



Enhanced Learning
Educational Services
“the study skills specialist”

“Examination Preparation Workbook”

Level 3

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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.

Year 11 Students

Year 11 is quite an important year. Probably even more important than the actual marks you attain in the examinations in this year are the skills you are developing along the way such as how to study effectively, what examination techniques work for you, and ways to improve your overall performance at school. Think of Year 12 as a marathon and Year 11 is your training year to help you gear up and be ready at the starting line.

Year 12 Students

It's crunch time. Take the time to skim through this booklet, working through the sections most relevant to you to ensure that your preparation for your major examinations is as effective as possible. Much of the information should be familiar to you. Use this booklet to refresh your memory on the most effective ways to prepare for examinations and as a check to ensure you are doing everything you should be doing!

You should start working through 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.

A. Study Notes
B. Planning
C. Studying
D. Techniques
<u>Appendix:</u>
Dealing with Stress
Studying in Vacations

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A

Study Notes

Try the multiple choice questions below.

1. The best type of study notes are:
 - a) the ones you can buy in a bookshop
 - b) the ones you make yourself
 - c) the ones your teacher gives you

(for the answer, read FAQ1 and FAQ9)

2. Your study notes should be :
 - a) handwritten
 - b) typed
 - c) doesn't matter which

(for the answer, read FAQ3 and FAQ11)

3. You should make study notes:
 - a) just before an examination
 - b) at the end of a topic
 - c) as you go during the topic

(for the answer, read FAQ2)

4. Study notes should:
 - a) include mind maps and visual notes
 - b) be in point form rather than long sentences
 - c) use bullets, numbering and lists
 - d) be rewritten if unclear
 - e) all of the above

(for the answer, read FAQ4, FAQ5 and FAQ 10)

5. You use study notes by:
 - a) writing them out then reading them through
 - b) learning as you write them then reviewing them actively

(for the answer, read FAQ6)

6. Study notes for different subjects:
 - a) will be very similar
 - b) will be very different
 - c) may have elements in common

(for the answer, read FAQ7 and FAQ 8)

It would be great if you could thoroughly read through the FAQ section below, but it is understandable in your senior years that you are always pressed for time and have so many demands on the time available to you. If this is the case, at least skim through the following pages paying attention in particular to the questions that most apply to you.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why do I need to bother making study notes?

Your brain is an amazing organ. You may have heard the brain being compared to a computer but that is actually not a totally apt comparison. The brain does not assemble data from bits and pieces of information. Instead, it relates whole concepts to one another and looks for similarities, differences or relationships between them.

If you organise and structure the material you need to learn, finding ways that concepts are related, it will assist 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, every handout and every note you have ever taken in order to revise. Instead, you need to start sifting through the 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. It enables you to find out if you do really understand the content and it forces you to think about the topic in its entirety. As you break the topic down into headings and subheadings, you then focus on different aspects in turn, and through making study notes develop a solid base of knowledge to build upon.

2. When should I make study notes?

Ideally, every time you finish a topic. This is the perfect time to look at the topic as a whole and create a basic set of study notes for this topic. It is also OK to make study notes as the topic progresses, but the end of a topic acts as a reminder to you to get started if you haven't yet done so. The advantage of doing study notes then is that you are making your study notes while the topic is fresh in your mind and you can deal with anything you are unsure of in a timely manner rather than months later. In addition to this, you have an enormous time advantage closer to the examinations and can spend time updating and reviewing your study notes rather than creating them from scratch.

In reality, most students do not do this. Some may prepare study notes haphazardly for particular tests or assessments. Others do none at all. Most students are just struggling trying to stay on top of the increased workload as compared to the previous year.

But it is never too late. It is, of course, preferable to have as much time as possible, so if you haven't started, start now! Allocate some time to working on study notes during the term. Even if it is just half an hour each afternoon or an hour or so on the weekend. Maybe you could allocate time between now and the examination to make summaries of the topics you have covered so far. Aim to complete a certain number each week.

If it feels like there is just too much to do, at least start by doing an overview of each topic and the main points. You can add in more detail later. The important thing is to start. For Year 11 students, make a decision to make your life easier in Year 12. Develop the habit that every time you finish a topic, you make a set of study notes for that topic. You will be glad you did. Year 12 students should endeavour to complete their study notes as soon as possible.

3. How do I make study notes?

Making study notes is all about chunking the work down into smaller and smaller pieces.

