

3 Setting Up Systems

Name:

Class:

Materials needed: nil

Activity 1 - Class

What systems do you use to manage all the paper you are constantly given at school? Do you have a single folder that you use for all subjects? Do you use exercise books instead? Do you have a folder with your current work in it and file the rest at home? Your teacher will go around the class and ask each student to explain how they keep their notes in order.

WRITE DOWN ANY GOOD IDEAS HERE:

Activity 2 - Individual

Read and highlight the following and write down what you think the most important point is in the space below.

Finding a system that works well for you is important this year. Next year the amount of paper you have to manage will dramatically increase to the point where you feel like you need a secretary! Your notes and the handouts you are given form the basis of the material you will use to study for examinations. Being able to find everything you need is certainly important. But having everything well organised and easily accessible also gives you a greater advantage around examination time. The process of organising your written material also helps you to get a real feel for the topic. By finding patterns and structure in your notes you help your brain to remember the information more effectively. The more structured and organised your work, the more it mirrors the way your mind works. Set up systems this year while you have time to think about it so that next year it is just an automatic process that makes life easier for you.

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Activity 3 - Individual

Remember, a system is just a series of steps that becomes so habitual it is second nature to you and you don't need to think about it at all. So far we've focused on organising your papers but there are a number of systems you should try and put in place this year. You might think, 'I don't need systems, I just do the work when I have to.' That's well and good this year, but students often find that when the workload increases they are forced to be more organised and more systematic and often spend the first few months of senior high school struggling to find ways to manage their work. It makes sense to get your systems in place and working now.

Read through the list below highlighting the things you do in one colour and the things you need to do in another.

- **PAPER SYSTEM**

You have folders or exercise books that you use for your subjects. You automatically hole punch or paste in any sheets you are given. Your work is secure in the folder and won't fall out or get lost. Within each topic you label and organise your notes. At the end of a topic, you make sure the notes are all organised and you file that topic away. If you need to find something, it is easy to locate. You also have folders at home to file away more bulky things like tests and assignments.

- **HOMEWORK SYSTEM**

You automatically record your work in your homework diary once it is given to you. When you have completed the work, you cross out or highlight it so it is easy to see what work has not been completed. If you don't finish all the work that day, you cross it out and write it in the next few days. When you come home from school, you check your homework diary before starting work. Your diary is a tool to help you manage your workload, not just somewhere for you and your friends to graffiti. You try and have set times each day that you allocate to schoolwork to make it easier to sit down and do the work. You make time on a regular basis to make study notes and summaries as you go so you do not have to do it all at exam time.

- **ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM**

When you are given an assignment, you take the time to break the task down into more manageable chunks, maybe writing a list of what the different things are you need to do to complete it. You look at your diary and work out when you are going to start the first piece of the assignment rather than leaving it till the last minute. You schedule completion of your assignment over the time available to you.

Activity 4 - Pairs

Rank each of the following from 1 to 4 based on you and your partner's opinion of which is most important (1) to success at school to least important (4).

- ✓ ____ Managing your homework effectively and completing all work on time.
- ✓ ____ Organising your papers and notes so that your work is well set out and easy to find.
- ✓ ____ Scheduling work for assignments over the available period of time.
- ✓ ____ Finding ways to make your work at school more effective and efficient.

6 Managing Workload

Name:

Class:

Materials needed: whiteboard pens or chalk and board

Activity 1 - Individual

You've done a number of years of high school so far. Everyone copes with the workload in different ways. Some people seem to find it really easy and don't do all that much work. Or at least, they say they don't. Others do a bit of work and some people work really hard. In the space below, write down how you have found the workload so far this year. Has it changed much from last year? Do you have to do more work than you expected? Your teacher may ask you to share your ideas with the class.

Activity 2 - Pairs

There are a number of basic time management techniques that are worth implementing. Developing these skills will not only help you manage the workload this year but will also help you prepare for future study or for future employment. Every job requires you to be effective in the way you manage the workload your boss gives you. You can use this year to develop skills that will help to make you a more effective person in everything you do. Match the two sides of the sentences together by drawing a line to join them.

Make a 'to do' list in order and work
Study the most difficult and
Always write your homework in your
Have regular times set aside to
Be aware what time of day
Break large pieces of work into
Do the most urgent tasks first and
Plan what you are going to do
Use a calendar so you can clearly see
Be aware of your distractions like

you are most productive.
more manageable chunks to do.
tv or phones and minimise them.
leave the ones that can wait.
boring subjects first.
when all your work is due.
diary so you are clear on what to do.
do your homework and schoolwork.
through it one by one.
before you start working.

Highlight the techniques that you currently use.
Put a star next to one or two that you don't use now but will try.

