



BLACKWATER
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Committed to quality education

Study Skills Booklet

2024/2025

‘Success? It’s the peace of mind that comes from knowing I have done the best I can with the ability that I have’

- John Wooden

Introduction

This booklet is to provide a resource to help you ensure that you are getting the most out of the study you are doing. All the time we are striving to complete quality work. We need to reflect on the study and homework we are doing to ensure that this is happening.

This guide aims to provide some practical suggestions that can be built into your study. You will not apply all the suggestions in this guide but feel free to dip in and out, especially for subjects you are unsure about.

Like anything in this world, we are all unique and study is no different. You need to see what challenges you face and come up with solutions to those challenges.

Getting Organised to Study:

1. Keeping well while you are studying

Getting the basics right to set yourself up for study. **Eat, sleep and exercise** are now more important than ever. Think of your brain as a muscle that you are training like you would if you were preparing for a run/match/dance performance. Getting a healthy balanced diet and good night's sleep will aid your body in having enough energy for your daily tasks. Exercise is proven to improve concentration. Exercise doesn't have to feel intimidating for anyone who doesn't exercise and does not like the idea of a gym, try going for a fast walk. Anything that gets you moving and away from a desk will benefit you.

2. Create a study friendly environment

- a. Set up a desk
- b. Get rid of all distractions
- c. Have all necessary books and equipment ready before you start
- d. Plan your study
- e. Reward yourself

3. Set up good study habits

- a. Have set times in the evening and weekends to complete schoolwork
- b. Start and end on a positive note; try starting and ending with something that you are confident in to give you a boost. Tackle the harder content in the middle
- c. Have a to do list for each subject
- d. Plan ahead

- e. Take in your teacher's feedback and apply it to improve.
- f. Recognise your strengths and weaknesses. Ask for help when necessary.
- g. Review/revise your work regularly
- h. Mix it up: sticking to one subject too long can reduce our concentration. Try different subjects, styles of activities, learn in between written, talk out loud, test yourself.

4. Motivate yourself to work hard

A lot of people feel they have to attend school. However, when we really think about it, you are actually choosing to be in school as you are the person who will benefit from school. In majority of cases, you are in school so that you can get a qualification with which you can give yourself many opportunities in education and work in the future. **Stop thinking of school as something you are forced to do and realise that for the vast majority of students you are here because you want to be here.** Realising that, can give you a focus to keep studying when times are challenging.

5. Manage your time

- Traditional study timetables can be challenging as life doesn't always fit into a timetable. You plan to study Home Ec on Monday but you have a Biology test on Tuesday so you have to deviate from the plan and all of a sudden you are not evenly studying all of your subjects.

Instead set aside time for study each day and **record what you actually got done** in that time. For example:

	30 th Sept – 6 th Oct Week 1	7 th Oct – 13 th Oct Week 2	14 th Oct – 20 th Oct Week 3	21 st Oct – 27 th Oct Week 4
English	Poetry quotes p. 36	Essay plan		
Irish	Vocab SP	Vocab SP		
Maths	2020 P1 Q2	2023 P2 Q1		
DCG		Finish design concept		
Biology	Circulation 2023 Q4	Respiration 2022 Q3		
History		Nationalism in EU		
Geography	Rivers 2023 Q1			

In the above example the student did not get to study all subjects in week 1 so they begin with the unstudied subjects in week 2. Your aim is to get as many subjects studied as possible each week.

Advantages: You are ensuring that all subjects are studied, and you are not avoiding subjects you don't like as much. You are also making sure that you are moving through the curriculum and not just studying the same thing each week.

Please remember that homework is vital and 100% effort should be put into homework. With the time that is left over, pick something to study and put 100% effort into that and record it.

- Have a to do list for each subject and tick off once completed.
- Remember all of your tests are a piece of information for you to use to plan your study. If you get 60% then it means, there

is 40% left for you to study. *You should review all tests to learn from your mistakes and improve.* **If we do not reflect and review, we continue to make the same mistakes and do not see improvement.**

Overall aim of studying is to increase engagement and understanding as both of these increase the amount we retain in the long term.



