

7. Study Skills: Contents

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About the second edition...

This booklet is one of a series of “Fact Packs” that were developed over many years by The Kids’ Team, South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (SWBIRS) in Albury. The creation of this second edition of Fact Packs has been a long-time coming, and provides updated content designed to enhance the clinical usefulness of these resources.

Our aim was to collate some practical, user friendly material that has previously been demonstrated to be helpful to families and educators. We hope that we have developed a set of resource booklets containing a range of referenced, user friendly strategies and ideas relating to common issues that arise after an acquired brain injury (ABI). Introducing any new ideas will take time, patience and persistence. The advice from countless parents would be “hang in there.”

It is intended that the Fact Packs will be used in conjunction with service provision by The Kids’ Team or other ABI health professionals.

Some of the material included has been adapted from textbooks. Some has been developed by team members and much has been developed by the educators, rehabilitation workers and families working with the children we see. Wherever possible, we have obtained permission to use the resources

included in the book. Please advise us if we have left something out!

To keep our material clear, we have used “he” to refer to the child with ABI throughout the Fact Packs. This reflects real life for us, too, as the majority of the children we work with are boys!

We extend thanks to the NSW Department of Health who provided the initial funding for this project. Without this funding, the development of the Fact Packs would have been an idea that remained trapped in the minds of several enthusiastic but busy ABI workers. Finally, we are very grateful to all the Kids’ Team members past and present, in addition to all the parents, teachers, school counsellors, students, therapists and ABI workers whose wisdom, energy, creativity and support has contributed to the development of these resources.

The eight Fact Packs in this series include:

- ◆ Achieving Goals
- ◆ Behaviour
- ◆ Choosing a School
- ◆ Especially for Parents
- ◆ Heads Up on Brain Injury
- ◆ Siblings
- ◆ Study Skills
- ◆ Teachers and Aides

We hope you find the Fact Packs useful. If you have ideas, resources, or material that could be included in future editions, please let us know!

The kids’ team
SWBIRS

Dear student

If you are looking at this particular Fact Pack, then you probably want to develop some good “study skills.” Everyone has some things at school that they find easier than others. Some of the things you find harder may be the result of your brain injury and you might need to learn some new ways of studying and learning information. This booklet has been written to help students in school to develop effective study skills.

In this booklet we use the term “study” to include completing homework tasks, completing assignments, revision and preparing exams.

When you need help studying please talk with your parents, teachers, support staff or therapists. They will never know you need help unless you ask. Tell the teacher when you are having difficulties. Be clear about what you understand and be specific about which part is difficult. Discuss the assignments or exams with them. If you are finding a task difficult, they might be happy to modify it, but you will need to ask them.

Each time you go up a year at school things can change. Make sure you discuss any issues you are having, whether related to school or not, with your parents, teachers or therapists. If you are a senior student you may need extra support for various issues that arise as a result of your brain injury.

There is not only one way to learn new information. We all have different ways that we learn best. Some find it easiest to learn from what they see, some find it easiest to hear and others may prefer hands on learning. If you have had a formal assessment such as neuropsychology or speech pathology assessment you may have an idea about which way of learning suits you best. Throughout the booklet there are lots of ideas, often these are similar but presented in different ways. You should try the one that makes most sense to the way you learn. Feel free to make these your own by making changes to the format or wording.

This Fact Pack has four core sections:

Section 1: discusses some of the tasks that are important to get you physically set up for study.

Section 2: suggests ways that you can learn to plan and manage your study time better, so that you can fit it in with your life.

Section 3: looks at ways of studying that can help you learn information more effectively and includes practical ideas / tools for you to try.

Section 4: provides tools that will help you to organise and complete assignments, projects and exams. The “Achieving Goals” Fact Pack also has other information that might help.

We know from personal experience and the feedback from expert students who have made it before you, that studying is not always easy! Hang in there. Keep trying!

The kids’ team

South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service

Setting up for study

Your study area is very important. It can be useful to separate where you spend time studying, relaxing and socialising. It is a good idea to make sure that your physical environment supports you to study effectively. This can include your study space, study tools and materials.

Aspects of a good home study environment include:

- Quiet and private space
- Distraction-free
- Supportive and ergonomic chair
- Good lighting
- Ventilation and fresh air
- Clear workspace
- Storage space
- Visible noticeboard

Quiet and private space

In order to study effectively, it's important to have a space that lets you focus and have quiet periods when necessary. For some students, they find this difficult at home, and so prefer to stay back after school and work in the school library. When at home, it would be best that study is not done in your bedroom or lounge room. Some students find that placing a sign on the door (e.g. that says 'Quiet Please') is useful to let others know they're working, or else the family may be

able to agree on a 'quiet' period each night.

Distraction-free environment

Some common potential sources of distraction include: people, television, music, food, and social networking. Many students find that willpower on its own is not enough to ward off potential distractions – instead, it is often more effective to remove the temptation just for the blocks of time you are focusing on schoolwork/study. So for the blocks of time when you are studying or doing schoolwork, close Facebook, turn off your iPod and your mobile phone. It can be helpful if you can close the door to reduce distractions.

Supportive and ergonomic chair

Do not underestimate the importance of a good, supportive chair! You want one that is comfortable and adjustable in order to remove the strain on your neck and shoulders. You want something that gives support in the small of your back, and that allows your forearms to sit flat on the desk.

Good lighting

Natural light is the preferred option here, but sometimes this isn't always possible. If you need a desk lamp on, make sure the room light is on too, and you want the desk lamp to be positioned so the light is shining on your work, and not in your eyes! Poor lighting is not just bad for your eyes – it can also lead to stiff necks and sore shoulders when you sit awkwardly and strain over trying to read something when the lighting is poor.

Ventilation and fresh air

Fresh air and oxygen keeps you mentally alert. If you don't have a window you can open, make sure you take regular breaks where you walk outside and get some fresh air. Also be conscious of the temperature of the room – you want somewhere between 18-21°C, otherwise you might have trouble concentrating on your work because you're focusing on how hot or cold you are!

Clear workspace

It is worthwhile taking time before you begin to study to make sure you have everything you need close by. Remove all clutter! This will help you save time looking for things, as well as minimise distractions from all the bits and pieces in front of you. A clear workspace also sets the tone for how you will approach your work. Put the stationery you use regularly in an easily accessible place. Make sure any technology equipment (e.g. computers, printers, etc.) are organised in a way that allows you to spread out your work. Once you finish one task, pack that work away before you start on the next task.

At least once a week you should have a regular study space clean up. Here is a handy checklist for desk clean outs:

- ◆ Take everything off the desk and put it on the floor
- ◆ Sort this stuff into piles e.g. maths stuff, stuff for the bin, food scraps etc.
- ◆ Decide what is garbage and throw it out
- ◆ Sort the remaining stuff into the folders and spaces it needs to be in

Put things back on the desk. You may have textbooks and notebooks on the right, technology on the left and pens etc. in the middle. Whatever works for you!

