

Name: _____

Tutor Group: _____



St Columba
Anglican School

SCAS STUDY SKILLS HANDBOOK



**Six simple strategies to help you
get organised and prepared for school**



Study Skills: An introduction

Students are encouraged to develop a homework and study program to complement their academic program at school. By adopting the six study and organisation strategies outlined in this booklet, students should feel better equipped to juggle the many demands placed upon them. This booklet is suited for everyone. For those who already have good study habits, this booklet will reinforce what you already know and for those who struggle, this booklet will hopefully provide some guidance to increase your motivation, commitment and effort in class and at home.

We want you to develop good routines and habits and find a healthy balance between school, family, friends and life. We as a school value good learning and we hope that this resource will assist you. Remember you are not alone, nearly all of us, if we are honest, struggle with study and homework, especially after school. But hopefully, with some help from your parents, boarding staff, teachers and tutors, you will value the importance of study and homework and make them a priority.

This booklet looks at the **what**, **how** and **why** we study as well as identifying and tackling the **hurdles** that get in the way of a good study routine.

Something to think about

What happens if you get into the habit of overeating and do no exercise?

Can you play a musical instrument just by reading a book alone?

What impact is technology having on my study habits?

- With information at our finger tips, if we don't 'digest' and review this information it can go to waste.
- Study is essentially practice. It is the process of making knowledge become understanding. In other words, processing what we know and being able to demonstrate it to others.
- The 21st century learner, is increasingly 'wired' to the internet. Is this a good or bad thing?

What do you think of study? What does study mean to you?

- Do you know the difference between homework and study?
- Even if you knew how to study, do you want to?

When it comes to study, most people fall into one or two of the following categories:

What applies to you? Reflect and give reasons for your response.

I don't know <i>what</i> to study CONTENT	I don't <i>want</i> to study ATTITUDE	I don't know <i>how</i> to study SKILL	I know how to study but I have poor time management skills

What is study?

Do you know the difference between homework, assignments and study?

Homework	Learning activities set by your teacher to be done outside of class time
Assignments	Specific learning activities/projects that your teacher gives you to complete in a certain way by a certain time
Study	Particular types of learning activities that involve doing a variety of things regularly to get your mind actively engaged in your learning. Study is a process where you move the things you learn from your short term memory to your long term memory. Study involves activities that you do often and at regular intervals

There are two main study activities:

1. Study that summarises, reviews and make notes based on classwork, text books and handouts
2. Study that re-reads and annotates the notes developed and attempts practice questions

Why is it important to allocate time to complete homework, assignments and study?

Why look at study skills

- Study is like any 'work' in life, the same principles apply: knowledge, skills, time and effort
- During your schooling, your success will largely depend on an effective, productive homework/ study program and, like life, success is based not on chance, but on hard work and perseverance
- Study skills aim to assist the student to work smarter at school and at home
- Like all habits, your study habits may be good or bad or both
- Good study skills save time, energy and foster good learning outcomes
- The good news – like all skills, they can be developed with practice over time

