

2 Self Evaluation

Name:

Time to have a reality check. Let's have a look at the study habits you have in place so you can work out what you need to focus on to improve and be ready for the next two years.

Self-Evaluation:

For each of the following, rank yourself on a scale of 1 (excellent) to 10 (poor).

	Rank
I arrive at school and class on time.	
I bring the correct books and equipment to class.	
I listen in class and pay attention to what the teacher is saying.	
I generally participate in class discussions and activities.	
I am on task, doing the allocated work for most of the lesson.	
I don't talk when I am supposed to be listening.	
I organise my folders and notes well.	
I complete homework regularly and on time.	
I start work on assignments well before they are due.	
I prepare for tests or assessments thoroughly.	
I make study notes for my subjects throughout the year.	
I ask questions about work I don't understand.	
I work through tests or essays when returned to learn from my mistakes.	
I spend time reviewing areas with which I have difficulty.	

Based on your self-evaluation, what are the main areas you need to work on improving?

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Read and highlight key points:

In the Classroom

Think about each of your subjects. There may be some subjects you are great in - you listen, do your work, are involved in class discussions and demonstrate all the abilities of a successful senior student. In other subjects you could be the direct opposite - you talk all the time, you don't listen, you rarely know what is going on, you complete little work in class and instead just muck around and waste your and other people's time. There is usually a reason for this difference. Maybe you hate the subject and are only doing it because you have to as you need it for uni or there was no other choice. Or maybe you really don't like the teacher, you might find them boring or annoying or hard to listen to or just have a personality clash. Or maybe it has to do with the people you sit next to. You find them distracting and tend to talk with them all lesson. It is easy to find excuses and reasons. The thing to do is to look past these and think about yourself. How is your lack of application in class affecting you? What effects will it ultimately have on your results and perhaps your life? Don't let someone else ruin it for you. Once you leave school you will probably come across a boss or a co-worker you dislike but you have to learn to deal with it and move on. You can't let it affect what you do. It's the same with school. Put yourself first and think about what is best for you, regardless of other factors.

At Home

Think about your study space at home and how you use it. Is it well set-up? Do you have a space to do work on and adequate shelves or storage space for your folders? Do you allocate time each day to do schoolwork? Do you focus on completing homework first then work on assignments or on improving your notes? It is a good idea to each day decide exactly what time you are going to allocate to your schoolwork. In the early stages of Year 11 you should be doing about 2-3 hours of work per night. Use any extra time after homework and assignments to get yourself organised and improve your notes. Doing this on a regular basis helps you maintain a smooth approach to your work. If you just work in fits and starts, half an hour one night, four hours the next, you will find you get stressed and worn out. Sure you'll have more homework some nights than others, but regular work will help you to stay on top of it all more efficiently.

Write down the most relevant point for you and describe how it relates to you or your situation:

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Your To Do List: What changes do you need to make in the classroom and at home?



3 Tips for Success

Name:

There are a number of specific things you can do that make a huge difference to your level of success at school.

Self-Evaluation:

For each of the following, write down how you think doing this could help YOU at school.

1. Making summaries or study notes every time you finish a topic.
2. Filing away all past tests, assignments and useful handouts.
3. Asking for help when you don't understand something instead of leaving it.
4. Keeping up-to-date with your work.

Based on your self-evaluation, what are the main areas you need to work on improving?

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Read and highlight key points:

1. Making summaries or study notes every time you finish a topic.

This would have to be one of the most important things you could do to help you deal with Years 11 and 12. Many students take some time to kick into gear. They think they have plenty of time, but before they know it half the year has slipped away and examinations are fast approaching. Don't let this happen to you. This simple action can make the most amazing difference to your year. All it takes is just a little effort. Each time you get to the end of a topic in your subject, set aside a bit of time and draft out some summaries for the topic. Look at the main headings in the topic and jot down the main points for each topic. Organise your material on the topic and work out what you don't yet understand and need to ask about. This process gives you a huge advantage closer to the examination period.

2. Filing away all past tests, assignments and useful handouts.

Yes it helps if you are good at a subject and good at school. But there are things you can do to help you improve your results in a subject. Being organised can make up for a lot. Having structure to your notes, past tests and assignments to use for revision makes it easier for your mind to process and recall information. Our brains are very structured so the more structure you can introduce into your notes and papers, the more help you are giving your brain to learning the information.

3. Asking for help when you don't understand something instead of leaving it.

Successful people in all walks of life have this quality in abundance: they know when to ask for help and are not hesitant about asking for it. Being proactive in your learning is essential if you want to achieve good results. And don't forget Murphy's Law - if you don't understand something and do nothing about it, it is sure to be in the next examination.

4. Keeping up-to-date with your work.

This is pretty much self-explanatory. The advantages of keeping up-to-date are not only keeping your parents and teachers off your back, but also it means less stress for you. The most important thing though, is once you do fall behind, it can be challenging to catch up again.

Write down the most relevant point for you and describe how it relates to you or your situation:

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Your To Do List: What do YOU need to do now and what changes do you need to make?

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Examination Techniques

Name: _____

Do you keep on making the same mistakes at examination time?

