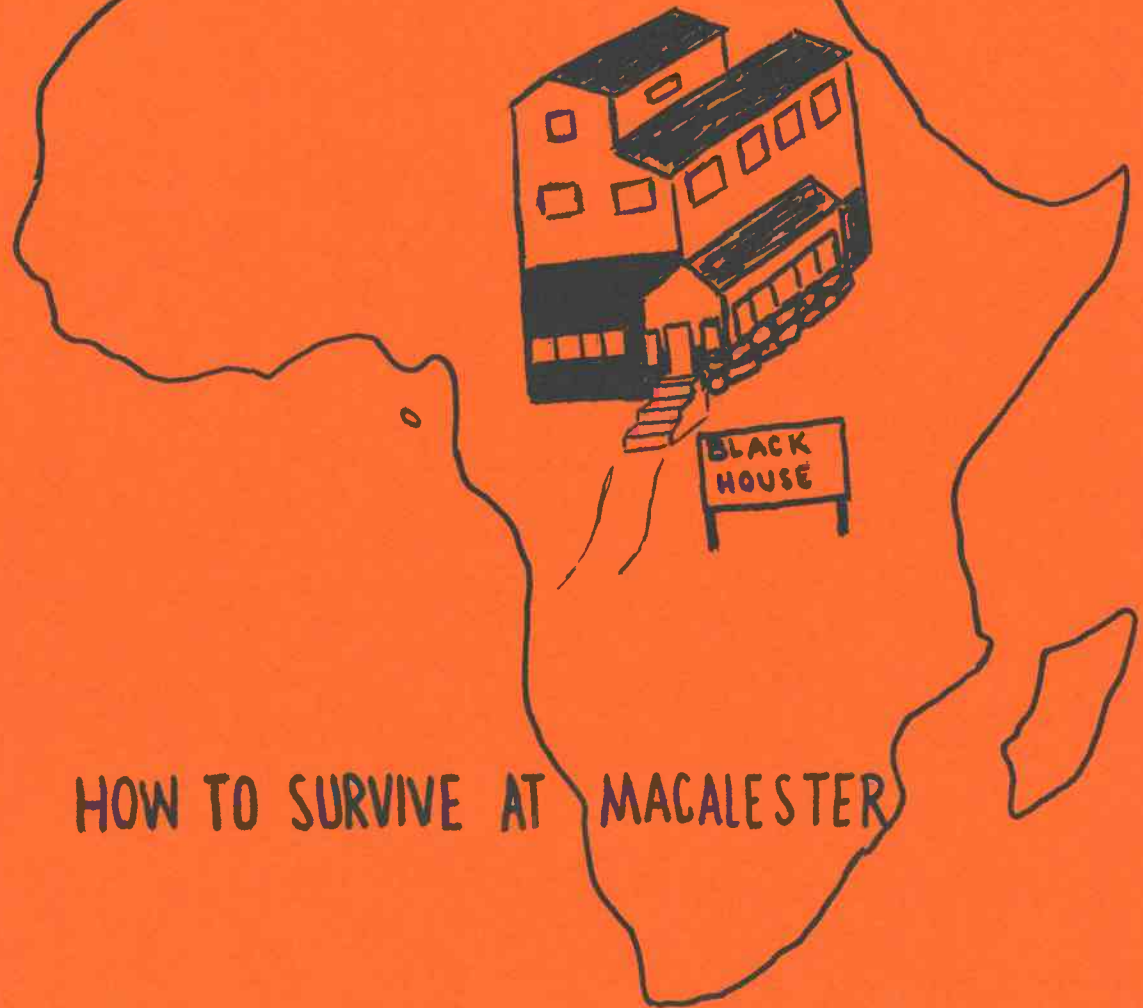
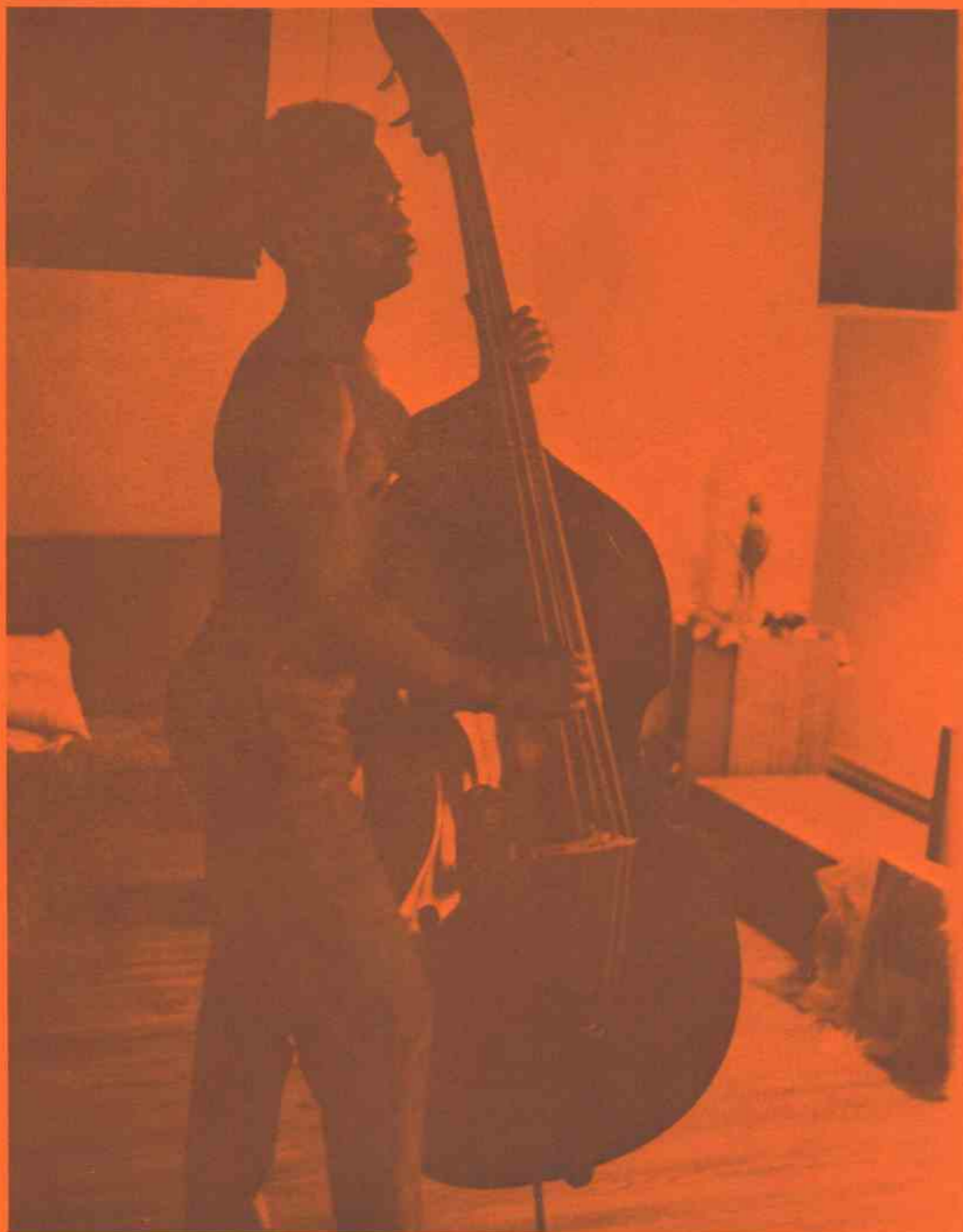


