

## How to Earn an “A” in Organic Chemistry: True Stories from Former Students

I've been trying to answer the question, “How should I study for this class?” For me, I like to combine rewriting class notes (filling in missing or incomplete info as I go along from the text) and working problems multiple times. This method may not work for you, so I've asked previous students who earned top marks in Organic Chemistry to help me answer this question. Their responses are below. I've asked for their permission to share this with you. I'll let you interpret the meaning of this data for yourself. Hopefully, you'll find something that works for you.-FWF Jr

---

“The way I studied for the class was basically a lot of repetition. I would first go over the chapter and problems that went along with it after the chapter was covered in class. Then, before the test, I would do the same thing, but more intensely practiced the questions. Then the night before the test, I would quickly scan every chapter and do the practice test. And by the test, I would have looked over everything three times. Thanks, hope this helps.” - M. Pollifrone -2010

“Rule #1. DONT BE LAZY!!! Grades do not magically fall into your lap.

Rule #2. Start memorizing reagents early in O. Chem I to help with synthesis in O. Chem II.

Rule #3. Do the problems in the book and check them against the solutions manual.

Rule #4. Go to and participate in class; i.e. ask and answer questions.

Rule #5. Do the O. Chem as a second language book...it really helps.

Rule #6. Do whatever it takes to make sure you know what is going on and why; SI, tutoring, bugging the professor . . . DONT BE LAZY!” -D. Cathey -2010

“Organic Chemistry was one of the hardest class I have ever taken, but it was not that hard to get an A if you know a good way to study. First of all, reading the chapters before coming to class. If you did not have time to read all the material, you should read the summary at the end of chapters. The summary would help you to understand the material easier. Second of all, you should bring your book to class every time, the text book would help you to keep track with your professor's lecture. In class, beside taking good notes, highlight the parts that you still did not understand. At home, you should review the material of each lecture. Don't wait until the nights before the test to review. After understanding the material, you should do the practice question of each sections and at the end of chapters. This course has a lot of reactions to remember, therefore, you should understand from basic reactions to complicated ones, and rewrite them on papers. Before the test, you should review what you have highlighted in the book and the notes. Before every test, Dr. Foss always gives a review day, I think it is really helpful. This is the time for you to ask what you still concern about. Most importantly, always ask yourself what you do not know, and study from there. Because, most students just keep studying the stuff they already knew over and over again. Lastly, you should try to do the old tests from Dr. Foss and other sections too. Hope you have a wonderful semester.” - N Pham 2010

“My study habits for Organic Chemistry are attending class regularly, taking notes, and reading the book. To me, taking notes was important; seeing the material on the board and then writing it down helped me remember. I went over the book quite quickly before lectures. After lectures I read the book again and this time I wrote down the points that I had missed during lectures. I did almost all the suggested problems and then checked them against the study guide. I found that attending the review session before exams was very helpful, as I had the chance to go over the material and listen to others' questions. I studied for the exam at least 2 days ahead as it gave me more time to reach for help when I didn't understand something and more time to go over all the notes.” – P. Duc 2010