

Study Tips and Mind Maps

Studying:

- Studying is a habit that you must get used to. It is hard when you first start. It will get easier when you get better at it. You need to learn how to study.
- To make learning easier, you have to want to learn and to believe you can. You cannot learn if you do not try. Learning is not something that happens to you. You must try.
- Think about what you do when you study. Does it work? If it doesn't, you need to change what you do. Try to come up with some other ways to work.
- You should start with a plan for learning new information or going over what you have learned before. If your brain is going to pay attention, you should begin by making connections to what you already know. Then, identify what you do not know and map out what you need to do.
- Always try to be positive. Believe you can do it and you are halfway there. If you study a little every day and then do more and more as your exams get closer, you will feel less stressed because you will be prepared.

Where to study:

- Try to study in the same place and at the same time each day.
- Study in a room that is quiet.
- Sit in a chair. Study at a desk or table. You will feel more tired if you study lying on your bed or the floor.
- Work under good light. Use a 60 or 75 watt bulb desk lamp. Always have a softer light behind you. Make sure there is no glare. This will hurt your eyes and make you tired.
- Make sure you have all you will need with you. Keep a box with spare things like pens and pencils, paper, a ruler, scissors, index cards, highlighter pens, and a maths set.
- Don't study with music or the TV on. Yes, you can read and write with them BUT they will take some of your attention and concentration. This will decrease what you will take in.

When to study:

- Don't study when you are hungry or tired. It is very hard to learn when you are hungry or tired.
- Some pupils find the morning is the best time to study. Think about when is your best time to study.

- Take a 5 minute break for every 30 minutes that you study.
- Do not study for too long at any one time. Trying to take in too many new things at once may only confuse you. It is better to study well for a short time then to just sit looking at a book.
- Use your spare time. While you are waiting for a bus or walking the dog, you can be trying to remember something. Carry your study cards with you.
- Keep a calendar where you study. Mark in the dates of tests and exams. Mark each day that you study and for how long.
- Before an exam make a timetable of when you will study and what you will study

How to study:

- Start with a subject that you like. Take turns with your subjects. Do an easy one, then a hard one, then an easy one. Do a language subject, then a maths or science one.
- Sometimes when someone says, "I can't study", they really mean, "I have never done it before and I don't know what to do."
- One of the best ways to study is to re-write your notes, drawings, mind maps and study cards. Do this from memory. Then check to see how well you remembered them.
- Some pupils study better with a friend. If you do it right, you can share the work and learn from each other and test each other.
- If there are specific facts, names, dates or words that you must know for a subject, try making study cards. Write each new thing onto a small card. For example, put a new word on one side of the card and what it means on the other side. Or put a date on one side of the card and what it refers to on the other side. Drawings may help too. Keep the cards in a box. As a part of revision, have someone at home take a few cards to check your memory. You might also put a few cards into your pocket whenever you go off on a bus or in the car. While you have nothing better to do on the trip, check how well you remember what is on each card.

Use your Memory:

To remember something you must:

- Understand it
- Get it into memory
- Think about it often
- Use it often
- What ever you are doing to study you must stop often and think about it.
- You won't learn something new by looking at it only once. You are more likely to understand and remember if you go over things again and again on different days.
- You must try to recall what you have learned often
- Talk to yourself more. A good way to remember something is to say it over and over again to yourself. This may works better when you say it out loud.
- Sometimes when someone says, "I can't remember", they really mean, "I don't understand it." It is

very hard to remember something that you do not understand. If you do not understand what you are trying to learn, you must get help from someone.

- Studying is not just reading. To study you have to do something. There is an old saying which is true. It says, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."
- Be sure to use your senses to learn in many ways, while you emphasise your learning strengths. For example, if you are a visual learner, you might use your "mind's eye" to create an image or picture of a paragraph you have struggled to understand. Some pupils learn best by hearing information, others prefer to read it while still others - many others - have to do something (write, draw, build, create) in order to learn.
- Learn by seeing - Look at it and then close your eyes and try to see it in your mind's eye. Use pictures and drawings when you can.
- Learn by hearing - Listen to it and then say it over and over again aloud. Tape your self or someone else reading or saying the information. Listen to the tape over and over again. Try making up silly rhymes or songs about what you are trying to learn
- Learn by doing- Try copying the information, then write it out or draw it over and over again. Use mind maps as well as pictures.

