

**Cromwell College**  
CENTRAL OTAGO

# SUCCESS TIPS

Achieving your academic potential at Cromwell College.

This booklet contains ideas on:

- ⇒ Motivation
- ⇒ Exam Tips
- ⇒ How to study
- ⇒ Time Management
- ⇒ Revision
- ⇒ Note taking

*“The Classroom is Number 1”*

*Whaia te taumata – Deserve Success*



# MOTIVATION

**What will excite and encourage you to put in the effort and achieve to your potential??**

## **1. Endorsed NCEA certificates**

- Excellence Certificate                      50 credits across all subjects at Excellence (3-4% of NZ)
- Merit Certificate                                50 credits at Merit or Excellence across all subjects (15-18% of NZ)

'Achieved' is not a challenging target for you all. What will challenge you? How many merit and excellence credits do you have from internals? How many do you need from the externals? Which ones will you target?

## **2. Prerequisites**

- What do you need to study at the next year level. There are some key standards. Ask your teachers.

## **3. Cromwell College Scholars**

- Excellence endorsed NCEA – top 3-4% in NZ – Voucher Paper Plus \$50
- Merit endorsed NCEA – 15-18% in NZ –Voucher Paper Plus \$20

## **4. Personal Pride**

- Intrinsic motivation. This is the real motivator – Individual Excellence - Personal Best. Reflected in reports and references.
- Extrinsic motivation – what 'outside' incentives are there for you?

## **5. Successful people**

- set challenging goals and strive to achieve them
- display courage to keep at it
- take calculated risks
- see mistakes as opportunities to learn
- put in the effort and persist.

Our school goal is for Cromwell College to have our students achieve at 10% above similar schools in New Zealand. We believe that you have the ability.

Attitude is the key, then effort and perseverance.

You can do it!!!!

# 1. How to Learn - A General Overview

## Study skills for students

Once upon an educational time, spring meant study for exams. Back then, you passed or failed on an end of year exam.

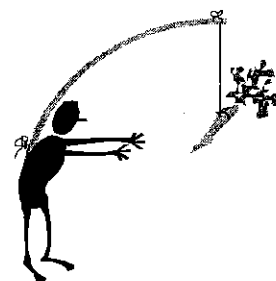
Now students looking for qualifications from School Certificate to post-graduate degrees know that assessment goes on all year: Study must be a multi-season habit, starting one summer and running right through to the next.

Effective study means getting the maximum learning and remembering for the least output of energy and effort. It has been estimated that intelligence accounts for about 50% of academic achievement; effort and effective study methods for 40%; chance and the environment for 10%. There are many parts to effective study.

### MOTIVATION

We work better when we have a purpose.

- ❖ Set long term goals e.g. gaining 14 or under in 6FC; passing three stage 1 units; becoming a PE Teacher.
- ❖ Set short term goals e.g. revising for a test on Friday.
- ❖ Set manageable goals. e.g. in half an hour revise Climatic Controls and not all the topics covered in first term.
- ❖ Reward yourself e.g. When I've written this essay I'll watch the tennis on television.



### PLANNING

- ❖ Make up a homework or revision timetable.
- ❖ Decide on priorities.
- ❖ Take short breaks between learning sessions
- ❖ Allow time for sports, household chores.

### ENVIRONMENT

- ❖ Have a place to study.
- ❖ Have a desk, table (old board on crates).
- ❖ Relatively quiet away from distractions like people and TV. Any music should be soft.
- ❖ Use the library if your house/ flat is too noisy.

### METHOD

- ❖ Read over lecture/class notes each day/night.
- ❖ Beware of your "pet" subject. Give equal time to subjects. Start with the subjects which need the most concentration. Finish with your favourite subject.