OUR HOUSE



HOW TO SURVIVE AT MACALESTER

Compliments of the **BLACK HOUSE**



## FOREWARD

This pamphlet, which was assembled by the Black House Staff, comes to you with brotherly and sisterly love, in the hope that you will find it useful in shaping your academic careers at Macalester College. Originally, the hints and tips contained herein were intended for the new brothers and sisters only (both frosh and transfers.) We believe however that these hints and tips are important enough to be useful to every college-going brother and sister. We are therefore making them available to everybody--both new and old.

Black House is dedicated to ensuring that black people coming to Macalester College will succeed in their objective for coming here, and in their mission as future leaders of the black community. To this end Black House will do everything within its power and limited resources to encourage black people to take academic training most seriously and foremostly; to create an atmosphere in which the pursuit of knowledge will be a full time and unceasing occupation; and to the cultivation, dissemination, and institutionalization of a correct and positive value system in which love for one another will be the basis for all brotherly and sisterly relationships.

Our hope is that collectively as a people (a beautiful and proud people) we can succeed to develop human beings who are morally sensitive and intellectually capable of making critical and independent judgments; and who, through their works of reason and imagination, will challenge any threat to the freedom and dignity of the black man and woman. We wish you all success.

James Bennett  
Milt Williams  
JoAnne Favors  
Blanche Clay  
Helen Morgan  
Chinula C. Chinula

## INTRODUCTION

You are now in business for yourself - the important business of getting a college education. Whether you emerge from this new enterprise with scholastic honor or in mental bankruptcy will depend upon you alone, in the last analysis. But because the business of securing a college education does demand some adjustments and new habits, there are several hints that may be helpful in making college life happier and more profitable for you. This pamphlet contains a number of such suggestions, designed to aid you in improving your study habits and in making a better adjustment to your new environment. Read them carefully and apply those that fit your own needs.

