

Got style?

Understanding your own way of learning

The Greek philosopher Socrates said it best: *“Know thyself.”*

Those are words worth remembering as you make the transition through middle school and on to high school.

Research shows that people learn in different ways. While each of us uses all of our senses to gather information, some people use one sense more than others while learning. Students can be better learners when they understand their preference for visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), or tactile (touching) learning. Often, students find that they have more than one preference when it comes to learning. For example, you could be almost equally strong in visual and auditory learning.

Once you understand how you learn best, you can adjust the way that you study for tests or complete classroom assignments. You also can learn to adjust when a teacher’s instructional methods don’t complement your style.

Understanding your learning style and playing to your strengths when it comes to studying and doing homework will help you be more successful in school.

You can use the learning styles inventory on the next page to investigate your learning style—or styles.



Learning styles inventory

To get a better understanding of how you learn, take this learning styles inventory. Answer each question as honestly as you can, then add up your points to find out whether you're an auditory, visual or tactile learner—and how you can make your personal style work in the classroom.

		Often	Some-times	Seldom
1	I can remember more about a subject through the lecture method with information, explanation and discussion.			
2	I prefer information to be written on the chalkboard, with the use of visual aids and assigned readings.			
3	I like to write things down or take notes for visual review.			
4	I prefer to use posters and models or practice some activities in class.			
5	I require explanations of diagrams, graphs or visual directions.			
6	I enjoy working with my hands or making things.			
7	I am skillful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.			
8	I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.			
9	I remember best by writing things down several times.			
10	I can understand and follow directions on maps.			
11	I do better at academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes.			
12	I play with coins or keys in my pockets.			
13	I learn to spell by repeating the words aloud rather than by writing them on paper.			
14	I can better understand a news article by reading about it in the newspaper rather than by listening to the radio.			
15	I chew gum or eat a snack while studying.			
16	I feel the best way to remember is to picture it in my head.			
17	I learn spelling by "finger spelling" (drawing the letters with a finger).			
18	I would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about it.			
19	I am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.			
20	I grip objects in my hands during learning periods.			
21	I prefer listening to the news on the radio rather than reading about it in the newspaper.			
22	I obtain information on an interesting subject by reading relevant materials.			
23	I feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, shaking hands, etc.			
24	I follow spoken directions better than written ones.			

Check your results >>

Scoring

Often = 5
Sometimes = 3
Seldom = 1

Place the point value on the line next to the corresponding item, then add up your points. The highest number of points determines your learning style.

Number	Points
2	
3	
7	
10	
14	
16	
19	
22	
Total Visual	
1	
5	
8	
11	
13	
18	
21	
24	
Total Auditory	
4	
6	
9	
12	
15	
17	
20	
23	
Total Tactile	



Visual learners

You're the most common type of learner, making up about 65 percent of the population. Visual learners relate most effectively to written information, notes, diagrams and pictures. You might not even absorb information if someone just tells you. It's almost as if it didn't exist unless you see it written down.

Study tips: Take notes even when you've been given handouts or printed course notes. Look at—don't just listen to—all study materials and directions. Use or make your own charts, maps, notes and flashcards and practice visualizing or picturing words and concepts in your head. Write everything down for frequent and quick visual reference.



Auditory learners

You are the second most common type of learner, accounting for an estimated 30 percent of the population. As an auditory learner, you relate most effectively to the spoken word. You tend to listen to a lecture, then take notes afterward or rely on printed notes. Written information will have little meaning until it has been heard. It may help auditory learners to read written information aloud.

Study tips: Read your assignments and study materials aloud—even if you feel a little silly at first—or use tapes. Taped lectures may help fill in the gaps in your own notes. Sit at the front of the classroom where you can hear well.



Tactile learners

You're a rare breed—one of only about 5 percent of the population. Tactile learners prefer a hands-on approach, learning through touch and movement. You learn skills by imitation and practice.

Study tips: You may take a little longer to learn some skills since most information isn't presented in a way that suits your learning style, but you can make schoolwork easier by typing your notes, using real objects or acting out reading assignments. Role-playing helps, too. When studying cell structure in biology, for example, you and maybe another tactile learner could pretend to be different parts of the cell. Sound crazy? It couldn't hurt to try.