

-> This first thing to do in this course is an orientation overview.

This overview is essential for most students, as it gives them the correct perspective on the course material and scope. For most students, once they know the objectives, they find it easier to focus their study time and efforts. The overview also gives many students the confidence to take control of their studying and learning in the course, instead of feeling like they are always waiting for some unknown assignment or content each week.

This intro geology course is where students discover geology, and it is out of this course that some of them will discover geology as their major and their career path. Most students, however, will remain non-science majors, but this course is often one of the few college courses that they remember long after completing their college degree.

This intro geology course is the foundation and intro course for geology. In this course, you will learn the basics of geology, as well as correct some of the likely misconceptions that you have about such things as earthquakes, volcanoes, ice ages, etc. In this course, you will learn fundamental concepts of geology and how they are connected and interrelated.

In the first on-campus, class-meeting,

1) We brainstorm a comprehensive list of the semester sub-topics

-> For online students, you should spend 10-15 minutes studying and perusing the table of contents. Obtaining an understanding of what this course is going to cover is essential to making the course easier for you to manage and learn as the semester progresses.

-> I highly recommend reading the topics aloud to yourself, because simply sitting and silently running your eyes over the text can be deadly boring for many students. By reading the words aloud, you can add tone and inflection and bring the words alive. Don't worry about how the words are pronounced. Insert your own humor and enjoy it.

2) We brainstorm a list of geologic professions and careers and jobs

-> For online students, run internet searches on geologic careers. Spend 10-15 minutes on this to get a feeling for what types of jobs geologist are hired to do. You can also page through the first section of the Green Study Guide, and you will find a one-page summary list that I have provided of some of the common geologic careers and professions. This list is not exhaustive, and should be supplemented with internet searches or such.

3) I present a 25 minute slide-show overview of geologic features that we will study this term – peruse the pictures in your textbook, spend at least 25 minutes on this and read some of the captions of the geologic features.

During this slide show, we also go over the important concepts of scale and perspective (was that photo taken from an airplane, a satellite, through a microscope, etc.).

-> For online DE students, you should spend roughly half an hour perusing through the photos in the textbook. Really look at the photos and have fun with it. Read some of the captions, but do not try and memorize the material. The objective here is to get a feeling for the course content and the scope of the course. Don't let yourself get bogged down on one photo or diagram.

4) The first class assignment – the Vocabulary Exam – is a continuation of this important overview.

-> The Vocabulary Assignment and exam is a collection of geologic terms and phrases. If you look at the end of each chapter, you will find a vocabulary list, with up to 50 words or more. With 24 chapters at 50 words per chapter, that's a total over 1000 words! The Vocabulary List that I chose for you is a smaller subset of those words. I have chosen the most common and/or basic terms for the Vocabulary Assignment.

As you look up the words,

- remember that the point of this is an overview to the course and its topics and materials
- you want to get familiar with the words and terms, but you do not need to memorize definitions.

- For example, for the term 'cirque'

- Look up the word in the index, write down the page number(s)
- Figure out what chapter this word relates to (cirques are a Glacial feature and are in the chapter on Glaciers). Write down that chapter title 'Glaciers'
- See if there are any pictures or diagrams of the feature, and if there are, study the photos or diagrams.
- Write down your own observations in the Green Study Guide Vocab List (page #'s, chapter titles and a short description of what it is, e.g., a hole carved out by a glacier).

- In many cases, if you are familiar enough with the term to recognize what topic it relates to, you will be able to answer the Vocab questions about it.

For example,

True or False: Drumlins are volcanic.

Without memorizing the textbook definitions, if you've looked up drumlins, you'd have found that they are in the chapter on glaciers...

In summary, the Vocabulary Assignment is an overview to the course that allows everyone to get familiar with the basic terms and topics that will be covered throughout the term. Some folks will already know many of these words, as many of them are not geology specific. Other students, however, may not be familiar with many of the words

at all, and for those students (e.g., ESL or DSPS), the Vocabulary Assignment is crucial to their further success and enjoyment and understanding of the course.

For students who attend my in-class presentations, this familiarity with the basic vocabulary allows students to listen to, and understand the concepts, instead of frantically attempting to write down definitions to words they've never heard before.

The same is true of online students reading the textbook, or using the CD-ROM – if you are already familiar with the basic vocabulary, then you can concentrate on learning the concepts and relationships, rather than stumbling over the definitions of the words.