

# The Time Management Secrets Of 29 Straight-A Students

By Kevin Kruse

What does it take to maintain straight A's at MIT or Harvard?

What does it take to be a straight-A student in high school, while juggling varsity sports and numerous activities?

The students I interviewed gave a wide range of advice and I'm reminded in my own home that there is no one way to achieve productivity and success as a student. My two teenage daughters are both straight-A students, yet they have very different study habits. One listens to music while studying, the other doesn't. One checks social media as her "reward" for getting a piece of homework done, while the other leaves her phone in a different room to avoid the temptation. What was most unique in this group of high achievers was how often they talked about social media. Almost everyone mentioned the siren call of Snapchat, Instagram or Facebook, and many suggested specific apps as a way to manage those urges (e.g., SelfControl, StayFocused). In addition to the familiar advice about using a calendar and being clear on priorities, straight-A students also know how to say no. From having no social life, or limiting friends to study groups, these suggestions—while seemingly extreme—might be the price to pay for excelling at the highest levels in academics. The full advice from the students I interviewed appears below.

**ELIZABETH POBLETE** attends Xavier College Preparatory in Phoenix, AZ. She will be attending the University of Arkansas as an Honors Fellow in the School of Engineering. Her advice:

"The basic principle of time management is as follows: do one thing, and one thing only until it is finished, then move on. This means, put your phone away so texting, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram aren't distracting you while doing homework and therefore adding to the time spent doing homework.

The most important guideline to time management, especially with homework, is a simple question: "What do I need to complete tonight so when I get to class tomorrow, I'm not kicking myself for not completing an assignment?"

Secondly, and almost equally important, "What can I do now so I won't have to do it on my most busy day, when I have work, practice, volunteering, etc?" Understanding your schedule is essential for time management because there might be days in which there are six hours to do homework after school, and some days when there might only be one or two.

Finally, make a schedule. It doesn't need to be written down or set in stone, but it is important to know that on Mondays, for example, you will get home at a certain time, eat, then do homework for a certain amount of time, then have dinner and relax for the rest of the night."

**CAITLIN HALE** earned her associate degree from Camden County College in 2009 with a perfect 4.0 grade-point average and is now in her third year of medical school at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine. Her advice:

“Staying focused on schoolwork can be a pretty daunting task, especially with all of the social media apps pinging in the background. I use an app called SelfControl, which lets me set the amount of time and specifically which apps I want to avoid—including Facebook and Instagram. It sounds old school, but what I found to be the most effective way to manage my time was to buy an agenda with a big calendar. I handwrite what topics I need to cover and how long I need to be studying that topic each night. So when I get home from class, I set my SelfControl app for the amount of time I allotted and get to work.

Something I find just as important to staying focused is scheduling in some “me time.” I make sure that every night I dedicate at least one hour to myself. Whether that is just watching a television show or going to the gym, it is a key factor in decompressing each day. This was especially important when it came time to study for my first medical licensing board exam. I would have been burnt out within the first few weeks of study boot camp if I hadn’t taken the time each day to go for a walk outside or hit the gym. I think this balance is what allows students to succeed in all aspects of their lives.”

**ERIK FOGG** is an MIT graduate who earned in only four years a Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree, and 2 minors. He is also the author of the bestseller, *How to Crush College*. His advice: “Start by saving semesters before saving minutes. Clever students—especially those looking for double-majors, minors, etc.—will find that many classes will count towards multiple requirements. Finding and planning for these classes means dramatically reducing the total number of classes needed for the degree you want.

Stop working in groups. Seriously; they either waste time or give you the answers so you lose the opportunity to learn. You may in time find one or two study-buddies that will keep you accountable for being on task, and these are great.

Give yourself play rewards. Time management is mostly about staying focused—when we’re playing a game we like, we’re not tempted to be distracted. Knowing that we have a reward coming up, like video games, a show, or social time, is not only motivating, but it gives us a clear light at the end of the tunnel that keeps us from the malaise of feeling like we’re trapped in work.

Lean on Wikipedia. If you’re trying to learn concepts rather than memorize a certain part of a textbook, Wikipedia is usually a much clearer, faster way of getting 90% of the way there.

