



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

# “Examination Preparation Workbook”

## Level 2

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# **Enhanced Learning Educational Services**

*“the study skills specialist”*

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## **Enhanced Learning Educational Services Profile**

### Our Organisation:

Enhanced Learning Educational Services (ELES) is the leading provider of study skills resources in Australia. Since 2001 over 500,000 students across Australia have benefited from our study skills worksheets and workbooks. An Australian business based in Sydney, our clients extend throughout Australia and to international schools overseas. We are committed to helping all students improve their ability to learn and study by providing study skills seminars and resources on the topics students need.

### Our Mission:

To provide a worthwhile and effective service to teachers, students and parents, enhancing students' learning skills and abilities through dynamic programs, resources and strategies to unlock the power of the mind and enable greater success at school and in life.

### Our Commitment:

As part of ELES' commitment to education, 5% of all gross income is donated to charities that help and assist children.

### Our Staff:

The majority of our resources are created by Prue Salter (B.A., B.Math., Dip.Ed., M.Acc., M.Ed.), founder and director of ELES. Prue has over 20 years' experience in the Education Industry in Australia. With a strong background in teaching and pastoral care, Prue was frustrated by the absence of high quality resources available to help students develop and maintain effective study skills. A committed scholar, passionate about learning, Prue combined her natural organisational and time management abilities with her research in how students learn to develop a series of resource kits designed to address the gaps and to present them in a format that is entertaining, as well as simple and effective.

## **For further information about ELES or our products or contact details:**

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# Instructions for students

Welcome. This booklet is intended to guide you through the steps necessary for effective examination preparation.

Probably more important than the actual marks you attain in the examinations in these years, are the skills you are developing along the way. Skills such as, how to study effectively, what examination techniques work for you, and ways to improve your overall performance at school. The final years of high school are quite demanding and the workload increases dramatically. Many students do not take advantage of the opportunities available prior to the senior years to fine-tune their examinations skills. These are your training years where you have time to develop good habits and techniques so you will be ready for your final years of school.

You should start this booklet at least 6 weeks prior to the examination period and complete the steps as outlined in each section. Of course, you can start earlier and move faster than the suggested timings. It is up to you! Read carefully the ideas on the first page of each worksheet (maybe even use a highlighter to highlight the key points as you go) then complete the activities on the next page.

## WORKSHEET

## WHEN TO COMPLETE

A. Check up Time	At least 6 weeks before examinations
B. Study Notes	At least 4-5 weeks before examinations
C. Effective Studying	At least 3 weeks before examinations
D. All about the Exam	Prior to the examination period
Appendix: Finding Motivation Home Study Environment Multiple Choice Questions Approaching Essay Questions	Perhaps review through these at the beginning so you know what they are about then return to them in greater detail when appropriate.

On the following pages is a grid for you to complete as you are given information about your examinations from your teachers. Work out in advance how long you should spend on each section. Divide the length of the examination (in minutes) by the total marks possible. Now multiply the number of marks in each section by this number. Round it down a little so that you have time left at the end of the examination to check your work.

# Are examinations really necessary?



Many students would argue no! For a lot of students, the word 'examinations' is associated with:

- Stress and worry about their performance.
- Pressure from parents and teachers to study.
- Boredom with the thought of having to study subjects they don't like.
- Concern about how much work they are expected to do.
- Anxiety about their ability to make themselves do the work.

It is natural to experience the feelings listed above. Everyone experiences feelings like these at some time or another to a varying level. The important thing is that you do not let these feelings control and absorb you.

The first step to doing this is to understand the reasons behind examinations.

The main reason that examinations are necessary is to allow the school to determine what you have understood and learnt in each of your subjects. Examination results also allow your parents to gauge how well you are doing at school and what sort of progress you are making - and seeing that they are the ones paying for your education they are probably entitled to this knowledge.

Once you accept that examinations actually have a valid purpose and are not simply a ploy to torture you, you can start to think about how you can make the most of the experience from your own perspective. Rather than think about examinations as a time when you reveal what you DON'T know, consider examinations as a chance to show what you DO know. It is an opportunity for you to learn about your own skills - what things you are good at and what things you do well. It is also a chance for you to work out what areas you need to work on to improve in your subjects.

So what can you do to minimise the negative feelings you might feel about examinations? Working through this booklet will definitely help you. Most of the feelings listed above come from not feeling confident about your ability to prepare effectively for examinations. This booklet will take you through the process step by step. Simply complete each section in the time frame indicated and complete the suggested activities.