You can improve the way you manage your workload by making a series of small changes. The first step is to keep track of your work. Make sure you know exactly what needs to be done. Just use your homework diary properly. Easy. The second step is to use your time at home effectively. The easiest way to do this is to have set times each day to do your work. They might vary from day to day due to sporting or other commitments, but having specific periods set aside means you are more likely to use the time effectively. Before you start work, make sure you have a list of what you need to do, prioritise it in order of importance (not in order of what you'd rather do first) and then start at number one and systematically work through the list crossing off each as you complete it.

Activity 3 - Class

Your teacher will ask a few students to come out to the board to be scribes. The class is to come up with a '5 STEP PLAN' to managing your workload. What are the top 5 things you need to make sure you do? First the scribes should write up ALL the brainstormed suggestions from the class. Then the class needs to decide which ones should be eliminated until there are only 5 left. Lastly, work out what order the steps should be in and write them in the space below.

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
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Activity 4 - Individual

Write a few sentences answering each set of questions

Homework Diaries.

How well do you use your homework diary? Do you record all your homework clearly? Do you cross off completed work? Do you check each day when at home what work needs to be done?

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Use of Home Time.

How well do you use your time at home? Do you have time set aside for your work? Do you get all of your homework done each day? How could you use your home time more effectively?

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Scheduling Work

Do you have a calendar so you can see when the periods are when lots of work is due? Do you break large pieces of work into smaller tasks? How can you better manage your workload?

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9 Balancing School and Life

Name:

Class:

Materials needed: nil

Activity 1 - Individual

It can be challenging to try and find time to do everything you want to do during the year. Apart from school, list in order the top three things that take up most of your time. Sport, a part-time job, boyfriend/girlfriend, family commitments, shopping, phone, Internet, other hobbies.....

Activity / Commitment	Approximate amount of time spent on this each week:

How successful have you been this year in managing your workload for school along with your activities? Do you need to reduce the time you spend on your activities this year?

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Activity 2 - Class

What is a realistic amount of time to spend on schoolwork this year? Opinions will really vary. Your teacher will ask you to put up your hand once for each of the following questions. Record how many people in the class put up their hand for each category.

1. How many hours per day do you think YOUR SCHOOL expects you to do each day for homework/study etc this year?

0 - half hour	Half hour - 1 hour	1 hour - 2 hours	More than 2 hours

2. How many hours per day do YOU think you should HAVE to do each day for homework/study etc this year?

0 - half hour	Half hour - 1 hour	1 hour - 2 hours	More than 2 hours

3. How many hours per day do you actually do on average each day for homework/study etc?

0 - half hour	Half hour - 1 hour	1 hour - 2 hours	More than 2 hours

4. How many hours per day do you think students really SHOULD be doing this year for homework/study etc in order to do well?

0 - half hour	Half hour - 1 hour	1 hour - 2 hours	More than 2 hours

The reality is that most students do not do nearly enough work as they should this year which is why the increased workload next year can be such a shock to the system. You should be doing at least an hour a day on schoolwork. If you want to do well, then try to do from an hour and a half to two hours per day. You may find that some days you have to work a lot longer than two hours anyway as you have heaps of homework, lots of assignments or tests coming up. But this should not be too regular an occurrence. Once you have completed your homework, spend time working on study notes (even if the exams are still a long way off!), reviewing past topics or completing assignments.

Activity 3 - Pairs

Finding an hour a day is not as difficult as you would think. Look for two half hour blocks each day that you can allocate to schoolwork. Maybe one when you first come home from school and another before or after dinner. If you have set times allocated each day then you will find it easier to actually do your hour of schoolwork each day.

In the spaces below write in each day the times you could allocate to schoolwork:

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Weekend

Activity 4 - Groups

Your teacher will ask you to move into groups of 4-5 students. Listed below are a number of tips to help you balance school and your life. See if your group can come up with another three suggestions. Your teacher will then ask the groups to share their ideas. Record any other ideas that your group did not have in the space below.

TIPS FOR BALANCING SCHOOL AND LIFE

* If you are finding it a challenge to manage everything and your parents are hassling you, make a deal to keep your favourite sport or activity and sacrifice some of the ones that are not as important to you.

* Don't plop down in front of the TV when you get home and end up wasting half the night on programs you aren't even that fond of. Instead, get the schoolwork done first while you are fresh, tape your shows and then watch them later when you probably wouldn't concentrate well.

* Make the most of little pockets of time. Get up 20 minutes earlier in the morning and do a bit of work, use the half hour before dinner, or while on the train or bus to or from school.