Storage space

There are lots of options for how you want to store your past and current work in an organised manner. These include shelves for folders for each subject, a cupboard, or stackable plastic tubs (one for each subject). Work out what works best for you. Try and keep all the work and books for each subject together.

Visible noticeboard

A large pinboard can be useful for planning and to keep important things you need to remember – you could even try using tape down the middle to divide the board into different sections. Some students like to use a term planner to clearly see what assignments are coming up. Others like to use a small whiteboard to write 'to do' lists and write reminders, or for brainstorming.

Organisation and filing

Different schools will have different rules about notebooks, binders, folders, diaries, use of laptops and tablets etc.

- ◆ Many students in the early years of high school use exercise books
- ◆ Many students in the later years of high school use folders
- ◆ Some students mainly use a laptop

You need to decide what works best for you within the requirements of your school.

Organising work in your paper folders

We have found that it helps many students to take notes using loose leaf paper or a lecture pad or spiral notebook that are then transferred to subject folders. The lecture pad or spiral pages do not get as easily lost and the transfer of the pages to the appropriate folder can be a great time for review. During the weekly study clean up you should make sure that the notes taken during class and any worksheets your teacher has given you are transferred to the appropriate folder.

Here are some handy general hints from teachers whose time is spent working with disorganised students!

- ◆ Colour code binders and timetables
- ◆ Link the colour of notebooks and dividers with the colour of the binders. For example, the notes behind the blue divider are the History notes and they go in the blue folder -the History one. The stuff in the blue plastic envelope is the stuff I am collecting for the History project on bushrangers.
- ◆ Write the subject and date on the top of every page of notes written! Should there be a disaster where notes are jumbled or lost, this makes life much easier.

Organising work on your computer

If you have a computer that you use for school and for your personal things (e.g. music, movies, photos, etc.), it is important to separate the two sorts of files. Create one folder for “Personal Stuff” and another for “Schoolwork”. In

your “Schoolwork” folder, set up a folder for each subject. For each subject, you may want to create sub-folders. You can choose to do this in a number of ways, such as by terms (e.g. Term 1, 2, etc.), by topic (e.g. Maths – geometry, calculus, etc.), or by category (e.g. class notes, assignments, and handouts).

Back up your work regularly, at least weekly, perhaps during your weekly clean up in case something happens to your computer. You may choose to store it on an external drive (such as a USB or a hard drive), or back up over the internet using a Cloud storage service (e.g. Google Drive; iCloud; Dropbox). It would be a disaster to lose your hard work before you hand it in!

Technology

There are a huge range of apps available to use on smart phones and tablets. These can be used to schedule your time, record notes, access word and excel documents, mind map and do many other tasks. There is an extensive range of both free and paid apps and these are changing all the time. We have included a few examples below, but please note, we have not necessarily tried out all of these and so can't guarantee their effectiveness or quality, although many have been recommended by students. Always read the reviews/feedback from users on your relevant app store and/or talk to your teachers and other students at your school for recommendations.

- ◆ **Wunderlist** – make lists and keep track of important tasks with reminders and notifications

- ◆ **Evernote** – take notes, capture photos, create to-do lists, and record voice reminders
- ◆ **Penultimate** – make freehand notes, draw diagrams and store work in handy 'notebooks'
- ◆ **Idea Sketc.h** – draw mind maps, concept maps and flow charts to brainstorm ideas
- ◆ **Study Flash** – create multiple flash card sets to test yourself

In addition, there are many built-in features available on mobile phones and tablets to assist with organising your time (e.g. using the calendars to set reminders).

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This information has been sourced from the online *Study Skills Handbook* (www.studyskillshandbook.com.au).

Tips for good concentration

There are some easy steps you can take to make sure you are concentrating as well as you can. These include:

- ◆ Focus on only one activity at a time if possible.
- ◆ Keep an eye on your fatigue - learn to recognise your signs of fatigue (e.g. yawning, needing to read sentences multiple times, slumping in chair)
- ◆ Schedule regular breaks to stretch your body and refocus your attention (set your watch or a timer to remind yourself to rest)
- ◆ Stop and refocus if you are getting overwhelmed or find yourself drifting
- ◆ Change activities to maintain interest, but allow yourself time to adjust when changing tasks
- ◆ Do harder tasks at a time during the day when you are the most alert (e.g. morning)
- ◆ Clear your mind of other thoughts. If you find you keep getting distracted by other things you are thinking about, write down those thoughts to deal with later.
- ◆ Try not to be self-critical, as this often leads to more distracting thoughts

Lifestyle and balance

Getting good marks at school is more than just doing lots of study. To perform at your best, you need to have a balanced lifestyle that contributes to the health of your body and your brain.

Diet and nutrition

You should always start the day by eating breakfast. Even if you don't feel like eating as soon as you get up, take something with you to school and eat it before class starts. Remember that food fuels our brains – without breakfast, your brain is trying to run without fuel! This means it can be harder to concentrate, and you might even start to feel unwell.

Try to eat 5 smaller meals a day – breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner – rather than 3 big meals. Eating smaller portions more regularly ensures our brain has a good flow of fuel to get us through the day.

Also, think about what you eat throughout the day – try to eat more fruit and vegetables, and less junk food and fast food / take away.

Hydration and fluids

Water is the best way to keep our brain hydrated and functioning well. Our bodies are made up of 70% water, and it's really easy for us to become dehydrated and not even realise.

Dehydration impairs brain function and reduces the effectiveness of your short-term memory.

Everyone should aim to drink 1.5L of water a day, which is the equivalent of about 2.5 of those 600mL bottles. If you aren't that keen on plain water, add a small bit of fruit juice, cordial or fresh fruit to add some flavour.

Drinks high in sugar, such as soft drinks, should be kept to a minimum – did you know that one can of soft drink can contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar!? Other drinks, such as fruit juice, flavoured milk, sports drinks, 'energy' drinks, and coffee, should also be consumed sparingly.

Physical activity and exercise

The most common advice is that we should be exercising for 30 minutes 3 times a week. You can also break up this 30 minutes into smaller blocks (e.g. 3 x 10mins). When you're studying, exercise, even just a 10 minute walk, is good to help you reset your focus and motivation. It also has a whole host of health benefits for both your body (e.g. cardiovascular strength, strong bones/muscles), and your mind (e.g. improves mood, lowers stress levels, improve brain function, etc.).

Sleep

Sleep is an important time for your brain to recharge and file away all the information from the day. Research suggests that optimal sleep need for children and adolescents is difficult to define, and differs with age. But the average for most people seems to be around 8-10 hours of sleep per night.