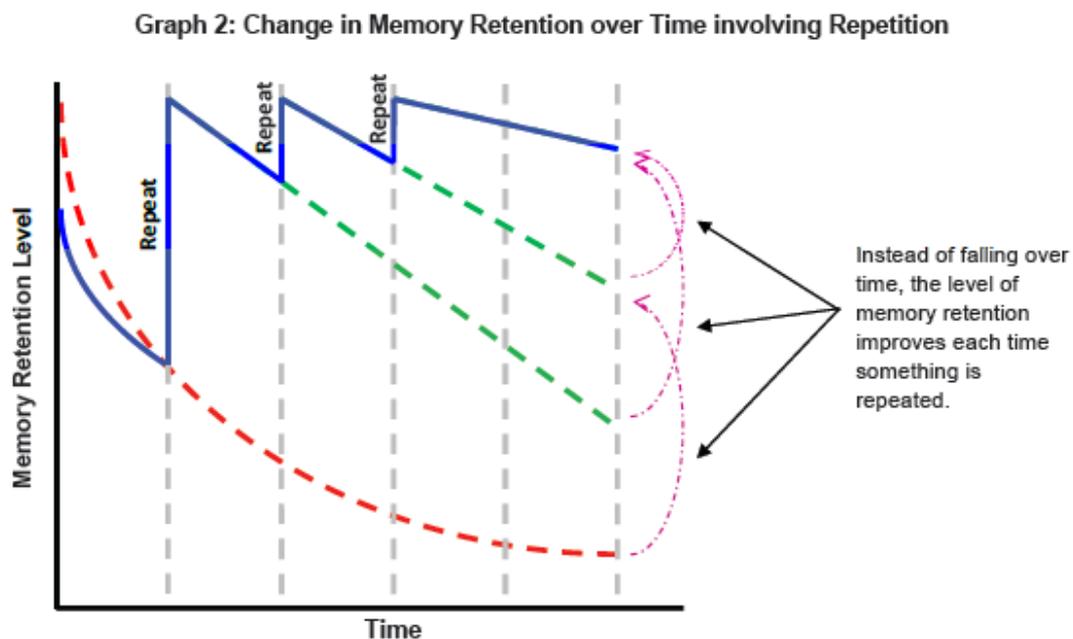
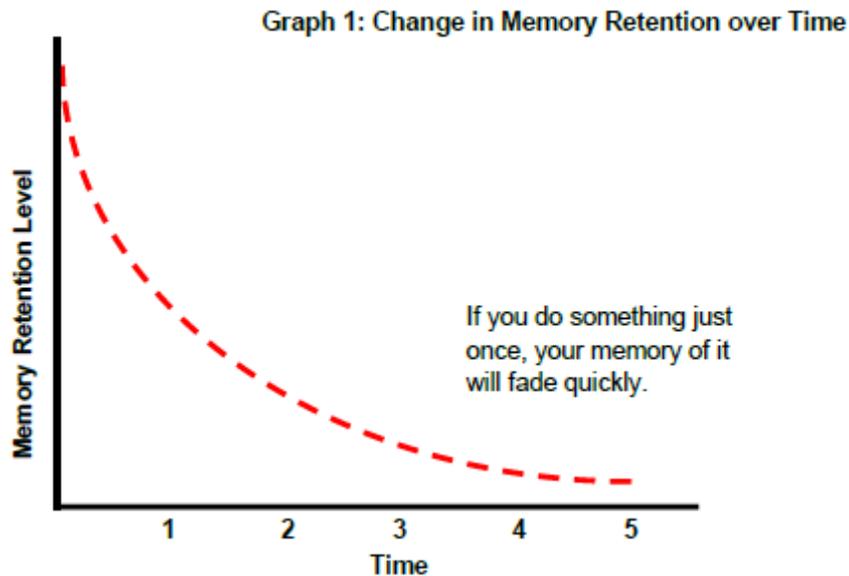
The benefit of effective study skills



What area do I need to work on?

Why look at study skills

According to the research findings of Hermann Ebbinghaus, we forget 40 percent of what we learn after the first 20 minutes and retain only 30 percent of the information after six days. He discovered how repetition improves our memory and showed that we can have much better recall if we spread out the number of times we review new material.



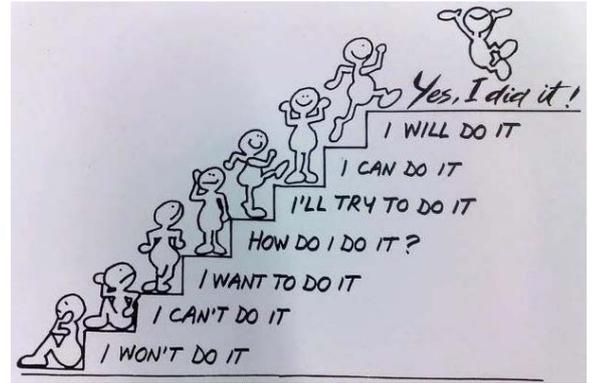
Why is memory retention important for study?

Study is a form of repetition where information acquired is developed into notes and re-used, over and over again. It includes study activities such as: note-taking, answering questions, explaining to others, constructing mind maps etc. We will look at these study activities in more detail.

Study Skill 1: It starts with you! A look at your study ATTITUDE

What do I think about study?

When it comes to homework and study, look at the image on the right. Which step are you on? **Give reasons why you're on this step.**

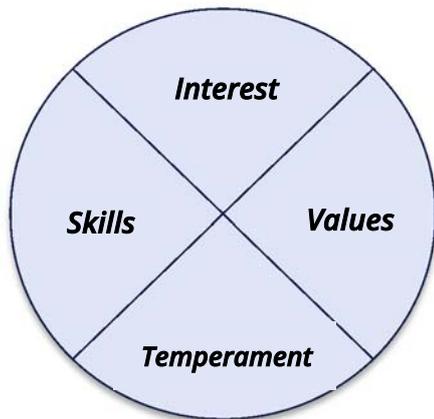


How does my life impact on my homework/study/assignments? Reflect and fill in the columns

Me	Home	School	Life



The key ingredients to a successful study attitude



- Interest (what you enjoy),
- Skills (abilities to carry out tasks),
- Temperament (how you react to situations)
- Values (what is important, priorities in your life)

My study attitude: what are my strengths and weaknesses?