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16 Exam Preparation Stages

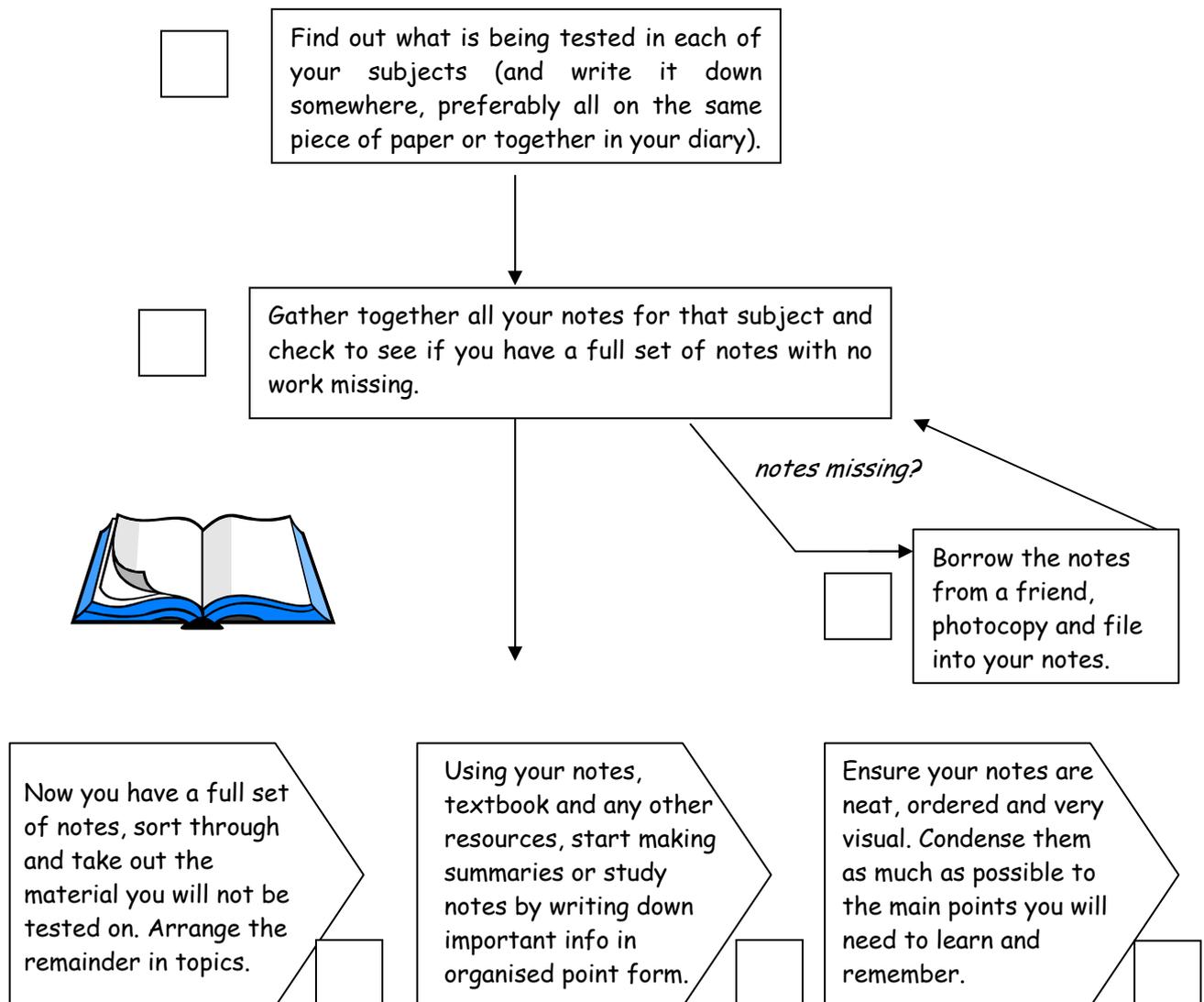
Name:

Class:

Materials needed: nil

Activity 1 - Individual

Follow the flowchart below to see if you have completed all necessary stages of your examination preparation. It is a good idea to start at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the examinations. Even earlier would be better! Tick the box when you have completed each step.



(Study Notes: Making study notes is a great way to prepare for your examinations. The process of sorting and organising your material, working through to find out the main topics and main points, means that you are studying as you go. Notes that are well set out and very visual are easier to learn and remember. The main reason why you should make study notes is that it is important to try and reduce the amount of information you need to learn to the essentials.)

Decide what you are going to do to study for each subject. For example, you might decide that you should do 2 past essay questions for English and that you should learn a certain number of quotes from your novel. In Maths you might decide to make flashcards of formulas, do past papers and do the chapter reviews in your textbook. Fill in the table below for each of your subjects listing the revision work you would like to complete before the examinations.

Maths	English	Science	

Make a plan of when you are going to actually do the study for each subject. The best way to do this is to draw up a table of the weeks left till exams and write in what you will do each day.

Note: It is a good idea to do this in pencil as you may need to make adjustments as you go if you don't complete all the work in the time you have allocated and have to move it to another day. The important point to remember is that if you have a plan, you are more likely to follow it and actually study. Don't stress that you are not getting everything done: it always takes longer than you think it will. Some students are resistant to the idea of a study timetable but it is the best way to ensure you make the most of the study time available before the examinations commence.