## HOW TO STUDY-GET STARTED RIGHT

Learning requires effort. Get started right, and keep going. Do your work on time. Attend class regularly, in spirit as well as in body.

Don't drift. Analyze your work from week to week, and discover the methods of study which are best for you.

Have a goal. Plan courses to fit your abilities and your objectives.

## PLAN YOUR WORK

In college you will need to budget your time more carefully than you have ever done before.

To gain balance among the daily activities you must know that, basically, there are several specific activities for which you must allow time.

1. You must sleep.
2. You must eat.
3. You must allow time for personal grooming.
4. You must attend classes.
5. You must study.

Make a reasonable schedule and stick to it. Your schedule should provide for about three hours of preparation outside of class for every hour spent in the classroom for your academic courses. But flexibility is important - your schedule should suit your needs. When circumstances prevent your keeping to your schedule, make sure you devote the amount of time you need for each subject by trading your study times rather than stealing from it.

Study periods should be about 50 minutes long for maximum effectiveness. If you need to study longer, "take a break" after about 50 minutes, then resume study.

Use the between-class hours for study. Most students are more efficient in the morning and afternoon hours than in the after-dinner hours. During the freshman year extracurricular activities should be kept to a minimum. See how you make out in your studies before you expand or add to your activities. If you must earn money, schedule your courses accordingly - college is a full time job when a student takes 4 to 5 courses, so you should not try to carry a full load of outside work. Your record in college is a public record which will be on file for the rest of your life. Make it a good record.

## YOUR HEALTH

Good health, both physical and mental, is necessary if you are to get the most out of your college work.

Be regular in your eating, sleeping, exercising and other personal habits. Attend to all illnesses immediately, even minor ones.

Mental health is an important factor in successful living, both in college and out. Learn to meet your problems calmly and squarely. Face reality with courage; don't dodge the facts. "Act your age." Do rather than dream about doing. Wishing will not make it so.

If you want a well-rounded personality, you must grow up physically, mentally and emotionally.

Worry is one of the chief causes of inefficient study. If you have worries, talk them over with someone worthy of your confidence. Thorough discussion of your worries with an impartial person will usually remove most of their "nuisance value."

## STUDY ENVIRONMENT

Have a definite place for study. If you can arrange to use it as a place for study only, it will soon come to mean study. It should be a spot where you can be relatively free from interruptions.

Keep your study room well ventilated and not too warm. Be comfortable - but avoid being too comfortable. Adjust your light so that it will not shine directly in your eyes. Do not work in a glaring light or in a shadow.

Keep your desk cleared for action. Have all work material at hand before you start work. Have a good dictionary within easy reach.

Get the type notebooks, paper and other equipment best adapted to your courses. Own - don't borrow - your textbooks and other study equipment.

## CONCENTRATING

Start studying as soon as you sit down at your desk. Avoid daydreaming. Work intensely while you work. Keep this one job clearly before you. Forget everything else.

Interest is the greatest aid to concentration. Find relations between new materials and old interests. Read widely about the subjects you are taking. The more you know about anything, the more interesting it becomes.

## READING SKILLS

Some college students do not read well because they have never learned how. It is possible for any normal adult to read 1,000 words a minute, with training. Yet most college students read around 300 words per minute. There are three principles that can be applied any time you read non-textbook level materials: (1) Always read faster than is comfortable - don't lag along. The faster your normal rate becomes the better your understanding will be. (2) Do not regress - keep reading ahead in every sentence even when you come across a new word. If some word, term, or phrase has clouded your understanding, reread only after you have read the entire paragraph through once. (3) Read selectively. As you read, make a conscious effort to screen the nouns, pronouns and verbs from the other words. These words give meaning to what you



read. In effect, you should really read the nouns, pronouns and verbs, but merely see the rest of the words in the sentence.

Textbook reading requires a different approach from general reading. Four steps will help you get the most out of the time you spend in textbook study: (1) Skim. Use table of contents, paragraph headings, illustrations, and summary in order to get a good overview. (2) Underscore. Prepare to underscore the meaning of what you will read by turning the chapter heading into a question. Write your question down, it will be the nucleus of some cue notes you should take down after reading the chapter. (3) Read. Try to answer your questions as you read. Read purposefully. (4) Emphasize. Once you have located main ideas, write short cue notes under the question for later use. Review your notes five to ten minutes the same day you write them. And review them every week for about an hour.

