



S3-6

Study Skills

A guide to support successful study

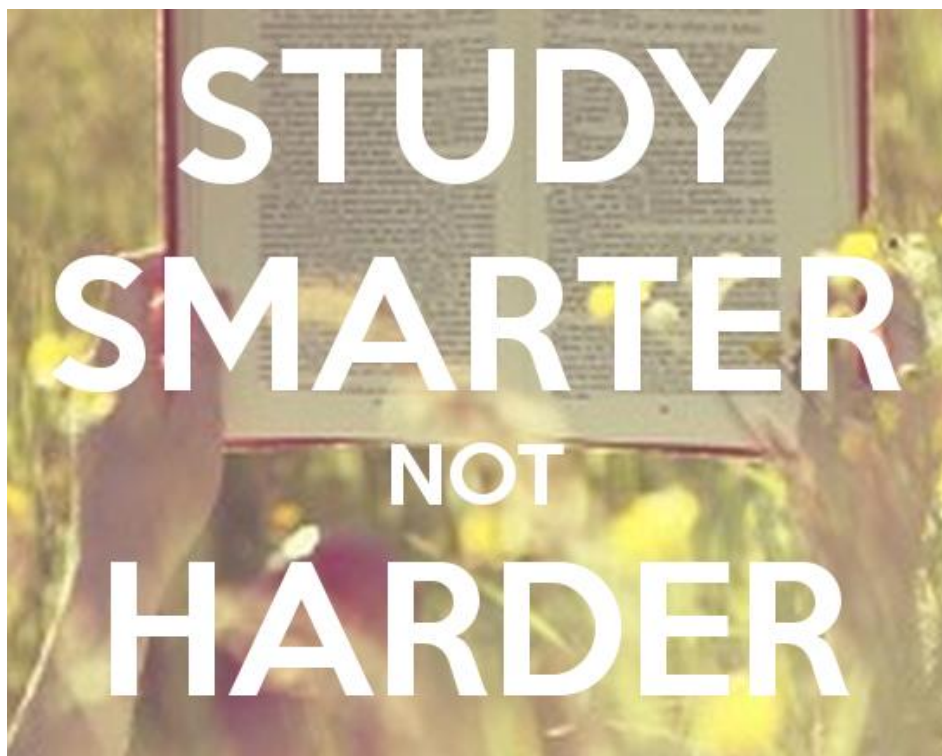


Why Study?

Studying is vitally important at Cathkin High School in ensuring you are successful in your learning, achievements and attainment. Studying helps you to go over what you have covered in class and gives you the opportunity to further develop and strengthen your knowledge and understanding. It also provides opportunities for you to test your knowledge and understanding.

Study skills are methods and techniques that support you to learn effectively. This booklet is designed to help you make the most of your study time, develop good study habits and provide methods and techniques for you to try. Studying effectively will ensure you achieve the best SQA exam results you can.

Different study skills suit different people and the best thing to do is try out different ones to help you find the ones that suits you best. Read on and try for yourself!



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SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is a method used to identify factors which can have an impact on you and your journey to success.

SWOT stands for:

S – Strengths

W – Weaknesses

O – Opportunities

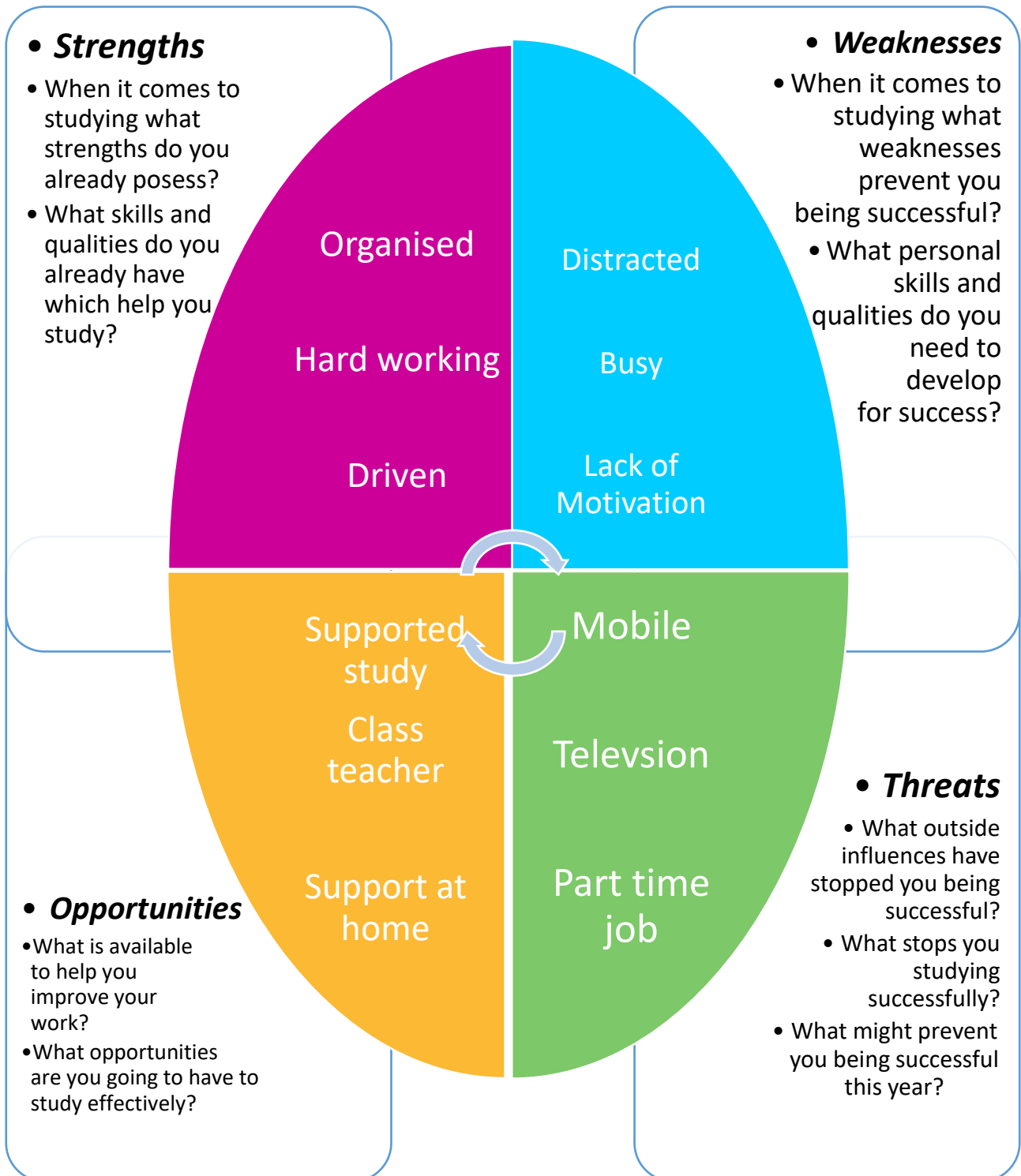
T – Threats

SWOT analysis is a good first step to establish your study habits. It allows you to see what you already have in place to provide success and what needs to be improved to ensure success. It analyses your strengths and opportunities as well as your weaknesses and threats. This is useful as you can build on what you already do well and maintain that while you are studying. It also identifies what may hold you back so that you can tackle these factors and prevent them having a negative impact on your new study routine.