It is amazing how differently you will look at examinations when you feel prepared for them. Try it!

# Examination Information

Subject	Topics	Date/Time	Length	Format	Timing
Eg Maths	Equations Coordinate Geometry Graphs Surface Area and Volume	Tuesday Nov 16 <sup>th</sup> 2pm- 3.30pm	1.5 Hrs (90 mins)	30 multiple choice 6 questions each worth 10 marks 80 marks total	25 mins mult.choice 10 mins each question 5 mins checking

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# A Check-up Time

Suggested Timing:

At least 6 weeks before the examination period

## Let's examine the current state of your study skills.

For each of the following questions tick either:

- all of the time
- most of the time
- some of the time
- a bit of the time
- none of the time

### Why are we doing this???

Preparation for examinations starts in the classroom and is affected by everything you do at school and at home. It is important to have a realistic idea of what you are currently doing in order to work out what you should change to improve your examination preparation.

IN THE CLASSROOM	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
1. I am on time for classes.					
2. I have the right textbooks / equipment for my lessons.					
3. I use my class time properly and efficiently and make the most of the time in the lesson.					
4. I really try to listen in most of my classes and think about what is being said rather than daydream.					
5. I concentrate on what I am writing down from the board instead of just copying it down without thinking.					
6. I try and participate in the lesson and be involved in discussions and activities.					
7. I don't talk while the teacher is explaining things.					
8. I don't sit next to people I know will stop me from doing work.					

ASKING FOR HELP	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
9. If I don't understand, I definitely don't just say 'oh well, can't be bothered doing anything about it'.					
10. If I don't understand, I ask the teacher for help in class or at lunchtime etc.					
11. If I don't understand in class, I ask questions.					

HOMework	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
12. I write my homework in my diary to make sure I don't forget it.					
13. I always check my diary at home for my homework.					
14. I always do the homework for the subject I like the least first.					
15. I always plan what I am going to get done before I start.					
16. I review what I did in class that day for each subject.					
17. I do some study each week in addition to my homework.					
18. If I am absent, I find out what I missed and catch up.					

ORGANISATION	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
19. I make summaries for all my subjects.					
20. I keep past tests and examinations to redo near exam time.					
21. My notes and handouts are well organised and filed away.					
22. I organise my study notes carefully.					
23. I have a wall calendar where I can see when everything is due.					
24. I start my assignments well before they are due.					
25. I finish my assignments on time.					

WHEN STUDYING	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
26. I am pretty self-disciplined and can make myself do work.					
27. When I sit down to study I actually do study.					
28. The place where I study is set up for quiet learning.					
29. I know what time of the day I learn best.					
30. I know what way I learn best - seeing, hearing or doing.					
31. I take minimal breaks when I sit down to study.					
32. I am able to concentrate well while I am studying.					
33. I don't get distracted when I am studying.					

34. I don't waste time.					
35. I use a study timetable.					
36. I work on the important tasks first.					

EXAMINATIONS	ALL	MOST	SOME	A BIT	NONE
37. I don't wait till the night before to study for most tests.					
38. I use some form of study timetable to plan for examinations.					
39. I never leave study till the last minute.					
40. I don't generally get nervous at examination time.					
41. I feel prepared for the tests and exams I take.					
42. I think and plan before writing an answer to a question.					
43. I plan how much time to spend on each question before I begin.					

<i>TOTALS FOR EACH COLUMN (count the number of ticks)</i>					
<i>Calculate your score by multiplying the number of ticks by the number indicated:</i>	x4	x3	x2	x1	x0
<i>NEW TOTAL</i>					

OVERALL TOTAL:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN???

172 - 150	Absolute study skills legend
149 - 129	Excellent skills in place
128 - 100	Good skills in place, some areas to improve
99 - 86	OK skills, but many areas to improve
85 - 43	Lots of areas to focus on
42 - 0	Much more effort needed

## What now?

The numbers above are only a guide and are just to give you a rough idea of the current state of your skills. Don't be discouraged if your score was low. We are going to examine where you should go from here and what steps you need to take.

You can't fix everything at once. The best way is to target just a few habits at a time and focus on changing these into good habits. To break a habit, or build a new habit, you simply need to repeat the new behaviour over and over for a period of time until it becomes automatic.