## NOTE TAKING

- ❖ Practise listening to people on television and take notes.
- ❖ List key points (ideas) and connect them to each other. Limit the amount of notes taken.
- ❖ Make summaries of notes.
- ❖ Underline effectively, e.g. one sentence per paragraph unrestricted underlining produces little benefit.
- ❖ When lecturers mention a book and chapter, note it down.
- ❖ Put notes in YOUR words.
- ❖ Take down diagrams and maps with the lecture uses.
- ❖ When reading and faced with a large text, full of jargon, have an aim – what are you looking for. Use index and chapter headings.
- ❖ Practise memory work – give yourself tests. e.g. remember shopping lists: what people are wearing.
- ❖ Use card summaries, place them all over the house.
- ❖ Identify your learning style e.g. visual – you may learn best from diagrams: aural – you may learn best by putting material on tape.



## WRITING ESSAYS

Essays are a major means of assessment throughout the year or within exams. Suggestions, you could follow include:

- ❖ Decide what you want – an “A” “M” or “E” (Achieved, Merit or Excellence) or 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 mark. If you want an “E” you will have to put in extra work, if you cannot spare the time and just want to pass then a “A” is okay. However, some courses require “E”s to allow you to progress onto the next level.
- ❖ Analyse the question. Underline key words. Make sure you know what **COMPARE, CONTRAST, DISCUSS, DESCRIBE, EVALUATE**, mean. See p 55
- ❖ Plan your work.
  - (a) Introduction define terms and limits of your topic: fill in essential background. Indicate main points and your line of argument.
  - (b) Body – develop main points (usually in a paragraph each). This is where you explain and discuss. Acknowledge borrowed material. Use quotations sparingly.
  - (c) Conclusion – summarise and round off the essay
- ❖ Use a reference list or bibliography. Check which, and the format preferred. Record details as you use the resources. It is very time consuming to have to go back and track down books, journal articles, page numbers which you’ve used.

## BEWARE OF TRAPS

- ❖ Friends who don't want to study.
- ❖ Resist the social life until the weekends.
- ❖ Don't put off assignments – get them done early.
- ❖ Overload – you may need to evaluate your time management.
- ❖ Don't cut lectures.



Nobody will do it for you or chase you up at University, Polytechnic or other tertiary training institutions.

# 10. Tests and Exams

## Exam Tips I

### Getting Started

- ❖ You must be motivated to study. If you're not, a talk to teachers, counsellors or students who have gone through it before might help.
- ❖ A clear mind is important. It might sound old-fashioned advice, but get plenty of sleep and keep fit during your swotting and examination periods.
- ❖ Don't swot when you're tired. Your ability to absorb facts and ideas is lessened.
- ❖ Be methodical in your approach. Plan your study times well in advance, setting aside special times of the day for it. Draw up a time-table and allocate times for your subjects according to your needs. Stick to it.
- ❖ Keep a record of the time you have spent studying each subject. A bar graph would give you a good picture.
- ❖ Set yourself realistic limits in your revision time-table.
- ❖ Study in an area free from distractions.
- ❖ Take regular breaks if you are working for a long stretch.
- ❖ If you are studying with a friend be sure you are both getting advantage from it.



### Remembering Facts

- ❖ Make sure you understand what you are trying to memorise. Rote-learned material without understanding will be hard to recall under exam pressure.
- ❖ Summarise your full notes into the most important facts.
- ❖ Memorise facts by writing them out several times, saying them aloud and picking a key word to associate with the fact.
- ❖ Test your ability to recall by writing down what you think you have learned after some time lapse.

## Know What to Expect

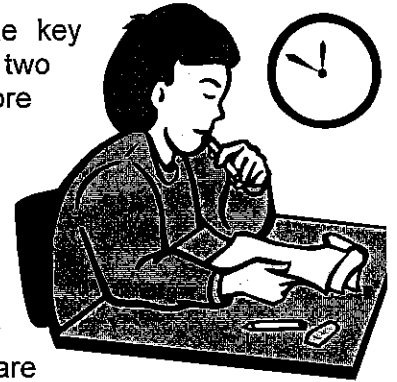
- ❖ Look at past exam papers and use them for practice, but don't try to predict questions from them. The risks are too high. It is advisable to look at only the last two or three year's exam papers for an indication of style rather than the older ones.
- ❖ Exams are set from a subject syllabus. Ask your teacher if you don't already know what it is.

