Enhanced Learning Educational Services

"the study skills specialist"

APPROACHING ASSIGNMENTS

So you are being given lots of assignments? Well here are the top things to know about how to manage assignments effectively at school.

- **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.**

.APPROACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Throughout school, students are given many assignments to complete, in various subjects.
An assignment mostly requires you to:
- research
- identify the most relevant information
- consider your own ideas which will have come as you researched
- determine a way to present your assignment to ensure it is answering the question
- write and present it

All this can seem daunting, particularly if there is no set structure or guidelines for the assignment. It's not a piece of work that can be left until a few days before it is due, indeed you will need to put in many hours of work before you even start writing the final assignment.

Here are some general guidelines to give you structure, because when you have a "road-map" to follow, completing an assignment can be relatively easy. Having structure will make a huge difference.

REASONS TO START WORK ON YOUR ASSIGNMENT IMMEDIATELY

- **GET YOUR BRAIN THINKING ABOUT THE TOPIC:** At the very least, read through the requirements of the assignment on the day you get your assignment. Even if you are not thinking about it directly, your subconscious will be hard at work.

- **FIND LIBRARY RESOURCES:** Although the library may not be your main source of reference, you should drop in soon after receiving the assignment. Reference books, resources and magazines will disappear quickly. It is not a good idea to only use Google!

- **DISCOVER OTHER RESOURCES:** You could also ask your local librarian for any additional direction on where to look for resource material for your assignment. Librarians know how to help people access relevant information, in books, and computer based references.
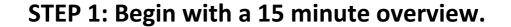
- **STARTING EARLY MEANS MORE TIME TO EXPLORE & ASK FOR HELP:** Your initial research might be on assignment points you've identified through the library, references your teacher may have given you, school textbooks, and/or general internet search engines. If you start this early, you could find that you don't understand important concepts, or perhaps you need to speak to your teacher to get further clarity.

- **CREATE A SAFETY NET:** Starting your assignment immediately will give you a safety net in case you get sick, or something unexpected happens. You should always have a schedule that allows for the unexpected.

DISCUSS

a. In your own words, explain why you should start your assignments immediately, i.e. as soon as possible after they are given to you.

STEP 1: Begin with a 15 minute overview.

Here is a simple key to unlock the assignment in 15 minutes, and give you an idea of what's required. You should be able to answer the questions below from the assignment information sheet. Once you have the answers to these questions, you can start to plan.

Read the assignment information carefully (perhaps highlighting as you go) and note the following.

- **DUE DATE:** When is the assignment due?
- **PURPOSE:** What is the purpose of the assignment? (e.g. an information report, an exposition, an investigative report, one that requires an hypothesis and evaluation, a recount or summary of facts, an assignment that requires your opinion, or others' opinions, one that requires primary and secondary sources?)
- **FORMAT:** What is the assignment asking you to do? What presentation format is required? (e.g. 2000 word typed essay, 1500 word hand-written essay, report where you need clear headings, bullet points, project, with photos, maps, diagrams, poster, a power point, website, newspaper report.)
- **GUIDELINES:** Are there any guidelines or directions to follow?
- **REFERENCES:** Are there specific references/resources given?
- **CRITERIA:** Is there a marking criteria? How will the assignment be graded?

It is a good idea to ask a relative or friend to let you briefly explain your answers to each of the questions above, just to make sure you can put this in your own words.

DISCUSS	*b. What is the main purpose of the 15 minute overview? Explain in your own words why you would go through this process and what it would achieve.*

STEP 2: Brainstorm the steps that will be involved and schedule the work over the time available.

Think about everything you will need to do for the assignment; this will vary depending on what type of assignment it is. For example:

- Read assignment/make points/do schedule.
- Check with the librarian.
- List topics to research.
- Decide how to organise research.

- Last pre-research check.
- Start researching.
- Continue researching.
- Finish researching.
- Begin writing draft.

- Finish writing draft.
- First proof.
- Second proof.
- Third proof.
- FINAL format completed.

Immediately draw up a schedule, or add to your homework diary, so you can do all your other homework and other things, AS WELL as the work for your assignment. You should add in your other commitments, so your schedule is realistic.

Allow time between finishing your draft, and having the assignment completed for submission. This allows for the unexpected, e.g. some parts of the process taking longer than you expected.