



STUDY FOR SUCCESS

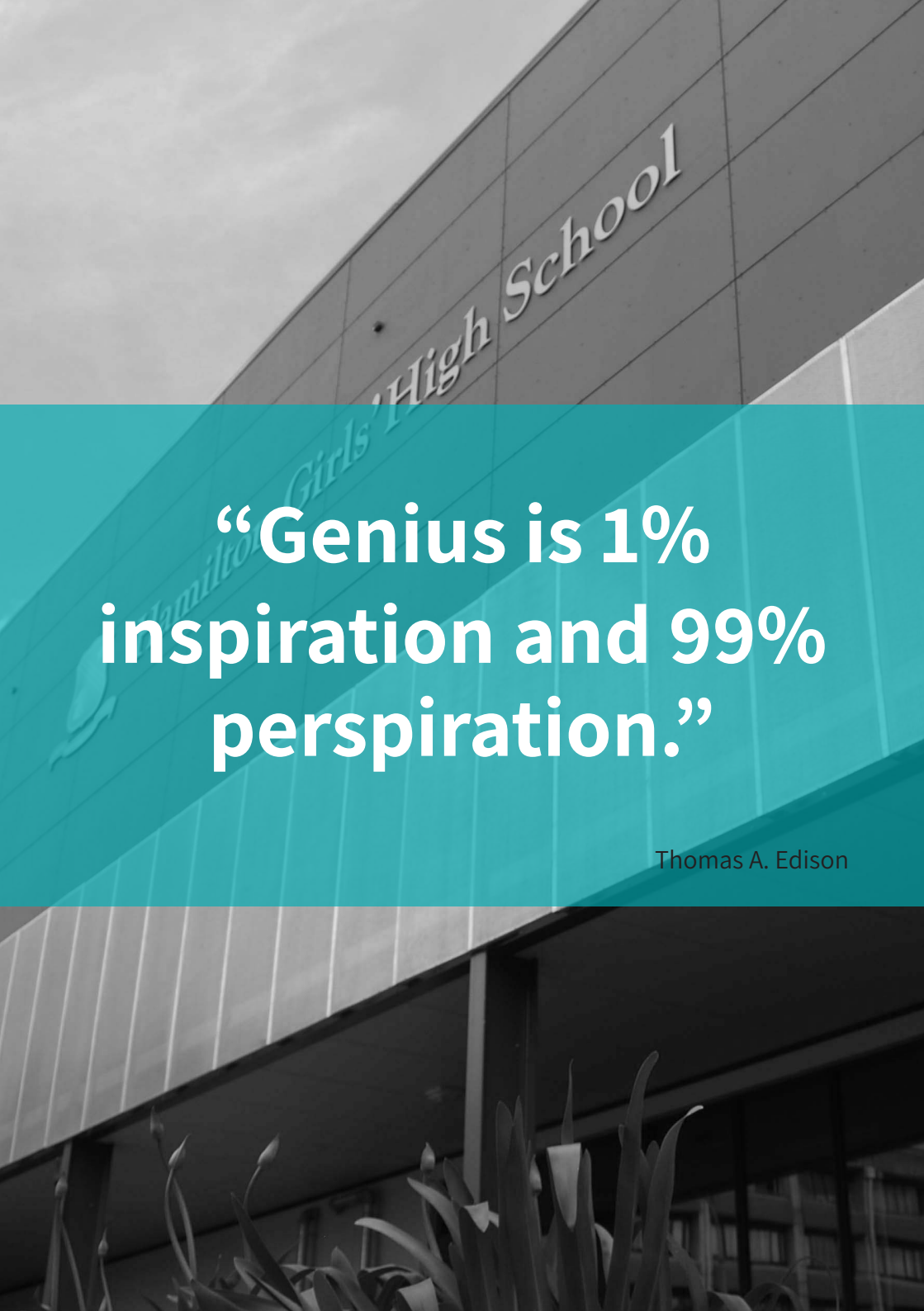
Introduction

Far too many people study harder rather than smarter and they end up burning out. Sitting and passing exams is supposed to get you ahead in life – not make you tense, stressed and a nervous wreck.

