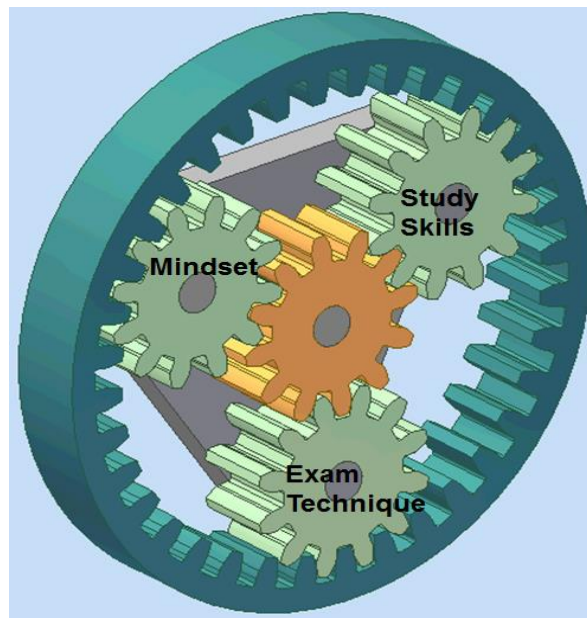




# Study Skills Guide

## Mintlaw Academy



### WE LEARN...

- 10% of what we READ
- 20% of what we HEAR
- 30% of what we SEE
- 40% of what we SAY
- 50% of what we both SEE and HEAR
- 60% of what we DO
- 70% of what we DISCUSS with others
- 80% of what we EXPERIENCE personally
- 95% of what we TEACH to someone else

## Key Points from the Research...

- ☑ Good Study Skills can be learned and do not need to take a great deal of time. They can improve academic performance/results significantly. For best results, students need to have an active and reflective approach.
- ☑ Mindset: having a positive, growth mindset creates motivation and productivity through the belief that your most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This view creates a love of learning and resilience that is essential for success. (Carol Dwek). Discourage, "I can't". Encourage, "I can, I'll try, I'm just not there yet."
- ☑ Link your work/progress to factors over which you have control such as: effort, study time and the use of appropriate strategies and not link it to fixed attributes over which you have no control. Think about (reflect) on your performance and set yourself improvement goals and work towards these.
- ☑ Using metacognition (where learners are thinking about and self-regulating their own learning) helps towards success.
- ☑ The neuroscience of memory:
  - ✓ Attention is fundamental - for information to be learned, neurons must think it is novel, relevant, noticeable and attention grabbing, and they must experience it repeatedly. This repetition must be offset against boredom - one way is to rehearse the information in different ways rather than repeat it in the same way.
  - ✓ Chunking is a great way to enhance memory: Pattern Chunking: Breaking information into bitesize pieces (e.g., making up a story about a series of otherwise unrelated items to remember and Categorical chunking.
  - ✓ Making things personally relevant helps with memory.
  - ✓ Transferring the learning (reorganising the learning) into various forms and practise regular re-call.
- ☑ Practise the thing you'll be tested on. If your exam involves writing an essay, you need to practise essay-writing. Merely memorising the material is not enough. Writing exam answers is a skill. You need to get 'exam fit'. Research confirms that practising retrieving information is one of the best ways to ensure you remember it. Regular past paper practice is essential.
- ☑ If you want to study effectively, you should 'space your practice' where you spread out your revision rather than cramming it all into one session. Get organised by planning your study earlier and spreading it out.

## Feelings about Exams

Tick the box which is most like you. Highlight the ideas underneath which you would like to try.

1. When I revise, I get the feeling I will never remember the answers.

Like me	Not like me
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### What can you do?

- ☒ Be an active reader - look at the **SQ3R** approach when reading text (Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review). This makes reading more active and effective.
- ☒ Highlight/underline **key** points - transfer these to note form, mind maps, flow diagrams, etc.
- ☒ Review what you know - the next day and the next day and the next and so on.
- ☒ Do this by testing yourself, doing past papers, explaining key points to someone or the wall, producing mind maps, etc.

2. I worry about how I will do in the exam and then I can't get started on my revision.

Like me	Not like me
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### What can you do?

- ☒ Plan your study and keep a record of how you are progressing.
- ☒ Get 'exam fit' by regularly working on exam type questions.
- ☒ Work on past papers (from untimed to timed) and review the answers - look where you dropped marks and do something about them.

3. When I have a test, my mind goes blank and I find it hard to start writing.

Like me	Not like me
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### What can you do?

