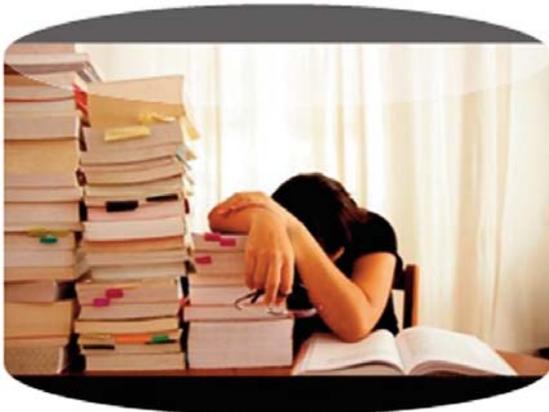


# Study Skills Activity Supplement

by Gina Halpin

Now that schools and colleges are back and young people are facing into another academic year, it is a good time to help them to develop good study skills habits that will see them through the year. Young people may not know how to study efficiently and effectively, so by exploring other ways of 'doing study' young people may gain better results and make the school year less stressful.

This activity supplement identifies key areas around study such as - **time management, motivation / organisation, full use of all resources and good study habits** which will enable young people to maximize their time, improve their learning and also reduce stress.



## Time Management

There are only so many hours in a day, a week, and a term. You cannot change the number of hours, but you can decide how to best use them. To be successful in school, you must carefully manage your study time. Here is a strategy for doing this.

It is vital that to draw up a timetable at the beginning of each week. Remember that the purpose of the timetable is to make your life easier. It will help you get more organised and take control, which in turn will result in less stress. A simple graph with days of the week listed and divided into one hour segments will suffice. Generally home work journals and student diaries will include a sample format.

## Prepare a study time table

**Never neglect to include leisure time into the weekly timetable:**

This will increase the chances of you sticking to the timetable you draw up.

**Set yourself precise learning goals:** It is strongly recommended that you spend time before you begin your study/homework session asking yourself 'what do I want to know at the end of working on this topic or question?'. Ask this for each topic/subject and write it down on a list before you start the session.

**Set time limits:** In your Junior and Leaving Certificate examination you will be expected to work against the clock. Your study should also involve working against the clock. Allocate a set time for each study topic or question.

**Prioritise:** Subjects taken at Higher Level demand more time and carry more Leaving Cert. points than subjects taken at Pass level. The time you put into subjects taken at Honours Level should therefore be greater than the time given to your Pass Level subjects.

**Take frequent short breaks:** Educational Psychologists tell us that it is better to take frequent short breaks rather than infrequent long breaks. A 5-10 minute break every 40 minutes is best for concentration and productive study. Try building this option into your timetable.

[www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)

## Improving Motivation and Concentration

Finding it hard to get motivated is a difficulty that is frequent among young people. Getting motivated is very important to successful study, and motivation can come from different sources. Enjoying the subject, wanting to learn more about a particular topic, fear of failing or wanting to achieve a specific goal are more motivating forces for young people.

For this activity give the young people a piece of paper and ask them to write down three things they want to achieve for themselves within the next five years.

## Tips for successful study planning

Suggest to the young people to pin this piece of paper up where they study as a constant reminder to themselves of why they are studying and putting the effort in. This can be a great motivator. Look at studying as stepping stones to achieving goals. It may be hard work but the reward at the end is great.

*Source: Adapted from Study Skills, by Liam J. Moroney*



## Utilizing All Resources

It is important to remind young people that there are many more resources to maximizing study other than focusing on the course text book alone. Also 'learning off by heart' is of little value especially if they don't fully understand what it is they are learning. So effective use of people and resources can be invaluable such as:

**Teachers** – listen to teachers, they will provide additional information and insights that are not contained in textbooks. Don't be afraid to ask questions – no question is stupid, if you get the answer you need it will have been worth it.

**Friends & family** - Ask for help from your family and friends, do assignments, projects and study together. Be careful however that valuable time is not being wasted by chatting and other distraction.

**Other resources** – Read other materials that relate to the subject, use the Internet, this is very useful as subjects may be explained in an easier way than may be presented in a text book.

*Source: Study Skill, by Liam J. Moroney*

## Creating Habits for Successful Study

Encouraging smart study skills to become habits rather than activities that young people do once in a while will help young people get more from the time they have allocated to studying.

**Listen** carefully when assignments are given at school – be clear about what each task requires and what teachers expect.

**Time Smart** - Study at a suitable time, one that is within their most productive hours.

**Location Location Location** - Choose a study area free from distractions. Studying clever requires concentration so stress to young people the importance of eliminating distractions such as telephones, tv and loud music.

**Review the day's work.** This will help with planning for the next day.

**Be Time Clever** - Short periods for study concentrate the mind better and reduce the chance of boredom.

**One by One** - Complete one assignment or task at a time, sometimes starting with the easiest task helps prevent the feeling of being overwhelmed with work.

**Check, Check & Recheck** - Review completed work every now & again. Check over the work you have done for errors.

**Help** - Ask for help if needed. Successful students have a habit of using the help and assistance that teachers and other adults offer.

*Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/45460>*



**Gina Halpin is the Information and Resources Officer for the Irish Youth Work Centre**