



### Independent Study Expectations 2016-17

All teaching staff are expected to:

- Set tasks weekly at KS3 for core subjects and once a fortnight for other subjects
- Set two tasks for every five lessons at KS4
- Set tasks which promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding (fluency) in your subject
- Relate tasks to the knowledge organisers for your subject
- Assess the impact of independent study and provide feedback to help students improve
- Provide support for students who require it
- Publish independent study tasks on SMH in line with the prescribed amount and frequency

Independent study at home has three aims;

1. To enhance students' literacy and numeracy
2. To improve students' knowledge and understanding (fluency) as the building blocks of learning in all subjects
3. To develop effective independent learning habits

**Students' literacy** will be promoted through reading for pleasure at KS3 and measured by the students' progress with engaged reading time, Quiz participation and % correct in the Accelerated Reader programme. Students at KS4 will read the books, poems and study guides from the GCSE specification.

**Students' numeracy** will be promoted through access to Mathswatch and measured by the rates of completion of Maths booklets, analysis of the use of Mathswatch, progress with '10 Quick Questions' numeracy challenges in Tutor time and the subsequent performance of students in regular short tests in lessons.

**Students' knowledge and understanding** will be promoted through the publication of 'knowledge organisers' for each student in every subject half termly or termly. These will inform students and parents of exactly what knowledge the students need to acquire and understand in that half term as the building blocks of learning for that scheme of work. Progress will be measured through regular short tests in lessons. Commitment to Learning for independent study will be evident in students' mastery of that knowledge and understanding.

**Students' independent learning habits** will be promoted through the tasks set on Show my Homework and the direct link to the knowledge organisers. In this sense, revision lasts five years and not five weeks or five months. This long term approach to independent study becomes habitual and the same strategies are embedded in all students by the time they do external examinations in Year 11.

### Setting tasks

As teachers will know the source (knowledge organisers), for all your independent study tasks for the whole half term, a bank of tasks to set each week on SMH should be developed. They may be less time related than previously and notice of any substantial tests or assessments should be given in plenty of time. **The way tasks are recorded on SMH should cement the relationship between knowledge organisers, independent learning strategies and the core aims of the policy.**

#### STOP

Revise cells

#### START

***Produce an A Map to show what you know about cells in preparation for next lesson***

#### WHY?

Revise.....how do you do that....what does it mean?! The students producing an A map supports Aim 3

#### STOP

Read for 20 minutes

#### START

***Try to read on average for 20 minutes each night and at the end of the week, write a paragraph summarising what you have been reading.***

OR

***Keep a reading journal-after each section, write a reaction to what you have read on a post it note and stick it in your book***

OR

***Which character in your book best typifies the following virtues...vices....?***

#### WHY?

Perhaps we limit students to clock watching if we dictate a commitment

#### STOP

'Write definitions of the 15 key science words'

#### START

***'Show that you understand the 15 science words by using them in new sentences'***

#### WHY?

Writing definitions is a low level rote task and students' learning is strongly reinforced by knowing and understanding words in order to place them correctly in context.

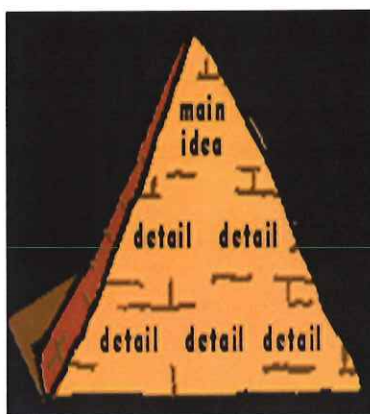
## Appendix: Overview of strategies for Effective Independent Learning

There are **FOUR STEPS** to success;  
**Understand, Condense, Memorise, Review**

- One of the **key elements** to succeeding in exams and turning your effort and your intelligence into marks is **Effective Independent Study**.
- **Know your stuff**. Too many students spend hours 'revising' – but it's ineffective; it's not going into the long-term memory.



### Step 1 : Understand



You won't remember a unit of work for long if you don't understand it.

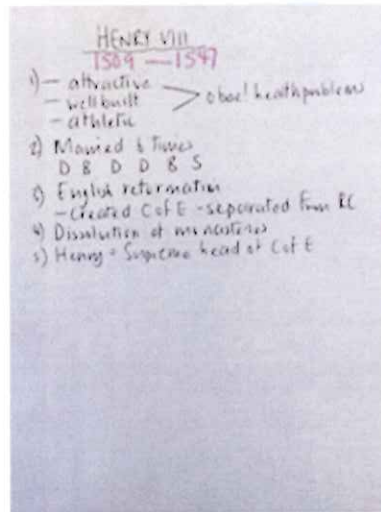
Think of each topic you study as a **giant jigsaw puzzle** and everything you learn as a piece to completing the puzzle.

