

Hyndland Secondary School



S4 Study Skills Workshops

Today's S4 Study Skills Workshops will be led by a group of S6 Mentors. These workshops will help you to prepare for your Assessment Diet in December and SQA Examinations in April and May.

This booklet will remind you of the advice given by the S6 Mentors in today's workshops.

Try to identify and use the study strategies that you find most effective. If some of the ideas inside do not work well for you, try something different until you feel more confident.

Hyndland Hints

Some of the more important, unusual and innovative ideas suggested by S5 and S6 students at Hyndland Secondary School have been collated in the booklet. You will find these in the boxes headed "Hyndland Hints" Why not try these and see if they work for you?

Time Management and Motivation

Time Management



It is very important that you manage your time effectively when you are undertaking independent study.

Make sure you compile a study timetable or a study plan.

Begin by identifying times when you won't be able to study due to family commitments or commitments to hobbies and pastimes you may have outside school. This will allow you to be realistic about what is possible in the time remaining. Enter these commitments into your study plan or study timetable.

Then, break down your available remaining study time into blocks. It is thought that blocks of 45 minutes are most effective. After two blocks of 45 minutes (with a short break in the middle) you should try to fit in a longer break.

Make sure that you don't concentrate only on the things you like and are good at. Identify the things you find difficult, and make a checklist of the things you know you need to revise.

Start filling in the empty blocks of time on your study timetable or study plan. Be as specific as possible. For example, don't write in that you plan to study "English". Instead, write that you plan to study "Close Reading Skills" or, to be even more specific, write in that you plan to study "Close Reading Skills – Word Choice Questions". By tackling things in small manageable chunks like this, you will see yourself making progress, and are less likely to feel overwhelmed.

Equally, don't get bogged down in minor details. See the bigger picture, particularly if you have a lot still to cover.

Make plans that will allow you to avoid distractions. For instance, if you're worried that you'll be distracted by your mobile phone, put it in another room before you begin studying.

Motivation

Motivate yourself by ticking off things on your original checklist that you've covered and are now confident about. This will allow you to track your progress and see how far you've come.

Reward yourself for effective periods of study. Rewards might include some time on Facebook, or a trip to the cinema.

Celebrate and share your successes. Tell someone when you're doing well, and enjoy the well-earned praise you'll get.

Think about the rewards for doing well in the final assessments.

Hyndland Hints



Make sure that coursework and homework are completed in good time to ensure that you leave yourself enough time for revision.

Mind-Mapping

A mind map is a very visual way of helping you to explore your thinking on an idea or topic.

Begin by **writing your main topic in the centre of a blank page**. Create **branches stemming from the main topic** in the centre of your page. On these branches, write down ideas related to your main topic. From these first branches, **have further branches stemming off**, which further explore each of the ideas.

Use **colours** to help you group together and remember key ideas.

Use **pictures** to symbolise the main ideas.

Some possible uses include:

- Exploring the different aspects of a particular character in a novel or play.
- Identifying the various different ideas within a particular topic ... in any subject!
- Linking together the related ideas on a particular topic ... in any subject!



Hyndland Hints

Without using your notes, begin a mind map on a topic using one colour of pen. When you are finished, finish the mind map in a different colour using your notes to help you. The ideas that are written in this second colour are, therefore, identified as those you are having difficulty remembering without your notes. Concentrate on these in your independent study.

Advantages of Mind-Mapping

Mind-mapping is very helpful in allowing you to get all of the different ideas in your brain onto the page. It is, therefore, useful in identifying what you already know about a topic.