Not getting enough sleep can affect a range of things, from your ability to concentrate in class, to your emotions and mood.

If you are waking up still feeling tired, check all the lifestyle factors – are you getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, or doing enough exercise. Some other things that you can do that may help you get to sleep better can be found in the Especially for Parents Fact Pack, or via the KidsHealth website (<http://teenshealth.org/en/teens/>).

Well-balanced lifestyle

Everyone finds balance in different ways. Some people like to spend time with friends/family. Some have regular hobbies, activities or sporting pursuits. Others set aside time each week to relax and let their body ‘chill out’. All the while, they also make sure there is still enough time to do the right amount of work for school too.

If you’re struggling to find time to do the things you want to do, or keep up with your schoolwork, think about how you’re using your time – what could you do to make your life more balanced?

This information has been sourced from the online *Study Skills Handbook* (www.studyskillshandbook.com.au).

Planning and managing time for study

One of the challenges for every student is finding the time to get everything done and have time left to enjoy themselves. It is very important for your health and wellbeing to maintain a work / study / life balance that includes time with family and friends, time for yourself and to follow your interests, as well as enough study time. Time management is critical, especially when your workload increases as you go through your high school years. As you progress through high school there will be more to remember and you will do better if you pace yourself.

Within your study time you will need to plan your time to:

- ◆ Write assignments
- ◆ Complete homework tasks
- ◆ Review classwork
- ◆ Study for exams
- ◆ Make sure you have covered all subjects

There are a number of good reasons for planning time:

- ◆ You will learn better and remember more. You will be working smarter, not harder!

- ◆ You will have more control of the work because it will not become overwhelming!

It might help if you can work out where your time goes before you try and manage it! To work this out you can do two things:

- ◆ Keep a log over a week of how you spent your time. You can use the study plan timetable to plot in what you have done each day. This will help you to make a realistic study plan. The questions underneath may lead to some good discussions!
- ◆ Think of the most organised person you know. Then ask this person what might be surprised that this person has to work really hard to be organised.

We have included in this Fact Pack some examples of forms for managing time. Try the different forms. Work out which form works the best for you. It is a good idea to take photocopies of these forms so that you have extra ones if you need at a later date. Remember, things may change each term and you may need to change the ideas you are using.

The following pages have some ideas to help you sort out where all your time goes.

Let's have a think about where all our time goes...

Where does your time go?

A questionnaire



1. I wake up at _____ am
2. I am ready for school by _____ am
3. I usually arrive at school by _____ am
4. I get to roll call by _____ am
5. I start lunch at _____ am/pm
6. I return to my afternoon classes at _____ pm
7. I finish school at _____ pm
8. I did the following activities after school and before dinner
 - i. _____ from _____ to _____
 - ii. _____ from _____ to _____
 - iii. _____ from _____ to _____
9. Between getting home from school and eating dinner I did the following activities:

10. I ate dinner at _____ pm
11. After dinner, I did the following activities:
 - i. _____ from _____ to _____
 - ii. _____ from _____ to _____
 - iii. _____ from _____ to _____
12. I finally went to bed at _____ pm
13. Total Time: At school _____ At home _____ Other _____
14. Total Time: Homework _____ Eating _____ TV _____
15. Exercise _____ Talking on the phone _____
16. Listening to music _____ Other _____
17. Surfing the internet and using social media e.g. Facebook, snapchat, _____
18. I spent most of my free time _____
19. I need to devote more time to _____ and less time to _____

Where does your time go?

A Chart

To work out how much time you spend on each activity use a timetable to note down what you do each day and the time you do it.

Activities	Hours per school day	Hours per weekend	Total Hours per week
Sleeping			
Eating			
School			
Job			
Household duties			
Sport and other exercise			
Extracurricular activities (e.g. music lessons, dancing).			
Homework/projects/assignments			
Studying			
Time with friends			
Computer and electronic games			
Internet and social media			
Watching television			
Hobbies			
Other			

Using the time listed on your chart, complete the following sentences:

- ◆ I spend most of my time during the day _____
- ◆ I spend the least amount of time during my day _____
- ◆ I spend most of my time in the evening _____
- ◆ I study at least _____ hours during the day
- ◆ I study at least _____ hours during the evening

Planning your time

Choose a method for managing your time. It might be:

- ◆ A diary
- ◆ A timetable or schedule
- ◆ A daily/weekly 'to do' list
- ◆ An electronic planner (i.e., on your phone, tablet, computer)

Then make a list of daily tasks. These might include:

- ◆ Activities that occur regularly, (e.g. classes, part-time jobs, meals, regular meetings, sport, sleep)
- ◆ Study activities that will vary from week to week
- ◆ Activities you choose, like movies, plays, games or picnics

Guidelines to remember

When you use any timetable, planner or 'to do' list you must:

- ◆ Be specific about what you want to do, e.g. "research causes of erosion" rather than "geography"
- ◆ Be realistic about what you want to do, i.e. not just about daily tasks
- ◆ Set aside short blocks of time for work which needs only a short time, such as scanning a chapter
- ◆ Organise study for difficult subjects during your best thinking time

- ◆ Make sure you plan short breaks frequently in your study time. Set yourself a time limit for your break. You can use apps such as Be Focused or Pomodoro Watch (based on the Pomodoro technique, which involves working in short 25 minute bursts separated by short 5 minute breaks)
- ◆ Build in time for exercise; research tells us that regular exercise can improve our attention and memory
- ◆ Make sure you plan time for leisure activities and be sure you use it. You can plan this as a reward for finishing some of your study tasks
- ◆ Order tasks according to importance and check them off as they are finished. Any undone tasks are placed at the top of your list for the next day.
- ◆ Set aside a time once a week to look at your work for the week and make a specific time to complete each task

Here is an example of a daily task list.

Thursday's task list:

1. Proof read book review for English
2. Pay soccer competition fees at training - \$40.00 to Mr Smith
3. Go to soccer training
4. Finish math's homework from Chapter 3.
5. Download new series of Modern Family.
6. Don't forget I'm on washing up!

A to-do list might help...

My Day

Date:

Priority	Task	Est time	✓
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Notes:



Planning your homework

In order to plan your time most effectively, you should write down absolutely everything you need to do and when it is all due. Next start thinking about what you will need to do to get it done and how long this might take.