First gather all the material on that topic. Notes, handouts, textbooks and supplementary material. Usually there is one resource in particular that forms the basis of your study notes. Maybe your textbook covers that topic very clearly or perhaps you have a well set out study guide. Maybe the notes that you made in class are the best resource to use as your basis. Look quickly through all the material for an overview of the topic and to decide if you have a resource that you can use in particular for the core of your study notes.

Next take a piece of paper and write down what the main headings are for the topic. Under each heading, list any subheadings you will need to cover. For example, if your topic is WW1 the headings might be *Causes, In the War, Effects*. Under the heading *Causes*, you would then list the main causes of the war that you will need to be familiar with.

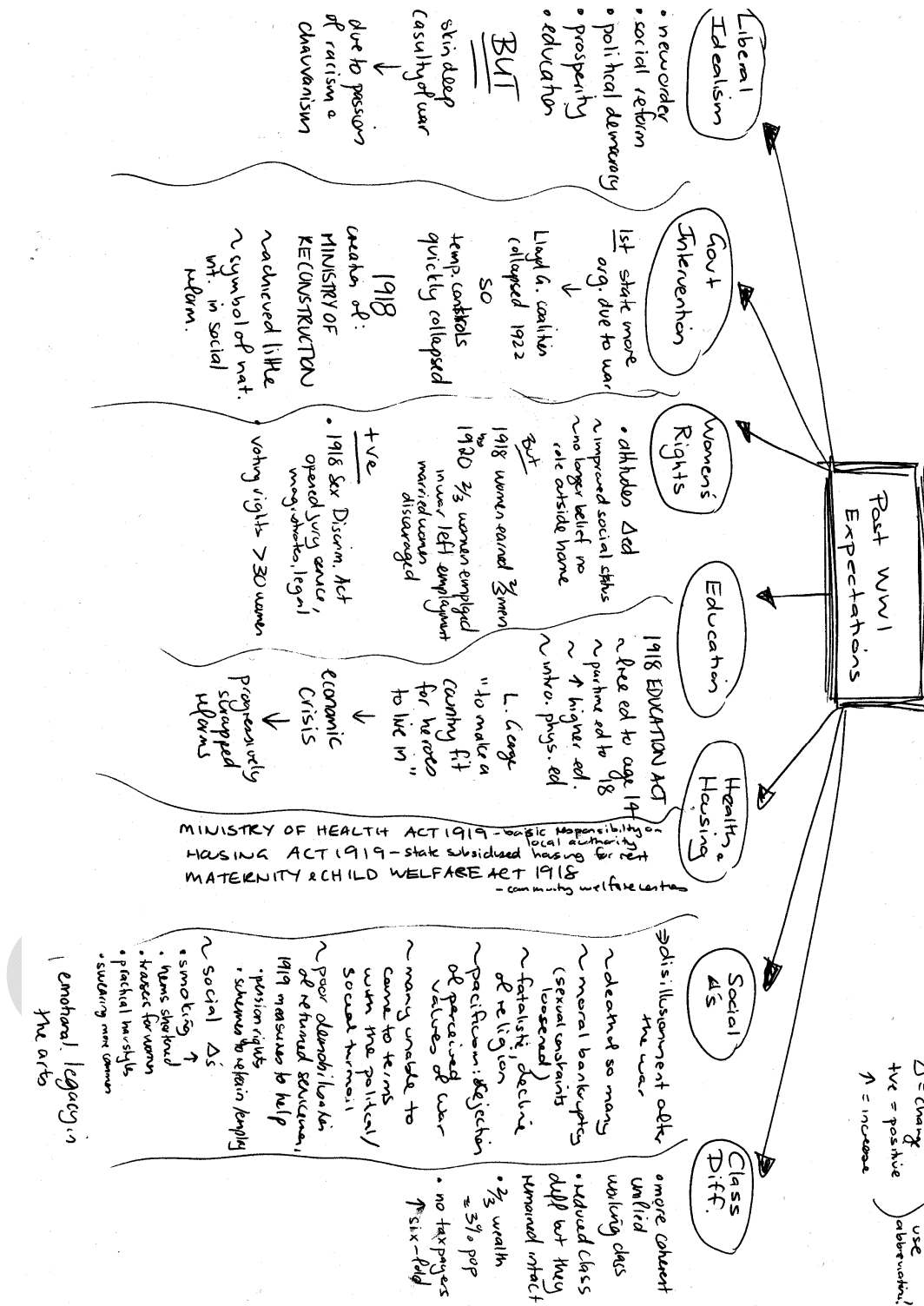
It is a good idea to take this list of headings and turn it into a one or two page Mind Map. A mind map gives you a visual overview of the topic as a whole and is a useful technique for study notes. It allows you to see at a glance what the topic is all about and you can then follow this with more detailed study notes or mind maps. It also is a way of integrating the left hand side of the brain (that likes details) with the right-hand side (that likes the whole picture) which makes learning more efficient. An example is given on the next page.