With the simple and effective techniques described in this booklet you can massively increase your ability to pass exams and even reduce your study time.

Education is the key to the future... Working smarter not harder is the key to success...





**“Genius is 1%
inspiration and 99%
perspiration.”**

Thomas A. Edison



Wise up in lessons!

BE THERE!

Attendance is the first stage to success.

Avoidable absence undermines your progress. You will miss vital explanations and quickly lose the thread of what you are studying.

BE PREPARED!

This means not only pens, paper etc – but also mental preparation.

You will get twice as much from a lesson if you've reviewed the notes from the last lesson, completed homework and any background reading. This is like an athlete warming up before a race – it gives you a flying start.

BE ON TIME!

Make sure you arrive to class on time so as to be ready when the lesson starts.

This is respectful towards the teacher, but also puts you into a more positive frame of mind.

GET INVOLVED!

Sit at the front close to the teacher.

This will make you feel more involved, you'll take more in and you'll be able to see everything clearly.

PARTICIPATE!

Ask and answer questions.

This is the essence of learning, and is like personal tuition. Teachers always respond well to students who are keen and enthusiastic about the subject.

ASK FOR MORE!

If there is a little time at the end of a lesson teachers are often flattered to talk more about the topic, sometimes looking at its wider implications, or relations to other things.

Ask if there are any particular books, TV programmes or websites that the teacher thinks would be useful to you.

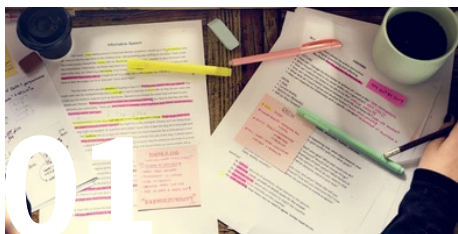
FOLLOW UP!

If you have a study (or when you get home) write up your notes immediately.

Do the necessary reading and start, or at least make a plan about the homework. Make set time for this then it won't interfere with your social life.

Get into good habits then they will stick with you!

STUDY TIPS



Use lots of colour

Using **colour** in your note taking and study will increase your ability to remember and recall your information. **Colour** is processed right next to the part of the brain that stores long term memory. Information in **colour** is more likely therefore to be remembered. Use your favourite **colours**, highlight key information, use felt pens of different thickness to make note taking more fun.



Drink 6 – 8 glasses of water a day

Approximately 70% of your body is made up of water. Over 80 % of your brain is water. A lack of water can lead to dehydration which causes headaches, lack of concentration and focus, tiredness and many other challenges. Drinking at least 8 glasses of water a day is also important for health and success. Keep a water bottle beside you when studying and take water into the exam with you. (If permitted)



03

Talk about your information as much as possible

Have you ever asked someone to remind you to do something and then found they don't need to?

When you say information out loud it is reinforced in your brain. Talk about your study notes and what you are learning with a friend or even to yourself out loud. You'll be amazed at how the information sticks. Teaching someone about your subject is also a useful strategy.



04

Move around while learning or do some brain gym

Most people like to do this and may have been told off many times for it in the classroom. Moving around or not sitting still has many advantages. It increases blood flow allowing more oxygen to the brain therefore making learning easier. Get up from your study and move around at least every 20 minutes. Walk around while reading. Sit on an Exercycle or mini tramp while studying. Fiddle with a Koosh ball or some blu tack, doodle frames around your pages while listening.



05

Eat small healthy snacks throughout the day

Research shows that blood sugar levels cycle every forty five minutes to an hour. This means an hour after you have eaten your blood sugar levels will be at a low, therefore learning is difficult. There are definitely strong links between efficient learning and good nutrition. But what foods is brain food? And which should I avoid?



06

Organise materials before you study

Before you sit down, have everything ready at your fingertips. You ideally should be able to reach everything you need from your chair.



FOOD TIPS

FOODS TO AVOID...

There are several foods to avoid when wanting highest brain function. The first is sugar. Lollies, sweets, chocolate and the like give a temporary lift to blood sugar levels but then leave you feeling lower than when you started eating them. This sets up a craving for more to increase blood sugar again.

