

## STUDY SKILLS

### Academic Tracking and your Goals

If you don't know exactly where you're going, how will you know when you get there?

Look on your time at school like an All Ireland final. You train hard for years, you make sure you are fit, you attend and are involved in training sessions; you give your all. It all boils down to one day in September.....but it doesn't. Without the preparation, without the hard work and effort in advance you would not be able to succeed. Exams are the same. You need to train hard for all your years in school to achieve success. The first step in this success is setting your goals or targets and using every "study trick" you can to achieve them.

Go to the pages at the front of this diary where you plot your target grades. Make sure you fill this in as it is your personal commitment to success. Deciding on the grade is only one aspect – the next step is to get to work.

### Getting down to study

First off you need to find somewhere suitable to study. Is your study space:

- ☐ Equipped with a desk and comfortable chair
- ☐ Quiet and well ventilated
- ☐ Have good lighting
- ☐ Free from distractions (internet, phones etc)

If you answered no to any of these you should consider doing evening study.

### When at study

- **Avoid distraction – study away from TV, music, computer (etc) and put your phone away**
- **Find a quiet place to study**
- Do homework first then do your study sessions
- Study in one hour blocks and use a time management system such as the traffic light system to help you.
- Make a list of what you need to study in your planner
- Work on what you find hardest first and leave what you like until last
- Cross off what you do as you go
- Make a list of questions for your teacher
- Use study techniques to help you (see below)



### Study technique no 1: Highlighting information

Use red, yellow and green highlighters or this function on the iPad. Time management in study sessions aims to ensure that activities that achieve the greatest benefit are given the greatest focus. Using something like a traffic light system of highlighting information and making sure you deal with important information when revising is one way of using time effectively.

A **traffic lights** system is a simple way of identifying the importance of information, highlighting or underlining information in colours:

- Green: topics to be studied first; important and also simple
- Yellow: topics to be studied next; important but time-consuming
- Red: lowest priority; complex and not vital.

This reminds students to start with the things which will provide the quickest benefit, while ‘red’ topics are only dealt with if time allows

### Study technique no 2: Using Flash cards

**Flash Cards** are visual cues on cards. Students often make their own flash cards, but you can also buy them. You use them to write short summaries or definitions of words. Students can re-order them, pick a selection to read over, or choose them randomly for self-testing. Make sure you keep them in envelopes/shoe boxes etc – no point making them and losing them! There are a variety of apps that you can download to do these on the iPad. Find one you like and use it.



### Study technique no 3: Note taking

- ☐ If you can use a multi-coloured pen
- ☐ Have an A4 hardback for each subject
- ☐ Use highlighters (and the traffic system) to help you
- ☐ Keep a list of your keywords and the definitions of them
- ☐ Only write down what you really know and understand
- ☐ Get help if you do not understand it

### Study technique no 4: Use Mnemonics

- A mnemonic is a method of organising and memorising information.
- Some use a simple phrase or fact as a trigger for a longer list of information.
- For example, the cardinal points of the compass can be recalled in the correct order with the phrase “Never Eat Shredded Wheat”. Starting with North, the first letter of each word relates to a compass point in clockwise order round a compass.
- Another example is “Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain” the sequence of hues commonly described as making up a rainbow: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet.

### Study technique no 5: PQRST reading

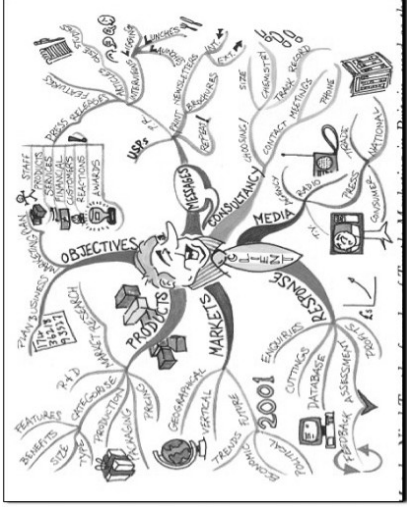
One method used to focus on key information when studying from books is the PQRST method. This method prioritises the information in a way that relates directly to how they will be asked to use that information in an exam. PQRST is an acronym for Preview, Question, Read, Summary, Test.

- Preview: The student looks at the topic to be learned by glancing over the major headings or the points in the syllabus.
- Question: The student formulates questions to be answered following a thorough examination of the topic(s).
- Read: The student reads through the related material, focusing on the information that best relates to the questions formulated earlier.
- Summary: The student summarizes the topic, bringing his or her own understanding into the process. This may include written notes, spider diagrams, flow diagrams, labelled diagrams, mnemonics, or even voice recordings.
- Test: The student answers the questions drafted earlier, avoiding adding any questions that might distract or change the subject.

### Study technique No 6: Mind Mapping

A mind map is a diagram used to visually organise information. A mind map is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the centre of a blank landscape page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those.