Prioritising: how to decide what to do first

Once you have a list of tasks and a timeframe for completing them, you can prioritise what to do first. There are lots of ways to prioritise so choose a system that works best for you. You could prioritise according to the due date, or the size of the task, or the task difficulty (e.g. what is easy / takes little effort or preparation vs what is harder). Some techniques for prioritising include the following:

- ◆ Write a simple **'to do' list** – make a realistic list of things you need to do. Rank tasks according to importance (value) and/or due date.
- ◆ **Rule of three technique** – circle the top 3 tasks to be done, order them from 1-3, then work your way through one by one
- ◆ **CULL technique** – write a list of everything you need to do and allocate them to one of the following groups: C = critical (requires immediate focus); U = urgent (requires attention in the next few days); La = later and Lo = lose it. Work your way through all the C tasks, then all the U tasks.

Then go through your list again and re-rank the tasks so you have a new set of C and U tasks to work on

- ◆ **Pace yourself** – alternate between hard and easy tasks

Questions you can ask yourself to help establish your priorities:

- ◆ How much time do I have available?
- ◆ Realistically, how long will the tasks I need to do take?
- ◆ Which tasks are worrying me the most?
- ◆ Which tasks are absolutely critical for me to do well in the subject?
- ◆ Which tasks will I learn the most from?
- ◆ Which tasks can be postponed to another day without consequences?
- ◆ Which tasks have I been putting off because they are unpleasant?
- ◆ What is definitely due tomorrow?
- ◆ What work will I get into trouble for if I don't do it tonight (i.e., what is absolutely essential to finish)?
- ◆ What work would it be a good idea to get done tonight?
- ◆ What work should I do tonight if I get time?

Taken from the online Study Skills Handbook

www.studyskillshandbook.com.au

Assignment planning will help you feel in control of your work and reduce last minute stress and worry about missing deadlines.

You will need to keep track of what homework and assignments are given in each subject. You want to avoid the situation where you have three assignments all due the next day and none of them are started.

Sometimes at the end of the day all the handouts from the day can all end up in a messy pile. You might find it helpful to have an assignment folder, into which you put assignment information when it is given to you in class. You can then remove this once the task is complete. Alternatively, you may prefer to keep the assignment information according to what subject it is for (e.g. in the subject folders suggested earlier in this booklet).

You could keep this form on your noticeboard or in the front of your folder, in your diary or recorded in your electronic device. Whatever is on this planner will need to be transferred to your diary or wherever you are organising things that you will do for different parts of your assignments.

On the following pages you will find a sample of the forms to show you how they are used and then a blank version that you can photocopy if you want to.

Helpful habits

Developing good time management habits can be a good way to have a pattern or regular routine for your schoolwork. These can help:

- ◆ Write your homework in your diary every day
- ◆ Check your diary when you get home every afternoon
- ◆ Decide what order you will do your homework that day (read back over the prioritisation tips above)
- ◆ Have set periods of time to work in each day
- ◆ Look ahead in your diary to see what work may be due soon
- ◆ Overestimate the time needed for each task (things always take longer than you think!)

Managing time:

Homework planner example

Subject	Task	Date Set	Date Due	Done
1. English	Book review: Choose your favourite character and write about their role in the novel		4.3.04	2.3.04
2. History	Outlaw project: Write about three famous outlaws		27.2.04	25.2.04
3.				
4.				

Homework planner

Subject	Task	Date Set	Date Due	Date Completed	Mark Received

Study planning

Usually it is not enough to write “do homework” onto your study planner. When your teacher gives you homework try to write down the detail of what you have to do (e.g. complete exercises 3-8 on pg 45, include working out). This will make it much easier to remember and get started when you get home. You’ll be able to cross things off as you have done them.

Using a study planner

- ◆ Write on the planner any regular commitments such as sport, work etc.
- ◆ Write on the planner the time for everyday activities (e.g. Dinner, shower)
- ◆ Think carefully about TV viewing and put this on your timetable
- ◆ Use the assignment planning forms (in this fact pack) and write the steps onto the planner
- ◆ Break up tasks into smaller chunks, this will help you stay fresh and interested
- ◆ Reward yourself after something particularly difficult with something easier or more fun

At first using these forms may seem complicated but with practice, the steps will become part of you routine and will actually speed up the process. You will be working smarter, not too much harder! Two examples of study planners used by students at our unit follow. The first is for a student who is able to work out the steps of her homework.

Sample study plan 1: Renae

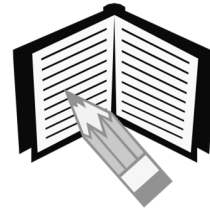
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4.00	H/W	H/W	TAFE	H/W	Gym		
4.30	H/W	H/W	TAFE	H/W	Gym		
5.00	Therapy	H/W		H/W			
5.30	Therapy						
6.00	Therapy	Shower	Shower	Shower	Shower		
6.30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
7.00	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV		
7.30	MKR		Jobs	H/W			
8.00		H/W	H/W	H/W			
8.30	Jobs	Modern Family	The Bachelor	Big Bang Theory			
9.00	Shower						

Sample study plan 2: Robert

You may need more direction and it may help to write the actual steps of the assignment into the planner. An example of a planner completed like this is presented below.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4.00	Finish English novel	Do Maths sheet	Soccer	Finish chapter summary for English	Gym		
4.30		Practise spelling words	Soccer	Practise Spelling words	Gym		
5.00	Therapy	Do chapter summary of first two chapters of English novel	Practise spelling words	Decide on the character you will write about for English			
5.30	Therapy						
6.00	Therapy	Shower	Shower	Shower	Shower		Put projects and tests onto next week's study planner
6.30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		
7.00	TV	TV	TV	Read Mad Dog Morgan notes	TV		
7.30	Home & Away	Read Ned Kelly notes for Outlaw project	Jobs	Mind-map the Outlaws project			
8.00			Read Buffalo Bill notes for project	Finish Maths sheet			
8.30	Jobs	Modern family	The Bachelor	The Big Bang Theory			
9.00	Shower						
9.30	TV!						

Study planner



Here is a blank form of the study planner that you can use or modify. Taken from *Treading Water while the Sharks are Circling* (written by Jim Elliott).

This form can also be used for organising your study time before exams. It helps you to vary the tasks you do so you don't spend so long on one thing that you lose interest. You can build in activities to reward yourself (e.g. an "easier" subject or TV break when a task has been completed).

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
4.00							
4.30							
5.00							
5.30							
6.00							
6.30							
7.00							
7.30							
8.00							
8.30							
9.00							

Techniques to help you study

There are lots of different study techniques that can help people learn and remember information. Some techniques are below. Try different techniques and work out which ones are better for you. We all learn in different ways and we need to find out what way is best for us.

Taking notes

Taking notes during class can be hard. You're trying to remember what you want to write, to write it quickly, and keep listening to your teacher – talk about doing lots of things at once! BUT...there are ways to make this easier!

Taking notes from what you read is another challenge. The internet can be especially hard. There is so much information and it is harder to find the main points. You might find the internet more useful for maps and pictures than notes. The following tools can be used either in class or when you are reading.

