

Your Professors as a Resource

Professors are the best resources when struggling in a course. Here are some tips for using your professor's office hours:

1. Seek help early. Your professor will not appreciate that you've waited until the day before an exam or major assignment is due to ask for help.
2. It might be helpful to let your professor know that you plan to stop by during his or her office hours. You can call or email or you can mention it to your professor before or after class.
3. Always be sure to prepare for your visit and come with a specific goal or question. You might want to find out the best way to study for the upcoming exam or you might have a question about a homework problem. Write out your goal or question prior to your meeting.
4. If you didn't do well on an exam, ask your professor if you can review the exam with him or her during office hours. Try to remember why you selected an answer or why you chose to solve the problem the way you did, and then work to understand why a different answer or approach was correct.
5. Be sure to bring the necessary materials. If you have a question about something in the assigned reading, bring your book with the page and passage already marked.
6. Always take notes during a meeting. It might feel a bit awkward, but the fact is that you are there to get information from your professor. You will never remember everything he or she says without writing it down.
7. Try not to be nervous or feel self-conscious. Even if your professor is intimidating in class, you will probably find that he or she is friendly and approachable in person. And if you have made a genuine attempt to figure out the material on your own, your professor will most likely be happy to help you. *Keep in mind that if you are confused, there's a really good chance that others in the class are also confused!*
8. If you need to meet with your professor and you are not available during his or her designated office hours, ask for an appointment. Send your professor an email and include several days and times when you are available.

Some Reasons for Visiting a Professor during Office Hours:

- You need clarification of course expectations/requirements
- You're looking to improve your performance in the course
- You need strategies for studying/preparing for exams
- You would like to go over an old exam
- You would like to brainstorm topics for a paper
- You are confused about a specific concept or problem