To complete a SWOT analysis, you must take the time to think about you. Be honest with yourself and complete the four boxes in as much detail as you can. On the next page is an example of a completed SWOT analysis. This now allows this person to go forward and identify strategies to build on the positives and combat the negatives. For example, the learner has identified they have strengths which help them study such as being organised which they want to maintain. However, the learner also identified that they can be easily distracted and they have identified their mobile phone as a threat. They now know it is a problem so they can take action to prevent it getting in the way of their studying, such as switching their phone off while studying.

Take the time to complete your own SWOT Analysis. There is a blank SWOT analysis sheet on page six for you complete. There are questions at the side of each section to prompt you. You should write in the 4 segments of the circle. Be prepared to tackle weaknesses and remove the threats. Ensure to keep your SWOT analysis in mind as you set your learning goals and create your study timetable. You should take actions to ensure your weaknesses and threats are removed or reduced.

Example SWOT Analysis



My SWOT Analysis

• **Strengths**

- When it comes to studying what strengths do you already possess?
- What skills and qualities do you already have which help you study?

• **Weaknesses**

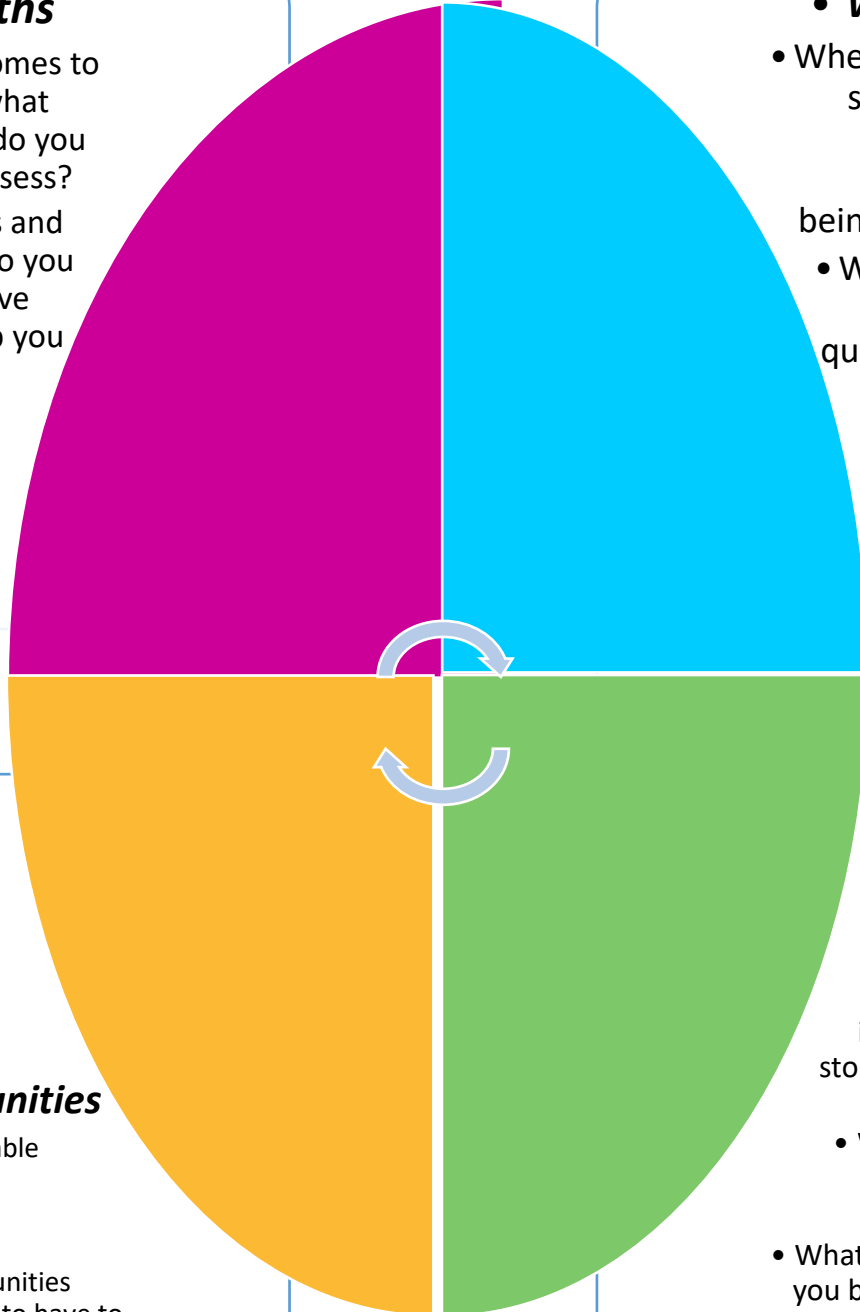
- When it comes to studying what weaknesses prevent you being successful?
- What personal skills and qualities do you need to develop for success?

• **Opportunities**

- What is available to help you improve your work?
- What opportunities are you going to have to study effectively?

• **Threats**

- What outside influences have stopped you being successful?
- What stops you studying successfully?
- What might prevent you being successful this year?



Aims & Marginal Gains

Effective learning involves having a clear aim and setting targets to achieve this aim. What do we mean by this?

- Aim - your aim is what we would call 'the big picture', for example, passing Higher English.
- Targets – Small targets allow you to break down your overall aim into achievable steps, for example, passing all your English assessments and completing your folio pieces on time. Over time, these small improvements will result in you achieving your aim.