## Equipment

- ❖ You must find out well in advance what you are required and allowed to take into the exam room. This particularly applies to maths exams.
- ❖ Make sure you aren't going to run out of anything. Pen, pencil, pencil sharpener, rubber and ruler are basic.

## The Exam Room – Starting the paper and answering questions

- ❖ When you get your paper read the directions carefully. Underline key instructions to avoid mistakes like losing marks for answering two questions instead of three or losing valuable time by answering more questions than required.
- ❖ Check to see how much time is allowed and what the value of each question is. Set yourself a time limit for each question always allowing time for checking.
- ❖ Read the questions carefully, underlining key words. If it is an essay question refer back to the question at intervals to make sure you are sticking to the point.
- ❖ In some exam questions, like science and maths, your method of arriving at an answer is just as important as the answer. Set it out clearly if that is, the case.
- ❖ Always check your answers and take full advantage of checking if you finish early. You have nothing to lose and possible marks to gain.
- ❖ Skim the paper to get the big picture.
- ❖ Use any extra reading time to start mentally preparing your answers.
- ❖ Select the questions for answering. Look at all the options.
- ❖ Check you understand all instructions.
- ❖ Once you have decided on what questions to answer, don't change.
- ❖ Number the questions in the order that you will answer them.
- ❖ Leave the hardest until last. Start with the one you know best.
- ❖ Write the times to spend on each section on your question paper.
- ❖ If some questions seem hard, say, "I'll find a way to answer it."
- ❖ Underline the key points in the questions you have chosen.



- ❖ Check you understand all instructions and the questions.

## ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

- ❖ Plan your answer before starting.
- ❖ Don't write out the question. It wastes time.
- ❖ Label questions with the same numbering system used in the paper.
- ❖ Write quickly, check the clock to make sure you are within time.
- ❖ Use the underlined words from the questions to keep on track.
- ❖ Constantly check that you are answering the question.
- ❖ Check you cover all parts of the question. There may be several parts.
- ❖ Work at speed, keeping in a calm and alert state.
- ❖ If an idea for another question comes, jot it down and go on working.
- ❖ If you need more paper, put your hand up, the supervisor will bring it.
- ❖ Don't use the same material more than once, unless asked.
- ❖ If you have a memory lapse, move on and expect the answer to come.
- ❖ Show all working in Maths. Marks are gained for working.
- ❖ Be accurate in drawing graphs and label carefully.

## CHECK

- ❖ Have you answered all the questions?
- ❖ When finished, add to any incomplete questions. Check all answers.
- ❖ Don't leave early. Check carefully. Look for ways of scoring more marks.
- ❖ Is your work neat? The marker must be able to read it.
- ❖



## Essay Writing

- ❖ Essays entail organising many different facts and ideas on a topic in a clear, logical fashion.
- ❖ Before you begin writing take time to think and plan your essay. Jot down ideas and put them in a logical order.
- ❖ Exams use a special type of language. Be sure you know how to compare, criticise, describe, calculate, analyse, delete, discuss, define, evaluate, illustrate, prove, summarise, interpret and verify to name a few.

### *Length*

- ❖ Be familiar with what 200 or 300 words looks like; measure in your own writing.

## THE ATTITUDE

In terms of examinations, think of yourself as a mark scorer. Don't do anything in the exam that will not give you the best advantage in scoring very well. You have one clear objective: to achieve the goal mark that you have set yourself. It is not a time to start writing about your latest theories and take an extreme view.

## THE MARKERS

In any writing it is good to be aware of your audience. Remember that the marker is likely to be a hardworking teacher who is marking scripts late at night to earn extra money.

- ❖ How can you interest him or her in your script?
- ❖ Your work should be clear, easy to read, detailed, interesting, on the topic, well expressed, knowledgeable, mature and should answer the question.
- ❖ When you are writing your paper, write to the marker. Make them really sense that here is a person who really knows, values and understands the work. When you write your paper in the examination room, tell everything that you need to say to your marker. Explain things thoroughly and give full, detailed explanations.
- ❖ As you write, every now and then, use your awareness intelligence. Imagine that you are looking at yourself busily working. Check how well you are communicating, using your time, answering the questions. Give yourself encouragement and, if necessary, useful advice.