Record the class

If it's ok with your teacher, you can audio record the classes that usually require lots of writing (e.g. English and History). Take notes during the class, and if you miss anything important, you can re-listen to the recording. Aim to listen to the recording on the same day. When you are listening to the recording, add more notes to those you took in class. That way it's still

fresh in your mind, AND you're reviewing the work, helping it to stick better in your brain!

Use teacher handouts

If the teacher gives out handouts (and if they don't, ask them to!) then this method of note taking can be really helpful as you can add your notes to the main points already on the handout while the teacher is talking.

For some of you, the most helpful thing will be to ask teachers for a copy of notes in advance. This means you will be doing just one activity. You can hear the information and then use the notes for review later.

Table of contents

Reviewing your notes will be much easier if they are well organised. Using a table of contents can be a very helpful strategy. A sample follows below.

Science: table of contents

Date	Title of Lesson	Page
4.2.04	<i>Introduction to Metals</i>	1.
5.2.04	<i>Properties of Metals</i>	3.
6.2.04	<i>Uses of Metals</i>	6.
9.2.04	<i>Where metals can be found</i>	8.

Revision

The best way to ensure you are prepared for exams is to start preparing a long time before they're due to take place! Revision is most effective when it is done every day as this will help to reinforce what you have learnt in class. It is also a good idea to read over all of your notes at the end of the week to help you remember what has been covered.

Your daily revision doesn't have to be long and detailed. It can be as simple as taking 10 minutes to think about each class and note down some key things you learned that day and some questions about things you didn't understand. You can then follow up with more reading or speaking to your teacher.

You might also find it helpful to read through your class notes (or handouts from the teacher) and your text book. You could summarise the key information and do any end-of-chapter questions.

When you're revising for exams, you might feel overwhelmed by all of the information that you have covered in the subject and wonder how you will be able to remember all of it. However, some of this information might not be important for you to know for the exam. So, find out what you are being tested on by asking the teacher, reading the subject outline or any exam preparation sheets that you are given. Checking the subject objectives will also help you to identify what is important.

You can find other tips for revising at: <http://www.academictips.org/highschool/ability.html>

The following tools and strategies might assist you to identify and recall important information:

- ◆ Create mind maps. These provide a visual representation to help you recall details/ideas and how they link together. Use who, what, when, where, and why questions to challenge yourself to develop the maps
- ◆ Quiz yourself or get a friend to ask you questions about the topic/subject. They might want you to quiz them too so you could take it in turns to ask questions and answer them.
- ◆ Develop flash cards with key details about the topic. When you create the flash-cards you will revise the content, and when you read through them later, you will revise it again. That means you're revising everything twice – sounds like a good way to learn!
- ◆ Read and review feedback from assignments and tests. This will help you identify information about the topic that you had learned well, and the areas that were weaker. Focus on re-learning the information where you were weaker last time. Ask teachers for help if you need to have the information explained again.
- ◆ Explain information about the topic to a friend or someone in your family. Ask them if they understood your explanation or if they are confused. This will help you to identify how to explain things clearly and succinctly (which is what you have to do when you're writing an answer on an exam paper!)

Remembering what you learn

It can be hard to remember all the things you learn at school. However, there are ways to make this easier. One way to help you remember new information is to make sure that you store it well in the first place! Cognitive strategies refer to strategies we use (in our heads) to help store and find information that we have learnt.

This means making sure that you pay attention to new information and what it means; think about how it is similar or different to other information that you have learnt, and how it links with other things you know or have experienced (see Association strategy below). It also means taking time to store the information in a way that is meaningful to you (see Visualisation) and will help you retrieve the information efficiently in future (see Chunking).

Cognitive strategies to help you remember

Association

- Link new information to previous familiar knowledge.
- For example, meet a new person and link their name to someone you know who also has that name.

Visualisation

- Picture the information in your mind.
- For example, hear verbal directions and translate that to a mental picture.

Chunking

- Group pieces of information together.
- For example, remember phone numbers by chunking subgroups of numbers together 0427 468552 remembered as 0427 468 552.

Repetition

- Repeat information back to yourself or aloud (this could be phone numbers, people's names etc)

Retracing your steps

- In your mind go back over what you have done for the day to help remember information.

Tools to help you remember

In the table below we have listed a range of tools that you can use to help remember things, and some examples of when they might be useful. You might like to try some of them to see if they work for you.

Tools	Examples of use
Diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Make and keep appointments; add names, addresses and phone numbers of people you want/need to talk with; make plans for the future and record information from important conversations/meetings.
Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write down appointments and special occasions.
Reminder notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write notes on post-it stickers when you have to remember particular activities or items (e.g. shopping lists, books for school). Place the notes anywhere you will see them.
Alarm clocks/ alarm watches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Alarms can do more than just help you wake up in time! Use them to remind you of appointments, as a timer for cooking, time to change subjects, time to take tablets. You may need to write a note beside the alarm to remind you why it is ringing!
Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Record messages on a note pad next to the telephone. Use answering machine as back-up for messages.
Whiteboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Write anything important on a whiteboard or other notice-board (e.g. bills, appointments, shopping list etc.). Keep in a visible spot.
Reminder calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Arrange reminder calls for really important things if you're worried about forgetting things!
Other technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use recording devices, iPads, iPods, Smartphones to tape class sessions, record important notes, due dates and set reminders (obtain approval to use in class from teacher). ◆ Use the calendar and notes on your tablet or phone.
Habits/routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Have a specific place where you put things that you have to remember (e.g. Keys on the hook, your wallet in the fruit basket). Do same things at the same time each day (e.g. always check your diary at breakfast time, look in the letter box after lunch).

Using your diary

One of the best tools you can use in school is your diary (either a hard copy or an electronic one, such as the calendar on your phone) It can be a great way to help you remember all the things that are happening. If this was the one thing you did differently, and you did it well, it would make a big difference.

Your diary can help you to:

- ◆ Remember what you have done
- ◆ Remember what you have to do
- ◆ Record how you feel
- ◆ Plan ahead
- ◆ Record important information you need to recall later
- ◆ Keep appointments and commitments
- ◆ Get things done
- ◆ Keep track of what they have done and when they did it

Your diary will only help if you:

- ◆ Have it with you all the time
- ◆ Write in it
- ◆ Can read what you have written
- ◆ Have written all you need; and look in it regularly

Always write enough information

- ◆ When will something happen
- ◆ What will be happening
- ◆ Who will it involve
- ◆ Where will it be
- ◆ How will I get there/do it etc.
- ◆ What else do I need to remember

The golden rules about using a diary:

- ◆ Take your diary everywhere
- ◆ Write everything you need in it
- ◆ Look at your diary often - make a regular time each day when you will check your diary
- ◆ Tick things off or cross them out when you have done them
- ◆ Make time at the end of the day to write again anything you haven't had time to do

Choosing a diary

- ◆ Decide what type of information you want to keep in it e.g. do you want to use it purely as a reminder for appointments and a planner for things to do, as a journal (i.e. to record past events), or for all purposes?
- ◆ Choose the right size so you can carry it with you (in your pocket, back pack) and fit all the information you need to write in it, given the size of your writing.