## REMEMBERING

A study assignment is never mastered without a great deal of remembering. Make sure that your impression of the material to be memorized is definite and clean-cut. There is no possibility of recalling material which has not been registered clearly. Form a variety of associations among the points you wish to remember.

The mere reading of words will not help you to remember. Think about what you are trying to learn. Find an interest in the material if you wish to memorize it with ease.

In learning a foreign language, train your ear by speaking aloud the sentences you read and write. This aids memory and prevents later self-consciousness in class recitation. Always consider the sentence as the language unit. Read each sentence aloud, repeat it - then try to repeat it from memory. See, hear, talk, think, and act the new language.

Review the material you want to remember. And then review it again. The stronger the associations among your ideas, the better your memory will be.

Allow an interval between learning periods. "Spaced practice" is an effective aid to memory.

Forgetting often results from being nervous or "fussed."

## BUILD A POWERFUL VOCABULARY

Your vocabulary should be extensive enough to enable you to read and write well. A good vocabulary is a powerful weapon in school - and throughout your lifetime. Your vocabulary can be built up systematically by devoting a little time and effort to enlarge it. Here is how it's done: Get yourself some blank 3x5 cards. Set aside a portion of your notebook for vocabulary. Each time you encounter a word unfamiliar to you, write it down in your notebook. When you have listed 10 words or so, write each word on a separate 3x5 card. On the reverse side write the meaning of the word; and write the word in a sentence. Make it a constant companion. Once a week review each card until you have memorized the meaning of a word. This system has the advantage of (1) assisting you to identify words you actually need to learn, and (2) allows you to enlarge your vocabulary in a convenient yet purposeful manner.

## THEME WRITING

Effective expression, both oral and written, is an important asset in any occupation. Theme writing is an extremely valuable part of your preparation for after-college life. Some of the following suggestions may be helpful in making your theme writing more enjoyable.

If you are given the opportunity to select your own subject for a theme, select one which is:

- (1) of interest to you;
- (2) specific enough to be covered adequately in the time and space allotted;
- (3) broad enough to give you something worth writing about;
- (4) important enough to you to be worth the time you spend on it.

Never start writing without an outline or plan of what you are going to write. It is much easier to alter an outline or plan than it is to change a theme after it is written.

Use of cards or slips of paper for notes from different sources is a good idea. Arrange your cards according to your outline. Find the central thought in each group and then expand the idea with examples, comparisons, contrasts, and analogies. Arrange the ideas in logical sequence. If possible, place the most striking paragraphs at the beginning and the end. Select words which are best suited to your meaning. Revise for sentence structure and word choice.

## NOTETAKING AND NOTEKEEPING

Accurate, legible notes are invaluable aids during college and in most occupations. Notes should be taken during lectures and during textbooks reading sessions. The keynote of good notetaking is to listen much and write little. Learn to identify main points and ideas and write them out in outline form. Other pointers are important, too:

- (1) Use an 8 - 1/2 x 11 notebook preferably. Use dividers to separate the various subjects. Keep notes on one subject together.
- (2) Strive to take good notes the first time. Do not plan to recopy notes -- recopy only when clarity and conciseness demand it.
- (3) Doodling is bound to distract your attention -- avoid it.
- (4) Review your notes for about five minutes the same day you take them, and at least once a week for about an hour at a planned time.

## EXAMINATIONS

Preparation for examinations should begin early in the course. Start all study periods with a brief (5-10 minute) review. Refresh your memory of old material before preparing the new. Set aside half an hour each week for review of each subject. Review those materials which are still hazy and poorly learned. Don't spend your time on the things which you know thoroughly. Study and review the material in the way in which you will be called upon to reproduce it during the examination period. Feverish exertions at the end of the course cannot replace conscientious work throughout the semester, term, or quarter.



Go to the examination with a clear head and a well-rested body. Give yourself a fair chance. In an objective examination, try to answer questions quickly. If any questions puzzle you, skip over them the first time. When you have answered the questions you can, go back and try the unanswered ones again. Attempt to answer every question, unless there is a penalty for guessing. In an essay examination read all the questions before you start writing. Jot down ideas as they occur to you. Before answering a question you must be certain that you have found the definite point of the question. Be sure you understand what is required, and then plan or outline your answer before you begin to write. Divide your time so that each question will receive its proper consideration. Keep active. Don't waste your time in dreaming. Write legible. Follow directions. Believe in yourself. Rely upon your own ability and knowledge.

Examinations are a test of strength and a means of measuring your progress. Life itself is a series of examinations.

Prepare yourself NOW!