For each of the categories above, look at the responses you selected for each question. What could you change that could make a big difference to the way you study and learn? Fill in below what you are going to focus on in each section. For example, you might decide that you are going to stop talking when the teacher is explaining new work in Science. For the homework section you might decide you are going to start using your homework diary more effectively. In the space below write down what you need to focus on for each section, being as specific as you can.

### IN THE CLASSROOM

What do you need to do in each subject to improve the way you use your class time? Think of the top thing for each subject.

SUBJECT	Top thing you should do / change:

### ASKING FOR HELP

Which subjects do you need to ask for more help in? Will you see your teacher at lunch or during the lesson, do you have friends that can help you, do you have so many issues that maybe a tutor would be helpful? Write what you need to do in the space below.

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### HOMEWORK

What do you need to do to improve your homework? Look back at the questions in this section to give you some ideas.

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### ORGANISATION

How could you become more organised? Look back at the questions in this section to give you some ideas.

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### WHEN STUDYING

What are your main obstacles to studying? Look back at the questions in this section to give you some ideas. What can you do to overcome these obstacles? Some suggestions are listed below although you might also come up with your own ideas.

- If you get distracted or bored, break your study up into blocks. Do half an hour solid work, then give yourself half an hour to do whatever you like. At the end of that half hour, sit down again and concentrate for a solid half hour. If you start to get distracted, remind yourself this is the 'work' period and you can check your email or phone your friend or whatever else you want to do in the next half hour period.
- Have a plan before you begin of what you want to achieve in the study block.
- Remove all distractions from your room before you start trying to do any study.
- Before you leave school, write a list of the work you would like to get done that afternoon and prioritise by numbering 1,2,3... from the most important task to the least important task. When you start work, start at the first thing on the list and don't move to the second until you complete the first fully.
- Give yourself a reward for each section of work that you complete.

YOUR OBSTACLES TO STUDYING	A strategy that you could try to combat this obstacle:

## EXAMINATIONS

What areas from the list of questions above do you most need to work on?

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.....

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## In Conclusion

*Imagine you were a fly on the wall in each of your classes. You are watching yourself, looking at how you have been doing in classes, looking at the results you have been getting in class tests and quizzes, and your general behaviour and performance. Write a 'report' for yourself in the space below. For example, 'John works well in his Science classes and asks lots of questions. He needs to ensure that he completes all homework for Science more carefully. In Maths....'. Be as honest as you can!*

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Your time in class is valuable for so many reasons:

- Your teachers have taught the subject many, many times to many, many students. They can often give you information in class that will help you pinpoint the areas to focus on in your examination preparation.
- Listening in class and completing the work you are set is a much faster way of learning new skills and information than wasting class time then trying to work it out yourself at home.
- You spend up to 6 hours a day in the classroom. That's about 30 hours a week or 300 hours a term. Wasting this time means that everyone else who isn't wasting their time in class gets a huge advantage over you.
- You don't just learn in school. When you leave school, you will have further study to do no matter what career you pursue. If you become very undisciplined in class, find it difficult to listen or concentrate and develop poor study habits, you will find it particularly challenging to break these habits in later life. You want to aim to develop habits of success rather than habits that promote lack of success.

*Ask yourself:  
'Am I making the best use I could of my time right now?'*

# B

# Study Notes

Suggested Timing:

At least 4-5 weeks  
before the examinations

## The problem with study notes:

*"I find that it just takes me so long to make study notes. I want to write everything down and can't decide what to leave out. Then I worry that I haven't covered everything and end up re-reading everything all over again anyway."*

Many students become anxious about study notes. In this section, we will work through the process of making effective study notes that will work for you.

The sooner you start this section the better. Don't leave it until it is too close to your exams.

## WHY MAKE STUDY NOTES? (version 1)

Study notes are helpful for a variety of reasons. The process of making study notes is a great way to find out if you really understand the topic. By thinking about how concepts are related and how to structure your study notes, areas you are not clear on will become apparent. By organising and structuring the material you need to learn, and finding ways that concepts are related, you will be assisting your brain in remembering and recalling the information. Within each subject, you have a huge amount of theory to learn and remember. The reality is, you simply do not have the time to keep re-reading every chapter in your textbook as well as every handout and every note you have ever taken in order to revise. Instead, you need to start sifting through this material, working out what you need to know, what you already know, and what is not relevant. Identifying what is important allows you to reduce the volume of your notes. You need to gather all the related pieces of information together and organise them in a logical manner. The process of making study notes is actually a form of studying. It helps you concentrate on what you are learning and improves your understanding, as putting information in your own words and making links between new knowledge and what you already know helps you distinguish between important points and supporting details. You also have the advantage of having your material well organised to study from for the examinations.