- ☒ Brainstorm - try to write key points.
- ☒ Read the paper and work out an order to answer the paper; leave space for questions you're going to come back to

- ☒ If your mind goes blank, try to imagine the times you were learning that particular topic and it may help to bring things back or when you were studying it - try to picture the study notes.
- ☒ It is useful to create visual connections or mnemonics to help with recall.

4. I work for so long the night before a test that I feel tired out or just don't care how I do.

Like me	Not like me
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**What can I do?**

- ☒ Plan your study - don't leave too late.
- ☒ Space your practice out instead of cramming it at the last minute. 3 x 1 hour sessions spaced out are more effective than a 3 hour session the night before an assessment.
- ☒ Try not to work the night before an exam - have your study completed before this so that you can relax and rest properly in preparation.
- ☒ Always have at least an hour's break between study and bedtime
- ☒ Talk to friends, parents, teachers about your worries and managing your study

5. There seems so much to learn, I lose my place and don't know where to start.

Like me	Not like me
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**What can I do?**

- ☒ Prioritise - traffic lighting topics. Work out what you know, what you're not sure of and what you don't know/understand...
- ☒ ...Make up a revision plan from this, prioritising areas that you need to work on more/most. Stick to it as much as possible.
- ☒ Keep an up to date record of your study and constantly review your progress - where you are now, what you need to do next.

## **Study Planning      Getting Started - What sort of worker are you?**




This is a useful checklist of effective study approaches...

- ☒ Do you work from a weekly/monthly/yearly planner?
- ☒ Do you banish your phone/social media from your study area?
- ☒ Is your place of study (desk/room) tidy and organised? Do you always have everything you need (books, pens, files, highlighters, dividers, study cards, etc) to hand before you start to study?
- ☒ Do you have water available and regularly drink it?
- ☒ Do you review your class work notes and hand-outs at regular intervals?
- ☒ Do you transfer information into various formats such as study cards, mindmaps, flow charts, etc?
- ☒ Do you ever use any memory techniques to help you memorise your work?
- ☒ Do you plan your essays?
- ☒ Are you confident about your subject specific vocabulary and spelling?
- ☒ Do you find it easy to identify KEY words/points in your notes?
- ☒ Do you practise active reading? (Survey Question, Read, Recall, Review)
- ☒ Do you proofread your work?
- ☒ Do you work for around 45-minute sessions and have short breaks in between?
- ☒ Do you do regular exam/past paper revision under timed conditions and actively seek to improve areas of difficulty?
- ☒ Do you read exam questions or titles of essays carefully; check these while answering and check again when reading over your answer to see if you've answered what has been asked?

## Revision Action Plan - Prioritising Sheet

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic/Subtopic/Skill	 Red	 Amber	 Green	Information/Next steps/ Details
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use these planning/ prioritisation sheets for each subject/topic before planning your Study Timetable.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work out where you are for each area by doing questions, working with others, discussion, brainstorming, etc.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Be honest with yourself: if you can't recall much information at all or don't understand it: put it down as <span style="color: red;">red</span>. If you are losing marks, guessing (even correctly) but generally understand it, then put it down as <span style="color: orange;">amber</span>. If you understand it pretty well and got a generally good mark for this topic, then put it down as <span style="color: green;">green</span>. The red topics should feature most on your Study Plan, followed by amber, etc.                     </div>				

## Practical Study Tips...

Some people prefer a particular learning style; it's better if you adopt a multisensory approach and utilise a variety of methods from the different categories below:

### Visual Study Tips: Watching & Seeing...

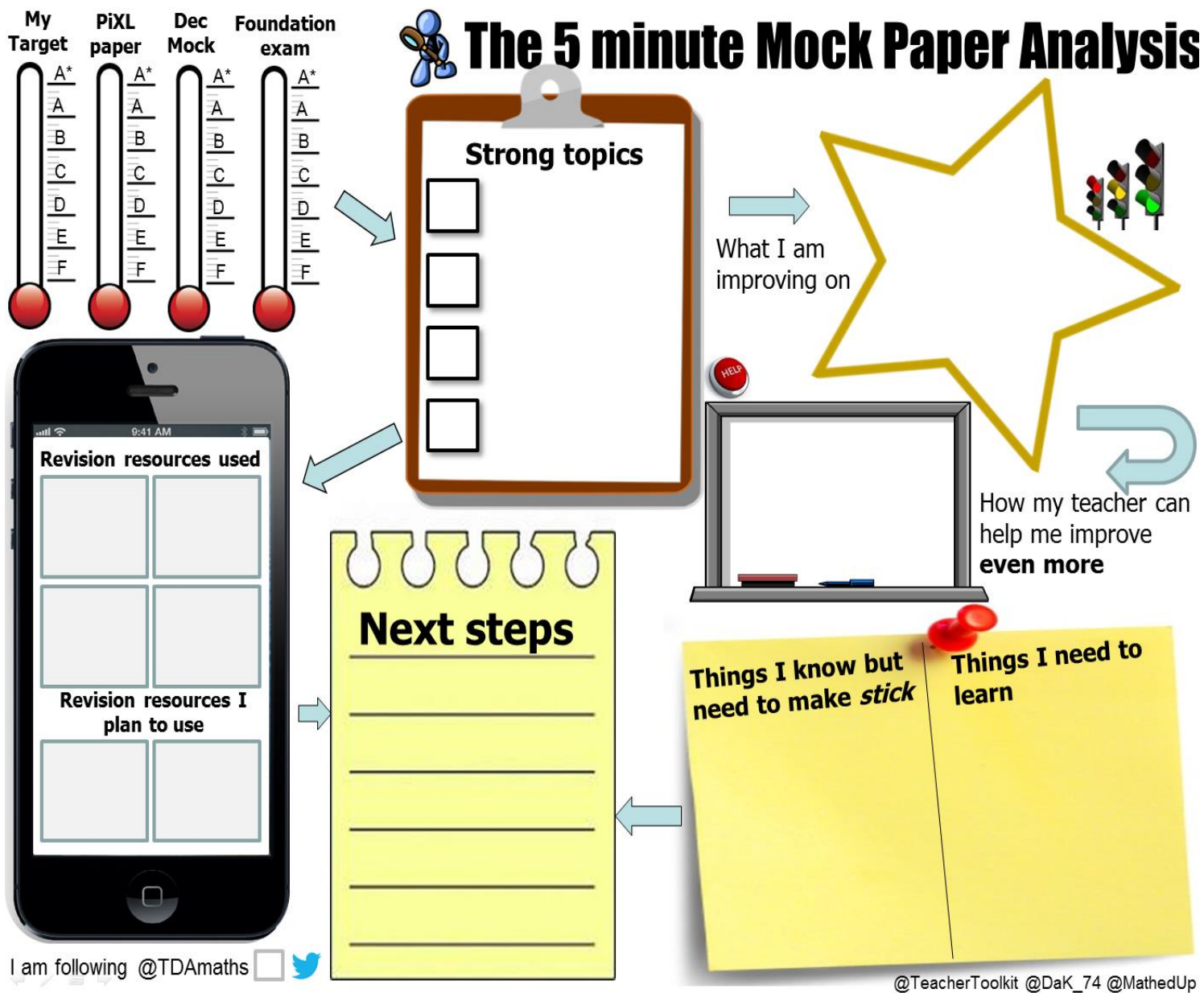
- ☑ Use mind maps/charts/diagrams/posters, etc. to help you to understand key concepts and how things connect/relate to each other. Put them on walls/doors for regular referral.
- ☑ Use study cards: uncluttered; colour-coded; e.g.. key words one side/definitions on other.
- ☑ **Sticky Facts** -Choose a topic: recall facts one at a time and remember/- if still sticky - put on Sticky Facts Board - regular practice/review to get into long term memory.
- ☑ Keep visual presentations uncluttered. Break them into chunks visually with colour coding/highlighting/bullet points/lines/boxes.
- ☑ Use traffic lighting to keep up-to-date with knowledge/information/priorities.
- ☑ Make visual connections between factors/ concepts.
- ☑ Watch T.V. programmes/video clips on topics and transfer information learned into study notes.
- ☑ Put important information to learn onto screen-saver/onto the inside of folders.

### Auditory Study Tips: Listening & Talking...

- ☑ Talk things through/re-call information often/explain information/details to others - this will help to work how what is known/not known and help to lodge it into the long-term memory.
- ☑ Get family members (for example) to do past/specimen papers/textbook questions or ask about information on study cards. This can help to regularly check where you are now and what you need to do next.
- ☑ Read information aloud.
- ☑ Condensing/summarising key information - do a 30 second/1 minute, 2 minute talk challenge on topics (repeat this to develop quality).
- ☑ Record notes/ instructions to self on mobile which you can listen to regularly, e.g. on bus.
- ☑ Make up mnemonics - funny, quirky or personally meaningful work well.

### Kinaesthetic Study Tips: Action...

- ☑ Write out notes/make up mind maps/diagrams as you listen. Produce study notes/cards/diagrams, etc. from what has been studied.
- ☑ Mentally review what you've been studying whilst doing any form of exercise.
- ☑ Move around to learn and revise; use actions/rhythm and rhyme to help memorise information.
- ☑ Practise answering exam questions.
- ☑ Carousel Learning: Write a list of questions then ask your questions to each other in turn, moving around the group.