Target setting works best when they are short term and focused. They will change depending on how successful your progress is. You will need to identify tasks (what are you going to do/ study/learn?) and strategies (how are you going to study and learn?) that will help you achieve your targets. You will need to monitor and reflect upon the progress of your targets regularly in order to know if you are on track to achieve your aim. Your evaluation will help you form your next target as you will be able to keep doing what worked well and tackle what could have been done better. You will feel successful when you achieve a target, this should motivate you to continue setting targets to reach your ultimate aim.



On page 9 there is a completed example of an aim and target setting worksheet.

On page 10 is a blank aim and target setting worksheet. You can use this to help you set small, manageable targets and reflect on these. There are blank aim & target sheets in the school office and on the school website for you to download under the 'Exam Support' section. You can plan as many aims and targets as you need throughout the year. Remember, you should be studying little and often so targets should be set regularly throughout the year. Remember to use feedback from your teachers, tracking reports and full reports to help identify aims and targets.



My Aim & Target Sheet (Example)

1. My aim is to achieve:

an A in National 5 History

2. Think about how you are going to achieve this aim and set targets in the following table.

	My Targets
Specific - can you be more exact about what you want to achieve?	I need to achieve at least 70% in any test by being able to describe events, explain why events happened and evaluate historical sources.
Measurable – how will you know you have achieved it?	I will be able to describe 5 things about each event. I will be able to give at least 4 reasons why an event happened and put these in order of importance. I will be able to compare two sources and identify what has been missed out from a source. I will be able to make a judgement on the usefulness of a source based on who wrote it, when it was written, why it was written, what it contains and what it has missed out.
Zone – Is it in the panic zone? Too Hard Is it in the comfort zone? Too easy Is it in the learning zone? Just right	Yes I can achieve this by working hard. I have been given a week's notice of the assessment so I can plan my study time. I will keep my phone off while I study as I know this is a distraction for me.
Process - How are you going to achieve this? What will you do to achieve your target?	I will have a list of events which I need to know about. I will compile lists of at least 5 things I know about each event. I will compile a list of reasons for each event and put them in order of importance. I will practice working with sources using past papers and practice papers. I will particularly focus on comparing sources.
Timed – when are you going to achieve this target by?	By the end of this week I will have a list of events and have descriptions for each of them. By the end of next week I will have reasons for each event and put them in order of importance. I will spend an hour each week practicing each kind of source question.

3. Now, turn your goal into a clear sentence: I will **achieve at least 70% in my history assessment** by having a list of events which I can describe and explain, and by practicing evaluating sources.

Reflection

Yes, I did achieve my goal. I achieved 23/30. I achieved this because I was able to talk about all of the events on my list. My teacher showed me how to improve my source comparisons and I was able to improve my marks on this type of question.

My Aim & Target Sheet

1. My aim is to achieve

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	My Targets
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Measurable – how will you know you have achieved it?	
Zone – Is it in the panic zone? Too Hard Is it in the comfort zone? Too easy Is it in the learning zone? Just right	
Process - How are you going to achieve this? What will you do to achieve your target?	
Timed – when are you going to achieve this target by?	

3. Now, turn your target into a clear sentence: I will _____

by _____

_____.

Reflection

Did you achieve your goal? Explain why/why not

--

Study Timetable

Timing and planning are vital to your study success. You must be realistic when planning your studying. You need to weigh up your aims and targets with how much time you have available to do this and plan ahead.

Making a study timetable is key to success. Your time is valuable and you should use it wisely. This means planning your time and then studying effectively during this time. If you follow the advice in this booklet and study little and often throughout the year, you will have time to fit everything in, studying, work, family commitments, hobbies, etc. By planning your time carefully, you will be able to successfully balance your studying.

One week you may have a folio piece due in Art & Design or English so your study time will mostly focus on that subject. However, the following week you may have to adapt your timetable to focus on an assessment coming up in Chemistry, for example.

The following pages contain an example of a completed study timetable followed by a blank timetable. Extra copies of this will be available in the school office or on the school website for you to download under the 'Exam Support' section. Notice how the example is realistic in planning for breaks, relaxation and commitments such as sports and hobbies. However, it also makes time for all of your subjects.

When creating your timetable, firstly add in all of your commitments. This may be a part time job, football training, hobby, or family commitment. Anything you will continue to spend time doing during the terms ahead should be added.

With the time left blank on your study timetable think about any deadlines, homework, tests, assessments, assignments or exams you have been notified of and plan for these on your study timetable. Finally, with remaining time that you have left to study, divide your time between the different subjects you are studying this year. Remember, you should complete a study timetable each week to reflect how your priorities both within and out with school change and how you will manage these in term of your time.



Cathkin High School

Example of a Weekly Revision Timetable: Week beginning: 30 October

Day	9:00 – 10:00	10:00 – 11:00	11:00 – 12:00	12:00 – 1:00	1:00 – 2:00	2:00 – 3:00	3:00 – 4:00	4:00 – 5:00	5:00 – 6:00	6:00 – 7:00	7:00 – 8:00	8:00 – 9:00	9:00 – 10:00
Monday								History	Break	Music	English	Relax	Relax
Tuesday								Break	Break	Maths	Geography	Relax	Relax
Wednesday							Break	Geography	English	Break	Maths	Music	Relax
Thursday							Maths	Science	Break	Business Studies	Relax	Relax	Relax
Friday							History	Break	English	Break	Maths	Business Studies	Relax
Saturday	Science	Maths	Geography	Science	Football	Football	Football	Football	Football	Relax	Relax	Relax	Relax
Sunday	Geography	Football	Football	Relax	Relax	Science	Science	Maths	Break	Geography	History	Relax	relax

Cathkin High School

Weekly Revision Timetable: Week beginning:

Day	9:00 – 10:00	10:00 – 11:00	11:00 – 12:00	12:00 – 1:00	1:00 – 2:00	2:00 – 3:00	3:00 – 4:00	4:00 – 5:00	5:00 – 6:00	6:00 – 7:00	7:00 – 8:00	8:00 – 9:00	9:00 – 10:00
Monday													
Tuesday													
Wednesday													
Thursday													
Friday													
Saturday													
Sunday													

