

Study Skills

There are **three** key elements needed before any *Study Plan* can be put into operation.

These are:

Motivation

Location

Organisation

Motivation

Motivation is the force that drives a person to do something! At the end of the day you are the only person who can motivate yourself! You need to forget about all negative thoughts like; “*There is too much to be done*” or “*Why bother?*”. You need to banish these negative thoughts from your mind! You need to ask yourself “*Why is it that I want to do well?*” Is it to achieve a good grade so that you can progress further in your education?

The motivation to study may be hard for some people. However it is possible if a few key steps are followed:

1. You need to **set yourself reasonable targets**. You need to pick a topic and set yourself a reasonable length of time to complete it.
2. You may need to give yourself a **reason** to meet these targets; “*If I study this topic now I can go to the cinema later with my friends*” or “*I will have covered this area for the exam*”.
3. Make sure that you **follow through** on the targets and **reward** yourself for reaching these targets.

4. **Let others know** of your study plans, that this is your time to be by yourself and **that you do not want to be disturbed.**

Location

The place where you will do your study is very important!

When deciding where it is that you will study, you need to ask yourself a number of questions:

Where am I going to study? Can I study in my bedroom? Is there a free room in the house? Is this a quiet part of the house? Is there a desk there that I can use for my study?

Remember you will not be able to study properly with the radio or the TV on!

Maybe this is something that you need to remove from your study regime? This might take a little bit of effort and change on your part!

You need a place where you will **not be interrupted**. The **temperature** of the room should not be too hot; if it is this will make you sleepy.

Organisational Skills

The better organised that you are, the less stressed that you will be!

You need to place all your books and notes together. Putting your notes into folders would also help. A good idea is to place all the notes for a particular subject in a separate folder. Then put the notes in order, placing all the common topics together.

You should follow a **routine**....make out a **timetable**...this needs to be *flexible* but you need to *follow through* on it.

You need to get into the habit of ticking off the work and revision that you have covered as this will help to keep you **focused**.

Initially, to start with, you need to **become familiar** with the course outline of each subject and the outline of the examination paper. Familiarise yourself with the layout of each exam paper and the type of questions asked. Doing previous exam questions is the best way to familiarise yourself with the paper and it is also a great method of revision.

The habit of regular study will lengthen your span of concentration; so the more you learn, the more you will be able to learn.

Getting Down To Study!!

Before you can do this, you need to ask yourself a number of questions:

Do I have a study plan or timetable?

Do I have all the **necessary resources** i.e. pens, pencils, folders, refill pads, exam papers, textbook, copies etc.

Do I have my mobile phone switched off?

What is my study technique?

Study Technique

-this is the way that a person goes about studying. A good study technique needs to include a number of things:

A: Goals

What do I want to know at the end of the study session? This is integral to a good study plan. Pick a small manageable piece of information to study at a time. Your study timetable needs to allow for the homework that you may be given between now and the exams. Over and above this, you need to allocate time for the revision/study that you have to do.

B: Note Taking

This starts in the classroom! When taking notes in the classroom, listen carefully to the teacher and write down the most important points. Likewise, note-taking from a textbook is about identifying the most important material and condensing it down into short notes. It is important that you do not copy it directly from your textbook i.e. word for word but that you write it in your own words.

In order to revise a subject, you need to have clear, concise notes to work from. To start with, pick out the key words and jot them down on a rough piece of paper, while saying the complete sentence in your mind. If it includes a diagram draw it out roughly at first, just writing down the labels and explaining it in your mind as you go along. Try to visualise the picture in your mind; this may help. Then turn over the page and try to repeat this again from memory. Then correct it yourself!

You can then use these notes later to make summaries in the weeks before the exams.

C: Clarifying

Pretend to explain it to someone who has absolutely no idea of the topic. Put it in terms that they would understand. If there is something that you do not understand, make a note of it and check it out with your teacher or someone else in the class a.s.a.p.

D: Memorising

Start by reading over your notes until you fully understand them and then highlight the key words or phrases or quotes that you need to know by heart etc.

Reading the notes aloud may also help!

You could make up a rhyme as a way of remembering key information.

Keep going over the information until you understand it; memorising the key words and this way you are most likely to remember the information that you need to know.

E: Time Out!!!

Exercise should form part of your study routine “all work and no play...”

You need to take regular breaks from your study. Spend no more than an hour on study but preferably you should take a break after about 45 minutes to avoid burn out.

Maintain a healthy diet, eat plenty of fruit and veg..

Talk to someone if you are finding the strain too much..... a friend, a parent, a teacher/Guidance Counsellor. They will be happy to help you through this difficult period in your life.

The Big Day!!! Pointers

Gather all the materials that you need for the exam the night before.

Get to bed early. Get a good night's sleep.

Eat a good breakfast.

Arrive in time for the exam.

Make sure that you know the number of questions that you need to answer on the exam paper before you go in, and the time allocated for each one.

Read the exam paper quickly and then decide on which questions you are going to answer. Answer your best question first!

Try to relax during the exam, take deep breaths and believe in yourself; and that you can do the exam. If you come across a difficult question; or if you have a "blank"; leave it for a while and come back to answer it later.

Leave some space after each answer in case you want to add anything to it later.

If you make a mistake in an answer, simply put a line through it but do not tippex it out.

Answer all the questions that you are asked. Do not leave any blanks. At least make an attempt.

Once the exam is over, try not to dissect the paper!

Good Luck!!!!