This is a visual example of how to actively review your learning and progress and help to establish your next steps.

## Group/Partner Study Skills Activities

- ☑ **Buzz Words:** shout out key words on topic ( give quick explanation to it or pass on explanation). Works with adding sticky notes to board or adding to mindmap, etc as they wish (e.g. doodle; mnemonics).
- ☑ **Pictionary:** draw pictures which represent key words - study partner has to guess what they are. Back to Back: one person describes what they see, the other person asks lots of questions and draws what's described - compare and discuss.
- ☑ **Paper in a Bucket:** write key words on topic on paper - put them in a bucket - each person chooses one and, in turn, describes the key word without using the term - other guess. Round two: same thing but only with one or two words description only.
- ☑ **Guess what I am?** (post-it of vocabulary term on forehead - ask questions to study buddy).
- ☑ **Jigsaw Learning (peer support):** list (from topic) what know/don't know - pair up with friends - knows with don't knows - explain/illustrate/discuss etc. (switch around with different topics/subjects as necessary).
- ☑ **Post Assessment Learning** - "Great Goals!": what don't know/need to work on for next time - write in bullets/number order, etc (**review these**).
- ☑ **'Teacher/Learner Layering Challenge':** take it in turn with friends/study partners to present info (on topic) in any way you want (game, word search, poster etc). The 'teachers' presenting for a few minutes and the 'learners' taking notes; asking questions, etc. The learners have to reflect on the learning (write fact/s down they learned). At the end, can do a sharing, around the table exercise where they build up facts learned - record ones required.
- ☑ **Regular Exam/Test Questions Let's do IT! I (individual) test** - Set of questions - do individually first then before going over answers, go onto **T (team) test** - doing the same questions with others- then go over using answer papers. Good for seeing where you are - identifying next steps

## Useful Study Skills Tips...

- ☑ Keep a positive, growth mindset! Don't close your mind by saying "I can't" - say, "I'll try, I'm just not there yet."
- ☑ Use a planners/goal-setting chart and a study timetable to keep you organised. Make it work for you - keep it up-to-date and keep a note what you still have to do/ find out. This is a dynamic process - it is constantly changing!
- ☑ Establish 'Great Goals' regularly. What do you still not know/need to improve on...
- ☑ Divide your study time into manageable chunks - with set targets for each subject/topic. Work for around 45 minutes then get up and move around. Come back and review learning before moving onto next section.
- ☑ Space your practice: e.g. 5 hours spread out over two weeks will produce more longer lasting learning than 5 hours cramming in one session.
- ☑ Before reading topic, brainstorm what you know about it, then read it (taking notes along the way) and brainstorm again afterwards (with your notes out of sight) to find out what you know now.
- ☑ Transfer the learning into various formats and go over regularly.
- ☑ Use mnemonics. e.g. the correct spelling of the word 'BECAUSE' can be learned through the mnemonic: Big Elephants Can Always Use Small Exits. Use this concept when you have a whole list of key words to learn. You can make them funny or silly. The more bizarre, the easier they are to remember.
- ☑ Use the past papers (download or hard copy) to help you to practise exam technique: getting used to the language, the planning and working under time pressures. Get into the habit of skim reading exam papers: how many marks, doing simple, quick plans for extended questions and checking the answer papers to see where you dropped marks. Download the papers and the answers
- ☑ Practise the things that you'll be tested on. It's not just about acquiring information/knowledge - it's about developing skill/how to answer the questions.
- ☑ Make use of all the resources at your disposal: e.g. Scholar

## **Revision Summary**

- ☒ Prepare for 100% by regularly reviewing and working on identified areas.
- ☒ Have a 'can do' attitude/mindset
- ☒ Using a multi-sensory approach
- ☒ Plan time effectively/prioritise by making up a study plan, working through it and noting next steps
- ☒ Monitor progress - review/tick off what you've done/learned; set areas for development.
- ☒ Keep active not passive
- ☒ Recall information regularly
- ☒ Tackle manageable chunks
- ☒ Practise skills/exam technique by doing regular past paper practice
- ☒ Have breaks and stay positive. Look how much you've achieved by the above.

## **Memory Summary**

- ☒ Understand what is to be learned
- ☒ Intend to remember. Find a reason for remembering (motivation)
- ☒ Be interested
- ☒ Chunk the learning into bitesize pieces.
- ☒ Practise recalling information regularly and repeat often in novel ways.
- ☒ Make visual connections between factors
- ☒ Mnemonics - Make them funny or silly; the more bizarre, the easier they are to remember
- ☒ Link new knowledge to things already known and understood
- ☒ Use a multisensory approach
- ☒ Use self-referencing -relate what you need to learn to yourself/your interests and experiences.