Reading to learn strategies

SQ3R

1. Survey the chapter – a quick survey allows you to get an overall idea of what you will be learning and what the important areas are
2. Questions – find a question from the end of the chapter or exam question
3. Read looking for the answers to the questions – focuses the mind when reading the chapter
4. Write the answers to the questions/do a mind map/summary tree/key words sheet
5. Review the information



Traffic light method

- Mark information you understand well in Green
- Highlight concepts you are unsure about in Yellow
- Indicate areas you don't understand at all in red



Writing notes

It is important to use different methods of note taking depending on the subject you are revising.

1. Key words

Key word	Description
These can be trigger words	Description including examples and diagrams
The key words can be a quick method of revising	This can also be used to test yourself by covering the description





SUBJECT: English SECTION: Poetry PAGES: _____
 TOPIC: Poetry Keywords


Learning Outcome(s)
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

1 st Review	___/___/___
2 nd Review	___/___/___
3 rd Review	___/___/___
4 th Review	___/___/___


KEYWORD	EXPLANATION/DIAGRAM/PICTURE
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<u>Simile</u>	 Sam runs as fast <u>as</u> lightning.
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	 Emily's dress was colourful <u>like</u> crayons.
--	--

<u>Metaphor</u>	 She is a walking dictionary. {A comparison in which one thing is said to be like another}
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<u>onomatopoeia</u>	   Words that imitate sounds  buzz
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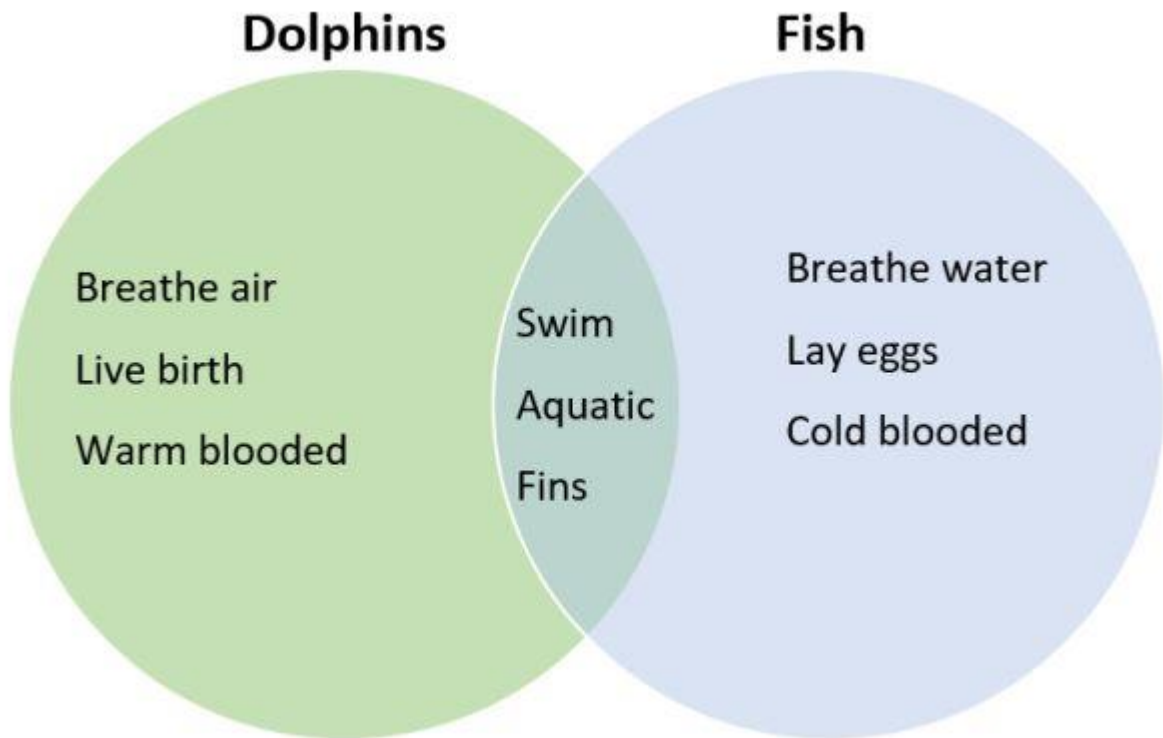
<u>Alliteration</u>	 Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
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<u>Hyperbole</u>	 I'm so tired I could sleep for a year.
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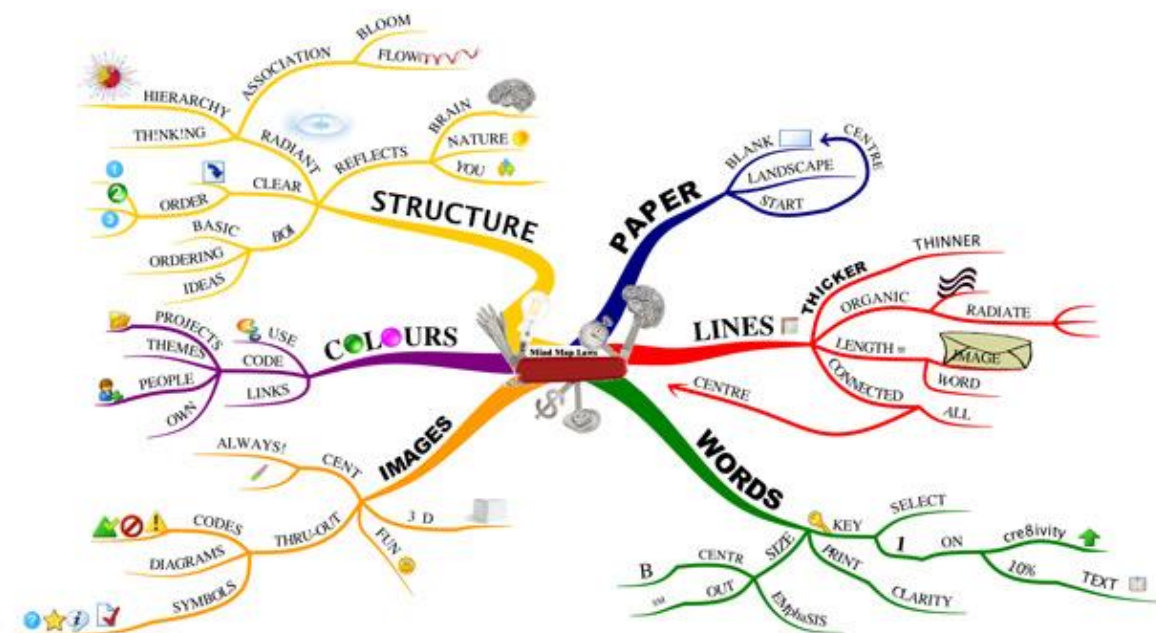
A hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration used to make a point