	Strength	Weakness
Interest		
Skills		
Values		
Temperament		

My current progress

Fill in the table and answer the following questions below:

Rate between **1 - 10**. **1** = bad/poor/never/no **10** = excellent/very good/every time/yes

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Rate your interest</i>	<i>Rate your current effort</i>	<i>What is your desired result in this course?</i>	<i>Are you happy with your current progress? Why/why not?</i>	<i>Can you improve in this subject? Why/Why not?</i>
English					

My study attitude: life, organisation and focus survey

(Rate using 1 to 10) Study and its place in my life:

- Do you enjoy school? _____
- Do you feel you have the skills to do well at school? _____
- What value/priority do you place on school and education generally? _____
- My parent's expectations for school are the same as mine? _____
- Results and how I achieve mean a lot to me? _____

Rating my current study habits

Organisation

- How organised am I? _____
- How organised do my parents/guardians think I am? _____
- Do I have a study timetable that I follow? _____
- Do I have an organised approach to my assessments? _____
- Is the work I submit well prepared and on time? _____

Attention and focus

- I can focus in class for the whole lesson _____
- I am easily distracted in class _____
- I am a good independent learner _____
- I work better when someone checks my work _____
- I prefer group work and discussion to working on my own _____

Reading and writing skills

- I enjoy reading the set text given to me _____
- I understand what I am reading all the time _____
- I can summarise what I just read _____
- I read widely - researching other texts, articles _____
- I take notes in class - during teacher talk (lecture/presentation) _____
- I take notes in class from board, slides etc without falling behind _____

School and life balance

- Other priorities take over school work so I often don't complete it _____
- Homework and study is boring _____
- Leisure/relaxing takes priority over homework and study _____
- I often get tired by the time I need to do homework _____
- I feel I don't have a good balance at home, I seem so busy all the time _____
- I often leave things to the last minute and get stressed _____
- My parents/boarding staff are a great help to me _____
- I need to work on my routines, I am too lazy _____
- I feel stressed and anxious all the time _____

From the above, identify five areas about your study attitude that need improvement

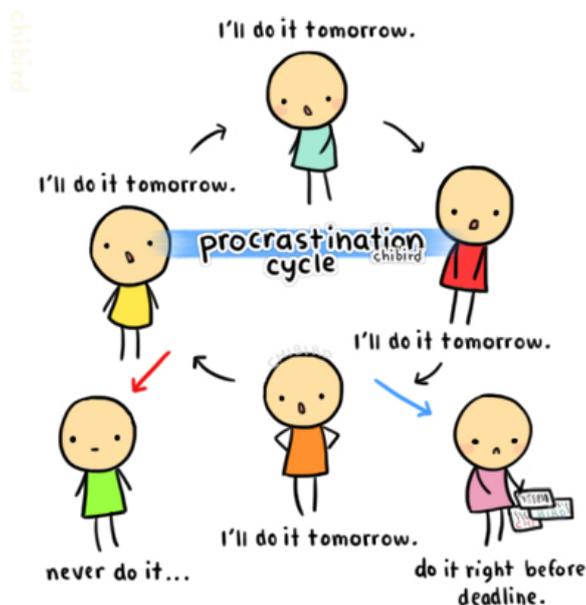
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Study Skill 2: Organising and Prioritising

Why is organising and prioritising important?

1. Procrastination

Procrastination is a big issue when it comes to study and homework. Procrastination is essentially avoiding work by putting it off or doing something you enjoy or that is less important.



There are broadly two types of procrastinators. The **Switcher** and the **Banker**

The Switcher

- Swaps priorities
- Avoids what needs to be done
- Substitutes a low priority task for a high priority task

The Banker

- Relies on 'banked time' and higher levels of stress and anxiety
- Deadlines prompt action
- By not completing 30 minutes tonight, attempts/makes promises to do more the next night and so on

Do you procrastinate? If so, describe specifically how you procrastinate? If not, what's the secret to your success?

As the 'procrastination cycle' shows, there are only two outcomes. What are they? Describe a situation where you procrastinated. What were the results of this and how did you feel?