This information can be condensed into the following key points (see version 2):

## WHY MAKE STUDY NOTES? (version 2)

1. Ensures understanding.
2. Helps your brain through:
  - organisation and structure
  - finding links in concepts
  - reducing the volume to learn
3. Saves time as key info. is condensed.
4. A form of studying:
  - helps you concentrate
  - putting it in your own words helps you retain it

This type of summary is called linear note-taking. Wherever possible, use numbering, bullet points and abbreviations. Some abbreviations you can integrate into your notes are as follows:

*info* (information)

*chp* (chapter)

*impt* (important)

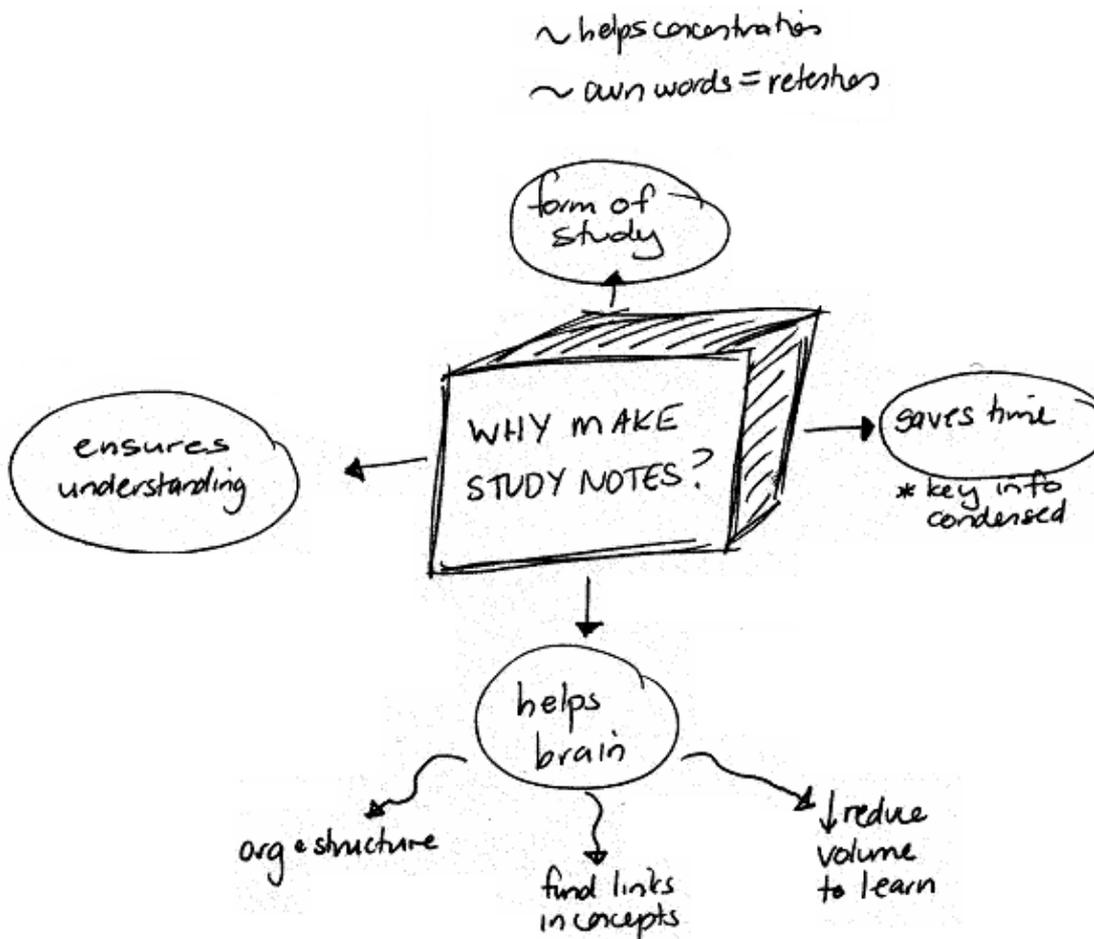
*devt* (development)

$\Delta$  (change)

*nb* (note well)

*w/o* (without)

Start finding your own ways to abbreviate and shorten words.



