

Remote Learning Resource Guide

The transition to remote learning presents unique challenges for Bennington students, challenges that you are ready to meet as you utilize the skills and qualities that have brought you success so far in your Bennington education.

While the format of the learning environment may be different, the habits and tools you can draw upon for success should look familiar. Adaptability and innovation are not new to Bennington students. Online learning requires high levels of self-motivation and self-discipline, qualities we know you already possess; you've demonstrated them in your courses and experiences at Bennington thus far.

When learning online, it's important to know ourselves, especially our strengths and weaknesses, so we can adjust appropriately to the new environment and reach our full potential. This guide will provide some helpful tips and techniques for utilizing those strengths while you're completing your coursework remotely.

Strategies for Success in Remote Learning:

Be Flexible and Patient: This is a significant change for everyone at Bennington. You will most likely encounter some bumps along the way with the technology, your faculty member's practices, or even with your own learning. Being flexible and patient will help you get back on track while allowing the Bennington community to support your learning. Remember, we are all in this together!

Also, "online" does not always mean "instantaneous." When things seem to stick or lag online, keep your cool and have some patience. Some web-based tools take longer to load, some documents may need more time to display, and some communications need more time to send. Remember that clicking too many times to accomplish the same task can have an adverse affect on what we are trying to do.

Be Organized: Find or create a place to work where your learning won't be interrupted. For courses using synchronous learning, this is especially important. If possible, keep your books and materials in this space too. Update your calendar with any new assignments and deadlines for your courses. Be open to the possibility that your methods of organization might need to shift now that you're (possibly) living in a new space and working differently to complete your courses. Reach out to [Academic Services](#) for support if you want to work together to adjust your organizational techniques.

Practice good time management: Keep track of all deadlines in either a paper calendar or in your Google calendar, which can send you reminders. With our current levels of uncertainty and stress, and without the regular interaction on campus, schoolwork may sometimes be far from your mind; this is even more reason to establish a routine and be generous in estimates for how long assignments will take. A good practice is to set aside some time each day for completing the course readings or activities. If your faculty are utilizing discussion boards, you should also plan to spend a good amount of time reviewing and responding to messages from your faculty and classmates. Set an alarm for 10 minutes before your class meeting time to be

prepared to log onto your class session in case of technical issues. After a short while, you will begin to feel more comfortable and confident as you settle into your routine.

Create a support system: It is important to remember that you can meet virtually via the Google Hangout, Zoom, Facetime, etc. and you are encouraged to retain any standing study groups to continue to enhance your learning. It could also be helpful to identify an “accountability buddy” or friend who can help keep you on track with your work and help you feel connected to your peers during this period of social distancing.

Maintain your attendance: During this time of remote learning, attendance will look different but it is still important. Classes will be held in a variety of ways:

- Synchronous classes (which are held at the date and time the class is taking place) in these classes your attendance will be based on your presence on the date and time it is hosted.
- Asynchronous classes (which are recorded or posted and you can attend at any time within the date set by your professor), in these classes credit for your attendance may be determined by your participation in activities posted online. In either case, be sure to review the course syllabus to familiarize yourself with the ways in which you will be expected to demonstrate your attendance and engagement in the remote learning environment.

Communication is key: Online classes may pose new communication challenges. The following recommendations should help you get started. Similar best practices are often referred to as “net-iquette.”

- **Write clearly and concisely.** Use full sentences, including proper grammar and spelling. In other words, avoid “chat” type text unless requested.
- **Maintain your personality.** When expressing opinions and perspectives, find ways to add humor, emotion, empathy, and other elements into your messages.
- **Adapt your methods of participation.** Class participation and class discussions might look different in an online setting and the tools we use online to interact can vary. For courses that can no longer fully rely on verbal communication, you will likely need to provide written responses. Your faculty should include new guidance in their syllabi, but if you’re unsure of any new expectations, please reach out to them to ask. For example, in a Discussion Board post you may be asked to discuss (elaborate on a point engaging in an exchange with other students), comment (state your perspective with no expectation of exchange), or respond (respond to the questions posed in the post). If you are unsure which is appropriate, ask your faculty member for clarification.
- **It is okay to disagree in discussion posts.** In fact, it is helpful in creating robust conversations which engage critical thinking. Remember though, that when you’re sharing a classroom, you can rely on the tone of your voice and your body language to express yourself. If class discussion has shifted to written exchanges, please be mindful and “speak” with intention to avoid unintentional escalations.
- **Create drafts.** When composing long messages, emails, or discussion responses, you may want to draft them off-line first to avoid any possibility of losing your work. You can also take advantage of spell and grammar checkers when drafting off-line.
- **Email properly.** It is helpful to your professor if you include a subject for each email. This is vital as it helps your professor keep track and respond effectively.

- **Maintain classroom privacy.** Please do not share your classmate's contact information with anyone outside of the class. Also it is not appropriate to share any discussion board post with individuals who are not in your class.
- **As always, avoid plagiarism when providing written responses.** Always express yourself using your own words. When using someone else's words or ideas to support your point, quote or credit your source.

Please remember, Academic Service staff are here to support you as you work to complete your courses remotely. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

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