



***Enhanced Learning
Educational Services***
"the study skills specialist"

STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL



So you are just starting or have just started high school? Well here are the top things to know from a 'study skills' perspective – this means working effectively and efficiently at home to achieve your personal academic best for 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.



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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.

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

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1. HOMEWORK IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM HOW IT WAS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL.

- **PRIMARY:** In primary school you only had to do the work the teacher told you to do. You squeezed in the work you had to do between activities, sport and free time.
- **TIME:** In high school it is different. Rather than completing a set amount of *tasks*, in high school you should try and work for a set amount of *time* on most nights.
- **MOST NIGHTS:** It will be *most* nights because some nights you will have activities or other commitments so you can only do the bare minimum that night. But you then try to make it up on the other nights instead.
- **AVERAGE:** Most schools will expect Year 7 students to do on average around 1 hour of schoolwork per night or 7 hours over the whole week. Some schools may expect more. Check your school diary to see your school's requirements.



*a. How much time did you spend on schoolwork in primary school?
Do you know what your school's expectations are for high school?
What do you think you will do for that hour of schoolwork each night?*

- **WEEKENDS:** You will have to do some work on the weekends. It is a good time to catch up on things like assignments and summary notes. Many students will do 2 hours on one day rather than an hour on each day so they can have a whole day free with no schoolwork. Try and avoid leaving the schoolwork until the last minute on the weekend, i.e. Sunday night.



*b. What are your weekends like?
How do you think you will fit in your schoolwork over the weekend?*

- **TYPES OF WORK:** Now the big mistake many students make when they go to high school is they say 'but my teachers don't give me an hour of homework each night'. This is where the big difference comes with high school. In high school you have two types of work to do:
 - compulsory work (things like homework, assignments, studying for tests) and
 - independent learning

- INDEPENDENT LEARNING:** Your teachers don't always talk about independent learning – they just sort of expect you to do this now you are in high school! Students who get good marks at school have often worked this out for themselves, this handout is making it easy for you by telling you the secret now. ***Here it is... the nights you do not have much compulsory work, you make up the rest of the time doing independent learning!*** So if you have 20 minutes of homework, you do 40 minutes of independent learning. If you have 60 minutes of homework you do no independent learning that night. This is one of the best things you can start doing when you begin high school – it is a great habit to get into and will really pay off for you!
- INDEPENDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES:** So what is independent learning? This means taking responsibility for your studies, using your brain and saying to yourself 'what else could I do to help me understand this subject better?' It could mean:
 - making notes ('summaries' or 'study notes') on what you have been learning in class (usually in point form in a separate book)
 - making a mind map about what you have learnt
 - doing extra questions on a topic you found difficult
 - reading ahead in your textbook
 - doing extra research about part of the subject that interests you
 - learning how to touch type



c. In your own words, explain what Independent Learning is. See if you can come up with 10 examples of things that might be independent learning activities.

- KEEP GOING:** Be careful though, after a while some students get complacent and think 'I don't need to do this independent learning stuff'. Yet the evidence has shown again and again, that students who do well at school do this – they just don't go around telling everyone about it!
- TOO MUCH TIME:** Some students find when they start high school they actually are doing much more than an hour a night of schoolwork. This can be normal in the first term of school as students are getting used to the expectations of high school. However if you find you are consistently doing many hours of schoolwork a night you need to talk to your parents and teachers as students in the first year of high school should not be doing this much work at home.



2. YOU NEED TO WORK SMART TO MANAGE YOUR TIME WELL

- **WORK FOR YOUR OWN SUCCESS:** Here's another tip, don't always believe what your friends say about how much work they do for school. Many people like to brag saying they 'did nothing' (or they did 5 hours!), don't worry about what anyone else says because it may not be true. Instead focus on working for yourself, training yourself to do around an hour of schoolwork on most days. You will develop effective working habits and you will be building your academic skills in your subjects.
- **WORK SMART:** Now you might say, 'how can I do all this and still have a life?'. Well welcome to high school! This is the reality of the expectations of your workload for the next few years. But if you want to have a life too, you have to be smart in the way you work. You could aim to do two half hour blocks of schoolwork each day, for example half an hour when you get home and half an hour before dinner. You could even do half an hour before school. It is a good idea to remove all distractions during these half hour blocks.



DISCUSS

*d. How well have you managed your work for school in the past?
Do you work in distinct blocks of time and keep schoolwork and personal
life separate? How well do you manage your distractions at home?*

- **TIMETABLE:** If you are very busy with many, many activities it is a good idea to draw up a weekly timetable for yourself (you will find these on the [FREEBIES](http://www.enhanced-learning.net) page of www.enhanced-learning.net). You fill in all of your activities for the week, then you shade in how you will fit 7 hours of schoolwork into the week (or more if required by your school). Deciding in advance makes it much easier as you know when the times are you have allocated to schoolwork.
- **ACTIVITIES:** If you can't fit 7 hours of schoolwork into your week, you may have to choose between your activities and keep the ones you are most passionate about. Usually in high school you cannot do as many outside activities as you used to do in primary school. If you are really keen to keep everything, then you have to make some sacrifices to find time elsewhere for your schoolwork. It means you can't spend lots of time watching TV or on your computer. It may mean getting up half an hour early to do work before school. If you are a very busy person it is a great idea to sit down with your parents and work out how you will fit in your schoolwork as a high school student.



DISCUSS

*e. What outside school activities do you do? Is that realistic?
Have you tried making a timetable before?
How would you spread out the work for school over the week?*



3. BEING ORGANISED MAKES LIFE EASIER

There are many aspects to being organised in high school. Here are the top ones to think about.

- **YOUR LOCKER:** If you have lockers at school buy some dividers or magazine holders so you can stack things in there neatly. Every day get rid of rubbish or loose papers so they don't get out of control.
- **YOUR COMPUTER:** Set up a folder on your device where you can store all of your documents for school, then within this folder create a folder for each subject (e.g. 'Maths', 'Science' etc.). Work out how often you will do a back-up and schedule this in your diary.

DISCUSS

*f. What technology will you be using in high school?
How well do you manage your files and resources on the computer?
What is your back-up plan and schedule for your data?*