Textbooks do a lousy job and there’s a lot of research that says you just go cross-eyed and lose focus when you’re buried in them.

My favorite app is StayFocused. The best way to beat the temptations of social media is to just block yourself from them, and not have to exert valuable, limited willpower. I allow myself 15 minutes/day total for Reddit, Facebook, Twitter, news, using this.”

**AMANDA KRUSE** attends Council Rock High School South in Holland, Pennsylvania. Her advice:

“I make my own day-by-day calendar in a notebook and write down when everything is due. I made my own system...I circle any tests I have the next day, so I’ll know to study for them the night before, I put an X over anything I don’t have to worry about but I was just writing it down as a reminder, I highlight the things I already did, and I box things that aren’t homework but that I need to remember later, like bringing money in for a special event.

When it comes to social media, I give myself goals, like if I do a certain number of math problems, I'll allow myself five minutes of Instagram. So it's an easy and nice break."

**ALEXANDRA LADOVE** is a straight A student at the Grauer School in Encinitas, California. She is also one of the nation's leading junior equestrians competing in the national equitation medal finals. In the fall, Alexandra will attend Auburn. Her advice:

"I set long and short term goals, and I make sure that I have enough time to realize these. For me, I had to give up going out at night. I spend my time studying, riding, training and competing. I love it; it's what I want to do. That isn't to say that it is always fun, or that I don't sometimes wish I could put it on the back burner and just go out with friends.

I recommend making sure to plan your day ahead of time, think about what needs to get done, and then do it. Leave plenty of time before you go to bed to make sure you accomplish what you need. One strategy that really helps is having a set time to start doing your schoolwork and to set an alarm to make sure you actually start then. Staying in a routine and trying to stick to a consistent schedule are key."

**NIHAR SUTHAR** is currently an undergraduate student at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Nihar's advice:

"Prioritize! I always prioritize the most important tasks that I have to get done for the day. The first on the list for me is always schoolwork, then writing (I write books), any athletic practices, and then hanging out with friends. I find that if you prioritize, you will almost always be able to get all your work done and have extra time to spend with friends as well.

Another tip I learned is that whenever I have a small task that needs to be completed (that takes less than 5 minutes), I should complete it now, rather than putting it off. This ensures that I do not have a long list of tasks that I have to complete later at the end of the day."

**NATALIE KRUSE** attends Council Rock High School South in Holland, Pennsylvania. Her advice:

"I have a homework log, which is a daily calendar, and for each class I write down when the homework is due. Even if it's due at the end of the week, I'll still write it down so if I have extra time at night I can start early. I generally write down when I have a test two to three days ahead of time so I remember to spread out the studying over a few days, to reduce the time and stress spent the night before.

When it comes to reducing distractions, I don't listen to music or watch television while I'm doing my homework. I find that this helps me push through my homework at a much quicker pace. For social media, I'll spend time on my phone when I first get home, but then I'll put it down and won't pick it up until my homework is done, or I'll pick it up between subjects as a little reward—but I don't give myself more than a ten minute break, because it will feel like you have a lot more homework than you do if you take multiple breaks.

I try to start my homework pretty early after I come home so I can be done by nine or ten at night. After that I start to get tired and lazy and work at a much slower pace."

**JOHN RAMOS** is a medical student at the University of Coimbra in Portugal, and is a writer at TheStudentPower.com. His advice:

“Set realistic small goals. I call them daily quotas, a term that got some attention on Quora. By daily quota I mean a small goal that seems insignificant, but when repeated day after day gets daunting tasks done. For example, 20 words in a foreign language a day (using a flashcard system, for instance) means 3000 words after 5 months. That’s almost complete fluency. Likewise, 10 math problems a day, every day, mean 300 problems done by the end of a month. It works because it’s a small time investment that compounds.

Work in short bursts of productive work, instead of long, unproductive sessions (in which 80% of the time is spent on Facebook). Strategies like the Pomodoro Technique suggest working in periods of 25-30 minutes, taking a small break and then resuming for another 25-30 minute session. It reduces distractions and increases productivity.

