

## **Effective Independent Study at Wellacre 2018-19**

Homework at Wellacre is referred to as **Independent study**. It has three aims:

1. **Enhance students' literacy and numeracy.**
2. **Improve students' knowledge and understanding (fluency) as the building blocks of learning in all subjects.**
3. **Develop effective independent learning habits.**

**Students' literacy** is promoted through reading for pleasure at KS3 and measured by the students' progress with engaged reading time, quiz participation and 'percentage correct' in the Accelerated Reader programme. All students at KS3 have a library book they should be reading daily in school and **at home, and an English SPaG booklet to complete weekly.**

**Students' numeracy** is 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. All KS3 students have a Maths Homework booklet to complete tasks in.

*Mathswatch is an online tool to help with independent study. It contains video clips, interactive questions and worksheets on all topics. It can also be used to help students with any subject with numeracy elements such as Science and Technology.*

*The web address is: [www.vle.mathswatch.co.uk](http://www.vle.mathswatch.co.uk) and students' login details are: initialsurname@wellacre e.g. John Smith is jsmith@wellacre Password: wellacre*

*In certain circumstances a student's login will include a number in line with the Wellacre email address (e.g. jbloggs2@wellacre). If a student is unable to gain access, please contact a Maths teacher.*

*Please log on and make sure that Mathswatch is used daily to develop greater confidence in Maths and support progress.*

**Students' knowledge and understanding** is promoted through the publication of 'knowledge organisers' for each student in every subject termly. These will inform students and parents exactly what knowledge the students need to acquire and understand as the building blocks of learning for that term. They are published on Class Charts and are also on the school website and can be accessed through the MyEd app.

Commitment to Learning for independent study will be evident in students' mastery of that knowledge and understanding and their response to teacher feedback in lessons.

**Students' independent learning habits** will be promoted through the independent learning tasks set on Class Charts 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.

**All students should;**

- **Log on to Class Charts daily to check independent study tasks that have been set and to meet deadlines.**
- **Locate and use the termly knowledge organisers in Class Charts.**
- **Log on to their school email account daily to check for shared resources and messages from staff.**
- **Use the independent study skills to improve knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.**
- **Read regularly and widely including their own library reading book and a range of fiction and non-fiction texts**

**All teaching staff will:**

- **Set tasks which promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding (fluency) in subjects.**
- **Relate tasks to the knowledge organisers for each subject.**
- **Publish independent study tasks on Class Charts in line with the prescribed amount and frequency.**
- **Test retrieval and memory through regular low stakes quizzing in class and regular formal assessments.**

**All Parents and Carers should:**

- **Log on to Class Charts through the MyEd app and check the work that has been set.**
- **Encourage the completion of independent study tasks every day and support the development of effective study habits.**
- **Support students in acquiring factual knowledge and sound understanding of subject content by discussing academic progress at home.**
- **Use the subject knowledge organisers to check for understanding in preparation for tests and assessments at school**

**A guide to how to prepare for examinations effectively**

Students need clear direction to complete work independently in order to develop subject fluency in terms of knowledge and understanding. Students at KS3 should be completing at least 1 hour of work every evening. Student at KS4 should be completing 90 minutes of work each evening.

The following information should be used with students to support them in developing effective independent learning habits.

**Firstly, it's ok to forget. That's an important part of making memories last.**

Tying shoes is a hard task when we are little. We had to think hard about which laces went where. Now we can do it automatically.

There is some basic knowledge which needs to be as easy to retrieve as tying our shoes, so working memory can be used for more critical tasks.



Need help? Try [www.getrevising.co.uk](http://www.getrevising.co.uk)

So how do you actually revise?

- No cramming-spaced practice as part of an ongoing commitment to independent learning.
- Consistent, short study sessions-2 hours on a Sunday becomes 30 minutes on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.

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

One of the key elements to succeeding in exams and turning effort and your ability 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.

**Follow these simple steps using knowledge organisers and subject exercise books.**

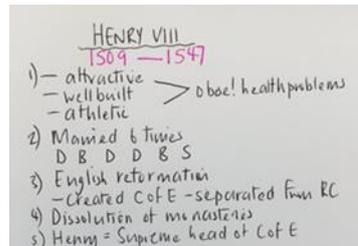
**Step 1: Understand**

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**

Make notes to condense chunks of text.

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



**Step 3: Memorise it**

1. Create an A-map to summarise notes



2. Create mnemonics or first letter triggers to aid memory

**All Boys Should Come Home Please**

To remember the names of Henry VIII's wives- **A**ragon, **B**oleyn, **S**eymour, **C**leves, **H**oward, **P**arr

3. Visual triggers

On the one hand...