2. Venn- diagram

Great for showing similarities and differences



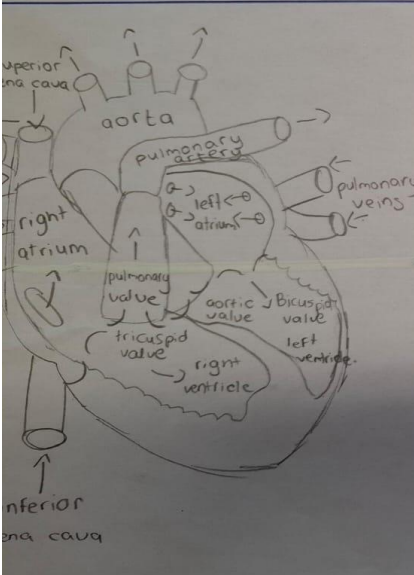
3. Mind maps



Helps to:

- generate more ideas
- identify relationships among the different data and information
- effectively improve memory and retention.
- Can draw themselves or do online!

4. Whiz Grid

<p>the rate of the heartbeat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - normal heartbeat is 70 beat per min - passes food and oxygen into cells - it give energy to the body <p><u>effect of exercise of heart rate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we exercise and need energy. - the fitter we are the lower the heart rate. 	<p><u>pulse</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a pulse is when the walls of the artery move as blood is pumped through them. <p><u>pulse is taken -</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. neck 2. wrist 3. temple 	<p><u>the heart.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the heart is a pump - pumps blood around the body - heart made of muscle cardiac - if the cardiac muscle stop pumping, the person have a cardiac attack (heart attack).
	<p><u>the heart</u></p> <p><u>Science!</u></p> <p><u>body temperature</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - normal temperature is 37°C - body cools itself by sweating <p><u>heart disease and heart attack</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - caused by blocking of artery due to cholesterol. <p><u>ways to prevent heart disease.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. eating healthy 2. don't smoke/vape 3. exercising 4. don't have fatty diet. 	<p><u>functions</u></p> <p><u>vena cava</u> - brings deoxygenated blood around the body.</p> <p><u>right atrium</u> - brings blood from the vena cava to the right ventricle.</p> <p><u>right ventricle</u> - recieves blood from right ventricle to the pulmonary artery.</p> <p><u>tricuspid valve</u> - separates right atrium and right ventricle</p> <p><u>pulmonary artery</u> - carries blood to lungs from right ventricle.</p> <p><u>pulmonary vein</u> - bring oxygenated blood from pulmonary veins.</p> <p><u>aorta</u> - pumps blood out of the heart and around the body.</p>

Break down your page into 9 squares. Put your topic in the middle and then put the information into the boxes.

Once you have this completed, you can test yourself using your white board.

Aids memory recall, as the information is broken down in a logical manner and you can visualise the information when trying to recall.

5. Exam Questions

At the end of the day, you will face a test. It is extremely important to practice questions, become familiar with how the questions are phrased and what information they are looking for. Best answers are ones that answer the question that is asked.

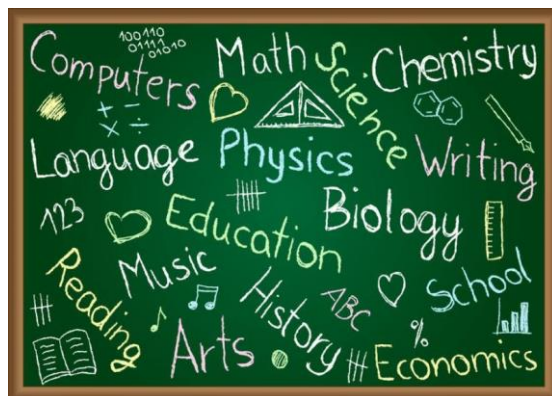
Studyclix is a brilliant website that not only gives you exam questions, it also gives you marking schemes and breaks the subject down into topics.

Ways to increase Repetition

Repetition doesn't always have to be in a formal study session.

1. **Take pictures of notes on your phone.** Have folders for your subjects on your phone, before you look at social media when waiting for a bus or in the queue in a shop look at the pictures of something you found difficult to learn.
2. **Voice notes:** record yourself and again use similar to the pictures.
3. Follow accounts on **social media** that talk about study for LC and you will increase your engagement when scrolling for example @howtolc @buzzingbiology_lc @crackingchemistry1 @studyclix @muinirish @gaeilge_vibes @the_business_department @excel_in_french There are so many accounts for all subjects in the LC in particular. Simply search for Leaving Certificate when using social media.
4. **Youtube** for example Biology Bug Bears

5. **Duolingo/ Quizlet/ Studyclix** are all popular websites for studying.



Subject Specific interventions:

Business Studies

1. White boards- rewriting key definitions, formulas or practicing calculations.
2. Keyword journal- keep a journal of keywords and revise these.
3. Practicing junior and leaving cert past exam papers as topics tend to repeat.
4. Flashcards for formulas, ratios or key definitions.
5. Create a mindmap/summary page of a topic so you have all the key information on one page.

German

Mnemonics are handy in German, especially for grammar rules. There are certain groups that have different effects on sentence structure etc

If you are struggling with a language remember to increase your vocab. 3 words a day Monday to Friday and spend Saturday and Sunday going back over the 15 words you did during the week. Make them relevant to topics you are studying in class.

Biology

Placemats in both junior science and ag. Science. A template for each chapter will focus study.

