

# Automatic and Coping Thoughts

Automatic thoughts pop up in response to a situation or event, usually without us realizing we are having them. They can be positive, negative, or even neutral. When we are struggling with depression or anxiety, these thoughts are usually negative, but we don't have to believe our automatic thoughts! We can practice developing more accurate or more helpful thoughts called coping thoughts. To better understand automatic negative thoughts and coping thoughts, check out the examples below.

Automatic Thoughts	Coping Thoughts
I'm going to fail.	I probably won't get an A, but maybe I'll do okay.
I'm not prepared at all. Why didn't I study more?	Next time, I'll try to be more organized and start studying earlier. Given how much I had on my plate, I studied as much as I could have. I had to choose between sleeping and studying, and I chose sleeping. That's an okay choice to make, even if it means I'm less prepared.
My GPA is going to go way down.	I'll have to work really hard to get my grades back up, but I can do it.
My teacher is going to think I'm a slacker.	I can go talk to my teacher about the test.
My parents are going to be so upset.	I don't know how my family will react, but all I can do is try my best. Hopefully they will be happy with my best performance.
Why should I even bother taking the test? I should just skip class.	I can do this! I've been stressed before, and I'm generally a good student. I can at least ask the teacher if I can reschedule the test.
This school is too hard. This class is too hard for me. I can't do this.	I'm at a demanding school – expectations are high, but I know I'm getting an amazing education.
Everyone else gets this stuff. I'm such an idiot. I bet I'm not even in the top 10% of my class. I can't ever do anything right.	I have strengths other than being the highest achieving student at school.
I'm never going to get into a good college.	One test probably won't ruin everything. I just need to make a plan about next steps to make sure I remain competitive for college applications. If I went to Harvard, college probably wouldn't be much fun anyway – I'd constantly be stressed about the work. I'd rather have a good balance of working hard and enjoying my time.