Enforce self-discipline with the help of browser extensions like StayFocusd (blocks social media and other time-wasters during certain periods of the day) and RescueTime (holds yourself accountable by measuring exactly how much time you spend working or wasting time on your computer).”

**HALEY SILVA** is a senior at Sierra High School in Manteca, CA. She recently received a scholarship to the University of the Pacific in Stockton. Her advice:

“Tips for staying focused: Have a goal, a positive mind set, and no doubt in overcoming any obstacles (like activities or people) that may cross your path.

Time management: Have a daily/monthly planner and make a to-do list to remember what your priorities are, and limit distractions.

Saying no to friends: Think of the consequences and what the best decision is for you; don’t try to please others, think of yourself first. Be careful of who you surround yourself with; if they’re your friend, no will not be an issue, and neither will negative peer pressure.

How to avoid the lure of social media: If you feel the necessity to have social media, be aware and cautious of who you contact and who contacts you, as well as what you say and display. It is meant for interacting with friends, which is why social media is not a necessity; you can easily contact your friends via text or with a phone call instead.”

**JOSHUA EICKMEIER** is an online hybrid MBA student at Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School of Business. His advice:

“You need to be a realist: it’s not possible to give 100% effort on every assignment, exceed expectations at work, spend time with family, and keep up with Game of Thrones. If you try, you’ll just stress yourself out.

You need to set your priorities early on and stick to them. I suggest that you maintain time with family and friends, but be quick to cut low-value activities like video games or TV shows. When you have to make more difficult choices, look at things from a long-term perspective. Don’t waste time feeling guilty about your choices – think of them as effective compromises that will lead to your long-term success.

I also suggest structuring your schedule to avoid these conflicts whenever possible. For example, doing schoolwork in the morning is a great way to keep evenings free for time with family or coworkers, and making weekend plans in advance keeps you motivated to get work done during the week.”

**CORAIMA MEDELLIN** is a junior at the University of Pennsylvania who graduated from Camden County College in 2014 as a member of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society, the top honor society for community college students. Her advice:

“I try to stay out of my dorm room because I tend to lie on my bed, get on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. So I go to the quietest place on Penn’s campus, Fisher Fine Arts Library, and study there. The quiet helps, but I think seeing others around me working on assignments motivates me to do the same. Sure, I go on Facebook, but the amount of time I spend on it is significantly reduced. I think it has to do with the fact that people pass by and I’m afraid of being judged going to a library and doing something that I could do somewhere else!

When it comes to reducing my social media usage, I try to restrict myself, especially when I’m getting ready for an exam or writing a paper. I want to stress the word ‘try’ because it’s easier said than done. So, I bribe myself by saying something along the lines of, ‘If you read this entire chapter, you can take a half-hour break and use Facebook during that time.’

Managing my time was something that I struggled with a lot when I first started at Penn, so I visited the Weingarten Center on campus to get some help with time management. It’s been suggested that for every hour of class lecture you attend, you should study for two to three hours. So when I spoke to a counselor at Weingarten, I was given a weekly schedule that I put my work schedule and my class schedule in and then wrote the times that I planned to study for each class. I found that it works when I have an exam or a huge paper coming up to keep me motivated and focused.”

**RANA ELMAKADEM** will graduate with an associate degree from Camden County College as the student commencement speaker (valedictorian) this May and is the New Jersey State president of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. Her advice:

“I recommend a large ‘month view’ calendar. I use both paper and electronic versions (on my phone and laptop), and I enter all assignment due dates from my syllabi at the beginning of the semester. But I enter them as due three to four days before the actual due date. I also recommend entering your work schedule and any other obligations to help you visualize everything you need to do and when you can allocate your time.

Setting incremental reminders of upcoming due dates and when different parts of your project or assignment should be done helps to keep you on track and minimize procrastinating.