Study Strategies

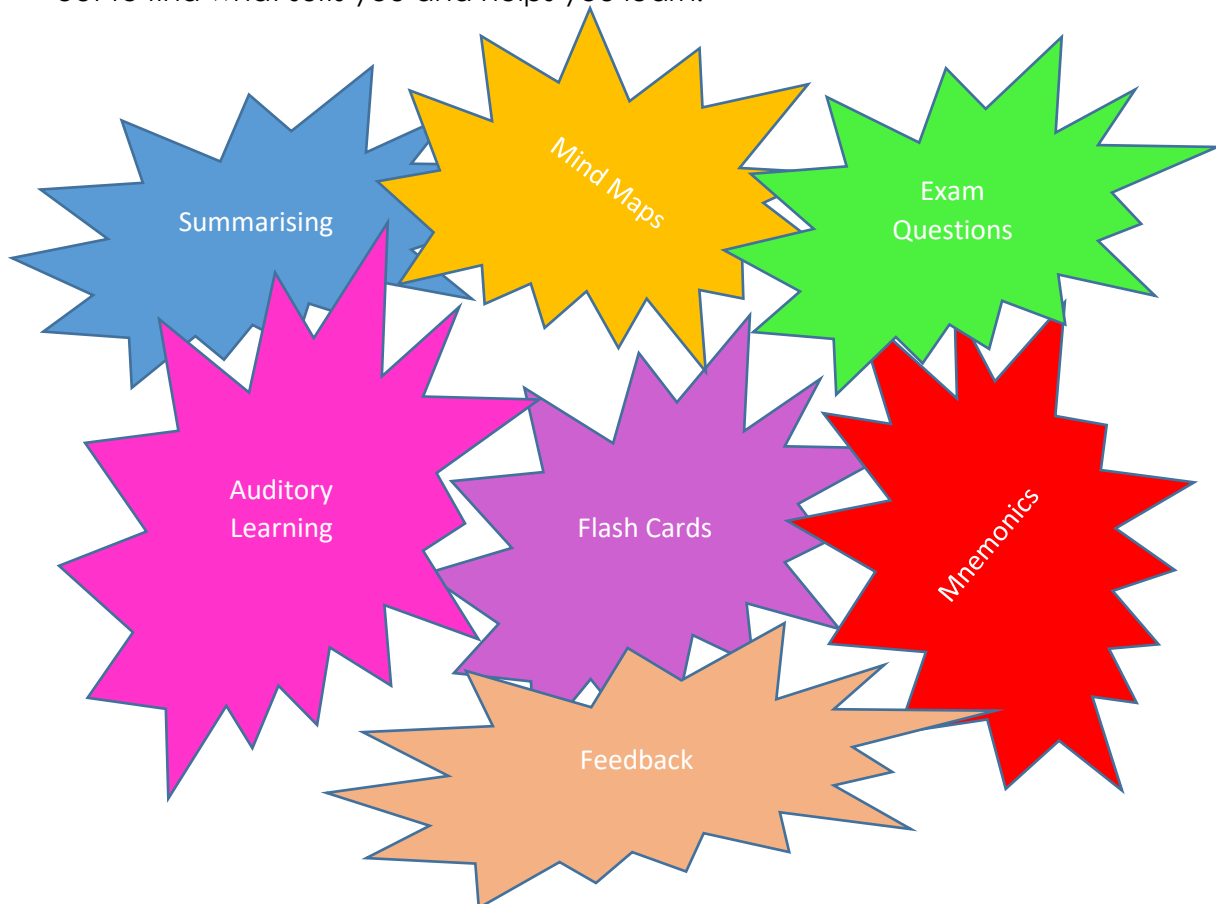
Now that you have thought about what you want to achieve from your studying and, allocated time to study, it is time to think about how best to make use of your time. There are different strategies that you can use to help you make the most of your time. The aim is always to learn and understand, not to memorise the information.

There are different types of activity that you can use to help you learn. You might find that you prefer a particular type, or you might find that, for you, different types of learning suit different types of activities.

Activities can be organised into three main areas:

- Visual – learning through seeing/reading
- Auditory – learning through hearing/discussions
- Kinaesthetic – learning through activities/demonstrations/doing

In this booklet there are 7 suggestions of different strategies you can use. Try them out to find what suits you and helps you learn.



Summarising

Summarising is a useful study skill involving:

- reading a text
- identifying the most important or most relevant points
- making a note of these points in your own words
- Using your notes to produce your own version of the text

Summarising is capturing the main idea(s) of a text but expressing them in a much shorter version. Summarising exercises are often set to test your understanding of the original text and your ability to restate its main points in your own words. This helps you to develop an understanding of the text rather than simply memorising it. Your SQA assessments and exams are set to test your understanding and summarising is a key strategy that can be applied to most subjects. For example:

Original Text

At a typical football match we often see players being disrespectful of a referee's decision, committing deliberate fouls or trying to take a free kick from an incorrect but more advantageous position, to try and score a goal. No wonder spectators also fight amongst themselves, damage stadiums, or take the law into their own hands by invading the pitch in the hope of affecting the outcome of the match.

Summary

Many footballers behave in unsporting ways to try to win the game so it is not surprising that fans behave badly too.

This might sound like an obvious study method, and it is! However, many learners make the error of simply copying out notes which limits understanding as the summary should be in your own words. Next time, try summarising.

Flash Cards









Flash cards are another useful way of studying. Flashcards can be created in many different formats and used in a variety of different ways to study. You should experiment with them in a number of ways before finding a strategy that suits you.

How to make Flash Cards

Flash Cards can be visual or written cues on cards. The process of making the flash card is a revision exercise as you must use your notes to pick out key words, phrases or images and place them on cards. Students usually make A6 size cards so there is enough space to fit all of the information on the paper. On the back of the cards you should then write the meaning or factual information you need to recall about the prompt on the front of the card. For example, to study for Modern Languages classes, you could have the foreign words on one side of the card and the English on the reverse side. Or for Chemistry you could have the title of the experiment on one side and the steps to complete it on the reverse.

How to use Flash Cards

These have numerous uses for learning, as you can cut them up and have each card individually, they have the advantage of allowing you to re-order them, pick a selection to read over, or choose randomly for self-testing. They can also be used when studying in small groups or pairs for various exercises and to test each other. Since all the information is on the card, a specialist knowledge of the subject is not needed therefore parents/carers could use these to revise with you at home.

Table	École	Table 	School 
Chaise	Élève	Chair 	Pupil 
Crayon	Prof	Pencil 	Teacher 
Livre	Règle	Book 	Ruler 

Mind Maps

When you make notes, for example to think of ideas for a project, you sometimes use lined paper and list the main points. Our brains don't remember or think of things in neat lines! We jump from one idea to another and make links between different ideas. A mind map is a different way of making notes that you may find more effective. It is particularly useful for visual learners.

Mind maps can be used for different tasks. They can be used to make notes, brainstorm ideas, plan an essay or investigation, or revise a specific topic or issue.

