



Effective Study Skills

**A Guide for Sixth Form
Students**

Dear students,

This booklet contains some helpful information on how to study effectively, so you can get an understanding of the way in which sixth form students need to operate in order to be successful.

How much study time?

Research has shown that high performing Sixth Form students spend about 15 to 20 hours on independent study per week. That is assuming they study 3 subjects, we are talking about 6- 7 hours per subject. Independent study is by no means just about completing homework. Important as it is to meet all homework deadlines and to submit work that reflects a student's full effort and ability, Sixth Formers are expected to go much further than this. They must use some of their independent study time to consolidate their class learning, learn material, review and organise their notes and files and keep up-to-date on coursework assignments. Teachers will also expect students to complete further reading where appropriate.

We will be advising students that they should be doing one hour of independent study for every hour in the classroom, in short - '1 for 1'.

For every hour in the classroom, students should be spending one hour of their own time doing independent study

STUDY SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

This is an introduction to the essential study skills you will need to be successful in the sixth form.

The exact study skills you need to develop will depend on the subjects you take and your own strengths and weaknesses.

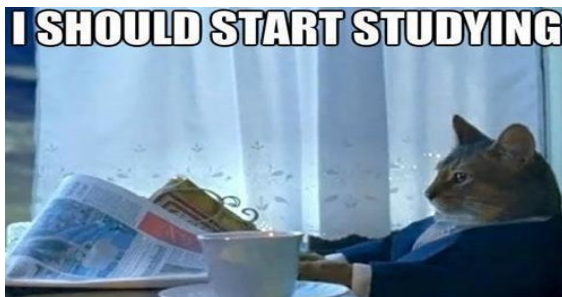
Here are the top 10 tips that everyone can follow.

1. **Get organised!**

Keep your diary up to date, listing the work you need to do and when you have to do it by. Keep your books tidy, filing any loose sheets in folders with dividers. Make sure you always have pens, pencils and highlighters and any special equipment.

2. **Get into the habit of working – do a bit of study and do it often.**

Don't leave work to the last minute - you will end up rushing it and making a mess of it! Most Sixth Form students should be doing around 12 to 15 hours of study outside of lesson time. Yes, **outside of lesson time**, but don't forget, you do get independent study periods in school to help you manage this.



3. **Find the right place to study.**

Don't think you will polish off an A grade essay whilst balancing your exercise book on your knee on the bus on the way to school. Find a quiet environment free from distractions and if you are at home, somewhere you can leave your books without being disturbed. If you

need to use a computer or your iPad, turn off any social networking sites so you are not tempted to find out what your friends are doing. And turn off your phone!.

4. **Make sure you know what you have to do.**

Knowing what the task actually is asking of you is a huge first step.



5. **Ask for help!**

Teachers won't think any less of you – remember they were students once, even if it was a very long time ago. They will be more than happy to help. That's what they are there for!

6. **Make use of all available resources.**

Teachers, friends, textbooks, internet, periodicals, and newspapers – anything that you can find.....just be sure it is correct (beware, it isn't always) and relevant!



Read around your subject. Don't just rely on the material you do in class – make sure you look at other sources.

7. Motivate yourself.

Have a longer term goal – ‘I need this grade to get into university’ or to be accepted for a certain career. Short terms goals such as ‘I will work until 7pm and then I am going to watch TV or go to play football.’ will keep you going along the way.

8. Work in attention span units.

Most students find they can’t concentrate for more than an hour, so work for about 40 – 50 minutes and then have a short break for a coffee or something and then go back to it.

9. Get a dictionary and use it.

Exam boards will penalise you for poor spelling and anyway, having a better vocabulary won’t hurt when you are rich and famous.

10. The more you put in, the more you will get out - and the same will be true throughout your life.

BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT LEARNER – WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?



You won't become an independent learner overnight, there will be a transition phase, but your teachers are there to help.

So what is it all about?

The transition from dependent to independent learner	
Dependent Learners	Independent Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needing direct staff instructions• A preoccupation with getting things right, marks and grades.• Concern for getting the correct answer, with less regard for how they have got there.• Getting better means a focus on becoming a better performer, higher marks or grades• Satisfied only by task completion, thinking "I just need to get it done"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make decisions about their learning• Are focused on having a go, learning incrementally from errors• Are keen to understand the method and process rather than just the right answer• Getting better means improving as a learner and making progress• Satisfied by effort and progress, and are able to see the bigger picture.

At grass roots level, it means that you need to get involved in your studies, show interest and ask questions. Do the work that is set, but do a bit more on the things you are not confident with, without being told to do it. You are investing in your own future, so give it your best shot now. As we have said, it's 'because you are worth it'!

Think '1 for 1'

**One hour in the classroom,
One hour in your own time**

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR INDEPENDENT STUDY SESSIONS.

You will be given a number of independent study sessions at the start of the year. You will be asked to assign them to your chosen subjects.

Choose your independent study sessions wisely, it makes sense to have a study period for Biology, for example, as soon after the lesson as possible.

In year 12, teachers will be telling you what work to do in your study periods, to help you learn how to use your time productively. By the time you get to year 13, you should be used to using your time well yourself and not need so much structure from your teachers – you will have become a more independent learner. Yay!