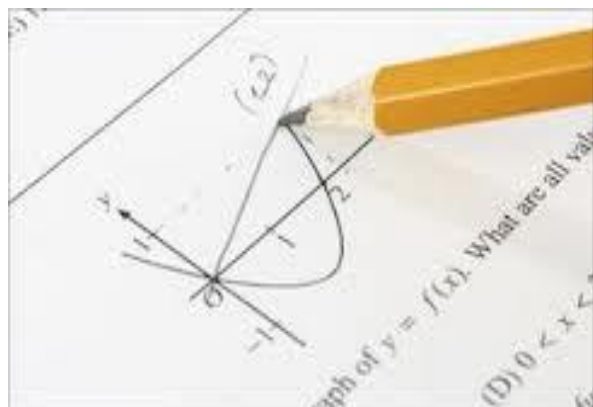
Mind-mapping can be a good tool for organising your thinking, as it encourages you to make associations between related ideas.

Mind-Mapping is very useful in understanding how key points are linked to one another, or how one point leads on from the previous one; just follow the branches!

If you use colours and pictures effectively, mind-mapping can help you to visualise and therefore remember key ideas.



Using Past Papers, Specimen Papers and Practice Papers



Past papers are exam papers which have been used in previous SQA examinations. Specimen papers are example papers created by the SQA which are similar in structure to those used in the final examination. Practice papers are further example papers created by other companies which are very similar to those produced by the SQA.

Possible Uses of Past Papers, Specimen Papers and Practice Papers

- The simplest way to use past papers, specimen papers or practice papers is to work through them under timed conditions for exam practice.
- You can attempt papers with your course notes in front of you at first. This will help you to write model answers for the types of questions you are likely to face in the exam. You can then try a paper without your notes in front of you.
- You can use the marking keys provided with these papers to help you see how marks are awarded. Compare your own answer with the answer in the marking key and see what you've done well, and what needs to be done next to pick up more marks.
- When you get an answer wrong, try to understand **how** and **why** you got it wrong. Then write a corrected model answer.
- You can look through a collection of papers, and pick out numerous examples of the same question type. You might want to do this for question types you find especially difficult. You can then get lots of practice in this type of question.
- As the new National Qualifications have only been running for the last few sessions, there are not many past papers available. To help with this, the SQA website has a helpful device that shows you which questions from old Intermediate and Standard Grade papers can be used by candidates attempting the new National Qualifications. Search their website using the term "guidance on the use of past paper questions for National 5" along with the name of the subject you are looking at. This will give you some guidance.



Hyndland Hints

You can even write out your corrections in a separate "corrections" jotter; this means that you'll have (in one easy-to-find place) lots of different worked examples of the types of question you find difficult.

Advantages of Using Past Papers, Specimen Papers and Practice Papers

Past papers, specimen papers and practice papers are useful as they give you practice in the types of questions you are likely to face in your final examination.

Past papers, specimen papers and practice papers can also give you experience of the exam situation before the Assessment Diet in December or the SQA examinations in April-May.

Using Flashcards

Flashcards are small pieces of card on which you write down some key facts or ideas you need to remember and understand. You should not have lots of writing on each card.

Summarise the key information to make it more manageable.

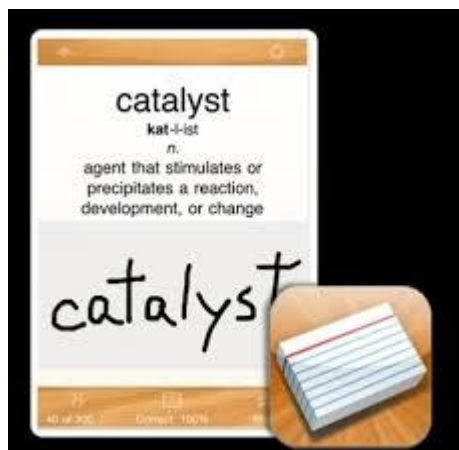
Try, as far as possible, to **use your own words**. However, if you need to quote (i.e. if you are writing down a specific definition) do so accurately.

You may want to have a key idea that needs to be understood **on one side**, with a definition, an explanation or an example **on the other side**.

You may want to have a **heading and/or a date** on your flashcards so that you know how the ideas on each card relate to the rest of your work.

Some possible uses of flashcards include:

- Identifying key words or concepts on one side, with definitions on the other.
- Writing key quotations on one side, with related analysis on the other.
- Identifying types of maths problems on one side, with example questions on the other.



