



WORKING “STUDY” INTO YOUR LIFE



I'm hearing a collective groan everywhere: STUDY? As well as do homework? Where am I going to find time for THAT? It will take HOURS??!!

The trick is:

A little bit, consistently

And:

Try and work it into your day so it doesn't take too much extra time

And:

Make the most of your time when things are quiet

Here's how a school term generally works:

Weeks 1 to 3: Things are pretty quiet. New topics are being introduced; your teachers are setting the foundations for your learning. It's unlikely you'll have a lot of homework or assignments.

Weeks 4 to 6: The "learning" increases, assignments are introduced and preparation work for these begins. There's a bit more homework, but it's mostly manageable.

Weeks 7 to 8: **PANIC STATIONS!!!** This is where you'll have a majority of your tests and assignments due before assessment closes. It seems like everything is expected right now and you're feeling overloaded.

Weeks 9 to 10: Your final assignments are due. There is relief. It's a bit quiet again. Then your teacher starts pre-teaching the next term's topic and it starts all over again!

So let's look back at weeks one to three. You probably don't have a lot of homework, so you spend extra time on the computer or watching TV. That's the way it runs, right? Nothing to do until later.

CHANGE YOUR MINDSET!!

To improve your organisation and learning potential and save your sanity, it's important to start your study from week one. Entering as much foundation work as possible into your brain correctly will also help you have some framework to "hang" new information on, making it easy to understand.

So in those first few weeks when you have no assignments and things are a bit quiet, get ahead on your study. You could:

- Get ahead on your English novel. Remember to write a brief, dot-point summary of each chapter or after every dozen or so pages.
- Read ahead in your Science or Geography text book, making flashcards for all the words that appear in **BOLD** font.
- LEARN those flashcards off by heart completely and early in the term. Not only will you have them learnt and ready for test and exam time, knowing the definitions and terminology solidly will give your brain a good "coat hanger" or framework to hang the rest of the stuff you learn that term on. This is a

good memory trigger and will give you a solid foundation on which to build your knowledge over subsequent weeks.

- Start on a maths “cheat sheet”; the piece of paper you are permitted to take into an exam with you. Too many kids do this the night before the exam and underestimate how much time it takes to write and get to know where everything is on one. You can put formulae, example questions and worded instructions on there. Add to it every week so by the time your test comes around you have everything there that you need and are familiar with it all.
- Revise vocabulary and grammar rules for languages. Put them on flashcards or in tables to learn.
- Do a table for the era you’re covering in History; do some background research and start putting down WHAT happened, WHERE it happened, WHO it happened to and WHY it happened.
- Anything else you can think of!! You are only limited by your imagination.

Another trick to remember when working study into your life is to make it easy and portable. Have you got 10 minutes before you leave for after school sport, but don’t have time to get your books out? Do you travel by bus or train to and from school? Do you get to the end of the day and feel too exhausted to do anything?

Here’s some ideas for some quick and portable study:

- Keep your study accessible. Avoid packing it away into folders where you won’t see it or have to dig it out. Stick it up, display it, have it in your pocket or bag or on your phone.
- Flashcards are wonderfully portable. Or download a flashcard app on your phone. Flick through a pile quickly and make separate piles of the ones you know and the ones that need a little more practice.
- Have your writing out diagrams, tables, mind maps and acronyms on flashcards to make them quicker and more portable.
- Walk around the house, looking at your mind maps and rehearsing bits of information.
- Record stuff to revise for tests on your phone and listen to it with your headphones on... find recordings of the musical pieces you need to learn and listen... or download an audio book of the novel you’re reading in class.

- Take photos of your mind maps with your phone or tablet and look at them until you can reproduce them without viewing them.

So, study doesn't mean getting out the largest book you can find, reading it and taking pages and pages of notes. It's not that doing that is unproductive, it's just that it's boring and tedious and you're not very likely to want to do it very often.

Change your mindset. Give yourself positive messages that study need not take long, that it can be bright, colourful and creative and that it's kind of fun to do mind maps and flashcards. And let's face it... who doesn't like playing with a bottle of white out?

By making your study cool, fun and colourful not only will it be easier to talk yourself into doing, ("Let's just do 10 colourful flashcards and learn them before going to bed") but it will also be easier for your brain to recall them when you go into your test. It's a win: win situation.

With a teensy bit of planning, you can always have a quick study fix at your finger tips. And with study, every little bit counts. A couple of minutes here and there adds up. Every definition or concept you manage to successfully store in your long term memory could mean an extra few marks in your final exams.