When studying, depending on the subject, I break up my time with one 15-to-30-minute break for every 90 minutes to two hours of studying. During my breaks, I leave my study area and walk around, grab a snack and usually just check social media for five minutes. Doing something fun that takes your mind off studying helps you stay refreshed and refocus when your break is over. I have a Post-it Note app on my laptop where I put deadlines or my to-do list. I like it because I’m on my laptop a lot, and I have this constant reminder of what I need to get done. It always feels good when I delete the notes that I completed and declutter my screen.

We’re all stuck to our phones 24/7, so visit your app store and try out different time-management and study/homework apps to see which works best for you. I stuck with MyHomework app for some time, but found that placing everything on a large visual calendar worked best for me.

Regarding friends: If you know you have to get something done, then get it done. Saying ‘no’ to your friends is actually very simple in practice. Just say, ‘No, I have an assignment to get done.’ But do set aside some time to hang out with your friends and do something fun or relaxing. It

could be as simple as having lunch or going to the movies. You still need a work/play balance in your life. It doesn't have to be frequent, but making plans gives you something fun to look forward to and keeps everyone focused at the tasks at hand."

**VICTORIA SHOCKLEY** was a straight-A, honors student at Wakefield High School and recently graduated summa cum laude from NC State University in only three years. Her advice: "Combine multiple tasks together. Sometimes, there literally aren't enough hours in the day to do everything. Find an opportunity to combine several things at once – maybe you do homework or study while on the bus, or you listen to an audiobook for class while cleaning your room. You have to do all four things eventually, but this way you can maximize time that you might otherwise have spent being idle (such as a bus ride). That way, you cross two things off the list at once!

Learn to say no. I know it can be hard to turn down social events or extracurriculars, but it's important to know your limits so you don't overload yourself. If you know you have a busy weekend with friends coming up, try to limit your social calendar during the week so you can get the next week's homework/reading done early (if it's available in advance). While it may be disappointing to stay in on the weeknights, you'll have a stress-free, school-free weekend to look forward to. If you're working while in school, see if you can take on fewer hours during busy weeks, like midterms and finals.

Stay organized!! I can't emphasize enough how staying organized helps people manage their time. Prioritize your tasks by what's the most important / due first, and don't just have a long-term To-Do list – create a small one each day to give yourself a concrete idea of what needs to get done. Maintain a clean workspace, which eliminates constantly having to sift through papers and binders looking for your work. Take notes in a planner, whether on your phone or hard copy (I use both!). It's especially helpful to write down important dates, like tests and paper due dates, as soon as you get the syllabus. Also, for very important reminders that you absolutely cannot miss, I'd suggest the Reminders app on the iPhone so you can immediately be notified even if you haven't yet checked your hard copy planner.

Limit your time on social media until AFTER your work is finished. This is a big one – it's so easy to get distracted scrolling through our Facebook newsfeeds or checking out photos on Instagram. We can start chatting with a friend or surfing through Twitter and before we know it, half the night is gone. Not only that, but if you're trying to write a paper and stopping every five minutes to check a notification, that paper is going to take so much longer to write...and the longer it takes and the later it gets, the more sleepy you become. In between classes or lunch time are great opportunities to check your profiles, but otherwise wait to log in until after your homework/studying and other responsibilities are complete!"

**AKRAM ALASHARI, MD** was the top student in medical school and today is a trauma surgeon and surgical intensivist at the University of Florida. Akram is also the author of, *The Power of Peak State*. His advice:

"First, remember that there are two forms of resources: internal and external. Too much focus is placed on external resources, such as computers, the internet, other people, etc. Oftentimes, the importance of inner resources is overlooked. This entails mental strength, courage, perseverance, grit, etc. Cultivating this resourcefulness will allow the individual to excel despite challenges.

Second, there is an extraordinary amount of idle time in our lives. Instead of letting that time pass underutilized, it is best to maximize productivity by taking advantage of it. This includes ANY waiting time. For example, waiting for the bus, in the airport, in between classes, etc. Use that time to complete short tasks that would otherwise accumulate and become a larger burden, such as responding to emails or studying. Another option would be to use that time to become productive in short bursts on a larger project. This will allow the project to be completed sooner, with less perceived pain and stress. In addition, short bursts are more effective than slogging at something for hours.