Another food to avoid is Turkey. Remember the feeling after Christmas dinner? Turkey has a chemical in it which used to be given as a sleeping pill! Also, eating a big meal can cause you to become sleepy. The body will choose digestion over brain function and will send all its energy to your stomach and away from the brain. Nibbling in the learning environment is more brain friendly.

Foods containing Monosodium Glutamate (MSG, flavour enhancer⁶²¹) contain excitotoxins that are harmful for the brain. This additive causes mental fatigue and a slowing down of thinking and therefore learning.

White flour is also to be avoided. When white flour mixes with the digestion juices it forms a thick gummy paste/glue like substance which is hard to digest, taking energy away from the brain. Eat whole grain flours as these do not glue and are easier to digest.



CAFFEINE, NUTRASWEET AND THE BRAIN

Most people who drink tea or coffee do not like to know what caffeine does to the brain...

Yes it gives you that alert feeling in your body but caffeine also constricts the vessels in the brain making messages harder to send and thinking slower and less efficient. Researchers recommend to lower intake of caffeine by having a glass of water with it. This dilutes the caffeine. We would suggest that when drinking a glass of water first you may not need the caffeine fix...?

Soft drinks also contain caffeine. Recent researches show that some soft drinks have as much as 35% caffeine in them. It's not just Coke and Pepsi. In fact Mountain Dew was found to have the highest caffeine levels. Caffeine is a drug. "Smart drinks" also contain high levels of caffeine. Avoid these around exam time.

Diet drinks, diet products and chewing gum can cause more of a hindrance to learning as they contain artificial sweeteners. These excito-toxins are one of the leading causes of mental fatigue, according to Kevin Trudeau (Mr Mega Memory). Avoid products with artificial sweeteners.



SO WHAT CAN I EAT?

Your diet should consist of 70% water rich foods such as lettuce, broccoli, carrots and oranges.

Have a salad with every meal.



EAT SMALL MEALS OFTEN.

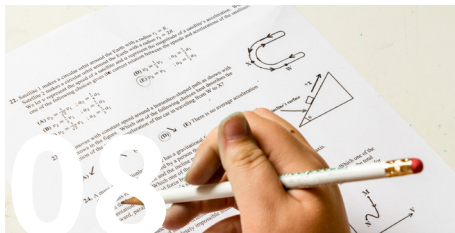
Nuts and plain unsalted popcorn are also useful. Eat lots of bananas, apples, strawberries, watermelon.

Pasta, rice, cereals and whole grain breads are excellent. Lean more towards carbohydrates as these also lower anxieties and enable calm and confident learning to take place.



Study at your best time

Are you a morning, afternoon or evening person? Study when you are most alert. If you are a morning person get up an hour earlier and study. If you prefer to stay up late at night - study during this time. Ensure you keep your water and energy levels up.



Practise old exam papers

Ask your teachers, librarian or students in classes in the next year level for copies of previous year's exam papers and practice these. Ensure you get them marked or are certain of your answers. Many questions are asked each year with maybe a slight change to the wording. The more you practice the more familiar you will get with what an examiner is thinking and wanting.



Do exam Brain Gym

Sitting for three hours can be very uncomfortable. Plus the blood in your body starts to pool in your ankles. (Ever been on a long plane trip and had swollen feet and ankles?) Blood is the carrier of oxygen to your brain. Keep yourself moving to keep your blood flowing in the exam by moving your ankles, rolling your shoulders forwards and backwards, tensing muscles and relaxing them, stretching your arms to the ceiling etc. These can be done without disturbing anyone else in the exam.



Study with low lighting

Research shows that for 70% of students studying with low lighting is best. Do you remember reading under the bed covers? You didn't ruin your eyesight (like your parents warned) because young children have excellent night vision. In fact it is as we get older (mid 20's) that the eye muscles start to weaken and we need brighter light and sometimes glasses. Bright light reflecting off a white page can stress the eyes and make learning harder. Avoid studying under fluorescent lighting as these lights flicker at a different rate to your brain making people tired, unmotivated and giving some people headaches.



11

Music or silence?