## AFTER THE EXAM: CELEBRATE

Forget the exam. It is over. If there are more papers to sit, prepare for them. If that is the last paper — celebrate. Celebrate regardless of how you think you might have done. It is simply not worth wasting energy worrying about the exam after it is over. Worry won't change anything. It will only limit you from doing the next thing as well as you could.

When it is over, treat yourself to something special and have a party.





## EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. Be organised, use a diary. Plan your time and avoid procrastinating. Map out your assessments.
2. Keep a track of your credits, especially those at excellence and merit level. Ask you teacher.
3. Any revision you do now for assessments in week 7, term 2, will make a positive difference for the term 3 exams and end of year.
4. Plan your revision. Teachers will have given you a list of what will be examined. Use this and plan your time to cover the work.
5. Write out summary notes.
6. Do practice questions.
7. Go over practice tests, essays, assessments. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Ask questions of your teachers.
9. Ask for extra help if you don't understand.
10. Reading your notes is not effective revision – you must write.
11. Repetition is the key. Not once, but 5 times.
12. Find what works for you – star diagrams, mind maps, lists, paragraphs, audio, buddy revision. Try things.
13. Get your study area organised, take breaks every 40-50 minutes.
14. Start with what you don't know first.
15. Exams can be fun!!!!

Keep positive and keep at it.

You will have lots of other revision ideas from your teachers. There will be resources in the library.

*Motivation is about getting started – just do it*

*Striving for success without hard work is like trying to harvest where you haven't planted." - David Bly*

*Begin somewhere; you cannot build a reputation on what you intend to do."*  
*Liz Smith*

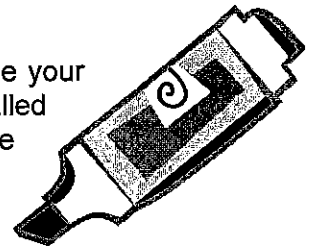
*Those who dare, win*

Make the most of 2010!

## Effective Study and Exam Tips II

With exams coming up for many people here are some quick study and exam tips....

- **Practice old exam papers.** Search out papers from previous years and practice the questions. Become familiar with the layout of the exam paper and concentrate on the sections that are more challenging for you. Ensure you go over the questions that you get wrong and learn how to answer them correctly.
- **Take frequent breaks.** To prevent overload take two or three short breaks from studying each hour. Ideal break activities include getting up to stretch, have a glass of water, eat brain food and a short walk outside in the fresh air.
- **Revise your study notes repeatedly.** go back over your notes the day after you learn them and then one week later to keep them fresh in your mind. The more you repeat them easier they get.
- **Use lots of colour.** Using, colour in your note taking will increase your ability to remember and recall your information. One colour is called monotone - which is monotonous or boring for your brain. Use many different colours. Highlight key and use favourite colours ...
- **Organise your materials people before studying.**  
Have you ever spent the first 30 minutes of your study time looking for a pencil or book? Have everything ready and at your fingertips before you sit down to study. The more organised you are the faster and effective your study time will be.
- **Study with low lighting.** Research by Rita and Kenneth. Dunn shows that studying with low lighting is best for over 70% of students. Bright light reflects off a white page often stressing your eyes, making reading and learning harder. Avoid fluorescent lights as these often flicker at a different rate to your brain, making you feel more tired, unmotivated and giving some people headaches
- **Study the information that you don't know.** This may sound obvious, however many people study what they already know as it is comfortable. Go over past tests and learn the questions you got incorrect. Identify which parts of your notes you already know and set this information aside for revision later and learn the information you don't know...



# The meaning of commonly used exam terms

**Account for – explain.** Examine and/or interpret the parts that make up the subject

**Analyse –** Break into constituent parts and examine – regroup, classify, explain in detail.

**Apply - to bring knowledge to bear on a situation.** Note that sometimes the word does not appear in the question. For example, 'Using examples from the article, explain how the business might promote its product' requires an application of knowledge to a particular situation. Apply the Boston Matrix to the product mix of the company.

**Assess - an invitation to measure or place a value on the importance of something.** Assess whether the change to just in time manufacturing is likely to be successful.