Once you have completed the mind map overview, take each heading and subheading and make notes, preferably in point form (either handwritten or on computer). Look through all your additional resources to ensure you haven't left out any information that is related to this heading. You may find that including a mind map on a particular heading is also useful as images can be more memorable than words.

4. What should my study notes look like?

It is best to do your study notes on loose A4 paper rather than in a note book. Summaries are never final. You may need to add in good worksheets you are given or you may find when you gain a greater understanding of a topic that you might decide to redo a section of your study notes. The more familiar you become with the material, the less you need to include in your study notes. Keep your A4 pages in a ring binder or display folder.

Mind map example. This is just one version of a mind map. Another method is to have the topic in the centre and branch out to related information.



5. How do I improve my study notes?

Make them as visual as possible. The more organised they are, the more structured and visual they are, the more your brain will respond and remember. Make it easy for your brain:

- use wide margins so you can add in extra information as your understanding grows
- use bullet points and abbreviations rather than long sentences and paragraphs
- highlight or box important points and formulas
- rewrite any sections that are not clear (but don't rewrite it all just for the sake of it)
- use sub headings, indenting, numbering: the more they are broken down, the easier to learn
- complete sentences should be rare - key phrases are better
- legible, neat handwriting
- use clear and noticeable topic headings

6. How do I use study notes?

The process of creating the study notes is the first stage of learning the material so you can recall it. It is important that you do not just read through your study notes. Of course, reading your notes is useful, but in order to ensure information moves to long term memory you need to make your study active. Some ways you can do this are to read through a section of your notes then put them to one side and see what you can write out from memory. Or try and speak out loud what you have read without referring to your notes. You can also try writing out the information in your own words or using your study notes to jot down sample essay plans.

7. How can I do study notes for English?

Many students find it difficult to do study notes for subjects like English as there is such a huge quantity of material studied for each topic or piece of literature. One way to approach study notes for English is to try and do one-page summaries on particular aspects of the novel and organise your thoughts in this way. For example, you may do a page of notes on each particular character, a page on themes, a page on the author's techniques, a page on the plot and so on. Make sure you avoid long wordy paragraphs and stick to point form as much as possible. It is likely you will still need to read through many of your notes again but these single pages will help you consolidate your ideas and remember the key points and quotes for essays.

8. Should I include examples in subjects like Mathematics?

This is very much a personal decision. Some students like to keep the examples separate from the formulas they need to memorise. Other students like to include examples of questions they find difficult. One way to do this is to have a separate section of examples of questions you find difficult and you can cover the answer and attempt the question again. Most students find including some examples beneficial. Another way to do it is to place your summaries in a display folder with the rules to memorise on the left-hand side and examples on the right-hand side. You could also create a list of the types of questions you find difficult and so need to review.

9. Why don't I just buy the study guide for the subject?

You can! And probably should. But don't just use this as your summary. You may use it as a basis for making your summary or a check to see if you have included everything you should have, but the process of actually making the summary and understanding the connections and links is probably the most important thing. It is during this process that you discover any holes in your understanding and start the memory process. If you let someone else do this for you, the understanding will still be in their head, not yours. This is why even if your teacher gives you a great summary or you find a fabulous book, you can incorporate it into your summary but you need to add something of your own to it or rewrite part of it in your own words to really make it work for you.

10. Should I redo my study notes?

Yes, but not at the expense of other forms of study or practice and not just for the sake of making them look better. There may be sections where, when you look back over your notes, you realise you didn't really understand or left out information or have not clearly and logically collected your ideas. If this is the case, then by all means redo that particular section. Add in any good handouts you are given.

11. Should I type my study notes?

There are arguments for both sides. On one hand, you have to write in the examinations. So you are better off getting used to writing as much as possible, especially as these days students do less and less pen to paper and more and more on the keyboard. It is also argued that by writing the information, you set up pathways of familiarity and recognition in your brain that will kick in when you are in an examination situation. On the other hand, some subjects have so much content that to try and wade through it with handwritten notes would take forever. A good compromise is to start making initial notes on the computer as this allows you to cut and paste, group information and rearrange it with ease. Once you have a core set of notes completed, you may like to further summarise some sections on paper using a more graphical or visual form of note-taking such as mind-mapping.