If you like studying in silence then one of the best ways to achieve this is to wear a pair of ear muffs – like the ones you use to mow the lawns. It's a great way to create a quiet space. Earplugs are also useful. They often come in the form of fingertip size, brightly coloured malleable foam which moulds to the outer ear canal cutting off outside noise. These are probably a bit less expensive and not quite as obvious as ear muffs! If you prefer music the kind you listen to can make a difference.

Firstly:

study to music without words. Your brain is designed to learn and will always focus on the words of a song rather than the content you are learning.

Secondly:

Baroque music will enhance your learning and memory.

Baroque music has 60 beats per minute which is equivalent to the average resting heart rate; therefore the music helps relax you into a calmer state for learning. This music has predictability about it, as opposed to the classical and romantic eras of music which tend to be unpredictable and more stimulating for the mind and body. Baroque music slows our brain waves where the mind and body are active and busy to the Alpha waves where the mind and body is calm and relaxed allowing for the long term memory to be activated. Learning becomes easy and rapid.



12

Wear comfortable clothing

It sounds so obvious and simple however many people don't do this. If you have to wear your school uniform ensure you have a jersey or jacket as the exam room may get hot or cold and remember you are in there for up to 3 hours – the weather can change quickly. Take a spare jersey to sit on if the chairs are uncomfortable.

If you can, wear mufti, exams are not a fashion show. Wear something loose that you can sit comfortably in for 3 hours.

Baroque composers include:

Pachelbel, Vivaldi, Handel, Bach, Corelli and Telemann.

Play baroque music softly in the background when you are working quietly at tasks such as writing, reading etc. Recent research also shows that listening to 10 minutes of Mozart music enhances your brain for 30 minutes to achieve tasks such as learning a new language and maths.

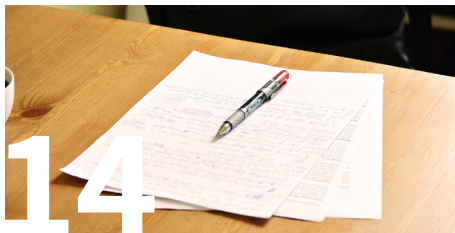


Put all my important information up high

Your visual memory is the fastest and most powerful memory that you have. When you look up you are accessing this part of your brain.

How many windows are there in your house? Take a moment to remember... to answer that question. Ninety percent of people will look up, as they are recalling a visual image of their house.

Summarise your notes and important facts onto a sheet or two of paper and place this in your learning environment just above eye level. Look up at your notes, and blink several times. This is to take a snap shot of the information. The more times you do this the faster the information will be transferred to your visual memory. To recall during an exam look up. This strategy comes from the science NLP or Neuro Linguistic Programming. Literally hundreds of students use this technique with fantastic results.



Revise my most important information last

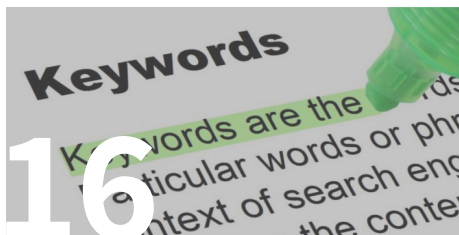
Which part of a movie is remembered? Usually the ending. What about a novel? Again it is most often the end that the reader remembers. The same is true of your study... by learning or revising important or key information at the end of your study time you are more likely to remember it.



Study the information you don't know

This may sound obvious however many people study the information they already know. It is sometimes easier to do over the information you got right as this is comfortable. However it's not where the learning is.

Go back through old tests, exams and assignments and learn the information you got wrong.



Read key words

When reading through notes and books, pick out and search for the key words, and ideas rather than reading every word on the page.

In fact your brain doesn't read everything on the page anyway ... read these:

Paris
in the
the rain

Wellington
is the
the capital
of NZ

People don't
often read
read every word

Many people don't see the repeated words the first time... did you?

Summarise key words and ideas as much as possible. Use a highlighter to pick out key concepts so they stand out.



Study your most important information first

Do you remember your first day of school? What you were wearing and who you talked to that day? The first time you drove a car? What about your first kiss? Do you remember the 47th time you drove a car or the 11th kiss? Probably not, as these aren't as memorable as the first. In general you will recall and remember the first time you do something. Study your most important information first to make it more memorable but revise or go over it as the last thing you do...