Advantages of Using Flashcards

- Flashcards will help you to identify the most important ideas, and summarise the things you need to know about these ideas. They can, therefore, make your studying more manageable.
- Flashcards are very portable. You can take these with you when you are on the move, and fit in short and effective periods of study when you get a moment.
- Flashcards can be helpful in checking your understanding of key ideas. After you have studied them carefully, you can give your flashcards to someone else and ask them to quiz you.

Hyndland Hints



Flashcards are useful for identifying the ideas on which you need to concentrate. When you are being quizzed on your flashcards, you can identify the things you find most difficult by creating two separate piles: "things you know well", and "things you know less well". Focus on the flashcards in your "things you know less well" pile in your next period of independent study.

Effective Note-Making

Effective note-making is vital if you are to keep a record of all that you've covered in your different courses.

You **don't need to use full sentences**, as long as what you've written makes sense to you. When taking notes from a book, an article or a note someone else has written, make sure you **use your own words**. This will show that you understand the points you are taking down, and also ensure that you aren't accused of plagiarism.



Use **lists and bullet points** to help you summarise things. Use **headings and sub-headings** to help you organise and connect related information. These headings and sub-headings will also help you to find notes on key topics more swiftly later on. You can use **colour coding** to show how ideas are related. **Underline, circle or highlight** your notes to help you identify the key points. Try **mnemonics** to help you remember things.

Remember that your notes on a particular topic or subject will come from a number of sources: you may have written notes in class from the board, or after listening to the teacher speak; the teacher may have given you a printed note; you may have taken notes from books or from articles you have read online.

You can also **annotate** printed teacher notes or your own notes, by reminding yourself of key points or key vocabulary, or even summarise whole paragraphs with a short note in the margin.



Hyndland Hints

You can compare notes with a friend to see if there are any gaps in your own. You can then fill in these gaps.

Advantages of Effective Note-Making

If you have a detailed set of notes that are well-organised, the independent study you go on to undertake will be more effective. You will have an accurate record of the most important things. You will have a reliable record of what has been covered, so can look back at these notes when you are revising or are finding things difficult.

Studying In Groups.



Studying in a group can be an effective revision strategy. However, you must make sure that you are confident that the sessions will be productive. Study with friends if you feel that they will be a supportive influence and will build your confidence. Avoid studying with friends if you feel there is a possibility of becoming distracted and achieving little.

Always begin a group study session with a goal in mind. This will encourage you to avoid distractions, use the time productively, and work as a team.

Some possible activities when studying in groups:

Share notes so that you are able to spot any gaps in your own notes and fill these.

Have someone in the group quiz you on particular topics. You might use flashcards for this.

Tackle difficult questions together, using the knowledge of the whole group to compose a model answer the whole group can then learn from.

Use a graffiti exercise to have everyone in the group jot down everything they know about a topic. In a graffiti exercise, everyone in a group writes (on the same piece of paper and at the same time) everything they can think of about a particular topic within a very short and strict time frame. Group members can then discuss with each other the interesting things that have been written down by the others.

Discuss important ideas. You won't just learn from what others say; you will also deepen and clarify your own understanding as you try to explain your own thoughts to others.

Advantages of Studying in Groups

Studying in groups can provide variety in your revision programme.

Studying in groups can also give you a support network where participants can find help with the things they find difficult.

Studying in groups can be motivating, as you will want to ensure that the others in the group feel you are doing your share of the work.

Studying in groups can allow the participants access to a wider range of knowledge and a range of different perspectives through the contributions of the other group members.

Hyndland Hints



Never submit group work to your teacher when you have been asked to provide an individual response. This could lead to you being accused of plagiarism.

Notes

Use this page to take down any notes from today's workshops.



Workshop	Notes
Time Management and Motivation	
Mind-Mapping	
Using Past Papers, Specimen Papers and Practice Papers	
Using Flashcards	
Effective Note-Making	
Studying in Groups	