**Calculate - to work out mathematically, usually numerically, but sometimes from a graph for example.** Calculate the return on net assets for the business.

**Comment on - to give an opinion about the extent to which something has occurred.** Comment on the environmental policy of the organisation.

**Compare** Show especially the similarities, but also point out the differences between two things. It would be good to use analogies and metaphors in answering this type of question.

**Contrast** Bring out the difference in

**Criticise** Analyse and judge the worth of something. Referring to an expert's opinion would be good

**Define** Give a concise, shortish statement of the specific meaning of a term or word. Look for the essential characteristics

**Describe** Give a detailed account of the subject. Make it as clear and real as possible. Using your visualisation skills, move from a brief overview to the detail of its individual characteristics and essential qualities

**Determine - to settle, decide, or find out the nature of.** Determine the most suitable new location for the business.

**Discuss** Debate advantages and disadvantages, compare and argue merits

**Distinguish - to show the differences between two or more things.** Distinguish between job and batch production.

**Either OR –** Do only one!

**Evaluate** Give your opinion on something. State the points for and against, quote supporting evidence from experts, studies or experiments

**Examine - to investigate closely to find out the 'truth' of the situation as if carrying out an inquiry.** Examine the factors that may have led to cash flow problems.

**Explain** How does it work? What is the principle? Make clear.

**Explore - to investigate or examine in detail, as explained above.** Explore the ways in which a business is affected by changes in interest rates.

**Give - to write down or say something.** Sometimes followed by 'an example' or 'an account of': *Give an example of a private limited company.* May also be followed by 'reasons for' which may involve greater analysis.

**How - to present an account of something.** How has the business raised funds to buy new machinery?

**Identify - to pick from a variety of information.** Identify three reasons for the merger.

**Illustrate** – Give clear examples. Again you might wish to use analogies or similarities, perhaps a diagram

**Interpret** – Explain the meaning of and give your opinion

**Investigate - to carry out a detailed examination.** Investigate the factors that may have led the business to go into liquidation.

**Justify** – Give good reason for your conclusions

**Outline** – Give an overview of the main factors or important ideas. **Summarise** – short description.

**Prove** – Support with facts, figures, evidence and examples. Give references

**Show** – Demonstrate give evidence that.

**State** – Present in clear, short form

**Suggest or give reasons for - to explain why giving a justification.** Suggest reasons why the business chose to reduce its workforce.

**Summarise** – Give a brief account of the main points, with your own conclusions

**To what extent (does/do) - to make a judgment or to measure.** To what extent has the change in corporate culture been successful?

**Trace** – describe the order in which events happened, and comment on causes and effects.

**What - to clarify something.** What is meant by a stake holder?

**Which - to select from certain options or to indicate a choice.** Which location did the business find most suitable?

**Why - to present reasons for something.** Explain why labour turnover has increased.

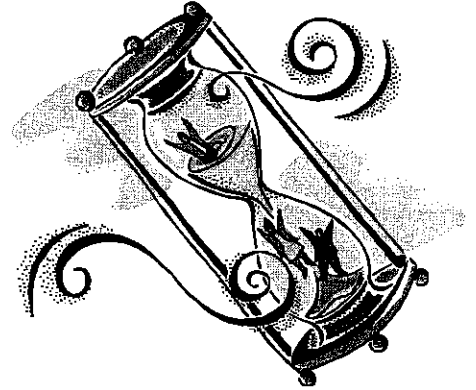
## 2. Time Management

### Three Essential Rules Of Time Management:

- 1 Organise ..... Yourself
- 2 Organise ..... Your Environment
- 3 Organise ..... Others

#### ORGANISE YOURSELF:

- ❖ Plan your time
- ❖ Make a daily list
- ❖ Establish priorities
- ❖ Schedule time
- ❖ Don't procrastinate