## **Making Notes Summary**

- ☒ Write key words
- ☒ Use abbreviations and know what they are.
- ☒ Record study notes
- ☒ Use different layouts (numbered points, mind maps, revision cards, flow charts, etc)
- ☒ Bind with key ring
- ☒ Use colour, capitals, drawings, diagrams
- ☒ Keep up-to-date

## **Managing the Stress**

- ☑ Talk about your feelings - don't bottle it up.
- ☑ Plan & prioritise - use a study partner to help you with this.
- ☑ Try and stay calm - "The enemy of learning is stress."
- ☑ Don't panic. Make sure you get relaxation time/ rewards for good study periods. Do not study directly before bed - need to 'wind down' and relax to ensure a proper rest.
- ☑ Get exam ready - lots of exam paper practice and working on areas highlighted.
- ☑ Create an environment where learning is applied.
- ☑ Do not work constantly - take regular breaks and drink lots of water.
- ☑ Look after your health - eat properly. Get fresh air - walk; exercise.
- ☑ Remember you don't have to give up your social life completely; it helps to keep things normal and grounded - just not every night!!!

## **Exam Technique**

- ☑ Use past papers/question papers (start with untimed and then build up to timed) to help you to practise exam technique: getting used to the language, the planning and working under time pressures.
- ☑ Be prepared -all the necessary equipment.
- ☑ Read questions carefully; check allocated marks,
- ☑ Plan answers; plan time. Don't leave early.
- ☑ Move on if stuck (come back later). Don't leave blank spaces; always have a go. Use common sense when you're not sure.
- ☑ Proofread all the answers (re read questions too!)
- ☑ Don't panic

## MUSCLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

1.	Lean back in your chair and stretch out your legs in front of you, or lie on the floor or on your bed.
2.	Close your eyes. Concentrate on each part of your body as you tense your muscles.
3.	First, curl up your toes, tense the muscles in your calves, stretch your legs as hard as you can.
4.	Hold that position and clench your hands into fists whilst stretching your arms out straight (hands resting on your thighs)
5.	Hold both positions - feel the tension - now bring your shoulders up to your ears.
6.	Push your tongue to the roof of your mouth, frown and clench your jaw.
7.	Feel the tension in all of your body. Count to 5: 1-2-3-4-5 and then let everything go.
8.	Concentrate on feeling completely without any tension.
9.	Still with your eyes closed, imagine yourself lying on a sandy beach; feel the sun warming your skin; listen to the sea gently lapping at your feet. RELAX.
10.	Slowly count down from 5: 5-4-3-2-1 and wake up.
11.	Alternatively, let yourself drift off to sleep

There are other relaxation techniques; you need to find out what works for you.

## Exam Questions and their Meanings...

Question	Meaning
Account	Explain the points.
Analyse	Show the main ideas, how they are related and why they are important.
Apply	Use your knowledge in a situation.
Compare	Look for similarities and differences.
Contrast	Show differences.
Comment	Discuss the subject.
Describe	Give a detailed account.
Discuss	Outline the details and give all sides of the argument.
Define	Give the formal meaning.
Distinguish between	Make clear the differences between.
Examine	Discuss in detail and give an opinion.
Explain	Make something clear and give reasons for it.
Evaluate	Give your opinion after explaining the advantages and disadvantages.
Illustrate	Explain/make clear by giving examples or drawing a chart, picture or diagram.
Indicate	Point out.
Interpret	Give the meaning using examples and personal comments.
Justify	Give a statement of why you think it is so. Give reasons for your statement and a conclusion.
List	Name and list the main ideas one by one.
Outline	Explain the main ideas and show how they are interrelated; leave out details.
Review	Give a summary of a topic and your assessment of it.
Relate	Show the connections between things telling how one causes or is like the other.
State	Give the main points of a topic. Use brief, clear sentences.
Summarise	Give the main points of an argument, leaving out details and examples.
Trace	Follow the progress of an idea or topic either in time or through the relationship of cause and effect.

## **Food for Thought...**

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right." (Henry Ford)

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough we must do." (Goethe)

"The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing." (John Powell)

"Learning is not a spectator sport." (D. Blocher)

"Retention is best when the learner is involved." (E. Scannell)

"Nothing worthwhile is ever easy." (Mrs Peck)

"Prepare for 100%" (Mrs Peck)

### **Notes:**

