

STUDY STRATEGIES

Studying refers to all that you do in order to learn something. Here are some suggestions to help you study effectively.

☑ BE ACTIVE

Be actively involved with the things that you are trying to learn. For example, write key points in your own words. Try to relate your study to your own experience, whether it be at home, at school, at work or elsewhere. You may like to keep a journal of notes about your work and how it relates to your experiences and situations.

☑ AT LEAST ATTEMPT ALL ACTIVITIES GIVEN FOR HOMEWORK

☑ MAKE CONNECTIONS



Try to see the relationships among different modules in a unit, and different units in your subjects. The more you seek for and find connections among the things that you study, the more sense they will make and the easier they will be to remember.

☑ UNDERSTANDING LEADS TO BETTER LEARNING

In problem-solving exercises or when performing calculations, try to understand each step of the process. If you know the reason behind a process, it is easier to handle related problems than it would be if you had only memorised the steps to follow.

☑ USE MEMORY AIDS

List the major points in each unit of work, chapter of a textbook, etc. These major points form the 'framework' of the unit. If you understand the framework, you will find it easier to remember the details.

Some students write important points on cards and go through them from time to time. Others write a detailed outline and pin it up on a wall by their study table. Such visible reminders are a simple and efficient way to help you memorise basic facts.

☑ FORM STUDY GROUPS



Form a Study Group with other students. You can take it in turns to meet at each other's house to ask for help, or to get a fresh point of view. You will find that trying to explain something to another person is one of the very best ways to learn it yourself! Read more about how they can work in the following section titled 'Study Groups'.

STUDY GROUPS

Study Groups can be whatever you want them to be. However, a Study Group is usually three to ten students who are studying the same subject. The Study Group aims to develop a more supportive study environment to help you achieve success in your secondary studies. Other students can provide valuable academic and social support. The group can offer mutual encouragement when you are just beginning or when the road is rough.

• WHAT CAN YOU ACHIEVE FROM YOUR STUDY GROUP?

Your Study Group can offer many kinds of support from a sense of belonging to the wider school community, a means to clarify your thinking on content issues or an avenue of communication between you and your teacher/s.

The following list explores some of the purposes of Study Groups:

① Belonging

1. To overcome the feeling of isolation by sharing ideas, experiences, resources and friendship.
2. To help you adapt to the role of student, adding another dimension to your commitments and responsibilities.

① Decision Making

3. To clarify your study objectives within the group.
4. To assist you in developing independent learning skills.
5. To brainstorm new ideas within the group, and challenge old or accepted ideas.
6. To share direct experience and practical knowledge with others in the group.

① Stress and Time Management

7. To improve your efficiency (time savings) and effectiveness (improved grades) in assessment work.
8. To exchange ways of reducing stress and limit failure and dropout.

① Communication Skills

9. To request teacher contact with the group by tutorial and regular communication.
10. To access tutorials as a viable group, often not available to individuals.

① Focusing Study Tasks

11. To maintain the group focus on assessment related study.
12. To keep the group on track in preparing for examinations.
13. To evaluate, discuss and compare assignment/exam results and teacher feedback.
14. To exchange views on the relevance and representativeness of assignments and exam questions related to unit objectives as given in unit specifications.

• WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A STUDY GROUP?

Study Groups offer many advantages to you as a secondary student:

- You acquire a tangible sense of belonging to the student body of the school.
- You form friendships with a network of other students.
- You can share library books and resources, eg. computer.
- You can alleviate some of the problems of studying in isolation.
- You can spread costs associated with study eg. local tutor, expensive textbooks, etc.

Where Can You Meet?

If there are a number of you doing the same subjects, you may wish to meet regularly. Venues can be as varied as the local library, one student's family room – anywhere you feel comfortable and reasonably uninterrupted. Once you've decided on the 'where' and the 'when' of your first meeting, you need to agree on some basic operating rules:

- How long will you meet?
- What you plan to achieve during the time?
- Who will be the contact point or chairperson to get things started?