Here are some reminders and tips for making a mind map:

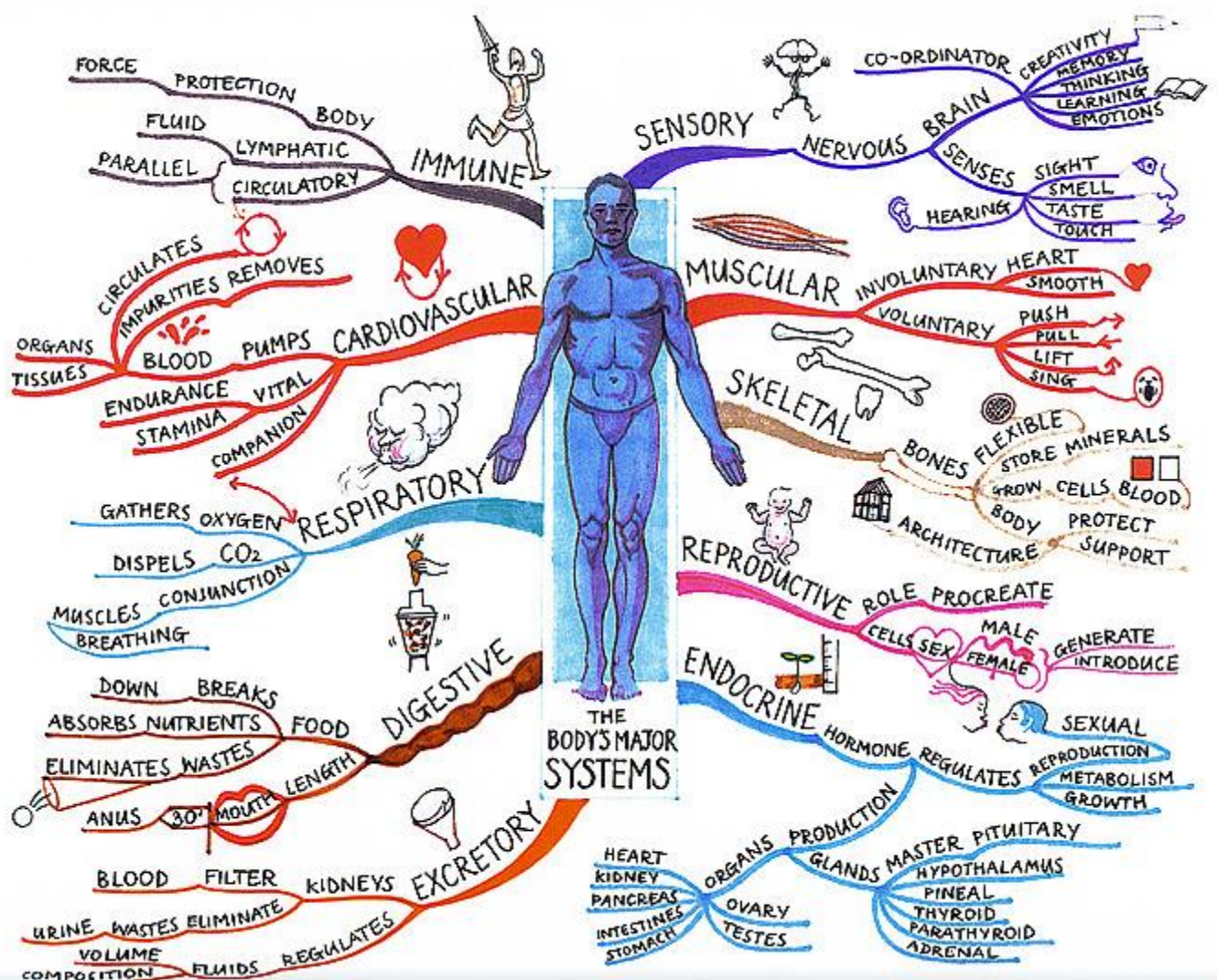
- If you are using paper, use a large sheet and turn it landscape.
- Put the main idea in the centre and work outwards.
- You should have different stems from the centre idea showing the sub ideas. You then work out from these adding more detail.
- Leave lots of space so you can add things in. Your mind map does not have to be completed in one sitting. Leave space so you can go back and add to it over the course of your school term and revision period.
- Use key words which you want to use in an exam situation.
- Use your own words. Do not simply copy from a textbook or teacher notes. A mind map should be your thoughts and ideas and will help you understand rather than memories.
- Use arrows to link ideas.
- You can go over the map with coloured highlighters. Do not fall into the trap of simply colouring things in. Use the highlighters in a meaningful way such as to categorise information. See the examples on the next few pages to see how colour has been used to differentiate between the different aspects of the mind map.
- Add pictures if it would help. Visual learners are stimulated by images and these will help them recall information in an exam situation.

The next page shows you how to lay out a mind map and gives useful tips.