1. Use a large piece of paper – A3 is ideal
2. Have a selection of coloured pens and pencils and highlighters at hand.
3. Start in the centre with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colours.
4. Use images, symbols, codes, and dimensions throughout your mind map.
5. Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
6. Each word/image is best alone and sitting on its own line.
7. The lines should be connected, starting from the central image. The lines become thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
8. Make the lines the same length as the word/image they support.
9. Use multiple colours throughout the mind map, for visual stimulation and also for encoding or grouping.
10. Develop your own personal style of mind mapping.
11. Use emphasis and show associations in your mind map.
12. Keep the mind map clear by using radial hierarchy or outlines to embrace your branches.
13. Thoughts and inspiration are good apps on your ipad to help with mindmapping



### Study technique No 7: The PEE pyramid

Draw a pyramid and divide it into 3 parts. At the top write down your main point, on the next part write down your evidence to back up the point and finally at the bottom write down your explanation to back up the point.

### Study technique No 8: Past exam questions

Use past exam questions to test your knowledge of subjects. The outline solutions and questions are available at <https://www.examinations.ie/>. Another great resource is <https://www.studyelix.ie/> which will allow you to get questions by topic.

### Study technique No 9: The “SES TEST” method of studying

Select

Examine

Skim read

Take notes

Examine

Surround (circle) mistakes

Test again (review)

Select a section that can be completed in a reasonable time.

Examine yourself. “What do I know already?” (Quick, ‘mind scan’ - 2 minutes)

Skim read the passage in the relevant textbook and look at the questions.

Take notes with the book open.

Examine yourself. “What do I know now?” (Quick ‘mind scan’ - 3 minutes)

Surround (circle) all your mistakes with a different colour pen.

Test yourself again (review) -

the next day

the next week,

the next month

and in four months time.



### **Study technique No 10: The “Poker” method of studying**

**P** – pretest your knowledge (what do you already know) **5 mins**

**O** - How does this topic break down? What are the subheadings? **5 mins**

**K** - Highlight the keywords for the topic **10 mins**

**E** – Etch and Sketch - Draw a mind map/create a flash card that uses the headings and keywords.  
**10 mins**

**R** – Retest - What do I now know about the topic? **10 mins**

**In order to put information into your long term memory you need to review your notes/ flashcards/mnemonics/exam question answers every week.**

### **How to produce a good study timetable**

As an academic tracking period/exam approaches you will need to do a study timetable for weekends/evening/holiday time.

- Using a blank timetable, write out your daily class schedule and any extra-curricular activities you have.
- Decide how long you will spend on study each day. Divide the total study hours by the number of subjects, and allocate equal time for each subject – while making sure to keep a few spare hours for subjects that may need extra attention.
- Plan to study at least three subjects each day (to keep your study varied and stimulating).
- Remember, Friday evening is a great time to complete homework for the weekend and leave Saturday and Sunday free for study purposes.
- It is recommended that a Leaving Cert student should aim to study between four and eight hours at the weekend. This may seem like a lot but when you break it up into two or three hour slots, such as 9-12pm and 4 -6pm, it’s not so daunting.
- Make sure you take the afternoon or evening off to reward yourself on one of the days, to socialise or relax.
- You will need to include time on your weekly planner for:
  - a) Homework assignments
  - b) On-going working assignments
  - c) New material covered in each subject
  - d) General revision for exams or revision of material already covered.
- To determine short-term goals or weekly needs, each Sunday use additional copies of the planner that you have created yourself to draw up a specific study plan for the coming week specifying exactly what you will work on in time slots of your term/month planner.
- Discuss your timetable with your friends and family to let them know when you are free and when you are due to study. They will understand that you must study and will make an effort to fit into your free slots.

### **Rewards and a reminder:**

It is a good idea to build rewards into your timetable to act as a motivator. These could include an hour’s relaxation for writing an essay or a day off once a month for a good grade or for finishing an assignment. Just don’t go overboard.

Remember the saying: “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”

# THE GROW MODEL OF COACHING

**GOAL**  
(SETTING THE ASPIRATION)

**What do you want to achieve?**

- Define short & long-term goals.
- Make them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- Clarify success criteria.

**Coaching Questions:**

- "What is your desired outcome?"
- "How will you know you've achieved it?"
- "What does success look like?"

**O OPTIONS**  
(EXPLORING POSSIBLE PATHS)

**What could you do?**

- Brainstorm alternative solutions & strategies.
- Evaluate pros, cons, and resources for each.
- Encourage creative thinking.

**Coaching Questions:**

- "What options do you have?"
- "If anything was possible, what would you do?"
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of each?"

**R**

**REALITY**  
(UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SITUATION)

**Where are you now?**

- Gather objective facts & feedback.
- Assess present challenges & barriers.
- Identify what is and isn't working.

**Coaching Questions:**

- "What is happening now?"
- "What steps have you already taken?"
- "What are the internal/external obstacles?"

**W**

**W WILL / WAY FORWARD**  
(COMMITMENT TO ACTION)

**What will you do?**

- Select the best options.
- Create a specific, time-bound action plan.
- Define follow-up and accountability.

**Coaching Questions:**

- "What will your first step?"
- "When will you start?"
- How committed are you on a scale of 1-10?"
- How will you review progress?"

**COACHING PURPOSE:**  
Facilitates self-discovery, responsibility, and goal achievement through powerful questioning.

## Revision Timetable

[illegible]

Revision Timetable

| Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
|      |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
|      |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
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|      |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |

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|      |        |         |           |          |        |          |        |
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