Reasons for procrastination include:

- No point – no reason to do it
- Overwhelmed – too much to do
- Don't like it – not enjoyable, I dislike doing this and besides, my favourite TV show is on

Some strategies include:

- Positive self-talk is important – note the language above, develop a "can do" attitude or seek help
- Minimising distractions – Be in control. Get tough on technology
- Adopt simple strategies to stay on task, such as timers

To some extent, we are all procrastinators. The key is to recognise when we are procrastinating and adopt strategies to avoid negative consequences of it outlined below.

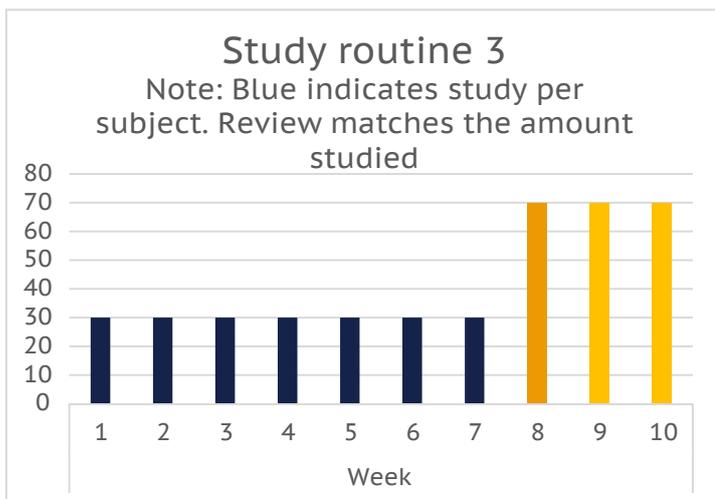
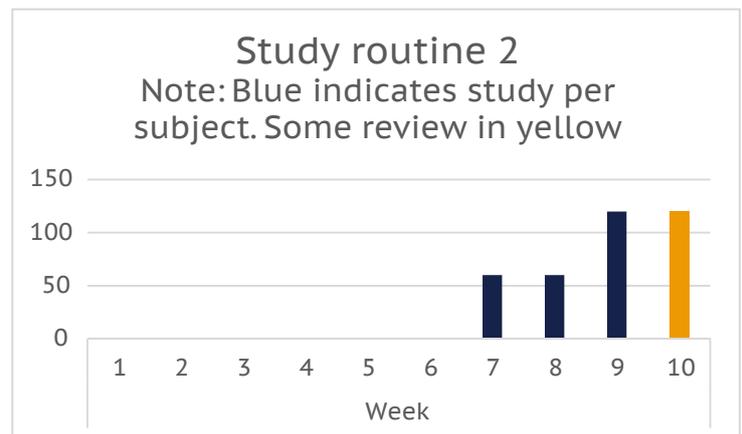
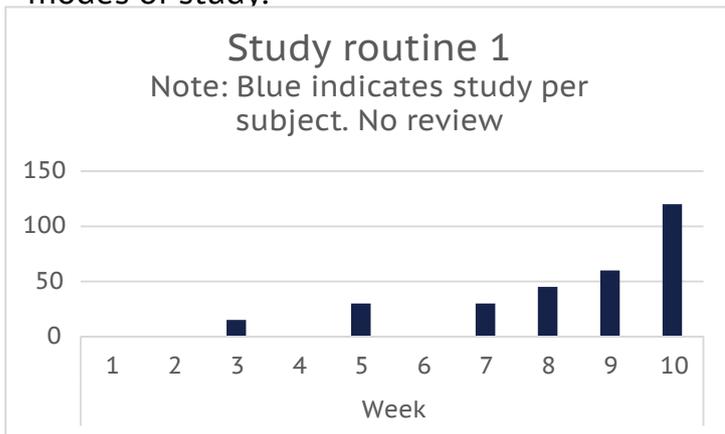
Consequences of procrastination

1. Cramming

Research, backed by common sense, tells us that massed practice (cramming) is detrimental to learning. Spaced-out, distributed practice that incorporates repetitive note-taking, re-reading of notes and practice questions is highly effective.

Consider the following rule of thumb:

For every hour you study (make notes), you need to allocate the same amount of hours for review (re-reading and practice questions). Look at the following graphs as a guide to typical modes of study.



What does your study routine look like?
Draw a graph that indicates the hours you spend on each subject. Differentiate between note-taking and review.

Clearly, Study routine 3 is an example of a spaced-out, distributed study program that incorporates both note-taking, review and practice. Study routine 1 results in short-term knowledge at the expense of long-term understanding. This is typical cramming behaviour.

