

The Amicus Program

Tips and Advice for Law Students: *Using Study Groups in Law*

Many students find study groups a supportive and effective means to improve their learning and to do well academically. Here are our suggestions about how to approach study groups and study group tutoring

1. To decide if you wish to pursue participating in a study group, consider the following

- What is your learning style and what is most effective for you? (e.g., yark-learn.com)
- When would study group work be most useful for you? If you are struggling to understand course material, perhaps you should have a meeting with an Amicus tutor individually *before* engaging in group study. Study groups enhance learning, but can't replace individual learning.

2. Before meeting with prospective study group partners

- Think about what you want the group to help you learn before you meet as a group for the first time.
- What can be your best contribution to the study group? (what are your strengths as a learner?)

3. In your first group meeting and *before* meeting with an Amicus Tutor

- Exchange contact information
- Set a limit to membership (2-7 is recommended)
- Discuss:
 - what you each want from the group
 - group members' individual strategies for learning (what's helped you in the past)
 - ways you will support each other's' learning
 - group member responsibilities (brainstorm how/what you might each prepare/contribute)
 - peoples' schedules/availability
 - frequency and length of meetings (60-90 minutes is recommended, once a week or every two weeks)
- Be careful with respect to adding in group members who have not participated in this discussion. The concern is that they will not be on the same page as everyone else and the session will not be as useful as it would otherwise be.

4. In your first study group meeting with an Amicus Tutor

- bring a short list with the issues you want to discuss with the tutor; if you feel overwhelmed, the tutor can help you understand where you are in the material, but even thinking about what confuses you the most can be a good starting place. In the session you can work together to identify particular issues/course material you want to discuss in subsequent meetings.

5. During the study group tutoring

- Assess if you are benefiting from the tutoring as much as would be possible.
- Address any aspects of the study group process that may be inhibiting your learning.

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- Make sure you set limits on the amount of time you spend complaining about the course/curriculum – complaining might help you feel better, but it doesn't help you learn better unless it leads to an improved study strategy or increased understanding.