TO DO:

For each of your subjects, list the topics you have covered so far and tick off when you have completed the study notes for this topic.

English			
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How well did you retain what you read? Try the quiz below:

1. You should rewrite sections of your notes as often as possible in order to make them neater and neater.	T / F
2. Commercial study guides are useful to help give you a framework for your own study notes and to help you ensure you have covered everything you need to know.	T / F
3. Doing study notes on loose leaf paper and filing in a display folder is useful as it allows you to rewrite sections when necessary and add in good sheets you are given.	T / F
4. There is no point doing study notes until right before the examination - if you start studying too early you won't remember the information.	T / F
5. The process of actually making study notes is one of the most effective forms of study you can do. This is why copying someone else's notes is not as valuable as actually creating them yourself.	T / F
6. Doing the study notes is enough study. Once you have done these, you only need to read over them in order to be ready for the examination.	T / F
7. Despite the fact that by the end of Year 12 there is just so much information to learn and remember, just reading through your textbook will be enough to help you retain the information accurately.	T / F
8. By summarising at the end of a topic, you can see how the pieces of the topic slot together and create a solid set of notes that will give you a time advantage when examinations approach.	T / F
9. Making your notes as visual as possible helps you retain the information more effectively as the brain tends to think in pictures anyway. Colour, highlighting, boxes, layout and neatness are all important in study notes.	T / F
10. When starting to memorise information from your study notes, you need to keep actively checking if the information has moved into long term memory. This means doing more than just reading: you need to test yourself to see what you can write or speak (ie. remember) without looking back at your notes.	T / F
11. The most effective way to make study notes is to simply start at the first section, and as you read through the paragraphs jot down points as you go. It is not necessary to have an overview of the chapter.	T / F
12. Study notes are too important to academic success to be neglected.	T / F

Answers can be found at the end of Section B.

B Planning

It is a good idea to have some sort of plan of what you are going to do between now and your examinations.

The first part of your preparation is to work on your study notes and you should be doing this as soon as you can, preferably as you go throughout the year.

Following is a grid for you to complete as you are given information about your examinations from your teachers. Much of the information will not be available until closer to the examination period. However, you should be able to discover at least the topics to be tested. Once you have all the information, work out in advance how long you should spend on each section in the examination. 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. Year 12 students may need to draw up a larger version of this grid.

Examination information

Subject	Topics	Date/Time	Length	Format	Timing
Eg Maths	Equations Coordinate Geometry Graphs Surface Area and Volume	Tuesday Nov 16 th 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

Subject	Topics	Date/Time	Length	Format	Timing

As you start to collect this information, you should also take the time to do a plan for the weeks before the exam, anywhere from three to six weeks before they commence.

Some things you need to think about first:

- On average, how much time can you (or will you plan to) set aside over the next few weeks specifically for study given that you still have to keep up with current schoolwork? It is realistic to expect that in the lead up to the examinations you will have to increase the amount of work you are doing.

Average time per weeknight you could put aside for study: _____

- Can you find some extra time on the weekends for study? The weekend is a great time to get on top of your study and knock over some big chunks. You can still go out Saturday night with your friends but just don't waste the rest of the weekend. After all, it is only for a few weeks.

Time (hours) available or that you will plan to study for on Saturdays: _____

Time (hours) available or that you will plan to study for on Sundays: _____

- Do you need to spend an equal amount of time on each subject? You may want to consider allocating some extra time to your weakest subject. This can be difficult to do as often your weakest subject is your least favourite and you will be tempted to spend more time on your favourite subjects (which are often also your strongest subjects). Consider carefully and let your mind not your inclinations make the decision.

Strongest subjects: _____

Subjects you are OK in: _____

Weakest subjects: _____

- How long do you like to spend at one time on a subject or a study session? There is a real range among students and again it can often depend on a number of factors such as how much you like the subject, what type of task you are doing, what else you have to do and even what sort of a day you have had and how tired you are! Some students can sit and concentrate for a number of hours (although a short break every half hour is really beneficial to all students) while other students struggle to stay focused for even twenty minutes. If you fall into the latter category, you need to ensure you regularly change which subject you are studying and study very different subjects after each other : eg Maths followed by History followed by Science. Also have specific tasks to complete in each time slot.