If you understand how it all fits together, it will be less confusing and you will be able to memorise it all easily.



## Step 2: Condense it

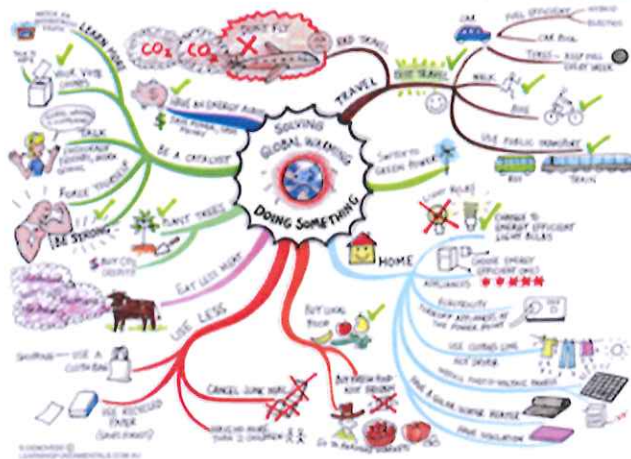
Henry VIII was King of England from 1509 until his death in 1547. Henry is said to have been an attractive, well-built and very athletic man, accomplished at many sports. Later on in life, he had a succession of health problems, partly due to becoming very obese. He is famed for having been married six times. He divorced two of his wives, another two of his wives were beheaded, one wife died and then Henry himself died whilst married to his sixth and final wife. As well as being married six times, Henry is known to have had many affairs. Henry VIII is also famous for his part in the English Reformation - the creation of the Church of England by separation from the Roman Catholic Church. His squabbles with Rome, which were mainly due to the issues surrounding divorce, eventually led to the dissolution of the monasteries and the establishment of himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England.



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## Step 3: Memorise it

A-Maps



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## Memory Techniques

### Mnemonics

#### 1. First letter triggers

A: ACCCS

Q: How was the League of Nations organised?

Assembly, Council, Commissions, Court of International Justice and Secretariat.

#### 2. Visual triggers

On the one hand...

On the other hand...



#### 3. Rhyming/phrase triggers

'When America sneezes the whole world catches a cold.' WASTWWCAC



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### 4.Loci

Works by logically placing items in various locations in places you know well. Useful for people, lists and periods of time.

For example, in this hall.....

Weimar Republic 1919-33



## Promoting subject fluency Strategy 1: Have a dump!

- Take a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
- Identify a specific topic to focus on but don't open any books.
- In 60 secs, dump onto the paper anything you can remember about the topic. Don't worry about the structure and organisation. Odd words are fine.
- This activity helps access prior knowledge and also sends signals to the memory.
- Put the paper to one side and do a revision activity for 15 mins using books, revision cards, mind maps etc (READ, COVER, REMEMBER).
- Put books away and dump again in a different colour on the same sheet of paper as before, but in a different colour.
- Students will typically add at least 7 new pieces of information second time around-a visible sign of success. Success is a powerful motivational tool



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## Promoting subject fluency

### Strategy 2: What does it look like?

'A picture says a thousand words.' (The brain prefers images to words!)

- Take a section of written notes.
- On a plain sheet of paper, try to reproduce as much as possible of this information in 15 minutes without using any words. Numbers, symbols and initial letters are acceptable.
- This tool forces students to personalise their notes- a great way to develop understanding.
- This could be developed by explaining their drawings to somebody else.
- Stick the sheets of paper up at home in a prominent place like a wardrobe door or a bedroom wall. Change them regularly.



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## Promoting subject fluency

### Strategy 3: Talk until you stop

- Spend 5-6 minutes reading through some notes
- Give a 'lecture' on the topic without the notes. This can be to a friend, Mum, Dad or even an empty room! The objective is to find the point at which the student stops talking. That is the point which is not fully understood or isn't remembered.
- When the student stops, they have discovered their limit and the starting point for the next revision session.
- Great for those who are good at kidding themselves about how much they know!



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## Promoting subject fluency

### Strategy 4: Post-it notes

- Spend one 20-25 minute session writing a set of notes onto post-it notes. Only one point for each note.
- Stick all the post-its on a wall, door or notice board in a random order.
- Over the next few days, rearrange the post-its into any order which seems to make sense i.e chronological, most/least important, thematic, causal.
- The student will see and remember the post-its 100's of times if they are displayed.
- Post-its can also be used to match dates with events, themes with poems, chemicals with reactions etc



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