Third, perform tasks that require a lot of cognitive energy during times of the day that you are most productive. This time will vary for each person, but use that time toward creative tasks, and tasks that require problem-solving. Perform tasks that don't require a lot of mental energy during times of diminished energy. These tasks include things like cleaning, organizing, responding to emails (things that can be done on autopilot)."

**KESHAWN BOSTIC** is a sophomore at Northfield Mount Hermon. He is also a student at Breakthrough New York, a nonprofit organization that transforms the lives of motivated, low-income students by preparing them for college so that they can succeed in the world. Keshawn's advice:

"Time management is a big part of being a good student, and to put it bluntly, it is not easy. It is all about motivation and self-discipline. Sometimes, you just need to tell yourself that work is more important than a social life. The best way to do that is to make time work for you.

Learn how you work, what time you work best, and where you work best; whether you work best right after school or at midnight, do what you need to do to do the best work. Personally I prefer a lamplit room between the hours of 7-10pm for optimal performance, but that is just me.

There will be times when you will have to ignore friends or that special girl/guy you've been Snapchatting everyday—this is just the reality of life as a student. But by having that initial work time alone, you can then make the most of your time elsewhere."

**JOHN PAUL ENGEL** graduated from the University of Iowa and was named a Collegiate Scholar. He earned an MBA from the University of Chicago. Today he is Executive Director, Project Be the Change ([www.projectbethechange.com](http://www.projectbethechange.com)). His advice:

"Always get at least 1 week ahead in your reading at the start of the semester in first week of classes. That way you can keep the work load more even through the semester and you will always have read the material the professor or teacher will cover in class.

Take notes by hand marking the important points. Then at night type the notes into your computer. This is good review and it makes sure you have a backup of your notes.

Make a one page study sheet of the items you think are the most important in the class. In other words guess what is going to be on the test – hint if it was in the book and the teacher talked about it in class there is a good chance it will be on the test. Carry your one page study sheet around with you everywhere you go and check it when you have free time. IT's easier to learn a little at a time then it is to try to cram the night before. I never got less than an A in a class I made a one page study sheet.

Convince yourself whatever you are studying is fun and will be important to you in life. IF you think it's hard then it will be hard. If you make a game of it creating songs and little games with flash cards then you are more likely to remember it.

When you study you need to study. No cell phone, Facebook, etc. You need to unplug and focus. Go someplace to study or study at the kitchen table. If you study in your room you will sleep or get interrupted by your friends.

Study on Friday nights. Seriously if you want to be more than average you have to do what the average won't do. Most students start the weekend on Thursday night. If you work through Friday then you can be sure to get your work done. If not, then you still have two days before the work is due.

Surround yourself by the 5 smartest people you can find. They will challenge you to be better. My friends and I used to compete on who could earn the highest score on a test. Make it a game with bragging rights."

**JONATHAN FARLEY** graduated second in his class at Harvard University, with 29 A's and three A-'s. His advice:

"First, choose the right courses: (a) Don't take courses you know nothing about just because they look interesting, unless Russian roulette is one of your favorite games. (b) Do not take too many courses each term.

Second, prepare before each course: learn the subject beforehand; find the reading list for the course and read.

Third, Join study groups.

Fourth, do not bring a television to college. Go to sophisticated movies with friends if you are going to watch a screen: that way you are always improving yourself."

**KRISTIN GMUNDER** is a senior at Villa Walsh Academy in Morristown, New Jersey. Her advice:

"Every high school and college student loves to watch TV; we're not fooling anyone. However, we all know we don't have time to watch TV every night of the week as we would like to. As students, we know that each week the workload is different in weight—some weeks we have very little work and other weeks we have so much that we are drowning. The way to combat this issue of our TV addictions is to binge watch. Yes, many people would look at me weirdly for suggesting that students binge watch using programs like Netflix or Hulu, but this really is the best way for us to enjoy TV when those workloads are less and we have more free time. This way when we're suffering under those textbooks and the papers we have to write, we're not tempted to type netflix.com into the Google search bar."