#### IF YOU ARE IN ACADEMIC TROUBLE

If you are having difficulty with your courses, for whatever reason, be sure to talk to somebody about it. Don't waste time thinking or wishing that those troubles will go away. They won't, unless you do something about them. Take the initiative to talk to someone. Don't wait for somebody to talk to you.

The first person to talk to is your instructor or professor. Go and tell him the nature of your problem and ask him to help you solve the problem. Each department also has preceptors or tutors, check them out. Use them. Also don't be afraid to talk to a classmate who seems to know the subject better than you do. Ask him if he can spend sometime with you, or borrow his notes. Look for someone who has taken the same course before and may have some good notes or hints. Do everything possible to survive in class.

If everything outlined above fails, don't give up. Go to the EEO Office and ask for help. EEO has three full time academic support personnel. They also have tutors. Approach them. Don't wait for them to approach you. Their job is to help you help yourself. Don't be shy. Go and seek their help. Lay it on the table. SCREAM FOR HELP!

This is so very important that we have to repeat ourselves in the hope that you can heed our advice. We have seen too many brothers and sisters get into some serious academic trouble because they were either too shy or too afraid or, worse yet, too proud, to seek help. This has to stop. This place was not built for you. It was built for Euro-Americans. You are a foreigner in this institution. Like a good foreigner your task is to survive. Do everything possible to survive academically. Which means: seek help wherever you can get it after you have tried hard and failed. Again if everything and everybody you've tried fails, seek us out. We may not have the tools to deal with your problem. We guarantee to give you good and sound advice.

#### SPORTS AND YOUR ACADEMICS

This is important. Get it straight. We do not discourage brothers from engaging in sports. Sports is good for you. It's good for your health. Even your future may depend on it. However, we do discourage anybody engaging in sports at the expense of academics. We say the same thing about all extra-curricular (out-of-class) activities. Get your priorities straight.

You are not here to party, or speed, or profile, or play sports. Macalester College does not exist for that purpose. Macalester is an academic institution. It exists to give people academic training. You are here (1) to go to class, (2) to do your assignments (study) (3) to pass the exams, and (4) to get the hell out of here as soon as possible so that you can start doing something to help other brothers and sisters get an education or survive in this alien land. Everything else you do is secondary. Academics come first. Whether you agree or disagree with the content of the course or with what the professor says, is irrelevant. If you disagree so violently that you can't bear yourself to attend class, do the assignments, and pass the exams, then you are in the wrong place. Transfer to another school before you flunk out. As long as you are here, you have to put academic survival first, sports second. Besides, if you flunk out of school you will not be able to play sports anyway! So even if sports is your main thing, get your academics together so you can stay in school and play sports.

#### BLACK EDUCATION

If you are the super black type (no humor or insult intended) and wish to read black scholars and learn about the black experience, then check us out.

We are the right place for you. We have a good size black library, and some good programs for black education and awareness. (These programs will be outlined in a separate pamphlet.) Don't wait for us to reach you. Approach us and let us know your needs. We promise to attempt to meet them. Also if you have some ideas about what form black education should take, let us know. Outline your ideas on paper and lets together figure out how we can program them.

If for some reason you can't utilize us or our resources, don't shortchange yourself. Educate yourself. Embark on your own reading program. Read at least one black author a week. Make it a habit. There is so much being written about black people, by black people themselves, that you can't afford to be ignorant. Whether you are in chemistry or physics or economics or sociology, your education will be incomplete unless you are widely read. Black people are presently embarked on a massive process of self-education. Be a knowledgeable person. Read widely. In your spare time. But find time.

#### IF YOU HAVE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

We assume that you will encounter some financial difficulties as you go along. Our experience tells us so. We will be happy to be proven wrong. Depending on what nature of problem it is, these are our hints: (a) for all problems having to do with your scholarship (financial-aid) go talk to somebody in the Financial Aid office. Mr. John Swift is the director. There's a brother working with him. Talk to them. (b) If you need a loan for whatever purpose talk to them also (Financial-Aid people.) (c) If you have serious medical problems and may need hospitalization, talk to Mr. Mareya in the EEO Office. (d) If you have an emergency at home and must go home, talk to Mr. Mareya also. In fact, if you have any other kind of emergency that may need money to negotiate, talk to Mr. Mareya also. In fact, if you have any other kind of emergency that may need money to negotiate, talk to Mr. Mareya in the EEO Office.

We are not suggesting or implying that the people cited above will solve all your financial problems. We do believe that they will give you good advice on how to go about solving your financial problems. As in everything else, if you do not get satisfaction from talking to anyone of the people mentioned herein, check us out. We are confident that we can help you with sound advice and good suggestions. Good luck.