2. Stress-induced anxiety

This is an increasing area of concern that relates to the well-being of students.

Procrastinators, or those with low motivation, often possess negative self-talk and feelings of being overwhelmed.

Some symptoms of stress-induced anxiety include:

- Highly disorganised
- Tired, lack of sleep
- Feeling panicked, and low confidence
- Avoiding work and distractions get habitual

The consequences of procrastination are not pleasant. They can negatively impact upon both your learning and well-being. Therefore, it is an important issue to consider and seek help if needed.

Dealing with Distractions

Distractions are a key component when it comes to avoiding study/homework. It is best to consider distractions as anything that takes attention and focus away from things that need to be done.

The best way to manage distractions is to recognise what they are and to use them as self-regulated rewards.



1. identifying my distractions

Examples include: Internet, Mobile phone, iPad, Instagram, friends who want to chat/talk, TV, YouTube etc

What are my distractions?

At school/in class	At home/boarding

Strategies to minimise distractions

- Consider your working environment - remove all distractions from this area
- Use clocks, timers, to stay in your seat! 45mins is a good guide
- Tell your friends not to contact you during set times
- Use internet, iPad and screen related work in an open area
- Record TV programs to be watched later
- Get into a routine, set boundaries and adopt time-management strategies (see below)

Any other strategies?

2. Understanding how rewards work

Rewards are linked to the idea of delayed gratification. That is, earning your reward is more satisfying. Students are encouraged to work on intrinsic forms of motivation. This is motivation driven by a person's own innate desire to do something worthwhile. These are positive intrapersonal characteristics and is a sure sign of maturity.

Extrinsic motivation are environmental structures to assist students stay on task. They include the use of **carrots** and **sticks**. Sticks are 'punishments' that result from infringing on rules or boundaries. It may help you to avoid 'doing the wrong thing'. Carrots are incentives or rewards. These rewards are effective if they are self-regulated (come from the student) and relate to leisure and rest such as TV.

Describe what best motivates you.

Study Skills 3: Time Management

Time management is a key strategy to stay organised and combat procrastination.

Do you manage your time well? Why/why not?

Do you want to change how you organise yourself? Why/Why not?

Time Management Matrix

Source: "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" Stephen R. Covey

In which quadrant do you fit? (Give a percent for each quadrant)

Many go between Quadrant 1 and 4. Why is this the case?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>Quadrant I</p> <p>Activities: Crisis, dominates all time and energy, Pressing Problems; Deadline-driven projects</p> <p>Results: Stress, burnout, crisis management, always putting out fires (reactive)</p>	<p>Quadrant II</p> <p>Activities: Prevention, Planning, Organising, Relationship building, New opportunities planning.</p> <p>Result: vision, perspective, discipline, control, few crises</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>Quadrant III</p> <p>Activities: Interruptions, distractions, some calls, mail, meetings, popular activities, can't differentiate important work</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Short-term focus, crisis management, see plans and goals as worthless, feel victimised, out of control</p>	<p>Quadrant IV</p> <p>Activities: Trivia, busy work, some mail/calls, time wasting distractions, pleasant social activities</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Total irresponsibility, ineffective, bad reputation, dependent on others, no initiative, feel like victims</p>