Using your diary

- ◆ Try to attach a pen/pencil to it some way for extra convenience.
 - ◆ Make sure you can easily open it at the day you need – use a bookmark, rubber band, fold the corner of the page.
 - ◆ Keep your diary in the same place at home so you can always find it, and remember to always take it with you when you go out.
 - ◆ If you carry a bag, keep the diary only in the bag and remember to put it back in the bag when you have finished using it.
 - ◆ Record appointments, social engagements, projects, things to do that day, etc. Think of all the different things you need to do and the information you want to include.
 - ◆ Develop a regular routine of checking your diary each day e.g. at breakfast, after lunch, after dinner and refer to it frequently as required.
- ◆ After you have attended an event, you may need to jot down in your diary a few key words to remind yourself what happened. Keep all the information about the appointment on the same page.
 - ◆ Tick things off or cross them out when you have done them and handed them in. Some students do the project, then forget to hand it in. If something was not done and still needs to be done, write it in the diary again for the next appropriate time.
 - ◆ Use colour coding to make different types of information easily visible, for example write information about work in blue and information about home matters in green.
 - ◆ Always promptly transfer information from appointment cards, invitations.
 - ◆ If you want, you can use what is in your diary to make a list of “things to do.”
-

Remembering what you hear

The following are strategies to help you remember information that you have heard from another person, a teacher, the radio or television.

- ◆ Listen to the information carefully; focus your attention on the person talking to you and minimise the distractions in your environment (sit in a quiet place, away from background noise/devices).
- ◆ Give yourself time to understand the information
- ◆ Ask for repetition of the information to check that you have it right, and check information you have heard (with the person who told you) if you are not sure/can't remember
- ◆ Link the new information with information that is familiar to you or with an emotional response e.g. "That really was weird information I just heard!" Aim to remember the main points, in order. It can help to write down the key words.
- ◆ The information on note-taking in the following sections will help you to take notes that are easier to remember
- ◆ Ask your teacher for a dot point summary of what you will be doing in class. You can add to this and make notes about the key ideas.

Remembering what you read

It is often hard to remember information that you read. Actively engaging in reading can help. This means doing something with the information that you're reading, rather than passively absorbing it. For instance, you might take notes on the key points that the author is making, or you might highlight/underline text to assist your recall (and help you find the key information later when you need to summarise it for assignments or review it for exams).

On the following pages are some examples of techniques that might help you to remember what you read. You might find that some of these techniques work best for some subjects or tasks, and some work better for others. For instance, the Chapter Summary Method might be useful for summarising novels, and the Note-Taking Method might be best for researching assignments.

The PQRST method

(preview, question, read, summarise, test)

This reading technique helps you to work out and remember important points from written information. *Importance of thinking about what you are going to read – priming your brain to notice*

P review

- ◆ Skim quickly through the material to get the main idea. Look for sub-headings, main points, and bold (darker) text.

Q question

- ◆ Ask “why are you reading?” (e.g. study, leisure). Think of the important questions about the topic e.g. Who, when, why...

R read

- ◆ Read thoroughly to understand the article and keep questions in your mind.
- ◆ Use your highlighter to make a note of important information, points and headings.

S summarise

- ◆ Think of/write down the main points conveyed. Remember the vital (brief) details e.g. Who, what, when, why...

T test

- ◆ If you are studying for a test, after a break, test your memory and understanding of what you have read by asking yourself questions. You can ask your parents to “test” you or you can use practice tests. You can write your own tests! It will all help you learn better

Chapter summary method

The chapter summary method is a useful tool for helping you to remember key information from novels that you read in class. The form uses 5 basic questions to help you identify the important information: Who (is in the chapter)? What (happens in the chapter and as a result of this)? When and Where (does the chapter take place)? How (does the chapter end)?

You can fill in the form as you read through the chapter or once you have finished.

Title of book:	
Chapter number:	
1. What happens in the chapter?	
2. Who is in the chapter?	
3. When and where does the chapter take place?	
4. What is the result?	
5. How does the chapter end?	

The place, event, person method

This form helps you to identify important pieces of information. Once again, it is good to use with novels. When you read a book or chapter ask yourself the following questions:

PERSON (man or woman?) Read and find:	
1. What did he/she do?	
2. Why did he/she do it?	
3. When and where?	
4. Relationship to others	
5. Description	

EVENTS (something happened?) Read and find:	
1. What happened?	
2. Why did it happen?	
3. When and where?	
4. Who was involved?	
5. Why was it important?	

PLACE (location?) Read and find:	
1. Location of event	
2. Why did it happen?	
3. Description of location?	
4. Who was there?	
5. Importance to chapter?	

Summarising the topic

Another useful way for you to remember the information that you read is to summarise the topic in a table such as the one below. You might complete one of these tables for each resource (textbook, website etc.) that you read when you are researching a particular topic.

The table allows you to write down the main points and identify new words that might be important for you to learn and remember related to the topic.

Subject			
Title			
Author			
What was the topic about?	1	2	3
	4	5	6
Summary Points <i>Make a summary of all the key ideas you read through the article. Use your own words so it makes sense to you...</i>	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		
	6		
Definitions of words I don't know <i>Write down the word and what it means for all the words you don't know</i>	Word	Meaning	

The outline method

The outline method can help you remember the important information from what you read. It is a way of organising and listing information. It can also be a helpful way to start planning an essay as it helps you to think about how to structure the information in a way that is organised and meaningful. When you use the outline method you should:

- ◆ Read a paragraph or section of text
- ◆ Decide what the main ideas are
- ◆ Write the first main idea in your own words
- ◆ Write the next main idea; use a number to tell you it's a separate idea
- ◆ Decide what details are important and write them below each main idea
- ◆ Decide if there are sub-details (smaller details) and list them below each detail

Example:

MAIN IDEA

- A. Detail
- B. Detail

- a. Sub detail
- b. Sub detail

MAIN IDEA

- A. Detail
- B. Detail

The note mapping method

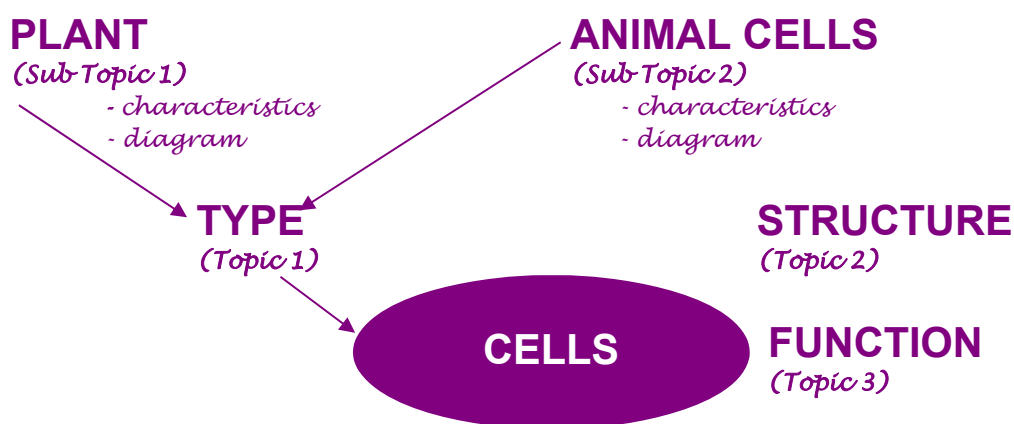
The note mapping method is another way to help you remember and organise what you read or hear. It is a type of mind mapping. If you would like to find out more about mind mapping, you might like to search “Mind Mapping” and review the work by Tony Buzan and other academics. When you are using the note-mapping method, you progress through the following steps:

- ◆ In CAPITAL LETTERS write the topic, title or main idea of the paragraph, section or discussion in the centre of your page. Draw a circle or a box around it.
- ◆ Whenever you hear or read an important detail, write it on the page on a line that is connected to the circle around the topic.
- ◆ If there are sub-details connect them to the details.

Points to remember

- ◆ Make sure your notes are clear so that you will be able to read and understand them later!
- ◆ Make sure you write related information together to help you find it when you look for it later!

Example:



The herringbone method

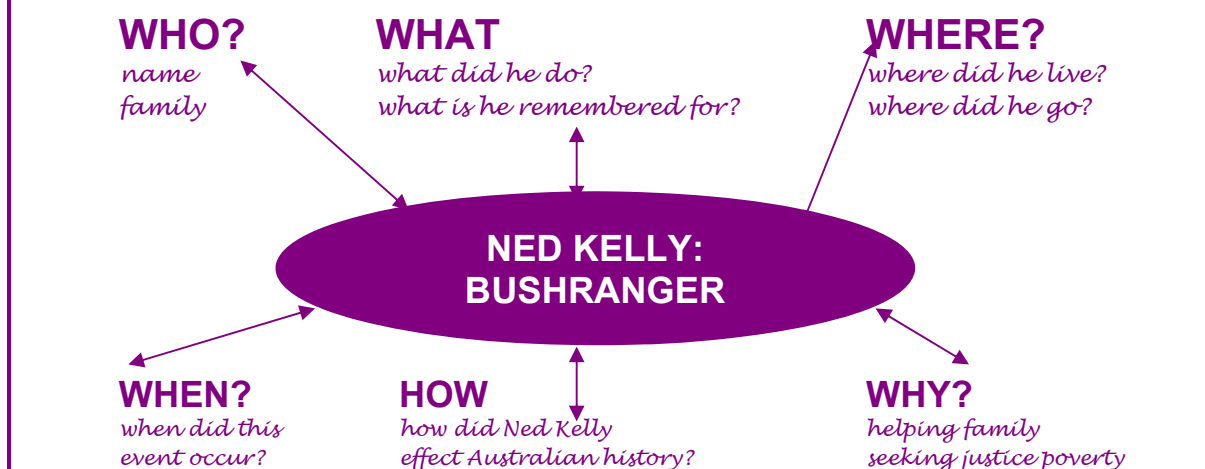
The Herringbone Method is another way to help you with your reading. This method is like the note-taking method as you organise your notes in the form of a mind map. However, this time, each branch of the mind map is generated using one of the following six basic questions:

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

When using the Herringbone Method, you move through the following steps:

- ◆ Read through the material you are studying
- ◆ Ask yourself the following questions:
 1. **Who** was involved? (the answer should provide the name of one or more persons or groups)
 2. **What** did this group or person do?
 3. **When** was this done? (refer to event in '2')
 4. **Where** was it done?
 5. **Why** did it happen?
 6. **How** was it accomplished?
- ◆ Write the answer to who, what, when, where, why and how next to the main idea. If it helps to identify more than one answer to the questions then write them down.
- ◆ Remember the purpose is to make notes that help you to learn.

Example:



Organizing assignments, essays, assessments and projects

Possibly, this will be the hardest part of learning to pick up. Sometimes people have trouble starting a task because they don't know how to get started. Here are some tools to help you to organise your thoughts so you can know where to begin:

Ask yourself the following key questions:

- ◆ What is my problem?
- ◆ How can I do this?
- ◆ Am I using my plan?
- ◆ How did I do?

There is a lot more information on this in the Achieving Goals Fact Pack. On the following pages we have provided two examples of forms. Try them out to see which one you like using.

We have already raved about a terrific little book available called **“Treading Water while the Sharks are circling”** by Jim Elliott. It can be ordered via the University Counselling Service website: <http://life.curtin.edu.au/health-and-wellbeing/CounsellingPublications.htm>

This is a thin book that will help you to “work smart, not hard.” It has a really good section on doing assignments and the material that follows has been modified from the booklet with Dr. Elliott's permission.

- ◆ The first golden rule is to give yourself time! Use your assignment planning form to make sure you can spread out the tasks required for the assignment. Write down when the assignment is due and when you want to have completed each of the tasks required (e.g. background reading, first draft etc.).
- ◆ Then read the question carefully. This sounds obvious but can make a real difference. What is the question asking you to do? Using the Assignment Planning form (page 42) will help you to make sure you are answering the question being asked and not what you think is being asked. Using the Goal-Plan-Do form from the Achieving Goals Fact Pack is another good way to break your assignment into steps. You may be meeting with someone at school to help you with assignments. Ask them about this very important stage.
- ◆ Read. Read carefully. Read what is relevant. Use the information in the note taking section of this Study Skills Fact Pack to make sure you are getting what you need from your reading.
- ◆ Mind mapping and brainstorming. Read the section on mind-mapping and brainstorming in this Study Skills

Fact Pack to help you think about your assignment before you start your final write up. Now may be the time to check with your teacher that you are on the right track. Using your mind-map, plan your assignment. Remember it will need an:

Introduction

- ◆ Then read the question carefully. This sounds obvious but can make a real difference. What is the question asking you to do? Using the Assignment Planning form (page 42) will help you to make sure you are answering the question you have been asked.