Also key word sheets, studyclix and biology bug bears for leaving cert biology.

Revision Topic Sheets RTS, see examples below:

Our Blood

- Plasma
- Platelets
- White blood cells
- Red blood cells
- Plasma is the liquid. It is pale yellow. It transports food and water + waste (CO_2)
- Plasma carries wbc, platelets, and rbc.
- **White blood cells** fight infection. Made in bone marrow.
- Some form antibodies - destroy infection.
- **Platelets** help to clot blood. Made in bone marrow.
- They prevent loss of blood.
 - bacteria entering body
- **Red blood cells** contain haemoglobin. (we need iron) Carries oxygen. Made in bone marrow.

• low exercise affects pulse

• When we exercise, our cells need an increased amount of food and oxygen. They need to get rid of CO_2 and heat. As a result exercise causes the heart to beat faster. Pulse rate $\uparrow\uparrow$

THE HEART Circulatory system

• **Right ventricle** - to the lungs. Short distance, thinner wall

Left ventricle VS Right ventricle

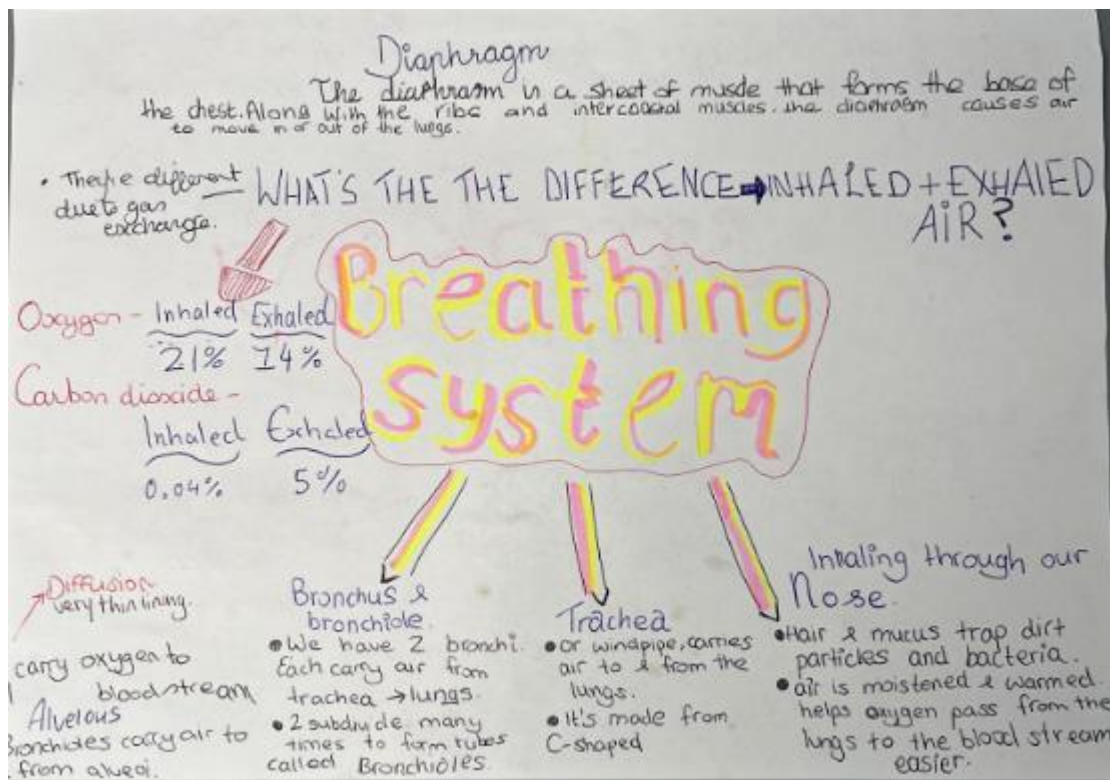
- **Right ventricle** - pumps blood to all around the body. High pressure. So, thick wall.