#### ORGANISE YOUR ENVIRONMENT:

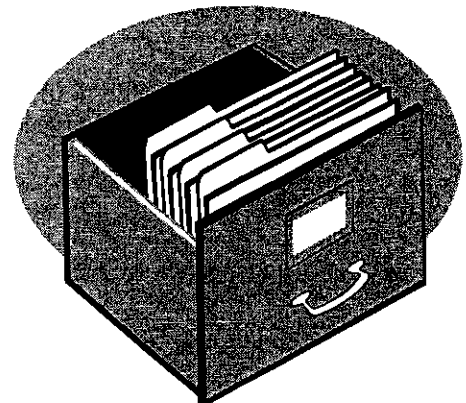
- ❖ Keep your desk clear
- ❖ Use the wastepaper basket
- ❖ Keep a good filing system
- ❖ Use a diary

#### ORGANISE OTHERS:

- ❖ Control interruptions
- ❖ Maximise meeting time
- ❖ Delegate
- ❖ Communicate

#### THE FILING SYSTEM:

- ❖ Keep it small
- ❖ Keep it simple
- ❖ Keep it flexible
- ❖ Purge it annually



# SQ3R A Revision Study Technique

The aim of SQ3R is to achieve maximum memory recall of notes and material needed for tests and examinations. (The following times are based on a 1 hour study / revision time.)

## S Survey

Survey the material you are going to revise and **plan** exactly how much you will cover in your study time. Set it as a goal. (2-4 mins)

## Q Questions

Draw up a specific **set of questions** that are drawn from the headings and sub-headings of the material you are swotting.

If you need to use the 5WH formula = what, where, why, when, who and how? Write your questions down on **scrap paper**. (3—5 mins)

## R Read and Write

Read through your notes and use your pen and scrap paper **to write answers** to your questions.

Use 'note form' only. Do not write whole sentences. Use abbreviations, symbols, diagrams, mind maps and flow diagrams as well as text. Focus on main ideas, key vocabulary, and key facts. (40-45 mins)

## R Recite

This is a brief **self recall test**. During the last 10 or 15 minutes of your study time cover up your notes and test yourself using your questions. Look over your notes for any material that you find you cannot answer. (10—12mins)

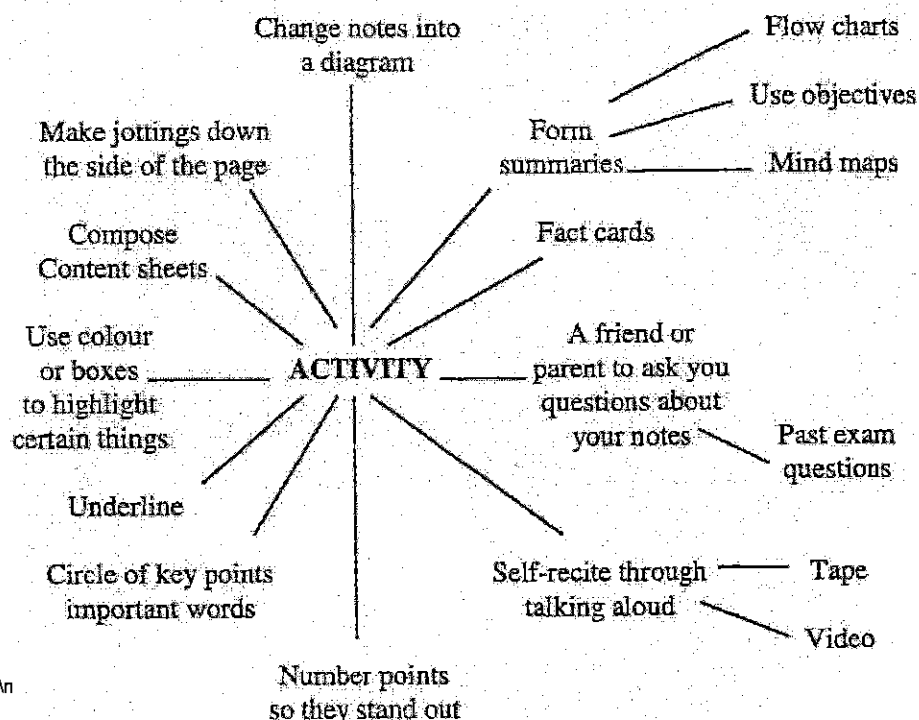
## R Review

Sometime within the next three days review your questions and your summary notes (that you did on scrap paper). By doing this you will drive the material from your short-term into your long-term memory.

