

# Study Skills Guidelines



## Goal Setting



There are many different factors to consider on the path to becoming a successful student- including motivation, effective reading & learning styles. There are three pillars that are the most important of all. These include:

- ❖ Goal Setting
- ❖ Time Management
- ❖ Organisation

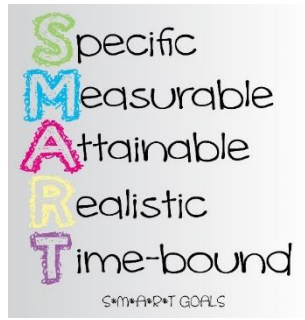
Always start a study session by setting goals, rather than beginning straight away without a plan. Typically, pupils who dive in and begin learning straight away tend to stop after a short while. One of the most difficult challenges a student’s encounters is not knowing what exactly to study next. Setting goals at the start of a study session will maximise the study time available.

Goal setting is an important step for students hoping to achieve in school and or exams. Simply, setting goals produces action and inspires. Beginning a study session, without proper planning, is one of the most significant causes of failure for all students.

It is essential that students take time to establish a number of goals, before they plan a study session. For example:

“I will study chapter 7 on Volcanoes for 30 minutes.”

“At the end of the study session, I will know.....”



### Setting Goals using the SMART principle

- ❖ Ensure that goals are both realistic and specific to subjects or topics within that subject.
- ❖ Each goal must have a target timeframe.
- ❖ Ensure that goals are attainable.
- ❖ Set goals and work backwards. Break long-term goals for the school year into numerous short-term goals.
- ❖ Goals enable a student to continuously track their progress.

## Organisation

Good organisational skills are essential for effective study to occur. The best approach to planning is one that divides tasks into three different categories.

1	2	3
<b>Daily Tasks</b>	<b>Weekly Tasks</b>	<b>Term Tasks</b>
<p>A daily plan can contain a day-by day list of assignments and topics to study. At the end of each study session, students should prepare a study plan for the following evening. A simple to-do list is adequate.</p>	<p>A weekly plan should include tests that need to be revised for and tasks (e.g. project work) that must be completed over a seven-day period.</p>	<p>A term plan is a broad overview of all the subjects/topics that need to be revised. This plan should include important dates such as Christmas &amp; Summer tests and deadlines for projects and or assignments set by teachers.</p>

## Study Materials



It is important that students are prepared with essential stationary for their study desk/area. All notes, worksheets, diagrams etc. from each subject must be filed in separate compartments or folders. Small paper labels help to organise folders neatly. Each subject should have its own folder.

## Time Management



Good time management can make a difference in achieving desired exam results.


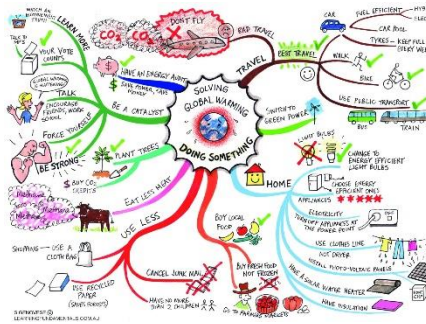

- ❖ Prioritize- effective timetabling of student's homework and study helps to prioritize urgent tasks first. Timetabling of study sessions and homework in allocated timeslots reduced the chance of spending too much time on one subject or topic and therefore neglecting other areas.
- ❖ Students are encouraged to allocate extra time to subjects or topics that they identify as being difficult. It is possible that the reason for a student's underperformance in a subject, is that they are simply not devoting enough study time.

- ❖ Good time management reduces the chance of procrastination- students are more likely to remain on schedule if they have a clear list of tasks to do in relation to homework and study.
- ❖ Students are more productive when they timetable their study sessions.
- ❖ Managing time wisely while studying improves the quality of the study that occurs.
- ❖ Always plan a break during study sessions, for example, take a 5-10 minutes break between study periods.

## Learning Styles

A possible reason as to why a student may be academically underperforming, could be related to the fact that they have not identified or understand the learning style that suits them best. All students are different and each student is encouraged to find a way of studying that can yield the best results. The three most dominant learning styles are as follows:



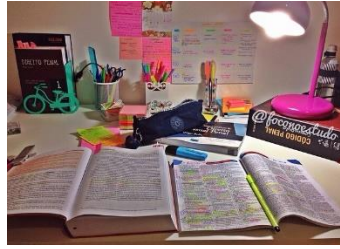
<p><b>Auditory Learners</b></p>	<p>Auditory learners perform well in Music and language subjects. They learn best by listening, through reading texts and key points aloud, recording notes and playing them back using apps or earphones. A useful tool to support auditory learners when studying is the use of memory techniques such as mnemonics or language apps for example Duolingo.</p>	
<p><b>Visual Learners</b></p>	<p>Visual learners are attracted to subjects such as Geography where there is a focus on diagrams and animations. Visual learners learn best by seeing-through the use of diagrams, visual organisers and colour coded bullet points and notes. Mind maps are a useful tool to support a visual learner when studying.</p>	
<p><b>Kinaesthetic Learners</b></p>	<p>Kinaesthetic learners are tactile learners that learn best through experiencing through movement and activity. Tactile learners learn best by constructing projects or carrying out experiments. Tactile learners usually prefer subjects such as Art &amp; Woodwork. The use of mini-white boards or flip charts are useful tools to support a kinaesthetic learner when studying.</p>	

## Memory Techniques

Many students struggle to remember large volumes of information they need to recall in tests or exams, and this can lead to a student underperforming academically. With so much to learn across many subjects, remembering facts, figures etc. is a monumental task. The following techniques are very effective to support students when studying.

<b>Flash Cards</b>	Flash cards are simple to use and a great tool for learning and studying. It is an effective method for students to test and assess their learning. Flash cards can be used to learn facts. Each card should have only one question and one answer. Large blocks of writing should be avoided as it will slow down students when studying in short bursts.
<b>Acronyms</b>	Acronyms are words created from the 1 <sup>st</sup> letter of the first word of each point/fact that needs to be remembered. It can be an invented or real word, but it must be easy and simple to remember.
<b>Acrostics</b>	An acrostic is very similar to an acronym, but instead of making a word out of the first letters, a sentence is created to remember information in a certain order.
<b>Mnemonics</b>	Mnemonics is an excellent technique to help students remember numbers. Invent a sentence in which the number of letters in each word represents each digit of the number to be remembered.
<b>Mind Maps</b>	Mind maps are an excellent study tool. Mind maps are diagrams which are used to represent facts, words and ideas that are all connected to the main topic. Mind maps are arranged in a circular pattern, with information represented by sketching simple diagrams and key terms. All the information connected to the main topic radiates or branches out from the centre of the page.

## How to create an area that encourages students to study?



- ❖ One of the reasons why students may be underperforming is that they are spending too much time procrastinating – that is, putting off work by distracting themselves with other things, such as social media. This is a common response to homework or study; when you have so much to do that you don't know where to start, the temptation is simply **NOT** to start. Distractions such as TV and social network sites interfere with student's concentration levels during study sessions. The use of phones for example must be controlled by students themselves and or monitored by parents.
- ❖ The study area/zone must be suitable- an area that is noisy, contains a desk that is too small or lacking privacy can distract students from studying properly.
- ❖ A cluttered study space with unfiled notes everywhere; an numerous textbooks opened on a desk, inhibits a student's ability to study effectively. Decluttered and file all subject notes correctly.
- ❖ It is advised that all notes/diagrams should be stored in multi-compartment A4 folders.