

Successful Group Projects

You may never have to write another lab report or lit review once you leave college, but there is not a single career path where you'll be able to avoid working in a group. College gives you the opportunity to learn how to enjoy and succeed at group projects. Here are some tips to get you started:

- ✓ **Connect with your group right away** – ideally at the end of class – to exchange numbers and set a date for a first meeting. Texts are best; social media or email messages can get lost.
- ✓ **Have a first meeting** to make sure you're all on the same page about the scope and direction of the project. At this meeting, you should also decide:
 - **Responsibilities:** be very clear about who is doing what. Work to your strengths, but also make sure that responsibilities are evenly shared.
 - **A timeline** for the project: start with the due date, build in a buffer and then work backwards, setting deadlines for final project completion, group revisions, and individual contributions.
 - **A communication plan:** Google Docs is a great way to work collectively; it keeps all revisions in one document and is especially useful if it's hard for your group to meet in person.
 - If you are writing a group paper, this is also the time to decide on **format, structure, and citation style**.
- ✓ **Write it down!** Assign one group member to take notes on what you decide at this first meeting, and circulate them to the whole group.
- ✓ **Get to work.** Accept the role you are given, and carry it out as best you can. Remember you are accountable to others; make sure that you seek out help EARLY if you need it.
- ✓ Meet or check-in regularly to monitor progress.

A few things to keep in mind as you work:

- ✓ Effective communication is key with group projects! Communication is a matter of listening as much as speaking; make sure that you are hearing everyone in the group, and that everyone is being heard by others. At the same time, don't be afraid to contribute!
- ✓ Collaboration should always be civil and constructive; practice concrete feedback over blame
- ✓ Know when to take the lead. Take the initiative to get things done, but also make sure that you are a good follower; accept your role within the group and be accountable for the jobs you have taken on.
- ✓ Seek help when things go wrong: contact your professor if you have any concerns about plagiarism or academic integrity, if one person does nothing at all despite outreach from the group, or if there are serious interpersonal issues within the group that you are unable to work out.

For more support study skills, visit the Study Mentors. See the CTL website for more information www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/, call us at 3351 or stop in to visit us on the second floor of the library.