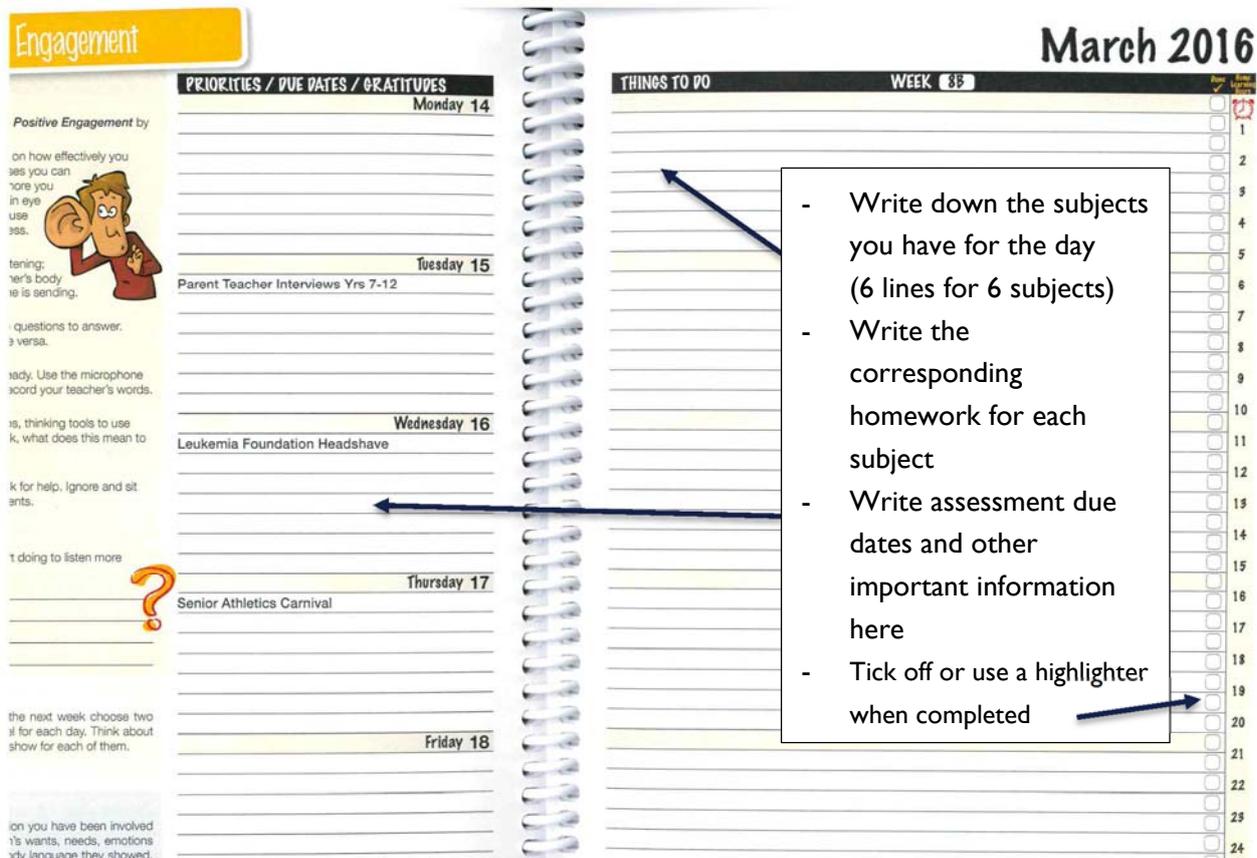
What do you think is the ideal quadrant to be in as a student?

The ideal quadrant is No 2. What are the activities that you can do that fit Quadrant II

Examples to assist in organisation and prioritising

1. School Diary

Use a diary or planner every day. Plan ahead, write down due dates, use colour to highlight key items



Note: **There is no such thing as NO**

homework Some suggested activities include:

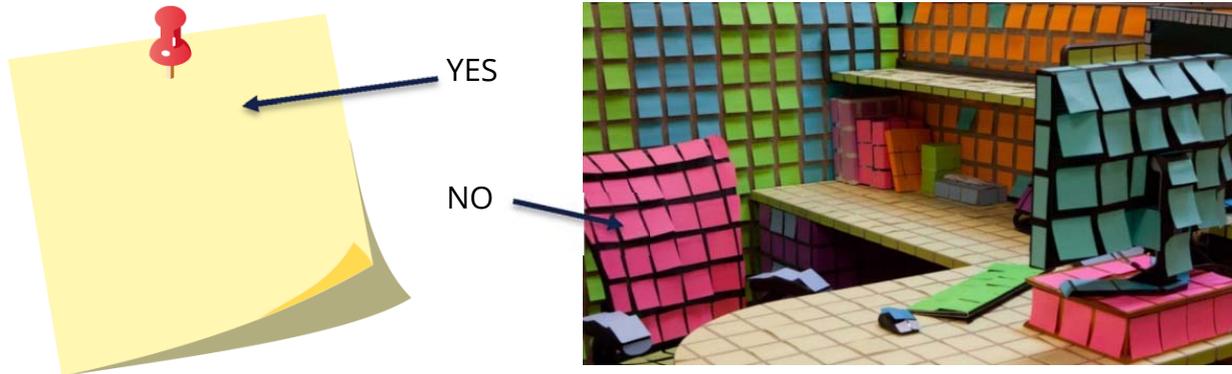
Write study notes	Re-read your class work	Highlight key words in your text or handout
Complete revision questions	Work ahead! Read the next unit of work	Catch-up on missed homework
Work on an assignment Research, collate, analysis	Study for an assessment task	Construct a list of key-terms for each subject and find out their definition

From the above suggested activities, what are some ideas that might work for you, next time you don't have any homework for the following subjects?