Take a moment to reflect on the approach you will take to your study sessions:

Steps To Planning Your Study Time

There is no such thing as a perfect study timetable - it will be different for everyone as everyone has different needs and commitments. Without some sort of plan, your study is likely to be haphazard and ineffectual. Many students are resistant to the idea of making a study timetable - they say it is of no use as they never stick to it. Without a rough plan however, it is much more difficult to make yourself stay on track. The thing to do is to create the sort of study timetable that suits you and that you can work with.

For some students this will be only a very simple outline that says what subject they will study on what day. For other students they might just make a list of what they want to get done for each subject as preparation, then just work through the list whenever they are studying that subject. For other students, having a detailed plan with set times for each subject really helps them to complete much more effective study than if they just approached their preparation haphazardly.

It is useful to go through the process below even if you do not end up using as detailed a study timetable as it helps you to think about how you will approach your study over the next few weeks.

Step 1

On the grid following these instructions, write down approximately how much time you will aim to study each night. Cross off any days that you know you will have activities or will not be able to do any study. For example:

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 hr	1 hr	basketball	2 hours	1 hour	3 hours	2 hours

It is true that other work may arise, tests and assignments and so on, and that you may need to reschedule this work. But unless you have a goal of what you'd like to do in terms of study, you definitely will not make the time to do it. Set a goal of what you'd like to achieve and you are more likely to find a way to make it happen.

Step 2

Next, allocate subjects to each of these time slots. Try and separate similar subjects and study the subject you find hardest when you are most alert. For example:

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 hr - Maths	1 hr - History.	basketball	2 hours - Physics	1 hour - Geography	3 hours - English and French	2 hours - spare time if need to reschedule work

Alternatively, you may like to break up your study sessions and study a few different subjects each day.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 hr - Maths and English	1 hr - History and Physics	basketball	2 hours - Physics French	1 hour - Geography Maths	3 hours - English, French, Geography	2 hours - spare time if need to reschedule work

- This is probably as much detail as most people need in their timetable. At least it has a goal set of the amount of study time to be aimed for, and you won't waste time each afternoon deciding which subject to study. It also ensures that you have thought about how much time you are going to allocate to each subject.
- It can be both frightening and depressing going through this process. You discover how much you have to do and how little time there seems to be to get it all done. Don't despair! Everyone feels this way and it always seems like there isn't enough time. The trick is to accept that this is how much time you have, so what is the most effective and productive way you can use this time. But without a plan, it is unlikely you will be as productive or efficient as you could be. Instead, you spend time each day deciding what to work on, shuffling papers around and getting more and more stressed. Talk to your teachers and ask for their advice on exactly what you should be doing to prepare in their subject.

Step 3

Come up with some ideas of what sorts of things you should do to study for the examination in each subject. This way you can work through this list when you are studying for that subject.

Step 4

Finally, decide what you are going to do in each block of time for that subject. Be detailed and precise and use the list you created in step 3 to help you. Do this in pencil, because it will probably change as you go. It is a good idea to just do this a week at a time and to plan out what you want to achieve that week. At the end of the week you can see how far you have got and make a plan for what you want to do in the next week.

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 hr - Maths	1 hr - History.	Basketball	2 hours - Physics	1 hour - Geography	3 hours - English and French	2 hours - spare time if need to reschedule work
Do summaries Chp 22-25	Do practice essay on Hoover		Summary chapter 10 + review questions	Study Notes on Land Forms	Organise notes on 'Emma' Make vocab flashcards	

In the first few weeks of your preparation you should focus on:

- catching up on any overdue work
- working on study notes
- organising all your material on that subject

In the weeks just prior to your examinations plan to:

- actually start to study and practise the subject
- do past examination papers
- continue to work on your study notes

Use the grids on the next pages to help you make a plan for the four weeks before your examination.

Answers to Section A: 1. F 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. F 7. F 8. T 9. T 10. T 11. F 12. T

What to do for each subject:

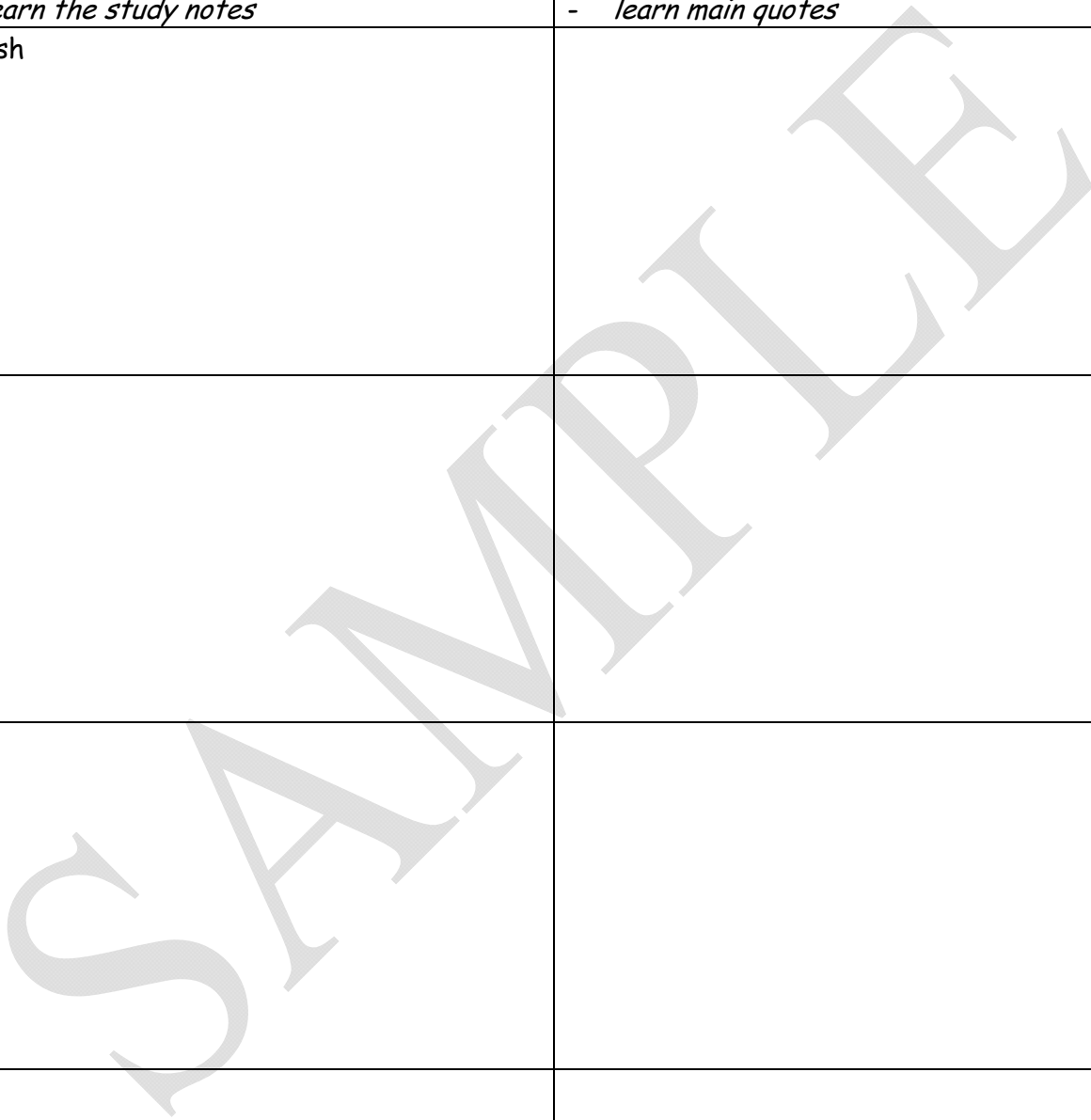
Example 1:

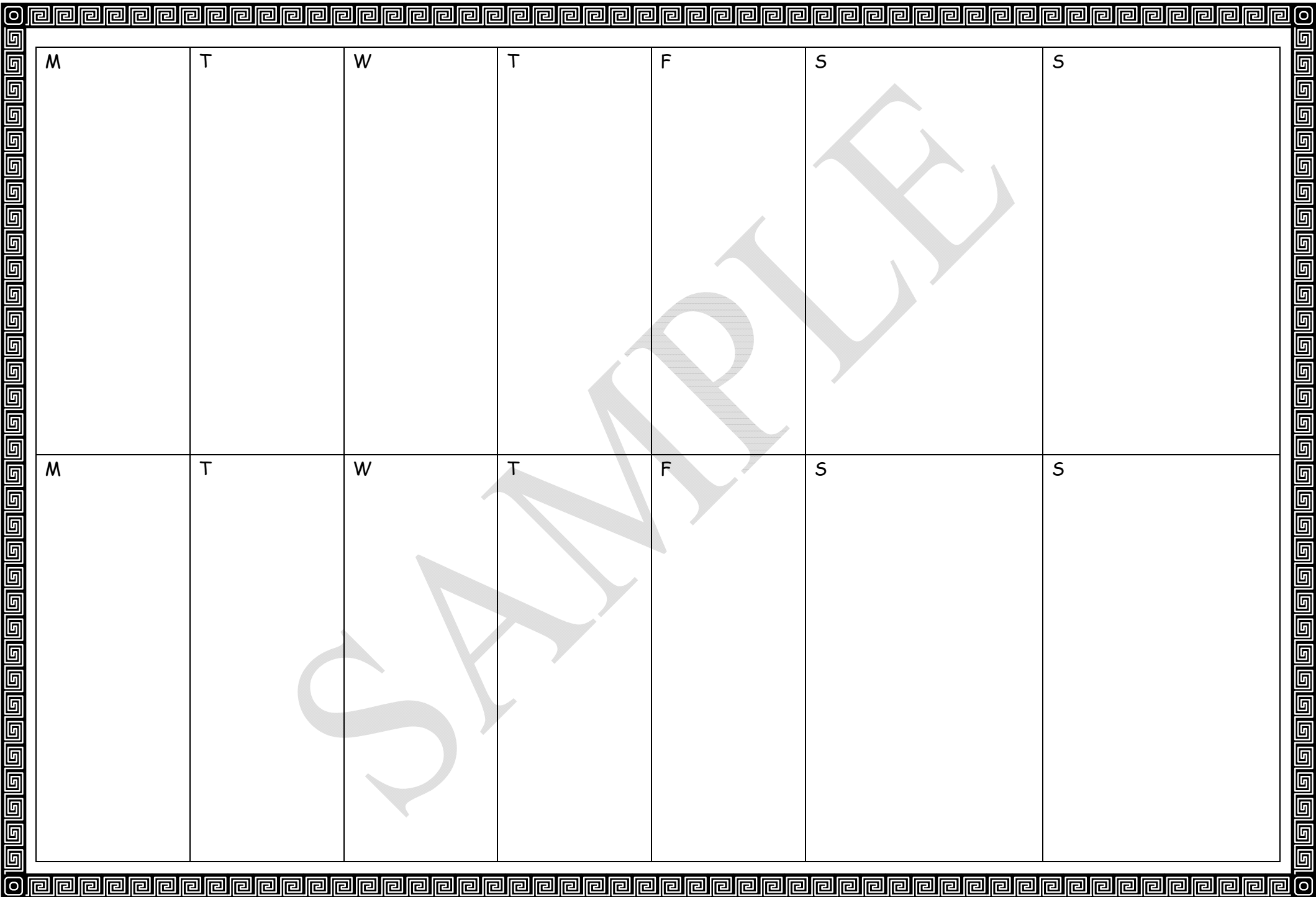
- do the chapter reviews for each topic
- do the past papers from school (3)
- redo parts of study notes that aren't clear
- go back and review chapter 3
- do the revision sheets we were given
- work through the study guide questions
- go through the last assessment we did
- learn the study notes

Example 2:

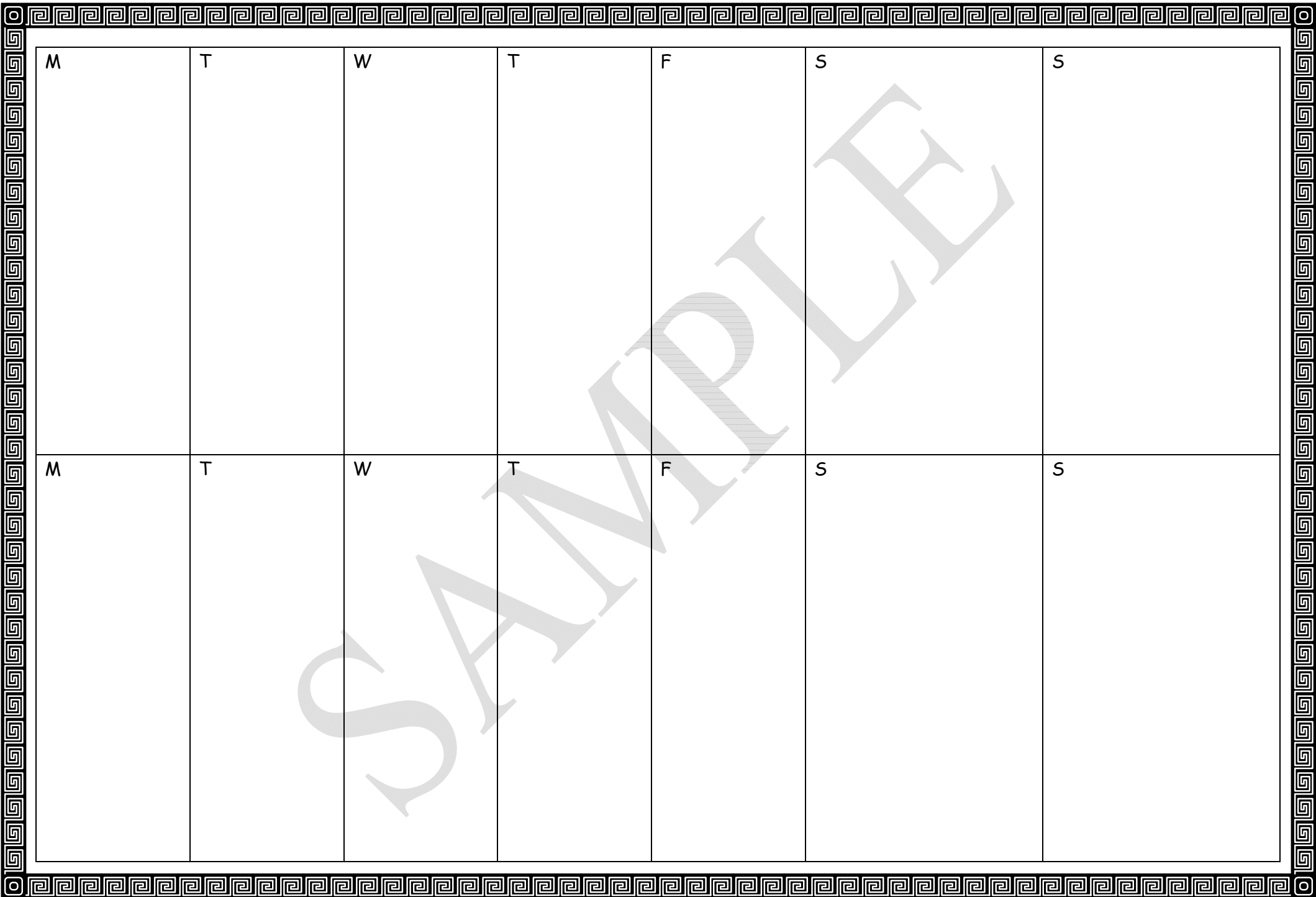
- complete summaries on 'Emma'
- do outline essay plans for past papers
- do comprehension questions sheet
- practise skills papers
- finish questions on Keats
- redo last assessment task
- re-read the notes on main topic area
- learn main quotes

English





M	T	W	T	F	S	S
M	T	W	T	F	S	S



M	T	W	T	F	S	S
M	T	W	T	F	S	S

c Studying

Skim through the following paying attention to the questions that most apply to you.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How do you actually study?

Pre-Quiz: When you study do you:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| - prepare study notes and summaries? | Y / N |
| - do practice examination papers? | Y / N |
| - test yourself to see if you can remember the information? | Y / N |
| - do lots of different question types? | Y / N |
| - make sure you understand the material before memorising? | Y / N |
| - use a variety of different techniques to learn it? | Y / N |
| - practise the skills of the subject? | Y / N |

Many students feel they don't really know how to study. They read through their notes and textbooks, they do some questions and revision sheets, maybe even a few essay plans, but they are not really sure if what they are doing is as effective as it could be.

Studying involves the following main aspects:

- 1. Experiencing and understanding the course.**
- 2. Actively learning and remembering the content.**
- 3. Practising the skills of the subject.**

Some students interpret this as read through your notes then do a couple of practice papers. If this is all you are doing, you are right - your study is not as effective as it should be. There is a lot more you could do to save yourself time, to make your memories and recall stronger, and to give yourself a better chance of achieving excellent results in the examination. Think about whether you are still studying the same way you did back in Year 8. The complexity and volume of the work has increased so your study approach should have developed in order to meet these increasing demands. Now might be a good time for a quick makeover, a time to add some new techniques and update your repertoire. It is amazing what a difference a few changes to your approach can make.

Read through the information below to check and see if you can improve the way in which you approach your study. You might like to review in particular the next few pages each time before a test as your brain needs repetition to help it remember to apply a variety of strategies.

This resource continues for another 25 pages

SAMPLE

SAMPLE