

ESSENTIAL STUDY SKILLS – THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANISATION



YOU NEED BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE

It is extremely important that you be in control of your studies this year. In other words avoid structuring your studies in such a way that you do not have a balance in your life. It is very easy for some students who are highly motivated to have very little quality time for relaxation. Thorough planning at the beginning of the year, which allows time for study and recreation, should be your objective. Without a balance across these two important areas, you run the real risk of burn out. Unfortunately students who burn out tend to do so when Outcome submissions or tests are due. The enormous pressure some students place on themselves can climax in headaches, physical tiredness, aggression, sleeplessness and an inability to concentrate.

The inability to concentrate at an appropriate level will limit a student's ability to do well in their Outcomes. The trick is to allocate an appropriate amount of time to study and also make allowances for sleeping, regular healthy meals, exercise, relaxation, social events, sport, music and so on.



It is also important to understand that procrastination can be counter productive. Don't devote so much time to relaxation that study periods are relatively short. Finding the right balance between study and relaxation is a paramount prerequisite for success this year.

LET'S START WITH WHEN AND WHERE TO STUDY

To be able to use your study time effectively requires you to be organised. This requires you to plan from the outset:

- WHEN you plan to study, and
- WHAT you plan to study.

To do so you need to take into account time for:

- homework tasks,
- large submission pieces, such as internally assessed Outcomes,
- revision,
- preparation for class tests, and
- preparation for final examinations.

During your final year of schooling it is advisable that you devote a regular amount of time per subject for study purposes. It is advisable to talk to your teacher but as a guide you should devote approximately 30 to 45 minutes per subject each day for study purposes.



It is important to understand that the most effective time to study may vary from one person to the next. Some of us concentrate very well earlier in the day while others prefer to study later at night. You need to think about your concentration patterns. When you are least tired and best able to work are usually your best guides.

MY STUDY TIMETABLE

A study timetable is the most effective way of organising your time. You must allocate time for each of your subjects and relaxation time.

When drawing up your study timetable you should consider the following.

- Allocate an appropriate amount of time for each subject. You should arrange each subject into a block. This block should represent 30 to 45 minutes on your study timetable.
- Arrange subjects in order of difficulty. If you find a particular subject challenging, begin your study session with that subject. Your concentration will be higher and your ability to understand will be maximized. Leave the subjects you find most interesting or least challenging for later in the study session
- Don't view the timetable as a binding document. Be flexible. There will be times when other commitments such as a school sporting event or play rehearsal one night during the week or on the weekend will prevent you from keeping to the timetable.

Examine the sample timetable below and then structure a timetable that best suits your particular needs.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4.30 English	4.30 Maths	Sports Training	4.30 English	Relaxation Time.	10.30 Maths	1.30 English
5.15 Maths	5.15 Sports training	6.00 Maths	5.15 Maths		11.15 English	2.15 Maths
6.00 Dinner	6.30 Dinner	6.45 Dinner	6.00 Dinner		Relaxation Time	3.00 Break
7.00 Psychology	7.00 English	7.30 English	7.00 Physics		3.00 Psychology	3.30 Psychology
7.45 Physics	7.45 Psychology	8.15 Physics	7.45 Psychology		3.45 Physics	4.15 Physics
8.30 Break	8.30 Break	9.00 Break	8.30 Break		4.30 Break	5.00 Break
8.45 Biology	9.00 Biology	9.30 Biology	8.45 Biology		4.45 Biology	5.15 Biology
9.30 Extra work to catch up with.	9.45 Physics	10.15 Psychology	9.30 Extra work to catch up with.		Relaxation Time	6.00 Extra work to catch up with.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO STUDY?

There are some simple rules to follow when preparing an appropriate place to study.

1. Find a quiet place to study. This could be your bedroom or the study at home. You need to be able to concentrate without the distraction of television or radio.
2. A well ventilated, brightly lit room will help you to concentrate. Ensure that there is a source of fresh air, such as an open window. A stuffy work area will adversely affect your ability to concentrate.
3. Your desk should be free of clutter and, preferably, not directly in front of a window. The view may become a source of distraction.
4. Ensure that your desk is only used for study. That gives you the ability to organise your materials.
5. Finally, ensure that you have a good desk lamp. Good lighting will help you avoid eye strain and possible headaches.