### WHAT IS ACTIVE REVISION ?

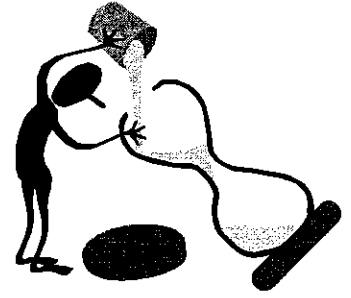
#### A SUMMARY

#### Active Revision - some activities



## Skills and Methods Relating to Time Management

- ❖ Identifying and organising task lists.
- ❖ The skill of prioritising.
- ❖ Use of Diaries and Planners.
- ❖ Use of a Homework / Revision planner.
- ❖ Awareness of one's daily use of time.
- ❖ Learning to categorise one's activities (critical, urgent, important, nonessential).
- ❖ Using the 'Backward Planning Calendar' to get assignments in on time.



### Breaking an assignment into its components and producing a logical task list of those components

- ❖ choosing my topic
- ❖ where information will be looked for
- ❖ the order in which information will be searched for
- ❖ the order in which the material will be organised / written up
- ❖ how certain information is going to be stored e.g. a draft bibliography page needs to be established very near the start, a disc will be obtained to store computer info, a manila folder or clear-file will be obtained and labelled etc
- ❖ the order in which draft and good copies of the final information will be made
- ❖ when proofreading will occur
- ❖ when printing will occur & a spare copy made
- ❖ when it will be handed in (obviously last on the list)

This should be seen / marked by the teacher and feedback provided to students. Students could even put their ordered list on an OHT and present it to the class who could critique the presentation.

Only when an approved task list has been drawn up should the pupils be permitted to proceed.

Staff could produce some sample Research Topics with an accompanying 'ordered component list' that has deliberate omissions and or deliberate mis-orderings and students are required to spot the mistakes and suggest correct alternatives.

In your subject tests and exams include some generic questions about the skill/s of organising research and assignment planning (HOD's take note).



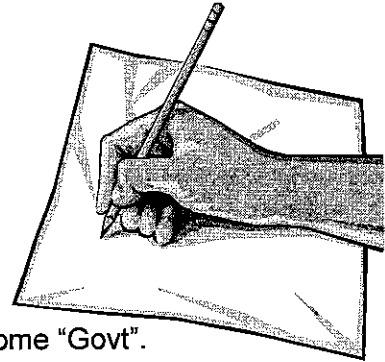


# 5. Note Taking

Taking notes is an essential tool for your learning success. There are so many ideas that you will be exposed to in any one day that it is necessary to find some way to organise them for further use.

This section gives you the skills to set out your notes clearly in order to provide a good basis for revision. Here are some of the key principles to note taking:

1. Make your notes interesting and pleasant to look at.
2. Space is needed for ease of reading and for later additions.
3. Only note essential points that will be needed later.
4. Find a system that suits your learning and memory style.
5. Take notes from lessons so that they don't require rewriting.
6. Develop abbreviations to save space. "Government" can become "Govt".
7. Build up your own additional notes from your own research.
8. Review the notes regularly for total recall.



## Types Of Note Taking

There are several ways to take notes. There is no right way. The essential factor is that you can read them at a later time and you can easily recall the essential points.

### *Mind Maps*

Drawing mind maps is an excellent form of note taking because it matches so closely with the way we actually think and it is a very flexible style. Here are the main points:

1. Turn your paper on the side to give you more room. Put a word or picture representing your main idea in the centre. Enclose the word with a shape — this could represent the idea.
2. From the central word or picture, draw branches. Write a key word in large print on each branch. Use different colours for different branches.
3. Connect smaller branches to the main ones for related ideas. Keep words sitting on the branches.
4. Use drawings and symbols rather than words where possible.
5. Write ideas in a relaxed way. Let the ideas flow easily.
6. Leave space. Develop a second mind map if one area gets too detailed.
7. Try to keep them relatively simple — use key words only.