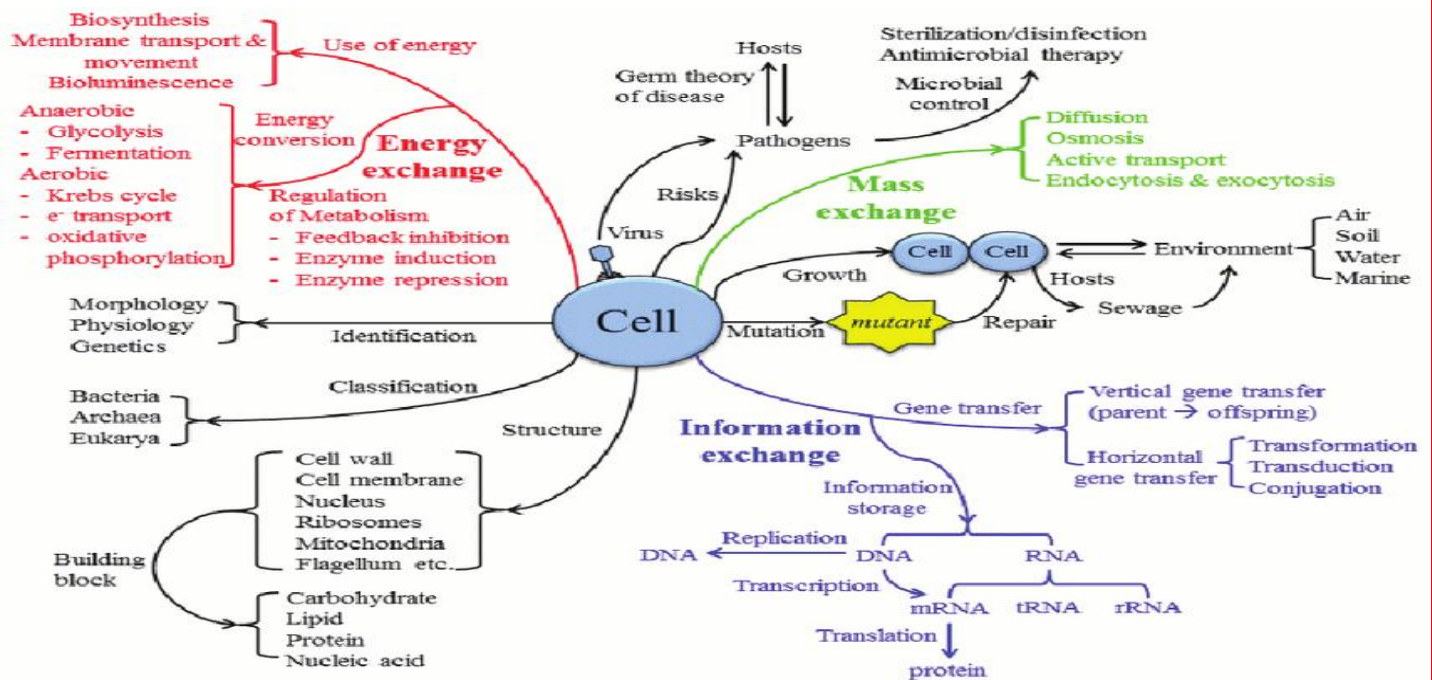


Mind Map Examples

This is an example of a mind map which has been created to revise the body's major systems in biology. As you can see it has a central idea – the body- and from this the learner has identified 9 major systems. The learner has then developed their notes to show in more detail each of these major systems. They have used pictures and colour to help separate the different ideas and help them remember each body system.



The following mind map is revision of a cell. Similarly, it has the main idea in the centre, sub ideas stemming from this and from there branches into detail. This learner is not artistic so they have not added images, however, the mind map is just as effective and suits their style of learning.



Auditory Learning (Learning by Listening)

Some people prefer auditory learning, this means they are able to gather more information when they listen. This can take many forms:

- Speak your notes and record them (for example on your phone). You can then listen back to these and hear the information. You could try this to learn the steps for an experiment in Science or a sequence of events in History.
- Sing an essay plan or set of notes to a well-known tune. You should then be able to sing this in your head to recall the information at a later date.
- Assign a certain type of music or musician/band to a school subject and only listen to that music when studying for that certain subject.
- Discuss your course notes with your friend/family member. Discussing the work and verbalising your thoughts will help you develop a better understanding.
- Teach someone else! Find someone who knows nothing about the subject you are studying and teach them. The act of explaining the information to someone will help you develop a better understanding of it. This is a good one to try at home.



Mnemonics

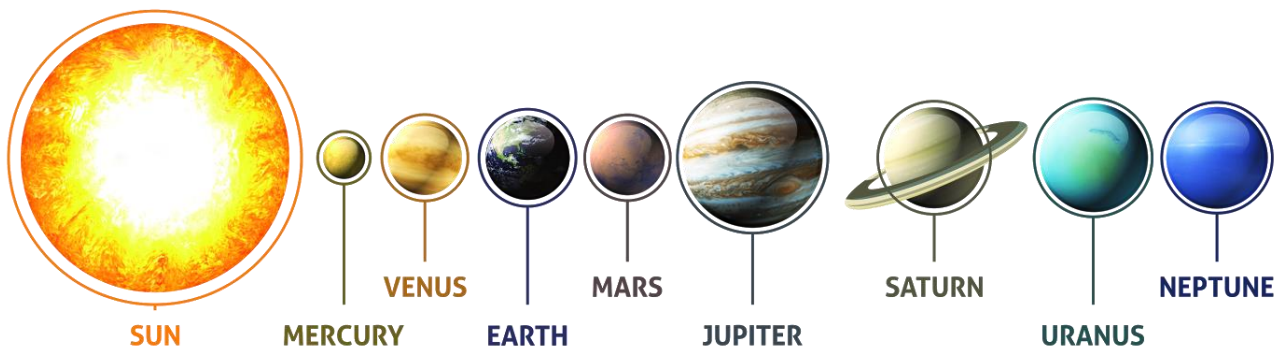
Using mnemonics, rhythm and rhyme are more examples of learning strategies for auditory learners.

- Use unusual rhymes and raps containing the things you need to remember.
- Mnemonics are silly sentences using each letter of a word or phrase you need to remember or the first letter of each word in a sequence.
- Saying numbers, spellings or words you need to remember in a rhythmic or sing-song way (similar to how children learn the alphabet song).
-

Examples:

Fact: Order of Planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune)

Phrase to remember: My Very Excited Mother Just Served Us Nuggets (The first letter is the same as the first letter of the planet)



Fact: The colours of the spectrum (**R**ed, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, Indigo, **V**iolet.)

Phrase to remember: ROY G. BIV (the 1st letter of each word in a list of items is used to make a name of a person or thing).

This one is a bit trickier but may be useful for maths:

Fact: BODMAS

Phrase to remember - Brackets, Outside, Division, Multiply, Add, Subtract (The first letter of each thing you need to do is used to create a word).

Exam Style Questions

One of the best study techniques to test your learning is to complete SQA Past Paper questions. This gives you the experience of answering questions that will be similar to the ones in your final exams. It also gives you the opportunity to see how SQA exam papers are laid out, what marks are allocated to particular questions and how long the exam lasts for.

The process of answering questions is good revision and will test how well you can recall the information you have studied and highlight areas you need to revise again. You should identify which topics you have already covered in class and complete individual questions as soon as possible, working your way towards completing the whole paper as you complete the coursework.

Timing is important. As you practice SQA exam questions, time yourself to ensure you are completing them in the allocated time. If you are unsure of this, check with your class teacher who will be able to advise you on how long you should spend on a particular question.

Marking SQA questions is equally as important as answering them. SQA Past Papers come with Marking Schemes so that you can mark your own work having completed a question. This will let you know if you have been successful in answering correctly or will help you to understand the answer expected to achieve the marks.

SQA Past Paper books can be bought in bookshops or on line, Amazon have a wide range of these. You can also access free past papers on the SQA website. You can use the following website to find past papers for your subjects.