Self-Evaluation:

For each of the following tick whether you do this in an examination:
A LOT, A BIT, NOT AT ALL

	A lot	A bit	Not at all
Not looking through the whole paper before starting work.			
Not reading the question carefully enough.			
Writing irrelevant answers and not really answering the question.			
Running out of time and not completing the paper.			
Forgetting details like 'Give 3 points' and giving only two.			
Wasting time using liquid paper or forgetting to write the answer in.			
Not writing neatly and legibly.			
Not showing all working or not setting work out clearly.			
Not having a plan of how long I will spend on each section of the paper.			
Getting stressed and freaking out and forgetting information.			
Not planning out an extended response answer but just writing madly.			
Not checking my answers at the end of the paper.			

Based on your self-evaluation, what are the main areas you need to work on improving?

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Read and highlight key points:

It can sometimes be difficult to implement examination strategies. You have good intentions, but in the heat of the examination all you can think about is getting as much of your knowledge as possible down onto the paper. That is why it is important to have thought about this before going in.

One of the most important techniques is your time management in the examination. Have a clear idea before you enter the examination room of how much time you should spend on each section of the paper based on how many marks it is worth. Take your watch off and sit it in front of you. Keep an eye on the clock and don't let yourself get bogged down in any one section. If you find a question difficult, mark it and move on. Your subconscious is incredibly powerful. Even though the answer is not on the surface of your brain, if you give it a little bit of time the answer often resurfaces or something later in the paper may jog your memory.

It is also important to accept that you can't fix everything at once. Look at the mistakes you often make from the list on the previous page. Work out which are the most important ones: which ones would most help you gain marks if you could fix these? Choose just one or two to focus on and in every little class test or examination try to put this into practice.

One way to improve your examination techniques and help eliminate examination nerves is to simulate examination situations as much as possible when you are studying at home. Give yourself a set amount of time only, do not refer to your notes in any way, and take the situation as seriously as possible so that you can work on specific techniques.

If you suffer badly from examination nerves, do what the great athletes do. In the weeks leading up to a sporting event, each day they will run a movie in their head of the event, making a mental picture as clear and detailed as possible. They imagine every stage: getting dressed, going off to the game, performing brilliantly and feeling great when it is over. You can apply the same technique to visualising the examination day and your success in the exam.

Write down the most relevant point for you and describe how it relates to you or your situation:

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Your To Do List:

19 Continuous Improvement

Name: _____

The way you approach your studies is in some ways a reflection of how you approach things in general in life.

Self-Evaluation:

For each of the following mark a cross on the scale for how well you apply each of these principles.

	Yes	sort of	No
1. You don't get hung up on set ideas. Just because you do things a certain way, you know that it is not the only way to do it.	_____	_____	_____
2. Faced with a problem, you think of HOW to do it, not why it can't be done.	_____	_____	_____
3. You don't make excuses.	_____	_____	_____
4. You don't get bogged down in the quest for perfection. You get things done even if they are not 100% perfect.	_____	_____	_____
5. If you make a mistake, you correct it immediately. You don't compound errors or bad working practices by continuing them.	_____	_____	_____
6. You use your brain and really think about things and try to understand before spending money by buying books or paying for a tutor.	_____	_____	_____
7. You think of problems as opportunities rather than challenges.	_____	_____	_____
8. You seek the root cause of your problems. You ask why? Then answer. Then ask why again (5 times!). You think deeply about what is standing in the way of you completing your work.	_____	_____	_____
9. You seek the wisdom of 10 people rather than the opinion of 1. This means you make sure you research things properly and ask for advice rather than just taking as gospel what one person thinks.	_____	_____	_____
10. You believe there is no end to improvement. You can keep improving the way you approach your schoolwork over and over.	_____	_____	_____

Based on your self-evaluation, what are the main areas you need to work on improving?

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Read and highlight key points:

When you think of the Japanese as a race, what springs to mind? Efficiency, attention to detail, care and consistency. In the 1950's when American manufacturers went to Japan to discover why they were able to produce cars so quickly and efficiently, they discovered in the Toyota factories a Japanese philosophy called 'Kaizen'. This was widely adopted across America and helped revitalise their failing car industry.

Basically, Kaizen is all about continuous improvement. The word Kaizen itself is derived from two different Japanese words, 'kai' and 'zen'. Kai, meaning: to change or modify; and Zen, meaning: to improve. When these two words are brought together, the meaning becomes gradual, orderly and continuous improvement. Just doing everything that little bit better each time, putting in that little bit more effort and looking for smarter ways to do things. The rules that govern Kaizen are simple and can be easily applied to the way you study and work at school.

The 10 rules for Kaizen were listed in the table above. The philosophy works on the principle that small improvements that are realised (ie actually made) can add up to major improvements in your outcome. Small scale improvements are easier and faster. You probably know how hard it is to make major changes. Saying things like 'I am going to totally stop talking in History' or 'I am going to get every assignment in on time' or 'I am going to study for every exam weeks beforehand' although sounding good, rarely translate into successful action. If you have had difficulty implementing major changes to the way you approach school and study, start trying to implement some of the Kaizen principles instead.

Look for little things you can do to improve. It is all about doing 10% more than you normally would, doing things 10% better and with 10% more effort. This is actually the principle that Weight Watchers apply to help people lose weight. They talk about doing 10% more exercise than you normally would, making your meal serving sizes 10% smaller and your vegetables and fruit servings 10% bigger. They recognise that most people who try to change their diet totally with some radical plan fail and that the best approach is to take small steps - just a little at a time and over a period of time these small changes compound and accumulate. The same principles apply for improving your own study skills and techniques. Try it and see the benefits!

Write down the most relevant point for you and describe how it relates to you or your situation:

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Your To Do List: What small improvements could you start making?

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