Study for 20 minutes and take a 5 minutes break

Keep your study times short as this allows for more firsts and lasts. Work on 20 minute intervals and take a five minute break before you continue with more study... During these breaks always leave your study area. Go for a quick walk outside (exercise + fresh air), have a drink of water, nibble on some fruit or nuts, stretch, skip, - anything that is different to studying that will keep your brain active for your next study session. Leave talking on the phone and watching TV until you have finished.



19

Review your notes one day after learning them

Reviewing or periodic revision of material is needed to reactivate the stored memory and prevent it from being buried under other information.

... The more recent, regular and fun the review is, the easier information can be recalled...

Information can be reviewed visually: by reading it, auditorily: talking about the key information and by combining movement, for example walking around while reading.

Research shows that if you revise your notes one day after learning them your recall will stay at 90%. If you wait 3 days to revise your study notes recall will drop to 30%. To keep you recall high... The best revision schedule is to look over your notes 1 day after learning them, then 1 week, 1 month and every 6 months...



20

Study 3 or 4 things at a time

Have you ever heard the saying, 'How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time'?

... The short term memory can remember between five and nine bits of information in one chunk. When the brain is given too many pieces of information to remember it installs amnesia or chunks out...

For example

... Read the following sequence of number, once, then turn away and write them down...

4, 12, 76, 34, 23, 87, 3, 67, 92, 88, 94, 5, 10.

Did you feel your brain go fuzzy? This is what happens when you study too much information at once.

When remembering a telephone number, we often break this into smaller chunks to remember it. The smaller more manageable the chunks, the faster you will pick up the information.

Break up your study content into small pieces so you find it easy to recall...



Say affirmations daily

One way to change this patterning is by using affirmations. These are positive phrases you repeat to yourself over and over.

There are four guidelines to using affirmations:

1. An affirmation must start with the word I, my or your name. This is so your brain knows it's you who you are talking about and not someone else. Often people talk from the position of "you" which means they are separating themselves from the event. "You know when you do something silly and everyone looks at you?" what they may mean is... "I did something silly and everyone looked at me."
2. Affirmations work best when they are positive. This means that you avoid the words not, don't, when ... etc
3. Affirmations also work best if they are in the present tense, as though they are true already.
4. Telling the truth in advance. Use phrases such as "I am..." "I have..." "I enjoy..." Phrases such as "I will..." are in the future tense. These tell your brain that it will happen in the future. Interesting concept... tomorrow is the future and tomorrow never comes! It's always today. I hear people in their lives saying phrases such as "I will be happy when I leave school..." "I will be happy when I have children..." and these people forget to be happy right now.

4. Positive thinking on its own doesn't work. It must be combined with ACTION. Make sure you do something positive towards your affirmation.

Sample affirmations:

- I pass my exams easily and effortlessly
- I like myself
- I am energetic
- I am an organised person
- I am a super netball player
- I speak clearly and precisely
- I have a fantastic memory
- I am great at maths
- I draw/sing well
- My life is perfect and all my needs are met!
- I deserve good things
- I am healthy and happy
- I remember easily
- I am calm and relaxed
- Research shows that you need to say an affirmation 20 times a day for 20 days for them to re-pattern your mind.

The way it works is that in your brain is a part called the Reticular Activating System (RAS). Its purpose is to wake up the brain for incoming stimulus.

Have you ever been in a room full of people and heard your name mentioned over the other side of the room? Or you have just bought a new car and suddenly you notice all the other cars on the road are the same as yours?

This is your RAS working. When you use affirmations it wakes up the RAS to look for all the reasons you do have a fantastic memory rather than what it may have been doing – searching for all reasons why your memory is bad.



Make your information stand out

Anything that is funny, different or has a novelty value will stand out in your mind. Any one offs will be memorable. Often the sillier it is, the more memorable it will be. Make up funny stories and pictures about your study. Use bright colours to highlight important pieces.

Make it FUN...

Make up mnemonics to create better memory.