Subject 1:	
Subject 2:	
Subject 3:	

2. Post-it notes

Quick and simple tool to post tasks in a visible manner. Helps with prioritising work to be completed each day. **The idea is FIRST THINGS - FIRST!**



3. Day Planner

Like post-it notes, day planners such as below, assist in prioritising tasks and include greater detail.

DAY PLANNER
Name: _____

Tips to setting SMART goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Goal setting is fundamental requirement to improvement * Goals help to set targets and provide motivation for effort * Goals should be challenging, specific and achievable * Goals decided upon should be pre-determined and are non-negotiable * Set 3 - 5 goals each day and tick off when completed

Day _____		
Priority	Activity	Completed
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

4. Weekly Planner

Fill in the activities which you do every day, such as co-curricular commitments (music, sport etc). Try to complete your homework by dinner time. Separate homework and study. Try to complete some study for one subject per night.

Daily Homework and Study Timetable							
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						Morning	Morning
						Afternoon	Afternoon
						Evening	Evening
Co-curricular							
AM							
PM							

5. Term Planner

To be used in conjunction with your Assessment Schedule. All assessment schedules can be found online on Explain SCAS website (<http://explain.scas.nsw.edu.au>)

My Term Planner: Assessment, School and Personal Commitments							
Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

Study Skills 5: Effective note-taking

Note-taking is one of the primary and therefore one of the most important skills for any student

- Note-taking is also known as summarising, study notes, syllabus outlines
- It should be completed at least 3 days prior to any examination, to allow for re-read and review
- Note-taking requires a study note-book (separate from your class book)
- Note-taking should be guided by your teacher, the text and syllabus (For Stage 6 syllabus see www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc)

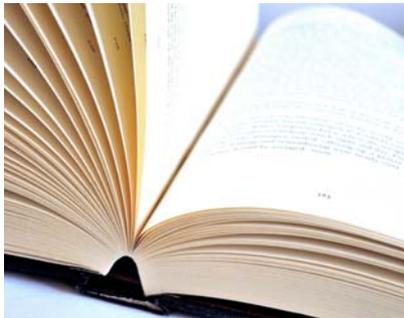
Note-taking is a three step process

- Based on SQ3RW model and Cornell Note taking method

Step 1 SCAN and READ

Select the information you want to summarise

Scan and read at least 1-2 pages to gain an overview



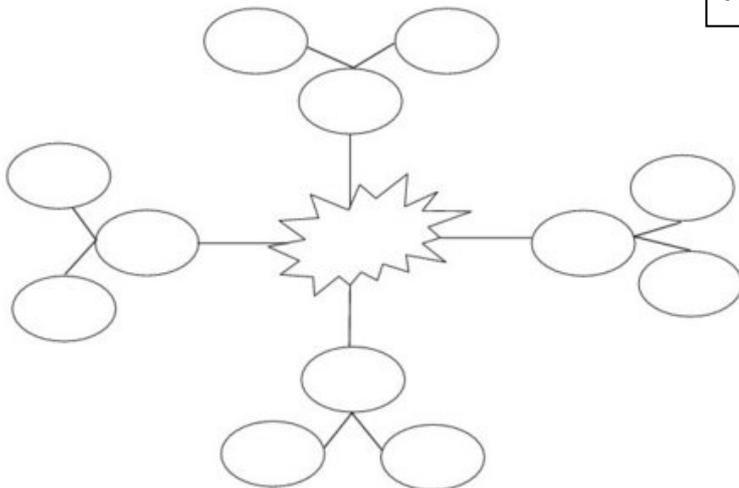
Step 1 Reflective Questions

- What are the **main/key** points?
- What is the author trying to **tell me**?
- Do I understand all the **vocabulary**?

Step 3 REVIEW

This is when you re-read your notes

- Annotate your notes with further points (in the right hand column)
- Create a graphic organiser (mind-map) of your notes
- Attempt questions to test your understanding



Step 2 WRITE

Draw a margin (5 cm from the right hand side)

Write your notes (left side) as dot-point summaries

Topic title _____	(5 cm margin)
Sub-Heading 1 _____	<i>This is a good area to annotate your notes just prior to your exams</i>
• Write a short sentence that sums up the main idea	
•	
Sub-Heading 2 _____	
• Write a short sentence that sums up the main idea	
•	
Sub-Heading 3 _____	
• Write a short sentence that sums up the main idea	
•	

Step 2 Reflective Questions

- Are these notes in my **own** words?
- Do my notes make **sense** to me?
- Can I **explain** what I have just summarized?