EXAMINATION TECHNIQUES



Many subjects include an end-of-semester examination as part of the assessment. The exact time and location of your examination will be provided to you well in advance. The formal examination requires you to demonstrate your learning to the teacher. If you have followed the suggestions about studying, you will be well on your way to success. Here are a few additional points to help you with your exams:

➤ PREPARING FOR EXAMINATIONS

- You should revise all materials on a weekly basis.
- It is a good idea to begin revising the entire semester's or year's material at least two or three weeks before the examination. That way, you have time to put in a bit of extra effort on areas you are not quite certain of. Here are some extra points to help you.
- **Revise your notes.** Go over the notes you have made for yourself during your study. Make sure that you see the relationship between the key points that you have written down and the related details.
- **Get together** – if possible, get together with others studying the same unit. Discuss each point. Quiz each other.
- **Review assignments** – go over previous assignments. If you didn't do well, look at the teacher's comments to find out where you went wrong.
- **Get to bed in good time** - don't stay up revising all of the night before the exam. Get a good night's sleep so that you are alert and at your best. And don't skimp on meals before the exam. Mental exertion is just as dependent on a healthy body as is physical exertion.
- **Confirm examination mode** – make sure you know what sort of exam it is eg. open book, closed book, etc. Come prepared with all necessary equipment.



❖ In Your Examination



Time planning – just as you plan how you will use your weekly study time, so too should you plan your time in the examination. Here are some guidelines on how to use your time effectively in your examination:

- ⊕ Use the initial perusal time to read through the examination paper, and to plan an exam timetable.
- ⊕ Try to leave yourself sufficient time at the end of the examination to check over your work and make any last-minute corrections.
- ⊕ If all questions have equal weight, plan to take about the same amount of time with each one. If the questions have unequal weighting, spend more time on those questions with many marks, and less time on the ones with fewer marks.
- ⊕ In multiple choice questions, don't spend too much time on questions you can't answer easily or quickly. Go ahead and answer the others first, leaving yourself sufficient time to return to those of which you are unsure.

Hints on Answering Questions – here are a few hints to help you in answering questions:

- ✍ Write legibly – even with the best will in the world, a marker cannot give you credit if your writing cannot be read.
- ✍ In answering essay questions, make certain that your essay is well organised and grammatically correct. It will pay dividends to spend a few minutes planning your essay before you begin writing.
- ✍ Make sure that you answer the question asked. Underline the key words in the question and underline the verb. This will help you to focus on the essence of the question.



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing is an important skill for all students. Whether it is a brief technical report, a longer exposition or a major research project, the purpose is the same: **to communicate clearly.** As in



all areas of study, it pays dividends to plan carefully before you begin. Here are a few suggestions to help you to develop a systematic approach to writing assignments. **Be sure to allow yourself plenty of time to follow them!**

There are many types of assignment topics which will require you to analyse, assess, criticise, outline or comment. At secondary level, you will be assessed on your intelligent interpretation of the question and your ability to organise the information you have gathered, as well as your own viewpoints, into a structured, coherent and concise piece of writing relevant to the question. In writing your assignments, you should pay attention to the following aspects.

■ Collect Pertinent Information

- ✓ Prepare a brief statement outlining the focus and scope of your paper.
- ✓ Quickly survey each available book and article to determine whether or not it contains relevant information.
- ✓ Take brief notes in your own words from the appropriate sources, noting relevant page numbers for inclusion in the paper.
- ✓ Record the specific location of potentially useful quotations.
- ✓ Use a separate page (or card) for each major idea and/or each reference source.

■ Organise Your Information

- ✓ Read through your notes and sort them into categories that seem useful to you.
- ✓ Organise the pages or cards in each group into an appropriate sequence.
- ✓ Using this sequence, prepare a detailed overall plan of your paper.
- ✓ Ideally, consult your teacher to clarify any points of uncertainty.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

■ Write and Review the Initial Draft

- ✓ Using the overall plan, dash off an initial draft as quickly and spontaneously as you can, concentrating on the development of your topic without, at this stage, worrying unduly about proper punctuation, etc.
- ✓ Stick to the point
- ✓ Back up your ideas with specific examples and/or factual details.
- ✓ Demonstrate that you have been thinking and not merely copying.
- ✓ Ask someone else to read your draft and tell you what parts are good or unclear. Does it make sense? Does it say what you want it to say?
- ✓ Where possible, leave this initial draft for a couple of days.
- ✓ Rewrite the assignment or simply cross out and add to your initial draft. This process of drafting and revising to the drafts should go on until you are happy with the piece.



■ Write the Final Assignment

- ✓ Type the final version of your paper **if possible.**
- ✓ Check if you are using unfamiliar or uncommon words correctly – use a dictionary or thesaurus.
- ✓ Check your paper for coherence and clarity of expression.
- ✓ Check for correct grammar, accurate punctuation, etc.
- ✓ Follow the required format for references, etc.
- ✓ Allow sufficient time for final proof-reading to check for careless errors – spelling mistakes omitted words, etc.
- ✓ Try to avoid the frantic, last-minute rush to meet the deadline.