**JASON KHOO** is part of the President Scholar Program at California State University Fullerton and on the Dean's List for the Mihaylo College of Business and Economics. His advice:

"Maintaining good grades is having a good understanding of the construct of your grade. Most classes are weighted and thus different assignments and tests have a larger impact on your grade. Know when the most important assignments, tests, and projects occur, then make sure at that time you are ready to work. I've seen many people who are excellent planners and never

procrastinate only receive B's and C's. This is because they don't properly weight their effort. Know when to put in all your effort and know when to ease back. This will help you stay energized but also not waste excessive time on academics."

**ANGELA HANSON** was valedictorian of her high school graduating class and is a top student at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. Her advice:

"I have found it most helpful to do something rather than nothing. If you aren't sure what to work on first, just pick something and get started. Once you get tired of one assignment, either finish it out or move to something else. A lot of time is wasted deciding where to start or avoiding an assignment you don't like. Also, a change of scenery can be helpful. I now associate my apartment with socializing, so I try to find another place that is just for homework. This makes it easier to be productive."

**MARIAM OLADIPO** is ranked number one in her senior class at Milton Hershey School, in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Her advice:

"During the day, I try to get as much homework done as possible so that I'm not as swamped at night. It seems to work because I get a good seven to eight hours of sleep every night.

For me, it's more balancing friends with activities. With school, I can just plan a study session where we can get work done and hang out. Activities present a different problem. Many times I have to schedule time just to hang out with my friends. It's not spontaneous, but it is still fun.

A lot of my friends have social media but I prefer not to because I know that it can take up a lot of time. I prefer to text, call, or talk to people in person.

I would say pick the things to get involved with that you truly love. You don't have to be involved in a lot of different things because you won't be able to manage it all with your friends, your grades, and your health. Make sure that you take time for yourself so that you can be the best person that you can be."

**JANE NINIVAGGI** is a senior at University Liggett School and plans to attend Barnard College. Her advice:

"There is nothing wrong with social media, but it can take over a student's life if they are not able to disconnect from it. During exam weeks, I delete Twitter and Instagram off my phone. I also make sure to leave my phone at home when there is something that I know I need to put all of my focus into.

A key part of staying focused is keeping your standards high. At Liggett, I play several sports and am on the Student Commission, so that helps to give us an inherent sense of time management. You quickly learn that your time is so invaluable and you want to spend it in the most productive way.

I also find ways on the weekend to combine my social and academic life — I hang out with friends who have similar standards and we do things together on the weekends such as studying for exams."

**JACQUELINE KOPICKI** is a senior at University Liggett School and plans to attend Miami University in Ohio. Her advice:

“I put everything in my calendar on my phone, and I color code my activities and appointments. For example, I will code athletics one color, the school musical practices another color and my assignments another color.

I think setting your own priorities and figuring out what is most important helps you manage your time and stay focused. For me, school comes first, so I make it a priority to finish my homework and talk to my teachers about all of my school-related issues before anything else. At the school, the most important thing is to have a close relationship with your teachers and other students who are focused. This helps you gain the mindset to work on your schoolwork first before you tackle anything else.”

**GRACE LEBRON** attends Eastlake High School. Her advice:

“I think about my future constantly and it’s what keeps me in line. I know I want to lead a happy, successful life and that getting my work done and being the best I can be in my educational environment is a step in the right direction.

Saying No to Friends: You really need to prioritize and consider everything that’s going on. If you know you have tests coming up you’re not prepared for or have unfinished assignments due the next day, going to the movies shouldn’t be at the top of your list.

Resisting Social Media: Personally I set mini goals and checking social media is kind of like I’m rewarding myself. For example I’d tell myself that when I finish two assignments I can check one social media. It’s worked out pretty well for me.

Time Management: If it’s important, then you’ll find time for it. School is important to me so I make time to have all school related things in order before anything else. Lacrosse and field hockey are important to me so I make time to put in the necessary work for that as well. Family is also very important so I always make time to be with them and help around the house.

We teenagers do need some downtime though so no matter what, ALWAYS carve out time to enjoy a hobby or just relax. It’ll keep you from going crazy.”