## WHY MAKE STUDY NOTES? (version 3)

By making a mind map or a diagrammatic approach to note-taking, you create a much more visual image of your content that can be easier to remember and retain. Connections and links between ideas are easily seen and it is clear at a glance how information relates.

*Time for you to get into action.*

### STEP 1

List below all the topics you have covered so far in each of your subjects:

English	Maths	

### STEP 2 - GATHER INFORMATION

Let's go through the process of making a summary now for one of your topics. Choose which topic you are going to try first. Gather together all the information on this topic:

- find the chapter in the textbook
- find the section in your workbook or exercise book
- gather any sheets or handouts related to the topic
- ensure you have all the notes from the topic (if you don't you will need to borrow a friend's notes and photocopy them)
- if you have any extra resources or study books on the topic look through these as well for the relevant sections

### STEP 3 - SKIM AWAY

Absolutely no pens at this stage. Many students make the mistake of starting to write down their summaries as they read each section before they have looked through the information properly. If you make summaries in this way, you will find you end up with two problems:

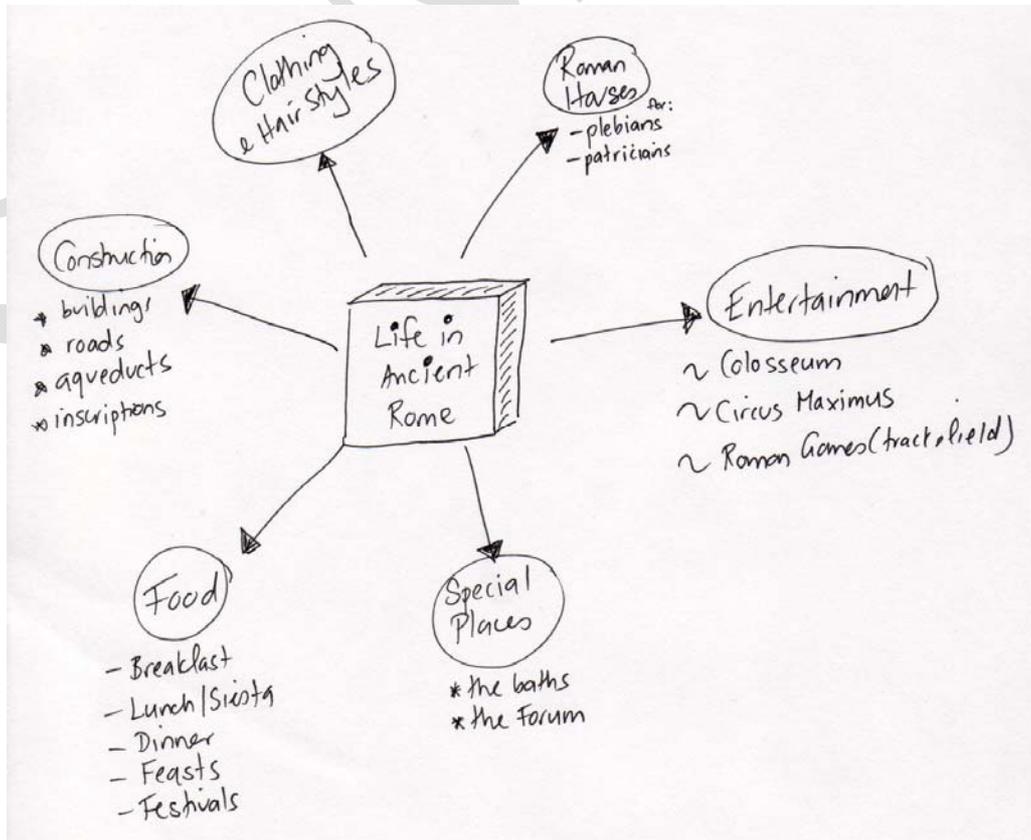
- you will end up writing down way too much information
- your summaries will be disjointed and you won't have all the material on each section together - it will be all over the place!

So before you start writing, take about 10-15 minutes to first skim through all the material you have. This means flicking through your textbook looking at the headings and main topic areas. Look at your notes from class and see where they overlap with your text. See if you have any really good sheets that explain concepts clearly or organise the material really well.

### STEP 4 - OVERVIEW

- Take a blank piece of scrap paper and write the topic in the centre of the page.
- Draw lines/arrows out showing the main headings for this topic.
- See if there are any links between any of these headings.
- See if the headings should be in any particular order.
- For each heading, jot down any subheadings that are related to this heading.
- Once you are clear on what the topic involves and how all the content is related, redo the mind map as the first page of your summary.