For example

- the colours of the rainbow; ROYGBIV
- the Periodic Table; How He Likes Beer Buy the Cup Not Over Frothy
- learning to read music; FACE + every good boy deserves fruit



Check my physiology

If I said to you a very depressed person is about to walk into your home, how would this person look, move, breathe and speak?

What about a highly successful person. How would they move, walk, talk and look?

Both states are very different. What you do with your body or physiology is important to how you feel.

Sit in a chair and slouch. Now hold your arms, frown and pull into yourself. Now without moving a muscle – feel happy. Now sit up straight, eyes wide and put the silliest smile on your face. Now try and feel sad – without moving.

Paying attention to how you move your body and how you feel means that you can use this information at a conscious level. Notice how you move your hands how quickly you speak and where you look (eye contact or not) when you are speaking about something you love, perhaps a hobby or recreational activity. Notice how you use your body when speaking about a boring topic.

Check your physiology before studying. Sit up, breathe deeply and smile. Study will be easier and much less effort. You'll even get it done faster so you can go out and do what you want...



Three words to avoid...

DON'T

Don't think of yellow... don't think of a blue tree and don't think of ice cream ... chances are that when you read those things you did think of them even though it said not to... Why?? Your brain does not recognise the word DON'T. When we have a thought we create a picture, a sound or a feeling of it in our mind... then think not to do it...

For example if you say to a child who is climbing a tree – “don't fall” then the child has to create a picture, the sound or the feeling of themselves falling then think not to... and what nearly always happens – they fall out of the tree!!

What should we say??? Instead of saying what you don't want, tell the child what you do want – For example “Climb carefully” or check the branch is strong before standing on it.”

Sounds easy?? With so much of our conditioning around language it is a constant challenge to remember not to use that word... especially with so much advertising that says “Don't Drink and Drive” and the most common.. Don't forget...

TRY

Another word to avoid using. If I asked you to try and pick up the pen I've dropped on the floor... and you pick it up, then you haven't tried, rather you've done it... If you left the pen on the floor then you haven't picked it up.

As Yoda, the Jedi Master from Star Wars says... “Try? Do or do not. There is no try.”

CAN'T

How many of us remember saying I can't as a child to be told by our parents “there is no such word as can't” well we know there is such a word – it's just not a useful one. When you use the words “I can't” they simply shut the mind down to any other possibilities.

Another way to think about those challenging situations is “How can I?”

- “I can't spell” changes to “How can I learn to spell?”
- “I can't dance” to “What can I do in order to dance?”
- “I can't afford it?” becomes “What can I do to be able to purchase this?”



Visualisation...

Many studies have proven the power of visualisation.

A Stanford University researcher took the 3 top basketball teams and asked them to throw basketballs from the free throw line. On average players scored 8 out of 10 successful baskets.

The teams then had a different task for the duration of the study.

Team one was asked to go to the courts each day and practice throwing balls into the hoop from the free throw line.

Team two were told not to go to the courts and not to practice.

Team three's requirement for the study was to go to the courts each day and sit on the benches and visualise throwing balls into the hoop.

At the end of the study when players were asked to shoot 10 baskets – team one averaged 8 out of 10, team two averaged 8 out of 10 and team three scored 10 out of 10! Why? One reason is that each time they practised they were successful. That is every time they visualised practising they got the ball in. 100% success rate.

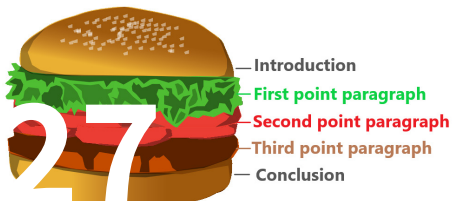
As part of your study see yourself sitting in the exam with lots of confidence and relaxed. Imagine being in the exam and the answers flowing out the end of your pen. Imagine that you have already passed. What does it feel like? What would you say to yourself?



Get lots of sleep

Remember that your body and brain works best when you are full of energy and alert. Get lots of sleep. At least 6 – 8 hours before an exam. A tip to keep you in tip top shape for exams is to exercise each day for 20 minutes and avoid eating anything heavy at least two hours before you sleep.