But, for a start, here's what you could be doing:

1. Reading through your notes – highlighting key ideas or reworking them.
2. Completing practice questions.
3. Preparing essay plans.
4. Revising for a test or exam.
5. Reading a set text.
6. Learning formulae.
7. Reading around a subject.
8. Working through past exam questions.
9. Reading Examiners' reports.
10. Researching for your NEA or EPQ task.
11. Producing a revision plan

How to Revise



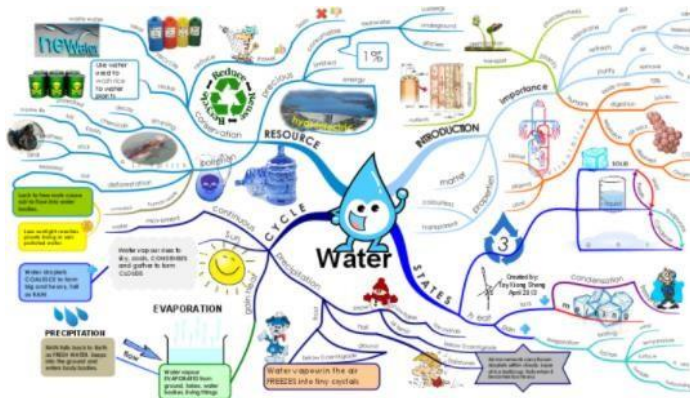
You will probably find that everyone has some difficulty in getting started. Here are some general tips

- + Carve out the time.
- + Sort out your space.
- + Get parents and friends onside.
- + Keep healthy.
- + Stay cool.

But more specifically,

- Make a revision timetable and stick to it - start early to give yourself time to sort out any problems and avoid last minute panicking.

- Don't spend more time on one subject than another – divide your time equally.
- Get your revision kit sorted – notes, past papers, examiners' reports, revision guides, textbooks, highlighters, revision cards etc
- Sort out somewhere quiet, where you can concentrate on your work– away from the TV, phone, or any other distractions.
- Don't just read your notes – **do something with them** – transfer them onto flashcards; make some mind maps; have a go at exam questions; learn definitions and get someone to test you. You can even test yourself by covering up the material, summarising key ideas in your head (or out loud, but preferably not in Sainsbury's) and then check whether you were correct.



- Have a look at YouTube revision – there are some fabulous clips, especially for Maths and Science.
- Attend any revision sessions your teachers are offering. They know a little bit about examination preparation as they have gone through a few years before (sometimes lots of years before). If they are bothering to hold sessions, they must think they are worthwhile.

- Look after yourself. You must eat properly, get plenty of sleep and have some time to enjoy yourself.

Sleep on your exam notes

— this will enable you to revise by osmosis. If you are going to do this, it's best not to learn anything until the night before the exam. Stick a revision guide under your pillow and when you wake the next day, you'll find the full contents of the book have been absorbed into your brain.



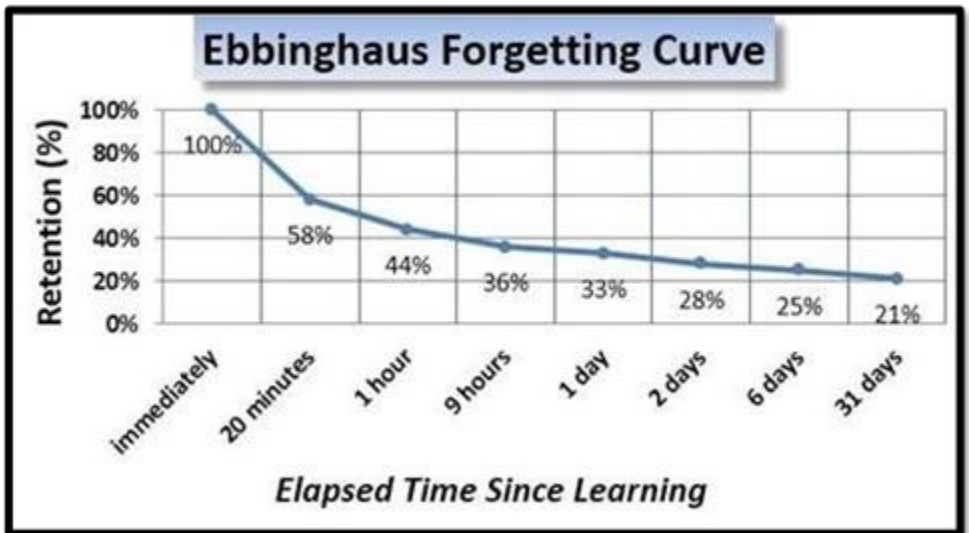
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Don't worry. It is natural to be anxious about preparing for exams, but if your worrying gets out of control **go and talk to someone. Now.**



We are here to help you, so come and have a chat!

Whichever technique works for you, just be sure to do it **regularly**. The graph below shows how about 70% of what you learn today will be forgotten within 24 hours.



Even though Ebbinghaus' famous research was done in the 1880s, the results are as valid today as they were then.

So the key is to revisit material often.



Final thoughts

Making the jump to sixth form study is not an easy one. There will be times when the going gets tough. But if you follow your teachers' advice, work hard

and stay positive, you will be well on the way to achieving some very valuable qualifications, which could set you on the right road for future success.

Best wishes and good luck.