Pulse

Arteries expand when blood is pumped through them. Pressure causes them to expand. A wave of pressure \Rightarrow pulse

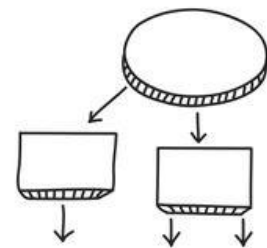
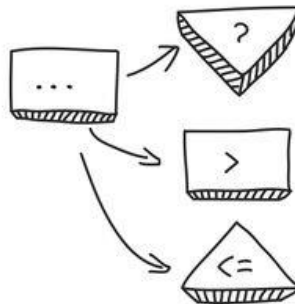
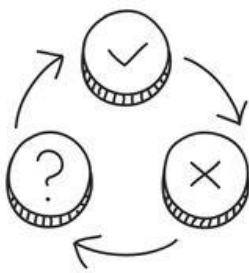
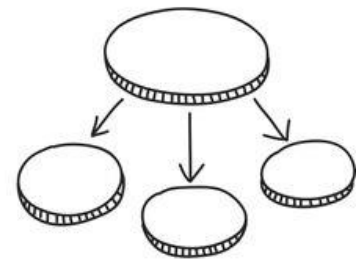
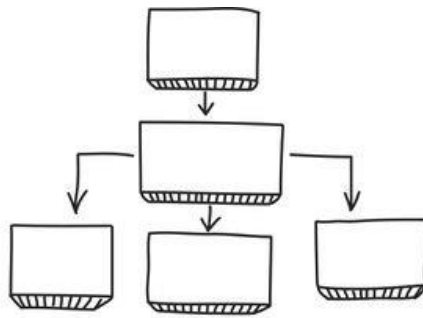
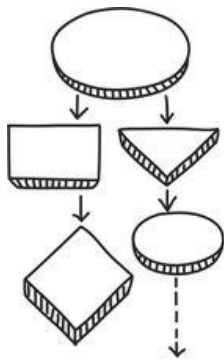
Labels in diagram: vena cava, pulmonary artery, aorta, pulmonary vein, left atrium valve, left ventricle, valve, right ventricle, right atrium.

* Pulmonary artery in the lungs blood oxygen + lose CO_2 .



English

Use of mind maps but in the most colourful way however if you find this difficult you could use the Funnel method or the graphic ladder where you put the most important information at the top and work your way down through the page.



Also setting out weekly goals is key for English because there can be a lot to learn in terms of quotes. You could consider writing out a timeline each week as to what you are going to focus on in terms of English. Some students do monthly planners.

Geography

Practice what they are prepping for, the exam. Therefore, plenty questions and exam papers.

1. study a topic, then find a question on that topic and answer as much as you can on it. When you find you can't answer anymore, use the book. Add in anything you've missed in a different colour pen. Use marking schemes and Studyclix where possible.

2. Try and do some questions or read questions on a topic before you have done it or revised it. That way you are mentally prepared on what to look out for before you do it.
3. For some topics in Geography there is a lot of information and videos online. Revise your topic. Then look up videos/websites making notes on information not in your book. This will make your answer different and stand out.
4. After revising a topic or before you revise it, make a list of all the keywords you would associate with that topic. In a lot of cases, putting all those keywords together will be your answer.
5. Draw an image that represents all the information on a topic that you studied.
6. Teach someone else (maybe someone at home) about a topic that you have studied or revised. This will help reinforce content.
7. Critically analyse sample answers etc What is good about the answer and why? How could you make it better? Etc Sample answers can always be improved.

Maths

Knowledge Organiser: essentially it is a cheat sheet. The student takes an A4 page on portrait and sections it into the various topics and how to do the topics. This is then used when they are revising in the future.

Make sure when you are looking at a solution not to copy the answer in full. Instead, look at the solution to check where you were stuck, understand it and then put the solution away before

continuing with the question. This way you are training your brain what to do when you are doing the next question.

LCPE

Quizlet

- learning definitions (LCPE) - study sets are premade for the different topics

Brain dumps

- Students sometimes do this into their copybooks or you could use a template with some key words to help you remember what was covered in a topic. Students write as many things as possible that they can remember. (see sample below)
- White boards in the PR book to practice wrote learning.