On the other hand...

#### 4. Rhyming/phrase triggers

Q: What Happened to the wives of Henry VIII?

*Divorced, Beheaded, Died, Divorced, Beheaded, Survived*

**Struggling to remember facts? Try these four strategies.**

#### **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. TEST YOURSELF! 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. Importantly, it establishes what you know and what you don't.
- 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!

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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

## What else?

Use Apps such as Memrise and Quizlet to use or create quizzes based on revision topics.

Students can create them, test yourself or get someone to test you, it works!

There are a number of types you can create:

- ✓ Multiple Choice Questions
- ✓ True or False
- ✓ Short Explanation Questions
- ✓ Odd One Out



## How to use flashcards

Simply create with questions on one side and answers on the other side. You can colour code for specific topics and quiz yourself or others. Post its can be also useful for key words and timelines

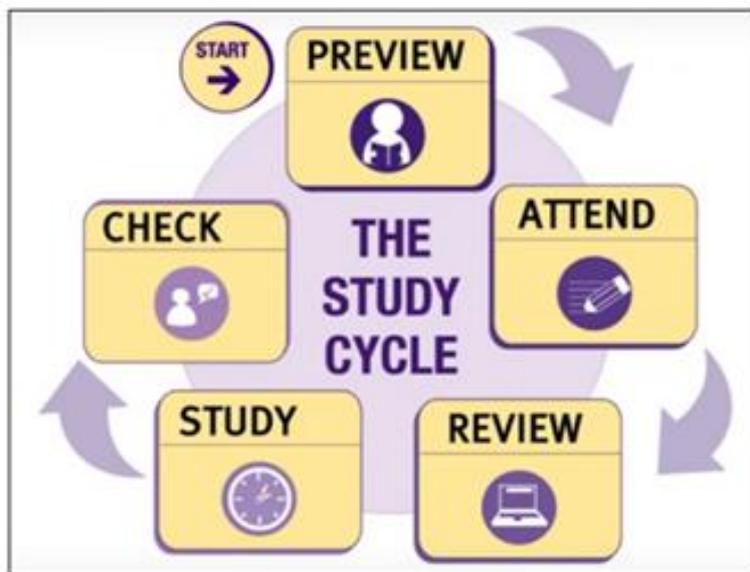
Try the Leitner Method, using this video <https://youtu.be/C20EvKtdJwQ>



Create excellent flashcards online or on your phone using Quizlet which also had an app.



## Using the Study Cycle model to embed independent learning strategies



### Step 1: PREVIEW

When you direct study to knowledge organisers **before the lesson/topic study**, students will grasp the 'big picture'. Direct and support students in activities to deconstruct information in the knowledge organisers. When students have the 'big picture', detail becomes more obvious and relevant to learning and lessons are more engaging.

### *Ideas*

How to study a textbook <http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2016/2/12-1>

DARTS [http://www.teachit.so/index\\_htm\\_files/DARTS\\_Information\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.teachit.so/index_htm_files/DARTS_Information_booklet.pdf)

### **Step 2: ATTEND**

When students have the 'big picture', detail in subject content becomes more obvious to students and more relevant to their learning. Students are more engaged as a result. Class work has a place in a cycle of learning.

### **Step 3: REVIEW**

Direct students to spend time reviewing their notes/class work. This process helps strengthen and transfer information from short term to long term memory. Reinforcing new learning and new concepts gives students more confidence.

### *Ideas*

'Quick fire five' as a Do Now

10QQ Do Now

Have a Dump!

Talk until you stop.....

### **Step 4: STUDY**

Direct students to review and connect learning independently through summarising, condensing, producing A-maps, apply understanding to new problems. Repetition is the key.

### *Ideas*

Dual coding, or combining visuals with words, is one of the 6 strategies for effective learning. The idea is that by combining a visual representation of an idea with a verbal representation of an idea, we will be able to learn the idea better.

### **Step 5: CHECK**

Provide timely opportunities for students to evaluate their understanding of subject content, concepts and skills. Getting feedback helps students to recognise their strengths and the area they need to work on. ACTIONS for students should be of sufficient quality to move their learning on.

### *Ideas*

Interleaving, elaboration, spacing, retrieval practice <http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2016/8/11-1>

Topic and Quiz Spacing <http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2017/5/11-1>

Use the KS3 POS to help students to gauge their progress and identify achieved (mastered and secured) and areas to work on (developing and emerging). Focus on the HOW. HOW can students improve to 'achieved'-how will your feedback, instruction and modelling to help them.