**ALI WARSHAY** is a senior at Westwood High School and is entering Harvard College. Ali’s advice:

“A piece of advice I would give to help manage time is that before anything else, know your organizational strengths and weaknesses as well as how much you can realistically complete \*well\* in a given day. I become distracted easily if I don’t set a detailed schedule for myself; however, once I’ve allocated a specific amount of time for everything on my to-do list, tasks become much more manageable. I religiously use the Schedule Planner app, which syncs with my calendar and helps me visually manage my time.

I’m also a big fan of the Stay Focused app on my computer, which blocks the amount of time I can spend each day on specific websites (especially social media).”

**MORGAN MUNSEY** is a senior at Sullivan East High School and will attend East Tennessee State University. Morgan’s advice:

“I use a planner with a month view and a weekly view. I put all club meetings, planned time with friends and family, sport activities, and big tests on the month view. Daily items I need to accomplish such as homework and reading I keep in the weekly view sections. Each night I

spend 5-10 minutes focusing on what I accomplished, what I need to better, and what is to come the next day. This helps keep me prepared and less forgetful.

I am a procrastinator. I always have been, and I always will be. It's so easy to say, I can do it later, and then forget to do it. So rather than making later the next day or in a few hours I use the timer function on my phone. If the time is 11:13 and I need to study but want to put it off, I give myself 17 minutes. Although it doesn't seem like much time, this routine satisfies my procrastinator personality.

Whenever I have a moment of free time I make StudyBlue notecards. Rather than taking the time to type out full definitions, I use the talk to text option on my iPad. I may look a little silly to those watching, but this makes the process go much faster. Since I made the notecards on StudyBlue I can study basically anywhere at any time. This allows me to study even when I only have a few minutes such as between classes or during lunch. The ability to do this is great when you have a busy week.

I don't have the best handwriting which can make studying more difficult. When allowed, I love to take notes on Google Docs. The program is convenient because it updates as you type on one device to all of your other devices. The program also allows for easy color changes and graphing, which can make notes seem a little more enjoyable.”

**NATHAN REYNOLDS** attends Reynoldsburg High School. His advice:

“Do your school work in school, when you have free time. It greatly helps at home when you have a lot of other work to do. If you can't do it in school, divvy up your work and time so that you have a schedule that reads like, 8-8:30 Math, and so on. It makes you feel the need to get the work done within your time limit, and makes for free time in your day.”

**KRYSTIE SEESE** is a graduate student at Post University. Her advice:

“I have found that I work best when I use a planner to track the assignments I've completed and denote the assignments I still owe. This process has yet to fail me. At the beginning of each week I plan what I will complete each day specifically. This helps alleviate the overwhelming feeling of seeing 10-12 assignments that need to be done. As I complete them, I check them off. Simple as that! In addition, this system has helped me ensure that all work due each week is completed on time.

On that same note, it is best to plan to complete assignments when you know you have time. For example, I set aside every Sunday for my school work. I get as much done as I can on Sundays, and spread out completing unfinished assignments throughout the remainder of the week. This takes the stress off of coming home from a long day at work and still having a ton of schoolwork to do. I've found the key to success in an online program is to plan ahead and have the discipline to follow through.”

**SHANE WOLF** is a candidate for valedictorian of Bridgeway Academy's 2015 graduating class and plans to attend the College of Southern Maryland. His advice:

“As a homeschool student the demands on my time can be a little different than that of my peers. Nevertheless, I would argue time management skills are even more imperative for homeschooling students than traditional students. As a homeschooler, I am tasked daily to write

my own schedule, stick to deadlines, and balance my schoolwork with extracurricular activities, without the watchful eye of a teacher.

One thing I learned early on is that scheduling is so important. Having a schedule is the easiest way to know what you have going on and what needs to be completed. I use Microsoft Excel to write out my schedule, where I include information like my extracurricular activities, job, and current course work. My parents taught me my education is very important and comes first, so I prioritize my academics. To ensure I keep my grades up, I identify which projects need to be completed first and foremost. If I'm struggling in a particular subject, I try to allow myself more time to focus and concentrate my energies there. This helps me keep my grades up across the board, and not just in the subjects I may have a stronger interest in."