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/findpastpaper.htm>



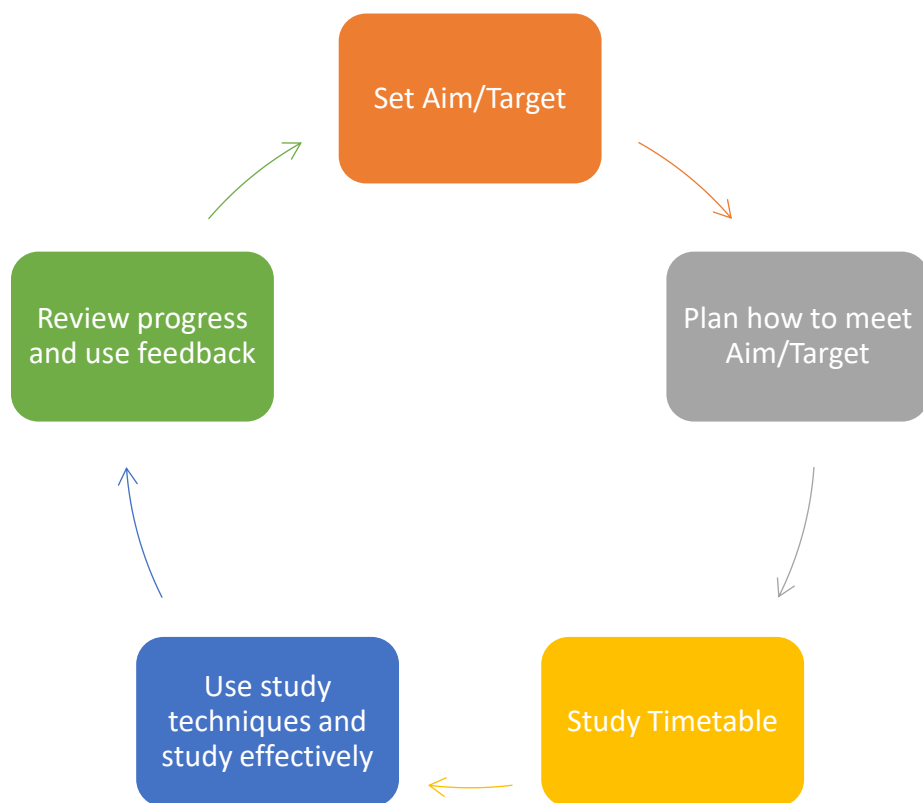
Using Feedback

Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and giving you both written and verbal feedback. You should spend time reflecting on any feedback you are given in order to understand the next steps in your learning and where you can make improvements.

When you get teacher feedback on a piece of work you should:

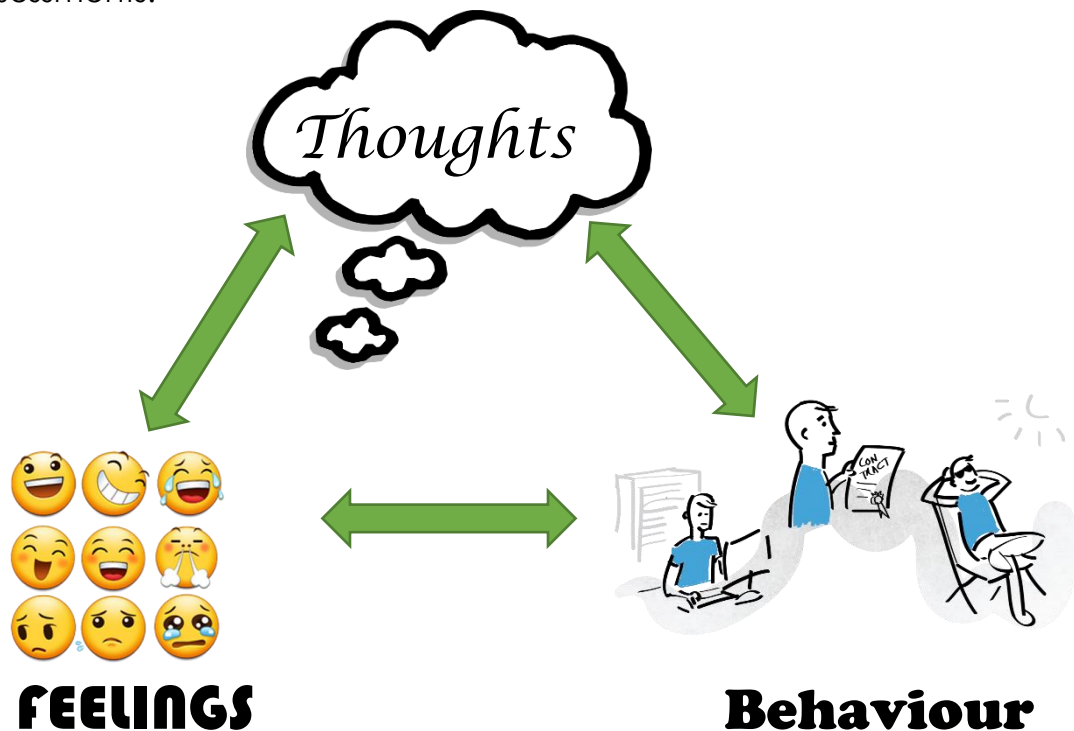
- Check you understand what your teacher has written/said.
- Highlight any comments/suggestions you think are useful and that you will use in the next piece of work.
- Make a note of these comments/suggestions.
- Have that note with you the next time you attempt a similar piece of work and make sure to act upon the advice given.
- Compare the next piece of feedback you receive to see if you have been successful in using the suggested improvements.

Throughout the year you will be constantly going through the studying cycle depending on what point in the year you are at and what the demands of school and each subject are. You will have to plan for and study for, assignments, course work, prelims and the final exam. By following the study cycle below, you will increase your opportunity for success.



Beating Exam Stress

Our performance **(behaviour)** in exams/assessment can impact on how we see ourselves **(thoughts)** and how we feel **(feelings)** about having to do exams/assessments.



How we think (thoughts), how we feel (feelings) and how we act (behaviour) all interact and go together.

Changing one can have an effect on the others.

Think about how you think, and take control. Here are ways to change your thinking.

1

INTERNAL

It is me
I'm stupid



EXTERNAL

It is something else other than me
This is too hard

2

RIGID

It will always be the same
I will always be stupid



FLEXIBLE

It can change
I can't do this yet

3

GLOBAL

It happens every time
I'm bad at everything



SPECIFIC

It happened once
I can do this, I just need more time

Mental Relaxation – You will need someone to help you with this or record it and play it back to yourself.