Example:



Note:

*It is a good idea to do your summary notes on loose-leaf paper and file them in a display folder. Although doing them in an exercise book is good to make sure you don't lose any pages, loose-leaf paper gives you the flexibility to add in extra pages or redo particular sections.*

## STEP 5 - MAKING THE NOTES

Now take each of the headings one at a time.

- Look through all the information that relates to that heading.
- Try and find ways to break the information down into subheadings. Perhaps your textbook has already done this for you by using a smaller font for each section. Maybe your teacher has divided the work into sections in the notes you have made in class.
- Look for links in the information or ways you can make lists or groups.
- Write the heading at the top of the page and start making notes on each subheading, one by one. To do this you will need to read through the information that relates to that sub-heading in both your textbook and exercise book.
- When deciding what to include, ask yourself these questions:
  - Will I need to know this information for the examination?
  - How could I be tested on this?
  - What are the key ideas?
  - How could I express this in my own words?
  - How does this relate to earlier information?
  - How can I condense this?
  - Are there parts that are related and should be linked together?
  - How best can I organise this information?
  - Can I reduce this information to a list?
  - Can I put this information into tables or diagrammatic form?

Note:

*If you find you fall into the trap of writing too much, don't try to do your summary all in one go. Instead, write the main headings first, then key points, then go back and add another layer of detail to your notes.*

- Once you have captured the main ideas and they are clearly outlined in point form, read through your material again to see if there are any notes you need to add to your summaries.

Example:

## LIFE IN ANCIENT ROME

### 1. Entertainment

#### a) COLOSSEUM

- large public entertainment centre
- could seat 45,000
- combat between gladiators
- battles between men and wild animals
- could be flooded for pretend naval battles

Note: many people died but the Romans found this fun to watch!

#### b) CIRCUS MAXIMUS

- another public entertainment centre
- used mostly for chariot racing
- could seat 250,000

#### c) ROMAN GAMES

- "Campus" was an old drill ground for soldiers (large section of plain near Tiber River)
- became Rome's field & track playground
- young men gathered to play & exercise
- women did not join in these games.

\* foot racing  
\* jumping  
\* archery  
\* wrestling  
\* boxing

### 2. ROMAN HOUSES

#### \* Plebians (lower class)

- lived in apartment houses or flats above/below their shops
- some had running water
- some were very crowded: a whole family in one room
- no toilets (had to use public latrines)
- threat of fire as wooden & cooking in small spaces

#### \* Patricians (upper class)

- single family homes
- quite often made of brick, red tile roofs
- arranged around a central courtyard
- windows & balconies face courtyard
- paintings of walls
- beautiful mosaics on the floor
- little furniture, no carpeting

# c Effective Studying

Suggested Timing:

At least 3 weeks before the examination period

## Planning your study:

It can be quite challenging to actually find time to study while you are coping with the current load of non-stop homework and assignments. It is a good idea to set aside at least an hour each day in the weeks leading up to the examinations to both work on your study notes and to start to learn and practise for the examinations.

Allocate two subjects to each day of the week:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY

Make the time to do some work on study notes for these subjects on that day to ensure you get your examination preparation started. Use the weekend to work on subjects you are weaker in or did not have time to do any work on during the week.

It is realistic to expect that in the weeks before your examination period you will need to increase the amount of time you spend on school-work both during the week and on the weekend. Start adding an extra hour of work to your weeknights and quite a few extra hours of work on the weekend. The weekend is when you can get a solid amount of work done while you are fresher and able to concentrate better.

At the start of each week, make a plan of what you will try and get done for each subject that week. Write it into your homework diary on the Sunday before. For example:

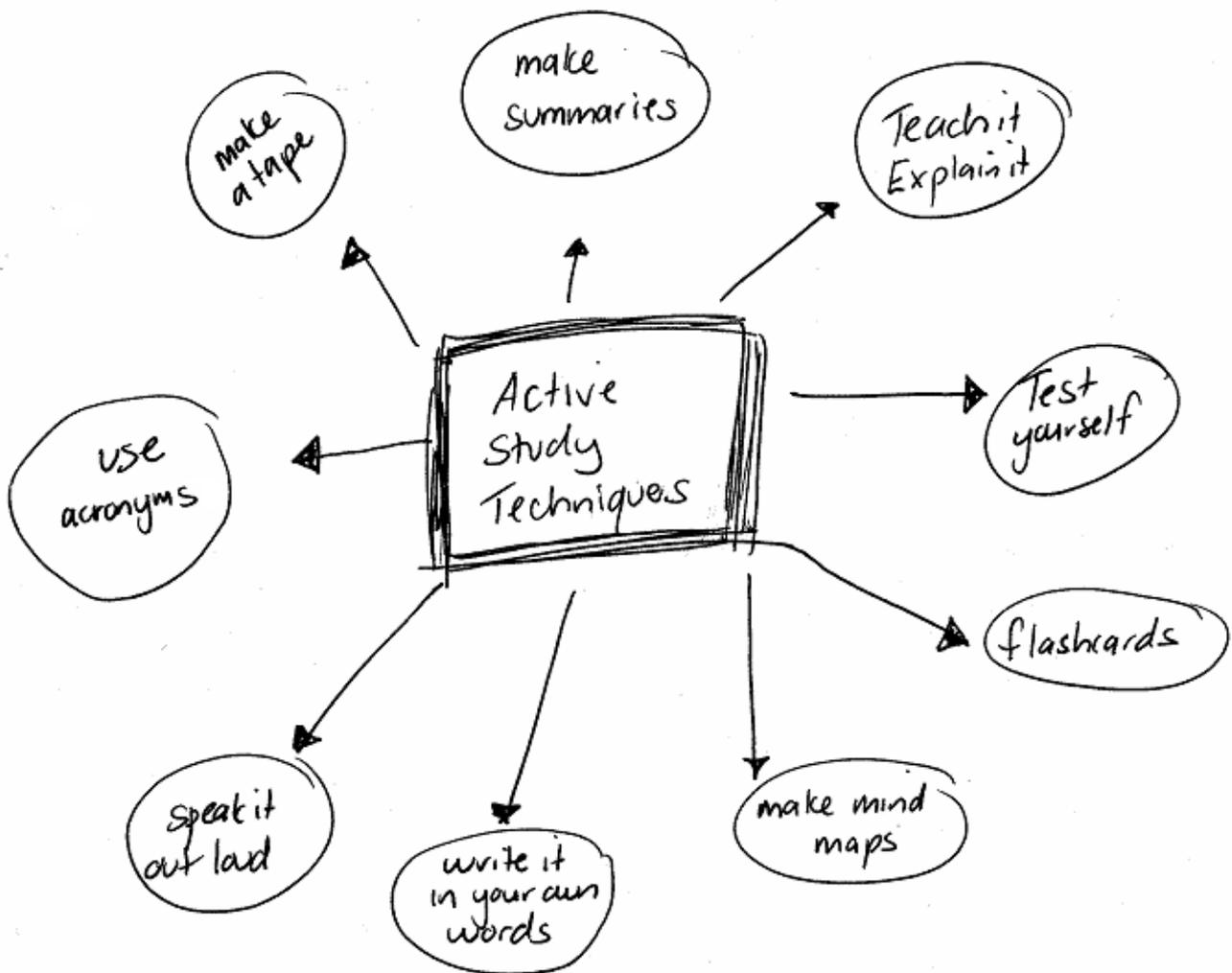
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
English - start organising notes on novel  French - make flashcards for vocab	Maths - do chapter reviews for Chp 2-7  Geography - do the practice exam paper	Science - make study notes on "The Cell"  History - do mind map on causes of WW1	Basketball training	German - make a question answer tape for vocab

You are much more likely to be able to force yourself to actually do some work if you have decided in advance specifically what you would like to achieve. Many students waste a large amount of time near exams "paper shuffling" and moving papers around rather than doing something constructive.

## Actually studying:

Below are some techniques you can use to make your study more active. Many students just try and read through their textbook or notes to study for their examinations. There are two main problems with this:

1. It becomes very boring and you quickly lose interest in what you are doing. You start to become sleepy and your concentration drops off. Before long you can't remember what you read a few seconds ago.
2. It is difficult to make the information stay in your long-term memory after just reading over it. Often students who use this method only to prepare for exams find that they think they know the information, but when they actually get into the examination the information seems to have dropped out of their head.



*Highlight the techniques you currently use for examinations.*

*Use a different coloured pen to highlight new techniques you could try in these examinations.*

This resource continues for another 24 pages

SAMPLE

SAMPLE