Answer

Ask someone for help. You could ask your parents, your teacher or somebody else that may understand the subject.

Helpful 9 Not Helpful 39

Question

I am in middle school and hate my Hebrew class. Do you have any other advice for me?



Community Answer

Try to speak the language at home, with relatives, or with friends/classmates. Talking is always the key to learning a foreign language, because if you don't speak the language properly then there is no use in trying to be better at grammar in writing or listening tasks. You can also ask your teacher what you can do to improve.

Helpful 7 Not Helpful 6

Question

How can I improve my ability to focus on my studies?



Community Answer

Time yourself (use a stopwatch) for a certain amount of time and only when that finishes you get a 20 minute break and then study more. Take away all distractions (e.g., your phone) or study with a group who will help you.

Helpful 4 Not Helpful 4



Tips

- Ask for help. If you're struggling to learn a particular concept or are having trouble with a textbook chapter, ask your instructor for help and clarification.^[9]
- Make sure you're taking thorough notes in class. Good notes will really help you when it comes time to study for tests.^[10]
- Try asking a friend for help if you're struggling with a subject. Sometimes having a friend explain something makes it easier to understand.^[11]



Warnings

- Avoid skipping class, not completing assignments, or not paying attention in class. This can exacerbate the problem.
- Cheating on your assignments or examinations is never a good idea and you can face severe consequences if you're caught.

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About This Article



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This article was co-authored by **César de León, M.Ed.** César de León is an Educational Leadership Consultant and currently serves as an Assistant Principal for the Austin Independent School District in Austin, TX. César specializes in education program development, curriculum improvement, student mentorship, social justice, equity leadership, and family and community engagement. He is passionate about eradicating inequities in schools for all children, especially those who have been historically underserved and marginalized. César holds a Bachelor's degree in Education and Biology from Texas State University and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from The University of Texas at Austin. This article has been viewed 43,168 times.

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4 votes - 75%

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