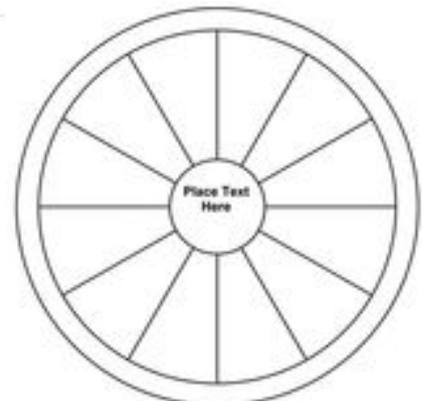
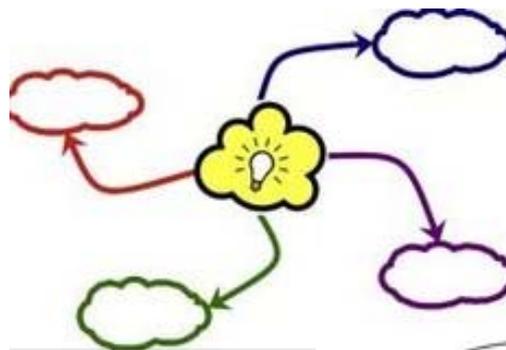
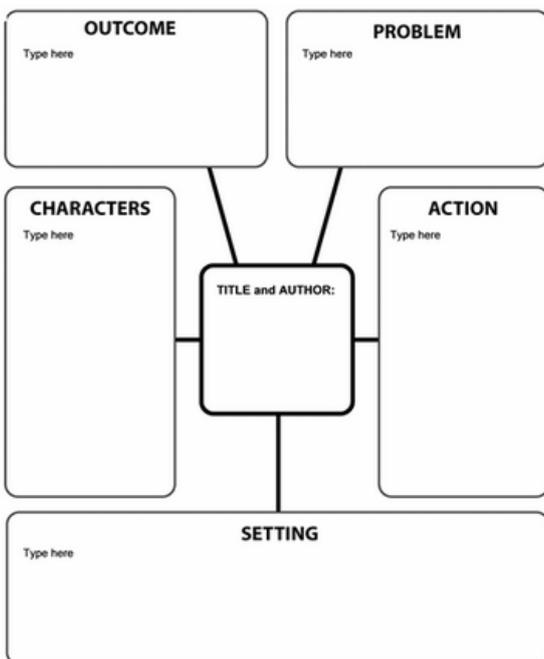
Step 3 Reflective Questions

- Have I **re-read** my notes?
- Have I created **mind-maps** for display?
- Have I attempted some **questions** to check my understanding?

Example of note taking page

Article Notes	Your Column
Author/Article Name:	* Key Terms
Thesis Statement:	* References to look up (other books, authors)
Supporting Argument 1 (include details, supporting info):	* Questions you have about the material
Supporting Argument 2: (include page #s with your notes for quick reference!)	*Other readings that this relates to
Supporting Argument 3: (notes for each argument should actually take a minimum of one page each)	*Do I agree? Why or why not? *What does this relate to in the real world?

More example of mind-maps



Study Skills 6: The work station

Your area of work is important. Whether this is in your room or in a common area, the following basic principles should be followed:

Ensure that you have:

- A designated work area
- Good light and ventilation
- Remove distractions e.g. no phone, TV, computer
- Leave iPad or internet work till last
- The resources you need e.g. books, calculator, text books etc
- Your Diary, Wall Planner, Assessment Notices visibly displayed
- Do Not Disturb: blocked out time for homework & study



Make sure you take breaks, preferably after 45mins. Consider your eyes, back and neck. Make sure you have correct posture (back straight, adjustable comfortable chair and plenty of cleared space). Drink lots of water.

What areas of my work station do I need to adjust/change?

Finally, when you feel stressed...



Summary of key points

1. Get Organised

- Use your Student Planner and Diary
- Prioritise and manage your time by doing “first things first”

2. Avoid distractions

- Friends who want to talk
- Internet and technology such as Phone, Facebook, TV, Instagram, Music etc

3. Study will become easier if you

- Follow your Planner
- Set and maintain positive habits (same time and place, silent study etc)
- Work towards your goals
- Reward effort and success
- Have a balanced lifestyle e.g. ensure you eat well and do regular physical activity
- Utilise the support around you e.g. Teachers, Tutor, friends and family

What can I expect if I commit to these steps?

- Less stress
- Improved learning
- Better results
- Positive feedback
- Sense of achievement
- A more enjoyable time at school

Key Take-Aways: What are three things I need to do now

Any questions?

NOTES: