



Study Skills

Resources



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STUDY SKILLS

Study skills are the skills you need to enable you to study and learn efficiently – they are an important set of transferable life skills. It is important to develop an understanding that success is not simply about being clever and getting good marks. Study skills lead to development of discipline and good work ethics, which leads to success in life.

In school life, study skills are needed for academic achievement, more so when a student reaches senior secondary level. These cannot be developed overnight, they are imbibed, practised and honed fully, over years of learning.

The objective of this programme is to offer insights on how to tackle study activities, develop effective study habits, and techniques for core academic tasks so that students are able to evaluate and manage their studies.

Three components critical to acquiring Study skills:

- ▶ Self-management
- ▶ Study Strategies
- ▶ Task Awareness



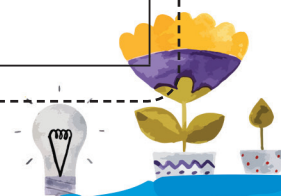
= Self-Management

You cannot succeed till you want to and decide to. You may sit for hours with your books and yet not understand a topic well. Sometimes you understand it, but, are not able to apply the learning. Sometimes you understand it but forget it soon after. Usually it is easier to avoid such scenarios than to undertake the tedious task of fixing these. To avoid such scenarios, develop good study habits. Developing good study habits can be a challenge, but it is totally worth it in the long run.



Answer a few questions to gauge your current study habits – tick the column which applies to you

S. No	Study Habits	I already do this	I should be doing this
1	Study every day.		
2	Create a quiet place at home to study.		
3	Turn off the phone, TV, and other distractions when studying.		
4	Play quiet background music.		
5	Study in a way that suits your learning style.		
6	Take short but frequent breaks, like 5 minutes every half hour.		
7	Study early (don't wait until the last minute).		
8	Study the hardest things first and then move on to easier ones.		
9	Spend the most time on things that are hardest.		
10	Ask for help if you are struggling with something.		
11	Take notes as you study, using your own words to simplify complex ideas.		
12	Keep your notes in a notebook or folder.		
13	Review your notes on a regular basis.		
14	Make connections between what you are studying and what you know.		
15	Take practice tests, so you don't panic when it's time for the real test.		
16	Use a planner or agenda to keep track of your study progress.		
17	Reward yourself after a good study session.		
18	Quiz yourself about what you just studied.		

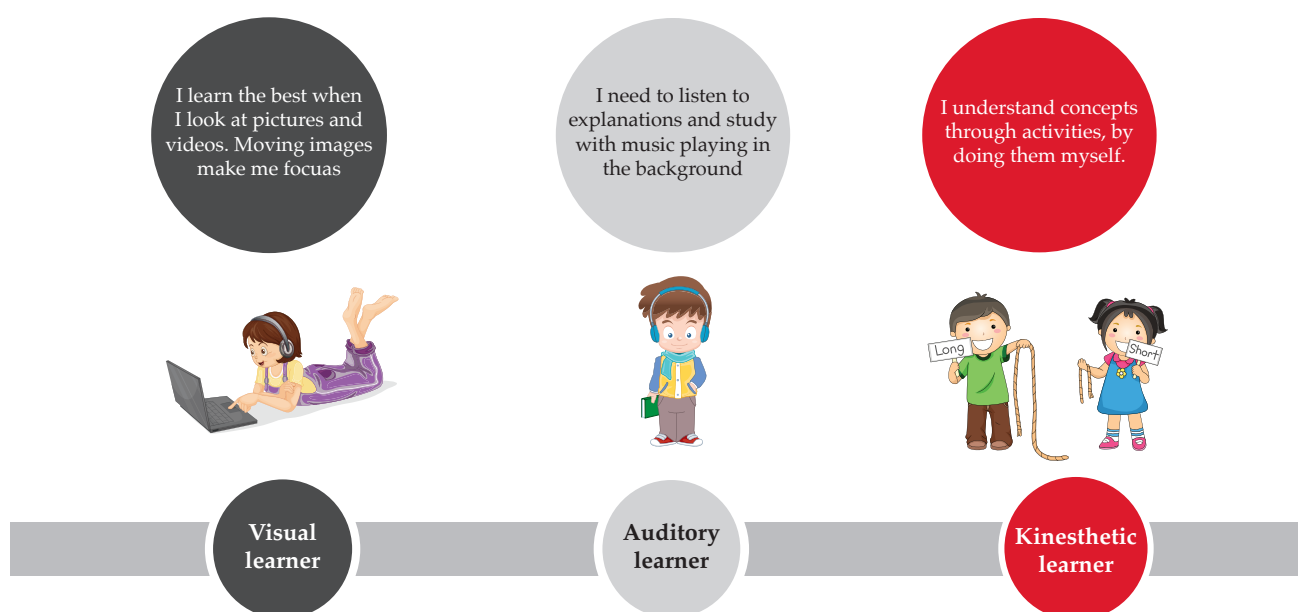


Want to aim for the best study habits possible? The goal would be for all your responses to appear in the “Already Do” column. By improving just one or two additional study habits, you may soon see a jump in your examination scores. And that’s what developing good study habits is all about!



Learning Styles

Perhaps the simplest way of describing 'learning styles' is to say that they are different methods of learning or understanding new information, the way a person takes in, understand, expresses and remembers information. There are 3 predominant learning styles: Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic. While most of us may have some general idea about how we learn best, often it comes as a surprise when we discover what our predominant learning style is. Let's take a few moments and explore each of these learning styles in more detail.



Visual learners learn through seeing, so tools like diagrams, flowcharts, pictures and symbols can be key to understanding new concepts. When taking notes in class, something to try is developing a system of symbols to replace the written word. For example, instead of writing out "female" each time in your notes, simply use the standard symbol. Or instead of writing that the results of a test were positive, insert a smiley face!

For visual learners, it is often far easier for recall to work with images as opposed to working with words, as you will picture the image in your head



while recalling it—far more difficult when trying to recall the word itself! Other tricks to try for visual learners include spatially rearranging your page—instead of writing across a page horizontally, write in a way that is more descriptive of the relationship being described—for example, write the words out in a circular pattern if that more truly represents the relationship you are describing. Also, it can be useful to colour code your notes, to create more visual stimulation.

Auditory learners learn through listening. As such, attending classes are essential for these learners. If you're an auditory learner, help yourself focus on text book readings by reading them out loud, so you can hear how the words sound. It can also be helpful to engage in group discussions about course concepts and topics—create a weekly study group to get together just to talk about the things being discussed by the teacher. Leave lots of extra room on your page when taking notes during classes, and then return to these notes after you've had a chance to discuss the material in further detail—supplement with the new information you have.

Kinaesthetic Learners learn through doing. This is perhaps the most challenging learning style for students, as there are not always many opportunities to engage in hands on learning in the class. For this reason, labs become even more essential for these learners. While studying, try to incorporate all your senses into the experience—the more of this you can do, the higher your recall will be, as you'll have multiple cues. One way to create more useful study notes if you're a kinaesthetic learner is to fill your notes with several examples for each concept. Try taking an example from the text, or lecture, or lab, and then try creating your own example. Also try to make as much use of practice questions and exams as possible.



Although many of us remain constant in our learning preference throughout time, styles can and do change with some regularity—this can be influenced by your learning environment. For this reason, it can be a good idea to retake the VAK test annually to ensure that you’re using study methods that best suit your current learning needs. In addition, when you take the VAK test, you will notice that you will most likely prefer one type of learning, although you will also respond positively for other styles as well. Yet another possibility is that of the multimodal learner. You are a multimodal learner if you display two or more equally or near equally predominant learning preferences.

Although it may seem desirable, now that you can easily find out your learning style, to only use study methods that seem to match with your style, this is not the best option. Instead, in each learner style there are great study strategies for all learners—so if you’re an auditory learner, take some tips from your kinaesthetic friends and add even more examples into your study notes!



Discover your Learning Style at
www.macmillaneducation.in/learningstyle



Goal Setting (Measurable and Achievable)

If you want to succeed, you need to set goals. Without goals you lack focus and direction. Goal setting not only allows you to take control of your life's direction; it also provides you a benchmark for determining whether you are actually succeeding. Think about it: Having a million rupees in the bank is only proof of success if one of your goals is to amass riches. If your goal is to practice acts of charity, then keeping the money for yourself is suddenly contrary to how you would define success.

To accomplish your goals, however, you need to know how to set them. You can't simply say, "I want" and expect it to happen. Goal setting is a process that starts with careful consideration of what you want to achieve, and ends with a lot of hard work to actually do it.

In your school years, goal setting is usually associated with study goals. Following is a learning goal template which could be quite useful for you. Feel free to modify it, to suit your needs.

The study planner can be used along with the learning goal template for more detailed planning.



Learning Goal Template

My learning goal for(subject or topic) is
(What will you learn and when will you learn it by?)

.....
.....
.....
.....

To achieve my learning goal, I must learn
(What specific knowledge, information, skills do you need to acquire?)

.....
.....
.....
.....

To acquire that knowledge, I will use
(What specific resources will you use?)

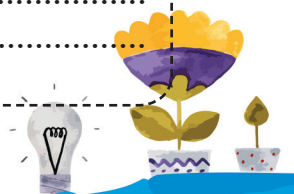
.....
.....
.....
.....

To determine whether I have achieved that goal, I will
(What criteria will you use to determine whether you have met your goal?)

.....
.....
.....
.....

To demonstrate that I have achieved my goal, I will
(How will you prove that you have achieved your goal?)

.....
.....
.....
.....



Study Planner

Name of Subject						
1	Lesson name	What I know	What I must learn	Time required	Start date	End Date
	Sub topic 1					
	Sub topic 2					
	Sub topic 3					
	Sub topic 4					
	Sub topic 5					
2	Lesson Name					
	Sub Topic 1					
	Sub Topic 2					
	Sub Topic 3					
	Sub Topic 4					



= Study Strategies

It is not easy to simply start using new study strategies, and it takes time and practice to develop new habits. At first, new study techniques may seem tedious, and you may feel like the time you're spending on that task could be put to better use. Rest assured that it takes time to develop all new habits, and after some time you'll find it becomes easier and less of a burden with each passing week. Don't give up!



Improving Concentration

Sometimes while studying you may struggle to pay attention, when you are given a task you find challenging, you are even more likely to give up before truly trying. If you want to improve focus during challenging tasks, here are some strategies that might help increase that attention.

1. Include Physical Activity in your schedule

You will often do better at studies, if you take brief breaks for active play - bounce a ball or do some quick stretching to stay more engaged.

2. Have “Attention Breaks”

At periodic intervals, practice attention breaks. Using a timer, have a signal go off during the study hours, and mark whether you were paying attention. This can help train your brain to understand what attention looks like, and how often you are tempted to disengage.

3. Break the content into smaller time frames

If you find that, no matter what you do, you just can't seem to stay on task, it may be time to break content into smaller time intervals. Remember, you can concentrate on one task for max five minutes per year your age.

4. Remove Visual Distractions

When you are struggling with a difficult task, clutter in your room or on the desk can make it impossible to keep your mind where it needs to be. Remove unnecessary clutter and visual experiences from your studyspace.



5. Play Memory Games

Memory games help hone focus in a fun way, so that you can concentrate when something challenging is presented. Have regular times in a day where you play simple memory games like puzzles, Sudoku or memory matching cards to increase attention.

6. Turn off screens and cell phones

Before you tackle your studies, turn off the television and put away your mobile phone. Or if others are watching television, make sure you are far enough away that you can't be distracted by it. Also, shut down or move away from the computer.

7. Well-balanced diet

An unbalanced diet is one of the physical factors that can cause concentration problems. A well-balanced diet can do wonders for your focus. Inclusion of vegetables, fruits, fish rich in omega-3, pulses and whole wheat etc in your diet can play an important role when it comes to improving memory. Having junk food rich in fats causes lethargy and loss of concentration.



Time Management

Time Management = Study Success

- ▶ Evaluate how you use your time currently
- ▶ Decide how you want to use it
- ▶ Organize your time so that you feel in control

Save time for the things you really want to do Create an 'after school hours routine' for yourself and see how you can distribute your time more effectively for being productive and active.

Activity (after school hours)	Time spent in minutes
Study	
Talk to friends	
Play	
Sleep	
Other	

Important points for good time management

- ▶ Be systematic and stick to your study planner
- ▶ Avoid distractions like messaging
- ▶ Do not procrastinate and avoid excuses like getting up for frequent snack breaks and washroom trips



Where does the time go?

As a student, there will be many other demands which eat up your time apart from study. Clarify where your time goes by penciling into your diary everything you do for a few days – sleep, exercise, lectures, etc. – noting this roughly every hour. Chart this using the Time Circle. Then use the second time circle to chart how you would want to use your time each day. Compare the two.

Circle 1: How I use time now

Using different colours for each type of activity, mark in where your time usually goes in a day. Treat each segment as roughly one hour. Which activities are left out or don't receive enough time? Which activities take up too much time?

Example

- sleep -10 hr
- eating -2 hr
- socialising-3 hr
- personal/home-3 hr
- travel-1 hr
- lectures and tutorials-2 hr
- reading-2 hr
- writing-2 hr
- thinking-0 hr
- exercise/relaxation-0 hr

Circle 2: How I want to use time

On the second circle divide the day into how you would prefer to use your time so that your day is balanced between different activities. This is your goal for you to distribute your time.

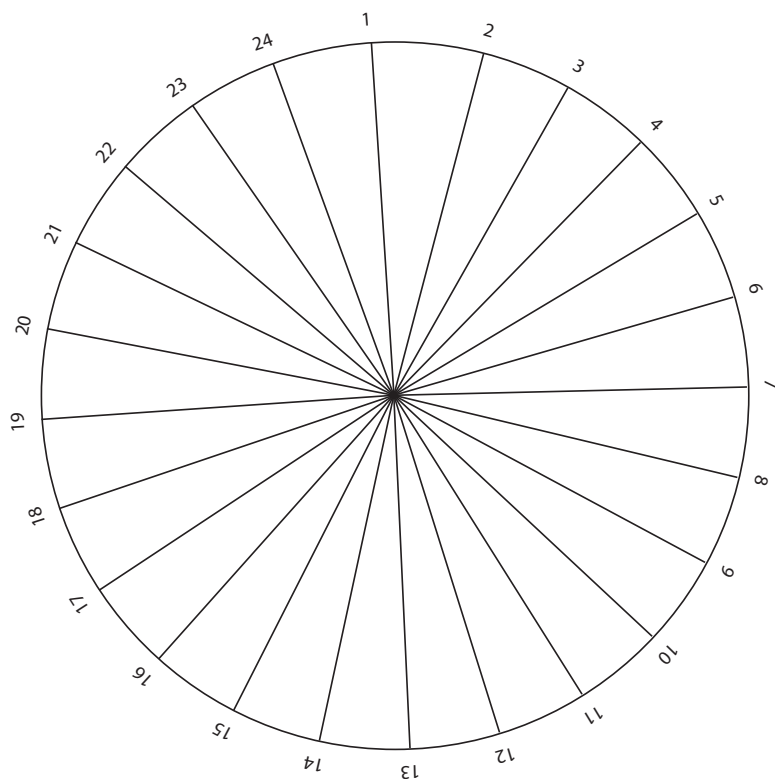
Example

- sleep -8 hr
- eating and socialising -3 hr
- personal/home-2 hr
- travel-1 hr
- lectures and tutorials-2 hr
- reading-3½ hr
- writing-2 hr
- thinking-1 hr
- exercise/relaxation-1½ hr

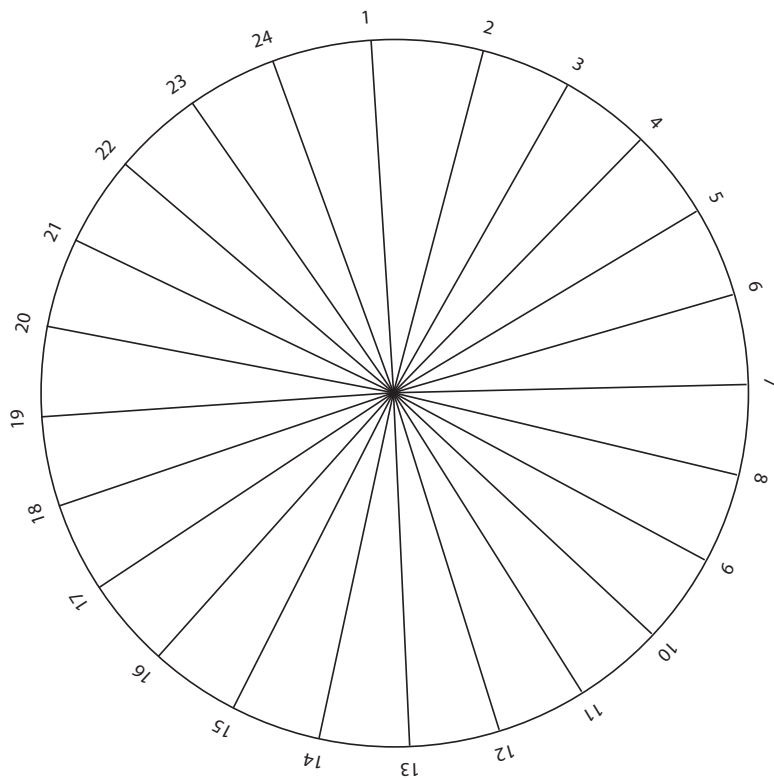


Time Circle

How I spend my time now (30 minutes slots)



How I want to spend my time (30 minutes slots)



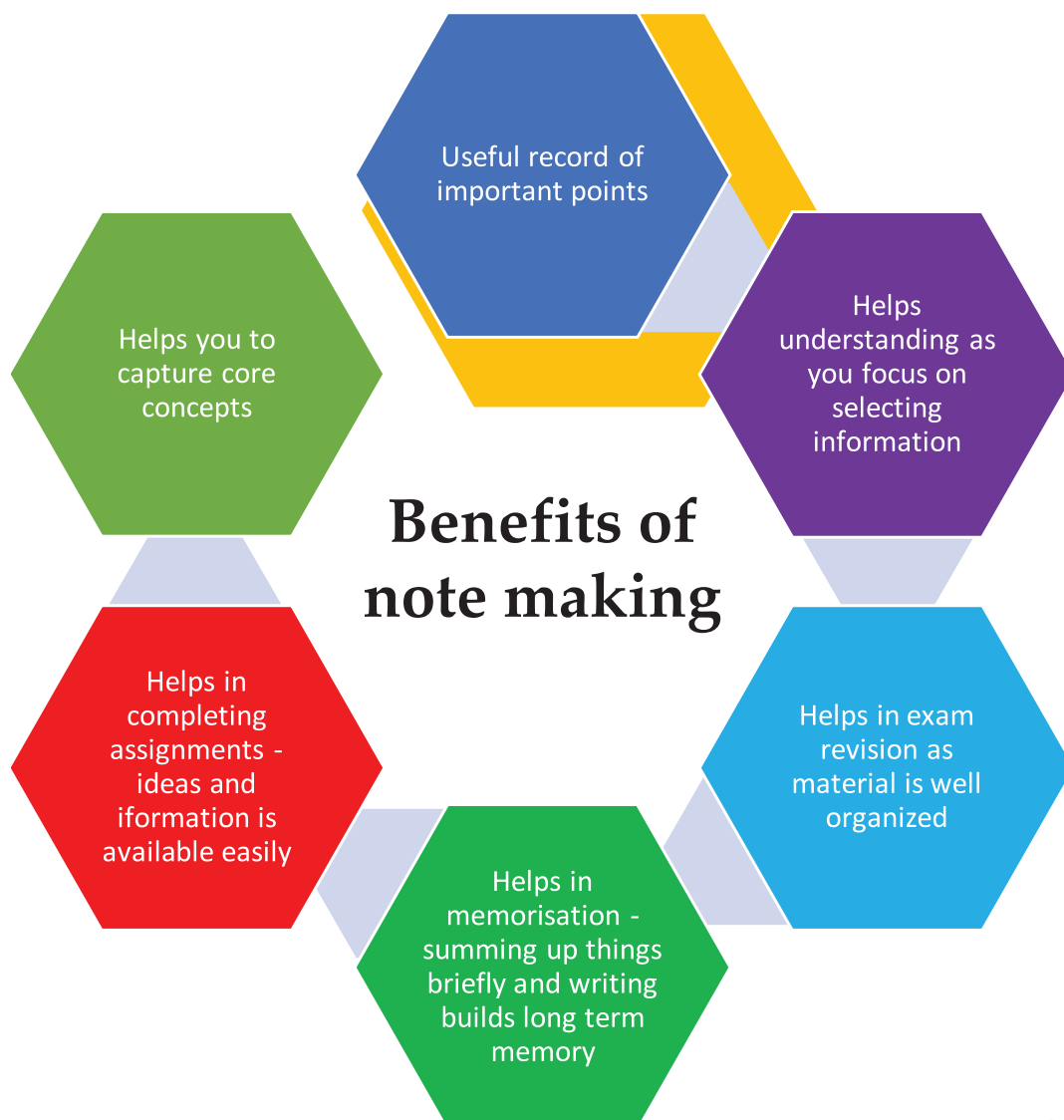
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Learn Note Making

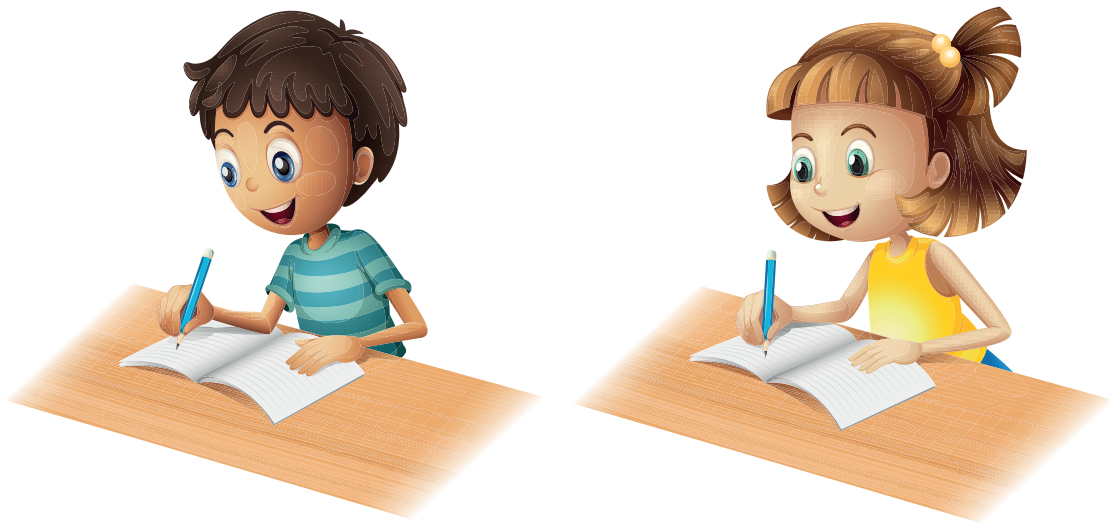


NOTE MAKING – a 21st century life skill. Good skills in taking and making notes will help you, as an active learner, to organise, categorise and recall information you can use when completing assignments or revising for exams.



Good note making method

- ▶ Read the text for which you wish to make notes
- ▶ Identify the main ideas
- ▶ Say them aloud in your own words
- ▶ Create headings for main ideas
- ▶ Jot down points under the headings, in your own words
- ▶ Use abbreviations
- ▶ Summarize in a few lines at the end
- ▶ Make the notes memorable—with colour, illustrations, encircling, arrows, and soon.
- ▶ Leave space to add further notes
- ▶ Use separate folder for each subject
- ▶ Number and label the pages
- ▶ Keep an updated contents page



Note making basis learning style

Visual Learners

You like to look...

- love colourful notes
- rewrite facts/notes
- notes displayed on walls/pinboard
- uses colour coding
- use of background activity assists you in concentrating
- retains information by remembering where/what it was located on
- likes drawing/diagrams

Methods

POSTERS MINDMAPS FLASHCARDS
COPY DIAGRAMS KEY POINTS
HIGHLIGHTING READ CHAPTER SUMMARIES BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

AUDITORY LEARNERS

YOU LIKE TO HEAR...

- like to discuss concepts/facts with friends after learning
- records lessons/lectures for later work
- likes to use music/rhyme to assist in remembering information
- prefers to listen without taking notes
- likes study groups
- uses background music when studying

METHODS

PODCASTS DISCUSSIONS STUDY WITH OTHERS (AS WELL AS DISCUSSIONS)
TAPE YOUR CLASS/LECTURES & RE-LISTEN
REPEAT ALOUD.

DOG - ANIMAL
NATURE - TREE
WORD - ASSOCIATION

Kinesthetic Learners

You like to touch...

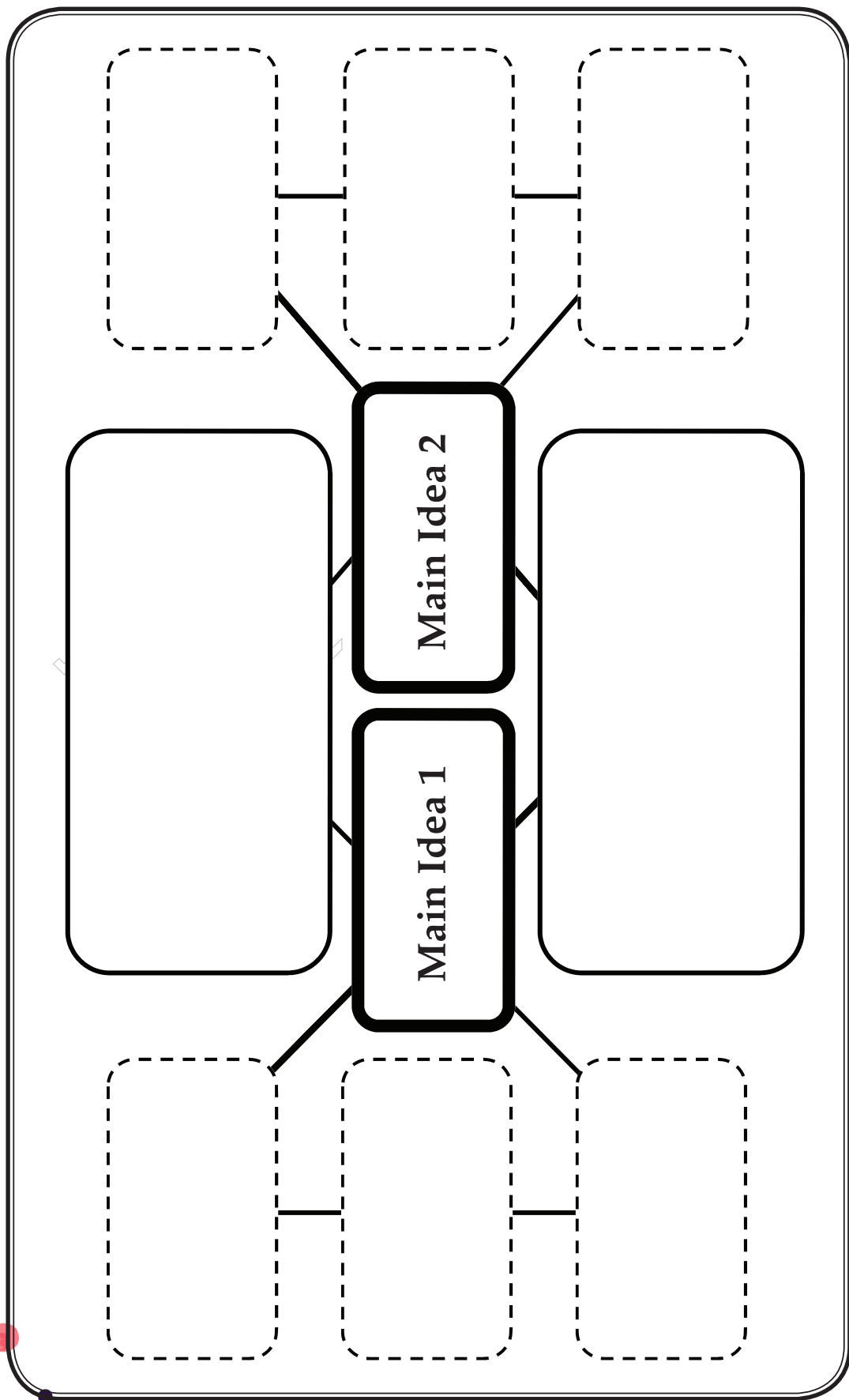
- copies out notes over and over
- always takes notes in class
- starts new page after making a mistake/several mistakes
- likes to be active whilst studying
- traces key words with finger/ marker
- prefers learning by doing
- loves on-site visits and school trips to aid learning

Methods

FLASHCARDS STUDY WITH OTHERS USE EXAMPLES IN WORK (INSTEAD OF JUST FACTS)
DO EXPERIMENTS SOMETHING WHILST YOU PLAY (IF APPROPRIATE) WORK e.g. stressball, tap a pencil

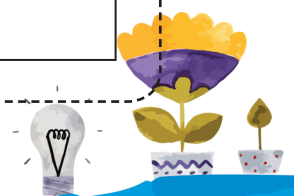


Graphic Notes making



Note Making Card

Date:	Topic:
Facts	Key terms
Other	



Memory Skills

Memory skills are important in school years as vast information has to be memorized for application to problems.

Some ways in which students can improve their memory skills are

Over-learn new concepts

- ▶ New information should be learnt not just once but repeatedly produce error-free repetition of the material and solidify the learning.
- ▶ Use visual images and other memory strategies
- ▶ A memory strategy that makes use of a cue is called word substitution. The substitute word system can be used for information that is hard to visualize, for example, for the word occidental. This word can be converted into words that sound familiar and can be visualized. The word occidental can be converted to accident hall (because it sounds like accidental). The student can then make a visual image of walking into a hall with an accident in it). Acronyms is another strategy for remembering multiple terms.

Be active readers

To enhance short-term memory registration and/or working memory when reading, underline, highlight, or jot key words down in the margin when reading chapters. They can then go back and read what is underlined, highlighted, or written in the margins. To consolidate this information in long-term memory, they can make outlines or use graphic organizers.

Write down steps in math problems

Do not rely on mental computations when solving math problems. When solving word problems, always have a scratch piece of paper handy and write down the steps in their calculations.



Retrieval practice

Research has shown that long-term memory is enhanced when students engage in retrieval practice. Taking a test is a retrieval practice, i.e., the act of recalling information that has been studied from long-term memory. Thus, it can be very helpful for students to take practice tests. Make up your own tests and take them, it will help you know where you stand and take remedial measures.

Review material before going to sleep

It should be helpful for students to review material right before going to sleep at night. Research has shown that information studied this way is better remembered. Any other task that is performed after reviewing and prior to sleeping (such as getting a snack, brushing teeth, listening to music) interferes with consolidation of information in memory.



What helps you remember things? Here's a simple way to find out.

- ▶ Colour ten words on the word chart below.
- ▶ Read through the chart for two minutes, then cover it completely.
- ▶ Write down all the words you can remember.
- ▶ Read the following section as you check your results.

sea

cog

kitchen

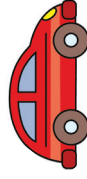
LOG

PINK

chair



car



blink

green

Spain

hobby

butter

cheese

walnut

student

jog

essay

sandwich

windy

FRED

pong

doctor

Gandhi

plate



sick

happy

sneeze

sad

maybe

holiday

jam

lost

tutor

INDIA

hand

bandage

fog

bread

table

book

see

room



What helps you remember?

Look at the words you remembered. Did you use any of the strategies given below? Any or all of the following may help your memory.

Recency effect

You may remember best the words you learned last.

Primacy effect

You may remember best the words you learned first.

Sound

You may remember rhyming words, strange-sounding words, or words that you heard together in your head.

Place

You may have linked a word with a place you know.

Real names

You may have a particularly good memory for names.

Visual features

You may notice the look of a word (such as the words in capitals or those with shapes around them).

Visual association

You may link words with pictures or mental images.

Visual arrangement

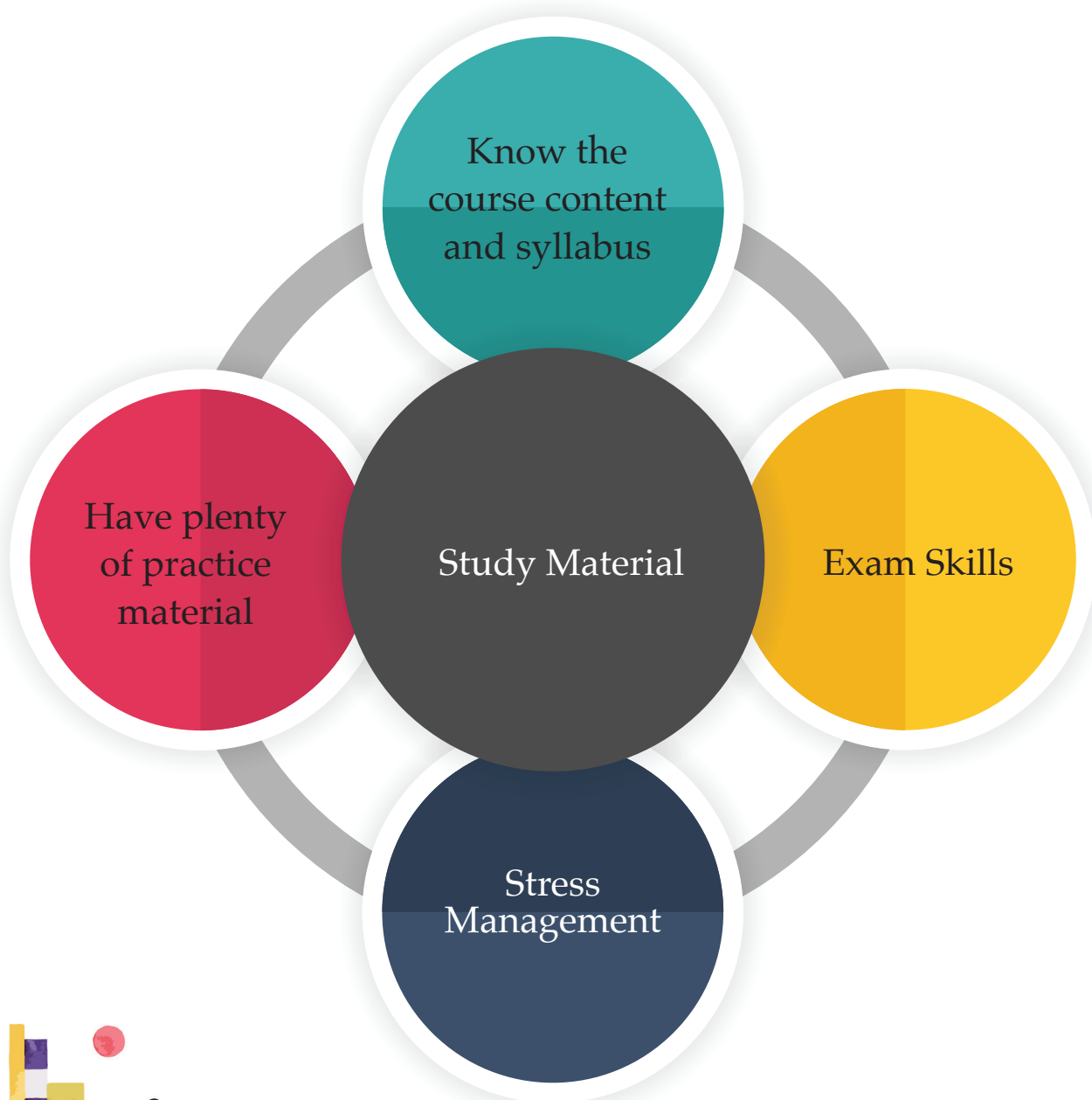
You may remember where items are on the page. (If so, you may find it easy to remember flowcharts or pattern notes.)



≡ Task Awareness

To win a race, you need to know the track and where the finish line is. Knowing the resources available for you to practise and perfect your technique will enhance your chances of victory.

Spend time studying the syllabus, weightage to each lesson, rubrics and identifying resources for studying. Seek help from family, friends and teachers as often as you feel the need.



Exam Skills

Make sure you have the following basic information

How many exams will you have?

When are the exams?

How will you be assessed?

Are any practice tests available?

Do I have the date sheet for exams?

Use Past papers

Familiarize yourself with instructions on test papers, these can be difficult to understand if you read them for the first time under the stress of the exam itself.

Plan your exam time in advance

Work out the time that you will spend on each question and whether you would start with the short or long answer questions.

Practice with mock exams

Attempt the paper within the time limit and similar quiet environment. Correct and then discuss your answers with a teacher or classmate.

Cue cards

Prepare cue cards for each lesson so that you can use them for revision.



Exam Check list

Duration:	Subject:	Date:
Reading Time		
Number of questions I have to answer		
Checking Time before submission (numbering, omissions)		
Total marks available for each question	Length of time to spend on each question	Checking for errors
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
Things to carry for the exam		
I Card		
Pen/Pencils		
Eraser/Sharpener		
Water		
Snacks		

First Things

- ▶ Stay calm and focussed and do not try to revise at the last minute
- ▶ Fill out personal details – Name, Roll no etc
- ▶ Read the instructions and the whole paper carefully
- ▶ Divide the time equally amongst questions which carry equal marks

Selecting Exam questions

- ▶ Read each question at least twice
- ▶ Note the number of parts to each question
- ▶ For the questions you have ticked, underline the key words
- ▶ Tick all the questions you could attempt and tick twice those that you know best
- ▶ Jot down ideas on the selected questions on a separate sheet

During the exam

What if you go blank

- ▶ Try deep breathing (5 times) to relax yourself
- ▶ Don't try too hard to remember. Leave space and come back later
- ▶ When you come back later write down any words connected to the question and these will prompt your memory
- ▶ Ask yourself questions Who? When? What? How? until you become more focussed



Self Evaluation

Do I		Yes	No
	read the whole exam carefully		
	follow all instructions		
	answer the correct number of questions		
	plan time well so that I have time for checking		
	know exactly how long I have for each question		
	divide time according to marks available		
	read each question at least twice		
	spend some time understanding what each question means		
	find questions that are like the ones I have practised		
	plan my answers in my head		
	use examples to explain		
	avoid irrelevant details		
	feel confident about what I am expected to do		
	find I have revised enough		
	know what a good answer looks like		
	have highlighted key points		

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Handling Stress

Avoiding Stress

A small degree of anxiety towards exams is unavoidable and can be helpful in providing stimulation for studying. Excess stress affects us adversely and if you spot it early on then you can take steps to reduce it.

Self Evaluation

Do You	Yes	No
lie awake at night worrying		
regularly eat in a hurry to study more		
feel moodiness and tearfulness		
get an empty feeling and dry mouth at the thought of exams		
get angry easily with people		



Identify your school stress triggers

Name: Date:

Directions: Read each item and answer honestly. Take your time as you complete this. Ask for help if you don't understand an item.

