

Choosing your environment

The most obvious example of choosing your environment is the act of registering for classes. You've got a wide variety of available courses to choose from and, luckily for you, most programs are forgiving in what you choose to take during your first year. Keep an eye out for introductory psychology, history and sociology classes. They're usually quite large and held in lecture halls, and with advances such as the Internet, most instructors of these courses have placed their notes and figures on the Web, meaning that you don't need to try and sweet-talk one of your fellow students into lending you notes at the end of term. Another advantage of those classes is that they're in very high demand, and for that reason are offered at many different times. This will allow you to avoid the dreaded 8am class and find something that'll allow you to wake up at a more civilized time, such as mid-evening-ish.

If at all possible, avoid foreign language classes, drama classes and math classes. These courses, while intellectually stimulating, are generally smaller and have more emphasis on essays, exercises and assignments. English classes also are generally smaller and require a lot of essays, but they're a necessary evil. Luckily, many great works of literature have been turned into films, or at the very least, are referenced in films, so you might be able to get away with that.

In addition to picking your classes, you're also able to pick how you get to those classes and where you sit in them. The key to being a successful slacker is to remain hidden in plain sight. Just like the polar bear hiding in the tall snow drifts, the lazy student must use their environment to blend in. However, unlike the polar bear, which waits for the perfect time to strike out at a tasty penguin (or whatever polar bears eat. I skipped my BIO 101 lectures), you're hiding to make it easier to avoid work. Therefore, you must be unremarkable in everything you do. (That's already assumed by the fact that you're reading this guide.)

Do not be late for class, it draws the attention of not only your instructor, but also the entire class. At the same time, don't be the first one sitting down—it makes you easier to spot. File in to the classroom about five minutes before class is scheduled to start. That's when the bulk of people come in. Likewise, don't sit at the back of the room. That's where the people who don't care about their education sit, and everyone knows it. (Of course, by definition, if you're a slacker, you don't care about your education. The difference is that right now, you don't want people to be aware of that fact). Don't sit at the front, either. Pick somewhere in the middle of the room, perhaps off to one of the wings, where not much attention is given. If possible, try sitting behind someone tall and large: it makes it easy to avoid attention from the front of the room, while at the same time looking like you just got unlucky with your seating arrangement.

Clothing is another big thing to be aware of. You want to seem generic, like the person in the crowd scene of a movie. T-shirts and jeans are always a good way to go. Try to stay with light blues, browns and greys: drab and uninteresting, just like you are. Hats are generally a no-no, unless they're being used for another purpose. (See sleeping in class). Jackets can be a little tricky: we're a cold weather country, and it's normal for people to wear jackets and coats for much of the year. At the same time, it looks a bit odd when someone sports a parka in the middle of April. Make sure that you're wearing a non-descript coat if everyone else is wearing something, but be ready to discard it as soon as everyone else starts bearing arms.

Perchance to Dream

Most people know the basic technique behind falling asleep in class. But, since I can't go back to my *Playstation 2* until I fulfill a certain word count, we're going to do a short review here.

The most common position for sleeping unnoticed in class is known as "The Thinker." It's done in steps.

- 1) Lean forward in the seat, with your left elbow resting on the desk, at around ninety degrees.
- 2) Cup your head in your left hand, spreading the index finger and thumb across your forehead. This will cup the hand over your eyes, making it difficult to see that your eyes are closed.
- 3) Place your right hand on the desk, with a pencil gripped between your fingers. The grip on the pencil is one of the most important parts of the posture. You want medium pressure, looking as if you are ready to write. If the grip is too light, the pencil will fall on the floor, giving you away. If the grip is too tight, people will think you're having a Grand Mal seizure.

Note: Reverse all hands if you are left-handed.

The Thinker is easy and it's well-known. Unfortunately, that makes it easy to spot to the practiced eye of a university professor. To make your sleeping-on-the-sly just a little more sly, here are a couple of advanced tips.

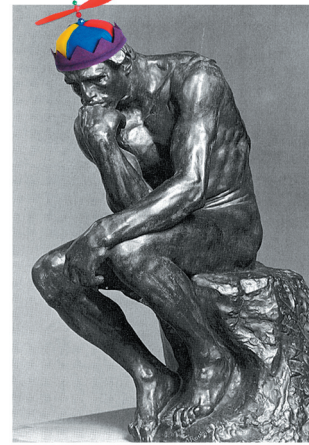
Hats: A baseball cap can be a valuable asset to the classroom-napper. It can be used to keep your eyes shielded from view, even better than the hand method. But be careful; as noted before, you're going to want to stay inconspicuous. Make sure that any hat you use is generic. Blue is a good colour. Avoid reds and yellows.

An alternative posture is known as the "Great Buddha," after the iconic founder of Judaism. (Or something like that. I skipped all of my RELIG 101 classes.) The Buddha involves crossing your arms over your chest, and leaning back in the seat. Place your chin on your chest, and sleep. A few advantages of this position are that it will seem less conspicuous than the Thinker, and the chin-to-chest posture will cut down on snoring. Just make sure you are wearing a cap, or else your ruse will be found out in no time.

Not getting caught sleeping in class



Right Way



Wrong Way

The Final Countdown

So, somehow, against all odds, you have made it through the year and are still enrolled in your classes. Good job. Now comes the toughest part of the whole year: the final. If you've followed the guide, you should have few friends, few responsibilities and, if you are a slacker worth his salt at all, you've got no job to hold you back. Good. Because you'll be spending the next couple weeks in a panic, attempting to read all of your textbooks from cover-to-cover, in a desperate attempt to learn in four days what the rest of your classmates picked up over three months. Hopefully, in the state of mind-numbing terror you will soon find yourself in, you will remember these few important tips.

- Regurgitate. Not only is this what you should be doing when you realize you have three hours to read 2000 pages, but it's also what you should strive to do when you are writing the final. First year is not about critical thinking. First year is about spitting out what your instructor shoved down your throat. Your instructor has undoubtedly mentioned what they thought on a political topic, or what meaning they thought a particular poet was trying to get across. And if it's what they think, then it's what you think—simple as that.
- On that note, the library can be a very helpful tool. Not for research or in-depth analyses of your subject or anything silly like that. If an instructor is teaching a subject, there's the chance that they have written a book or article on the subject. Look for one. If you do, read it and regurgitate, as noted above.
- It's possible for the human body to survive around eleven days totally deprived of sleep. However, in most cases, temporary insanity and serious deficits in concentration and judgement occur after three days. This is important for you to know.

These are the basic elements of a successful slacker. It should go without saying that as your university career will get more difficult, with classes and professors expecting more work and critical thought from you. Most of you will actually learn to put in a little work and actually do what is expected of you, taking a little bit of pride in what you do. But, a select few of you will be lucky enough to develop more advanced slacking techniques; tactics that must be learned, and cannot be taught—mostly because those who know them are far too lazy to teach them.