Talk about studying:

- Talk to your teachers more. They can give you a good idea about what you need to do and what you need to know. They are teachers because they are good at the subject and can tell you a lot about how to study it.
- Ask your teachers for a list of things that you need to study.
- Discuss how you study and what you study with your friends, teachers, parents and older sisters and brothers. They can often give you help.

Other:

- Be active. Be sure to walk or ride a bike or take part in a sport a few times a week. This will keep you healthy and help cut down stress.
- Stay healthy. Eat well, drink plenty of water and stay rested. If you do not feel well or are tired you will not be able to learn and remember.
- You will feel more stress if you (1) do not try in class, (2) do not do your homework, (3) do not study most days.

Revision:

- In revision, as well as reading, you must **WRITE**. If you don't, you are not really studying.

- Some books have questions at the end of each chapter. Write out answers to these questions.
- Make up and answer your own questions based on your topic lists.
- You can also get questions from your notes, your old homework, your class assignments as well as old tests and quizzes.
- Try looking at old exam papers. Before trying to write answers, ask yourself:

What does the question really ask?

How do I answer - write an essay, fill-in-blanks, multiple-choice?

If it is an essay question, brainstorm some points, make a Mindmap.

If it is a fill-in-the-blank question, brainstorm the words for each blank one at a time.

If it is a multiple-choice question - try to eliminate one or more of the choices, then focus on what's left, one at a time.

- Your answers should always be done in writing. If you can not recall enough information to write a full answer, go back and read about that topic again. Then write an answer using your book and notes.
- The next time you study, try writing the answer again without the book and notes.
- Make a chart to show what you have to study. Mark topics by colour. Use green when you feel you know the topic well. Use yellow if you are not so sure and need to review it. Use red if you need to put a lot of work in.

Mind Maps

A mind map is a kind of framework. It is a way of helping you to organise, visualise and summarise. Its purpose is to give you a better way to store information on one page. Many topics can be studied and revised easier and more meaningfully by making a mind map. Mind maps can be made by hand or by using a special program on the computer.

Mind maps can be used to:

- take notes in class
- take notes from a text book
- find main ideas
- plan an essay for homework or in an exam
- revise for exams

-work through problems

-brainstorm ideas

Examples of Mind Maps

Why use Mind Maps?

Mind Maps will help your memory.

Mind Maps will help you think.

Mind Maps will help you get organised.

Mind Maps will help see how information is linked.

Mind Maps can save you time.

Mind Maps allow you to get away from only using words and full sentences.

Mind maps should only take up one side of paper, so you write less.

Mind Maps can help you to see the whole and how the parts work together.

New ideas can be added easily without rewriting.

- Many pupils find that the making of a mind map is a painless way of studying.
- When they go into the exam, these pupils start by making their mind maps and then they use them to do the exam.
- Making the same map over and over again will help your memory.

How to Make a Mind Map

- Take a blank piece of paper (without lines) and turn it sideways
- Start from the centre of the page and work towards the edges.
- Make the centre a clear and strong picture that shows the main point of the map. Or use a word or two as a title. You may draw a circle around it.
- For the first sub-heading or point, draw a line out from the circle in any direction.
- On this line or at the end of it, draw a picture or write a key word to show this new point. Circle this too.
- For individual facts to do with this point, draw new lines out.
- Go back to the centre, to record your next sub-heading.
- Your map will resemble the spreading branches or roots of a tree.

Remember:

- Print in lower case letters
- *Use only one or a few words at a time.*
- *Use pictures or symbols. They may be better than words for you.*

- Use colour for different branches, ideas or links.
- Use colour to make things stand out. (Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind.)
- Think in 3-D.
- Use arrows to show links between different parts.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area, go to another branch.
- Put ideas down as they come to you, wherever they fit. You don't have to finish one part, before starting another. Don't judge or hold back.
- If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map.
- Be creative. Creativity aids memory.

Summary

- Mind Maps can give you an effective method of taking notes and planning essays.
- Mind Maps will help you see the structure of a subject, the important facts and how they are linked.
- Your Mind Maps are yours alone. Once you understand how to make them you can develop your own ways to take things further. Do not be afraid to invent. The more you make the quicker and the better you will get at making them.
- As you get better, you will see how useful they are to you.

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