



***Enhanced Learning  
Educational Services***  
*“the study skills specialist”*

# HOW TO STUDY FOR TESTS AND EXAMS



Knowing how to study effectively for tests and examinations is a skill that is essential not just for school but for life-long learning.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.

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# 1. OVERALL APPROACH TO STUDYING

*Study actually takes place long before you start to officially 'study' for a test or exam. The amount of work that you will need to do to prepare for a test or examination will depend on a number of factors.*

- How well you paid attention in class when the concepts were being taught.
- How well you have completed homework and other tasks along the way.
- How well you have kept your notes for that topic/subject organised.
- Whether you have made any study notes or summaries for that topic already.

**In a test or examination, you have to be able to do 3 things:**

1. UNDERSTAND the topic.
2. REMEMBER the content of the topic.
3. APPLY the skills and techniques of the topic to different types of questions.



**There are three aspects to doing this:**

1. Make STUDY NOTES or summaries.
2. LEARN the information.
3. PRACTISE the skills of the subject.

	Helps you see if you UNDERSTAND the info	Helps you to REMEMBER the info	Helps you to APPLY the skills of the subject
MAKING STUDY NOTES	YES	YES	NOT REALLY
'LEARNING' the info	YES	YES	YES
'PRACTISING' the skills	YES	YES	YES



*a. Does this match with your understanding of the correct way to approach studying for a test or examination? Do you do anything differently?*

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## 2. STEPS TO STUDYING

- **STEP 1: MAKING STUDY NOTES**

Making study notes or summaries is a great way for you to discover if you understand the topic. If you just copy slabs out of your textbook or classnotes and call these study notes then you won't have learnt anything! But if you really think about the information and try to organise it and write down what you need to remember in point form in your own words, this is when you will first start to discover if you understand the information. The process of making study notes also starts to move the information into your long-term memory. It also makes it much easier to learn and remember the information as you can go over a structured, organised, condensed set of notes rather than having to look back through all of the work you have done (which would be much more time-consuming).

- **STEP 2. LEARNING THE INFORMATION**

But making the study notes is not enough! You then need to 'LEARN' the information by studying it in an active way (so you can remember and retain the info).

This is really all about transferring the information from your study notes into your memory and testing whether you can remember it! This can also help you find areas you don't understand as it is really difficult to try and memorise or learn information that you don't understand! Part of the process of learning the information is asking questions about things you don't understand or are not sure of.



- **STEP 3. PRACTISING THE SKILLS**

The final part is to PRACTISE the skills of the subject. This is where you do lots and lots and lots and lots of questions in order to see what you remember and what you can do and whether you really do understand the information enough to apply it to different types of questions. This is where even though you thought you understood it all, you find out if you really do know it or not! And if you don't understand it then you work through what you got wrong in order to fill in all the holes in your knowledge. It also aids in moving the information more firmly into long-term memory. If you memorised information that you did not understand, this is when it will all come unstuck and you will realise that you have to go back to that section again and review it. You can see from the table above how essential this part of the process is!

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