Brain dump



confidence, anxiety, motivation,
concentration and feedback

Psychological factors affecting Performance
Strategies before/during/after Performance

Gaeilge

Quizlet

- Practicing verbs/ foclóir (Gaeilge) - study sets are premade and can be very useful for reviewing verbs and vocabulary.

Wordwall

- Scrúdú cainte ceisteanna (Gaeilge) - these are also premade for the students to practice different topics questions for their scrúdú cainte.

Brain dumps

- Students sometimes do this into their copybooks or you could use a template with some key words to help you remember what was covered in a topic. Students write as many things as possible that they can remember.

White boards in the PR book to practice wrote learning.

Voice memos to help learn for oral and can be listened to anywhere.

If you are struggling with a language remember to **increase your vocab**. 3 words a day Monday to Friday and spend Saturday and Sunday going back over the 15 words you did during the week. Make them relevant to topics you are studying in class.

History

- Quizlet resources online
- Juniorcyclehistory.ie has good extra reading and links to videos for students.
- Stacy Stout does YouTube summary videos on Junior and Leaving Cert History topics. Here's the link to her YouTube

channel: [Primary or Secondary Source? \(youtube.com\)](#) and she's on TikTok and Instagram too.

She also has a website [Miss Stout's History Class | Senior Cycle History \(missstoutshistoryclass.ie\)](#) which is really good but does cost £10 to sign up to

Remember if you are struggling in a subject or unsure how to study a subject, talk to your subject teacher and ask them for help either in person or on teams.

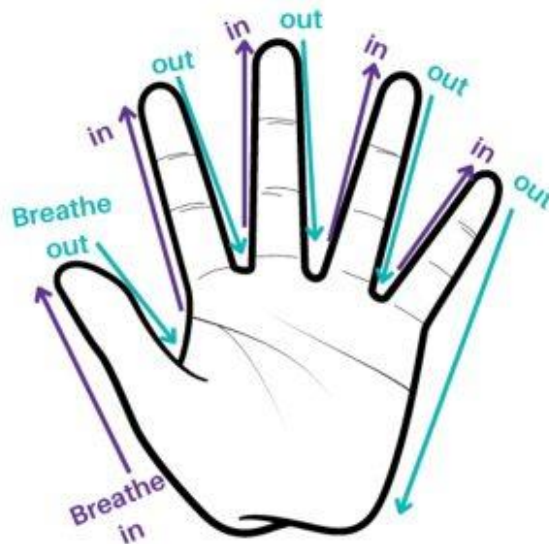
Exam Skills

1. Timing (write the start time beside the question). Practice completing questions within the time allowed.
2. Read the full paper including instructions at the beginning
3. Highlight key words in questions
4. Plan answers where necessary
5. Leave space at the end of a question so if you think of something extra it can be added in
6. Leave time at the end to read over the paper
7. Remember everything written can be corrected so no tipex, just put an X through work.


Ways to help you feel calm while studying or during exams:


3-Minute Breathing Space

1. **Awareness** - Noting what you are feeling.
2. **Redirecting**- Bringing attention to the breath.
3. **Expanding** - Expanding awareness to include a sense of the whole body.





Both of the above are ways that we can draw awareness to our breathing and away from our brain overthinking the situation. Grounding ourselves in our breath allows us to work from a calmer place.

5 you can  **54321**
GROUNDING
TECHNIQUE
e.g., sun, animal,
chair, desk, laptop, pen

4 you can 
e.g., feet on the
floor, desk, pen, book

3 you can 
e.g., clock ticking, wind
blowing, peers talking

2 you can 
e.g., food, perfume,
fresh cut grass,

1 you can 
e.g., breakfast,
toothpaste, chewy gum

54321 Grounding Technique is great for students who struggle with breath work as it allows them to bring awareness to the present moment around them and distract from the over arching thoughts in their brain.

Parting thought:

School is meant to challenge you. You will find it difficult at times, but it is meant to encourage you to grow and develop new skills as part of your preparation for life afterwards. Always remember to ask for help as all the staff in school are there to guide you on your journey in secondary education.

Best of luck!