Rate and tick each item from 1 – 4

1 = Does not bother me at all

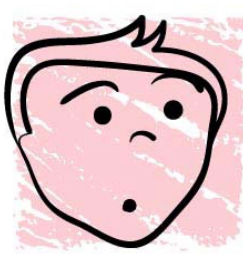
2 = Makes me feel a little uncomfortable

3 = Makes me feel stressed

4 = This upsets me



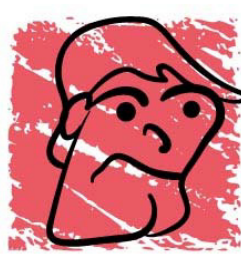
1



2



3



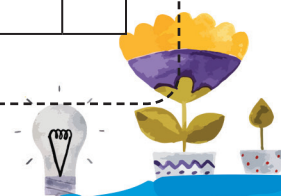
4

	1	2	3	4
Someone or something interrupts me while I am working.				
A teacher tells me to correct a mistake.				
When I don't understand what someone is saying to me.				
When I disagree with classmate.				
When a classmate asks for help.				
Homework.				
When a teacher tells me to do something.				

photocopiable template



	1	2	3	4
Group work with peers / classmates.				
When others make suggestions on how to do something.				
When one of my ideas is not included in a project / activity.				
When someone starts "small talk" with me.				
When I am excluded from an activity or conversation.				
Meeting new people.				
When someone points out a mistake I made.				
Greeting people.				
Taking tests.				
When I make a mistake.				
Reporting to school on time.				
School bells or loudspeaker announcements.				
When a classmate disagrees with me.				
Surprise quizzes.				
When I am late to school.				
When I have to do something new or different.				
Hearing other people's music / radio.				
Large crowds.				
When I have to wait for something.				
Teasing by others.				
Crowded hallways.				
Peer pressure.				
When my daily routine is changed.				
Loud places.				



	1	2	3	4
Specific noises (i.e. beeping, humming).				
Certain smells (examples: perfumes, foods).				
Math assignments.				
Big projects.				
When a teacher / authority figure tells me no.				
Changing classes.				
Getting a lower grade on a test, quiz, or paper.				
When someone points out a mistake I made.				
Greeting people.				
Taking tests.				
When I make a mistake.				
Reporting to school on time.				
Writing papers.				
Wearing specific clothing (i.e. long pants, coat)				
School bells or loudspeaker announcements.				
Fire drills.				

Now that you have finished rating these items, identify your BIG TRIGGERS. These are items that you scored as a “4” (or perhaps even a “3”). Write those down below, and be as specific as you can.

My Top Five “4’s” Are:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Emotion Cards can be used with scenario cards to understand and manage your reactions.

Sad

Angry

Nervous

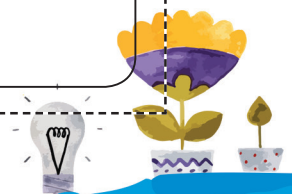
Excited

Disappointed

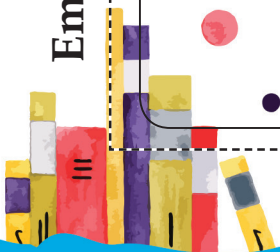
Scared

Surprised

Curious



Emotion Cards



Happy

Relaxed

Calm

Disgusted

Scenario Cards

1. I am lying down and reading my favorite book. Everything is peaceful and quiet.

I feel...

2. I just finished doing my homework.

I feel...

3. My mom just gave me the best birthday present!

I feel...

4. The teacher is talking about European history. I have always wanted to learn more about this subject.

I feel...

5. My class just won a prize for selling the most tickets!

I feel...

6. I did not know that my brother was coming to my football match.

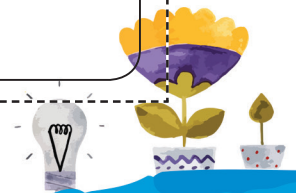
I feel...

7. I have to give a speech in front of the entire class. My hands are shaking.

I feel...

8. I just heard a tapping on my window and it is dark outside.

I feel...





Scenario Cards

9. Rohit keeps pushing me in the queue.

I feel...

10. The bathroom is really dirty and I don't want to touch anything in here.

I feel...

11. I scored low on the test, but I studied so hard.

I feel...

12. My dog Rocky died last week.

I feel...

I feel...

I feel...

I feel...

Scenario Cards

Answer key:

Remember that some scenarios may match more than one emotion!

1. Calm—I am lying down and reading my favorite book. Everything is peaceful and quiet. I feel.....
2. Relaxed—I just finished doing my homework. I feel
3. Happy—My mom just gave me the best birthday present. I feel
4. Curious—The teacher is talking about European history. I have always wanted to learn more about this subject. I feel
5. Excited—My class just won a prize for selling the most tickets. I feel
6. Surprised—I did not know that my brother was coming to my football match. I feel
7. Nervous—I have to give a speech in front of the entire class. My hands are shaking. I feel
8. Scared—I just heard a tapping on my window and it is dark outside. I feel
9. Angry—Rohit keeps pushing me in the queue. I feel
10. Disgusted —The bathroom is really dirty and I don't want to touch anything in here. I feel
11. Disappointed—I scored low on the test, but I studied so hard. I feel
12. Sad—My dog Rocky died last week I feel



Managing Stress

- ▶ Sleep properly – aim for 7 hours a day. Taking sleep more or less than 7 hours, can tire you.
- ▶ Give yourself regular breaks
- ▶ Use the STOP Exercise – Breathe slowly and smile
- ▶ Monitor your mind – think positive thoughts and discuss with people you believe in
- ▶ Manage your time - ways of improving your study schedule
- ▶ Have a healthy diet – drink less tea and coffee, eat wholesome home cooked food and plenty of fruits
- ▶ Maintain proper hygiene – do not avoid baths
- ▶ Celebrate your small successes, like have an ice-cream when you finish your scheduled work
- ▶ Communicate with your family about your feelings
- ▶ Visit the school counsellor if you have trouble managing stress