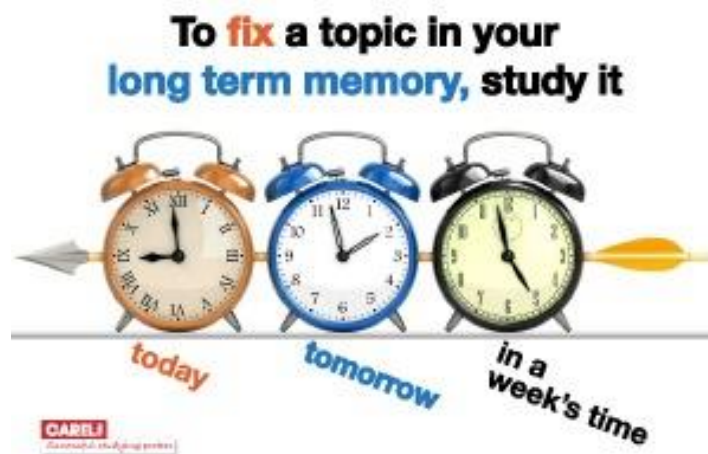
1. Make yourself comfortable, lying or sitting down.
2. Begin by clenching your right hand into a tight fist and at the same time taking a deep breath, take a really deep breath and hold it – feel the tension in your right hand and forearm and in your lungs – hold your breath – feel all the tension – and breathe out and relax your hand and feel your body relax. Close your eyes and relax comfortably – feel heavy, warm and relaxed, without any effort.
3. Let your whole body relax more and more deeply as you breathe smoothly and slowly, using your stomach. Feel yourself becoming heavier, relaxed and warm each time you breathe out slowly and smoothly using your stomach.
4. Relax your muscles deeply as I name the different parts of your body.
5. Relax your forehead: your face, your eyebrows; your eyelids are heavy and relaxed; relax your mouth; your tongue and your jaw.
6. The more you relax, the heavier your body will become. All your muscles become heavier and heavier – a feeling of warmth and heaviness is spreading throughout your whole body.
7. Relax your neck; let your shoulders drop and feel heavy, warm and relaxed.
8. Let the relaxation spread to your arms, all the way out to the tips of your fingers.
9. Let it spread through your back and lower part of your body. Notice the feeling of complete relaxation. Breathe smoothly and slowly from your stomach, feeling heavier, limp and slack each time you breathe out slowly and smoothly from your stomach.
10. Let all thoughts and noises drift through your mind like passing clouds. Nothing disturbs your deep relaxation – there is nothing that makes you feel worried or uneasy. Everything feels calm and peaceful.
11. Notice how heavy and relaxed your body has become. When your body is completely relaxed you cannot be bothered to move a single muscle.
12. Continue to breathe slowly and smoothly, using your stomach. Each time you breathe out, you feel as if you are sinking down deeper and deeper. It feels good to let things drift through your mind like passing clouds – and to let yourself drift deeper into a heavy, warm and comfortable feeling of relaxation.
13. Continue to relax on your own for a while (2 minute pause)
14. Now you can listen to me again. Each time you relax like this you will find that it becomes easier and quicker for you to relax more deeply. You will notice that this type of relaxation gives you complete rest, both physically and mentally. After each session you will feel rested, calm and alert.
15. Feel yourself becoming more alert now. Before you open your eyes, take some really deep breaths and stretch your whole body like a cat. Feel completely alert and well in every way as you open your eyes.

Final Tips

Here are some final key tips to help you reach your aims and goals this year.

- We are all in this together. You have a whole support network of people to help you through the year including friends, family and staff at Cathkin High. Talk to someone if you are feeling stressed or have a problem as often this will result in a solution.
- Start studying now and you will see the benefits of this in class tests, assessments, assignments, folios, prelims and final exams. You will also feel more confident that your hard work is having a positive impact.
- Study little and often. Studying in small chunks regularly is the most effective way to study.
- Give yourself a break! Regular study breaks are important (and factored into the study timetable).
- Drink plenty water, eat well and get plenty sleep. A healthy body and mind are key to exam success.
- Find the right balance of studying, relaxing, fun activities and life's commitments and chores.

Good Luck!





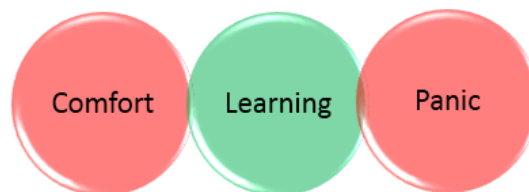
1. Positive Thoughts

Stamping out **C.A.N.Ts** (**C**athkin **A**utomatic **N**egative **T**houghts)

We have 50,000 – 70,000 thoughts per day, two thirds of these are negative. Do the Self Talk 'I am, I can, I will'. Stamp out the C.A.N.T.S. Identify the barrier and think of a strategy to overcome this and then.... do it!

Positive Thoughts – I can't yet is more powerful than I can't

2. Get in the Zone



In learning, there are 3 zones – Comfort, Learning and Panic. In the Comfort Zone, nothing ever grows. In the Panic Zone, when you are anxious, it is difficult to focus, learn and perform. The Learning Zone allows you to reach your full potential by pushing yourself.

3. Aggregation of Marginal Gains

Aggregation of Marginal Gains (AMG), is the total of small improvements. Set targets that you can achieve quickly. If you improve your learning by 1%, these small gains will add up to significant improvements in your performance.

4. Focus and Commitment

Focus and Commitment are vital in learning. If you focus on distractions, your learning will be slow. It's not about more focus, it's about where you place your focus. The decision to commit is the start. You must demonstrate commitment if you are to become the best you can be.

You now have the tools to put your mind to learn. Words are powerful, and quotations can inspire. Read some of the following and get going or even better come up with your own.

“I can is 100 times more important than I.Q”

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference”

“Success is not achieved in the 2 hour exam it’s in the days, weeks and months before”

“Are you really happy? Or just really comfortable?”

“When I lost my excuses I found my results”

“No matter how you feel. Get up, dress up, show up and never give up”

“Smooth seas will never a sailor make”

“Worrying is like praying for something that you don’t want to happen”

“What was the last thing you did that made you forget about your phone?”

“ _____ ”

Make positive your thoughts, they become your words.

Make positive your words, they become your actions.

Make positive your actions, they become your habits.

Make positive your habits, they become your nature.

Make positive your nature, it becomes your destiny.