5-Paragraph Hamburger Essay



Create real life examples

Research shows that when learning new information if you link it to previous knowledge, recall is greatly improved.

Thinking of “concrete” or real life” examples about your topic is useful.

For example, when learning the 3 parts to an essay you can link it to a hamburger. The top bun is the introduction, the meat is the body of the essay – the more filling the better the hamburger (and essay) and the bottom bun is the conclusion or summary. If you miss out one part, you don't have a hamburger or an essay...

Using at least four of these techniques can dramatically enhance your learning ability. The more you use the better your results will be.

Some of these techniques may seem difficult initially as was riding a bike. The more you practice the easier they will get.

ALL THE BEST WITH
YOUR STUDYING
SUCCESS.



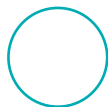
TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

1. Learn to put priorities on your tasks and your time. Rank the things you want to do, from most important to least important.
2. Focus on the things that need attention NOW. Don't dwell on past failures or future problems.
3. Do one thing at a time.
4. Divide large tasks into smaller parts and tackle these one at a time.
5. Be sure to include some time for recreation and relaxation every day.
6. Work at a comfortable pace. More haste, less speed is a good guide.
7. Be flexible with your time schedule. Try to keep some time free each day to cope with the unexpected.
8. Use a diary, or a large calendar with plenty of space for noting down specific tasks, or have some other way of writing down your schedule and commitments.
9. Review your important goals for each day and each week. Revise them if you need to.
10. Don't feel you have to get everything done TODAY. Spread your commitments over a period of time.



Visual Learners

- neat and orderly
- speak quickly
- good long-range planners and organisers
- observant of environmental detail
- appearance-oriented in both dress and presentation
- good spellers and can actually see the words in their mind
- remember what was seen rather than heard
- memorise by visual association
- not distracted by noise
- have trouble remembering verbal instructions unless they are written down and often ask people to repeat themselves
- strong, fast readers
- would rather read than be read to
- need an overall view and purpose and are cautious until mentally clear about an issue or project
- forget to relay verbal messages to others
- often answer questions with a simple yes or no
- would rather do a demonstration than make a speech
- sometimes tune out when they mean to pay attention
- often know what to say but can't think of the right words
- like art more than music



STUDY TIP
Draw pictures and diagrams.

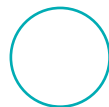


Auditory Learners ...

- talk to themselves while working
- easily distracted by noise
- move their lips and pronounce the words as they read
- enjoy reading aloud and listening
- can repeat back and mimic tone, pitch and timbre
- find writing difficult, but are better at telling
- speak in rhythmic patterns
- frequently eloquent speakers
- like music more than art
- learn by listening, and remember what was discussed rather than seen
- talkative, love discussion, and go into lengthy descriptions
- have challenges with projects that involve visualisation, such as cutting pieces that fit together
- can spell better out loud than in writing
- like jokes better than comics
- good at remembering and telling jokes
- prefer working in a quiet environment
- often prefer not to look at the speaker
- remember verbal instructions easily

STUDY TIP

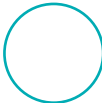
Talk about your information as much as possible.





Kinesthetic Learners ...

- speak loudly
- respond to physical rewards
- touch people to get their attention
- stand close when talking to someone
- physically oriented and move a lot
- have early large-muscle development
- learn by manipulating and doing
- memorise by walking and seeing
- use a finger as a pointer when reading
- gesture a lot
- can't sit still for long periods of time
- can't remember geography unless they've actually been there
- use action words
- use plot-oriented books – they reflect action with body movement as they read
- have messy handwriting
- want to act things out
- like involved games
- doodle during phone conversations and meetings



STUDY TIP
Doodle frames
around your pages.

NOW COUNT UP THE TOTAL NUMBER OF TICKS FOR EACH LEARNING STYLE.

Visual

Auditory ○

Kinesthetic ○

Your favourite or preferred learning style is _____!

Please note: this is only a guide.

You may have more than one preferred learning style, or be split evenly between all three.

Since your best learning style is _____ you would be wise (when studying) to do what ...?

[illegible]

NOTES

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HAMILTON GIRLS'
HIGH SCHOOL

Compiled by the
HGHS Careers Department