Main body

- ◆ Where you do what you said you'd do in the introduction! This is where you would make some judgements and observations - take a position based on your reading.



Summary

- ◆ Where you briefly summarise what you've said!
 - ◆ Do a draft! Leave it for a while (this is where making sure you give yourself enough time is important!) and then...
 - ◆ Check your work. Do you need to change anything? Is the spelling right? Do you want to swap paragraphs or add information? Are there enough illustrations? Using a checklist such as Final Draft checklist (page 52) will help to make sure you have done all you need to do.
 - ◆ Another good tip for checking essays and large assignments is to read them backwards! Not actually try and read the words backwards, but instead of starting proof-reading with the first paragraph, start with the last paragraph, then read the second last paragraph and so on. This way your brain won't "jump ahead" because it thinks it already knows what you've written.
 - ◆ The following forms may be useful in helping you map out this information.
-

Assignment planning

Example

<p>What is the assignment about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Staple food - I need to choose a country and its staple food e.g. India/rice</i>
<p>Is this a Project <input type="checkbox"/> Poster <input type="checkbox"/> Model <input type="checkbox"/> Speech <input type="checkbox"/> Essay <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>When is it due? <i>15th May 2017</i></p> <p>How long should it be? <i>3-5 pages</i></p>
<p>What am I being asked to do? <i>Read the questions and underline the important parts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Country and the food</i>◆ <i>Why is this the staple food for this country?</i>◆ <i>Recipes using the staple food</i>
<p>What information do I need? <i>Make a plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Geography</i>◆ <i>Religious factors</i>◆ <i>Climate</i> <p>When do I need it by?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>End of April 21, 2017</i> <p>Where will I find it? (e.g. class notes, library, internet)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>Indian cookbook and the internet</i> <p>What do I need to find out next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ <i>General information about India's climate and geography</i>◆ <i>Use of staple food for festivals</i>◆

Assignment planning

What is the assignment about?

- ◆
- ◆

Is this a Project Poster Model Speech Essay

When is it due?

How long should it be?

What am I being asked to do? *Read the questions and underline the important parts*

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

What information do I need? Make a plan

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

When do I need it by?

- ◆

Where will I find it? (e.g. class notes, library, internet)

- ◆

What do I need to find out next?

- ◆
- ◆
- ◆

Assignment organiser

Example

This is another useful form to use to help your child break an assignment down into manageable steps. It can also be used to help him summarise information he is reading for an assignment.

What is the main idea?

Write about an Australian bushranger of your choice

Who:

Dan "Mad Dog" Morgan

When:

When was he born and when was he active as a bushranger

Where:

Where was he a bushranger?

What:

What happened in his life?

Why:

Why did he rob people?

How:

How was he caught?

Assignment organiser

**What is
the main
idea?**

Who:

When:

Where:

What:

Why:

How:

An essay planner...

Subject	
Topic	
Word Limit	
Introduction	
Point 1	
Point 2	
Point 3	
Summary	
Conclusion	

Assignments: Where do I start? Example

Is this a: Project Speech **Poster** Story Model Essay

Due Date: 20.04.17

I have been asked to write about:

The cycle of a frogs life


Where can I find the information I need?

Class **Internet** **Library** Ask others Research (e.g. survey, questionnaire, observation)

What resources/tools do I need
(e.g. paper, cardboard, ruler, magazines, textas)

- ◆ *cardboard*
- ◆ *pictures*
- ◆ *computer*
- ◆ *notes*

Use this space to draw a plan of your assignment
(e.g. what will your poster/model look like?)



What information do I know/ What information have I found?	What else do I need to know? What questions do I need to answer?	By when?
<i>Tadpoles become frogs</i>	<i>What do frogs eat?</i>	10.04.17
<i>I found out about where they live</i>	<i>What enemies do frogs have?</i>	14.04.17

TIMELINE

Task	Date to be completed	Notes/Reminders	Tick when completed
<i>Complete assignment plan</i>	7.03.17	<i>Look at brother's old assignment for ideas regarding set up</i>	✓
<i>Start researching</i>	10.03.17		✓
<i>Finish researching</i>	20.03.17	<i>Booked computer 15.3.17</i>	✓
<i>Finish first draft</i>	10.04.17		✓
<i>Give draft to someone to review</i>	10.04.17		✓
<i>Finish final draft</i>	12.04.17		
<i>Get someone to proof read final draft</i>	12.04.17		
<i>Finish final good copy</i>	18.04.17		
<i>Hand in assignment</i>	20.04.17		

Assignments: Where do I start?

Is this a: Project Speech Poster Story Model Essay

Due Date: _____

I have been asked to write about:

Where can I find the information I need?

Class notes Library Internet Ask others Research (e.g. survey, questionnaire, observation)

What resources/tools do I need
(e.g. paper, cardboard, ruler, magazines, textas)

Use this space to draw a plan of your assignment
(e.g. what will your poster/model look like?)

What information do I know/ have I found?	What else do I need to know? What questions do I need to answer?	By when?

TIMELINE

Task	Date to be completed	Notes/Reminders	Tick when completed
Complete assignment plan			
Start researching			
Finish researching			
Finish first draft			
Give draft to someone to review			
Finish final draft			
Get someone to proof read final draft			
Finish final good copy			
Hand in assignment			

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a useful technique for starting your assignments. Brainstorming and mindmapping are techniques used by lots of people. They are good techniques for studying, preparing talks and essays, doing projects and thinking about things in general. They help with ideas and organising information so that it is easier to get started or remember information. Brainstorming is a great way to think about what you will include in your assignment.

To start brainstorming

- ◆ Get a large piece of paper, you might find it useful to put butcher's paper on a wall
- ◆ Write down everything you can think of relating to the topic
- ◆ Use pictures or symbols if it helps
- ◆ Don't worry about spelling or if the idea seems a little far fetched
- ◆ Keep adding whatever comes to mind

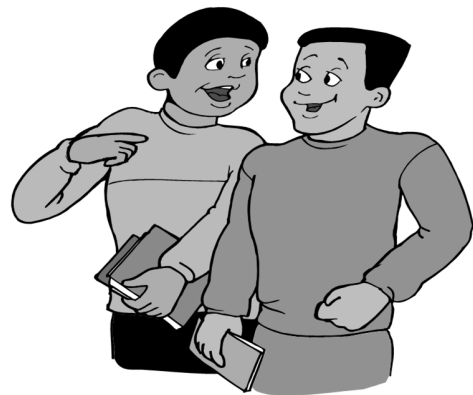
Then develop a diagram or map linking the key points

- ◆ Write the main point in the centre of the page
- ◆ Link key points with this main point and then link minor points to key points

On the next page is an example of using this technique for World War 2.

Suggestions for brainstorming

- ◆ Use single words or simple phrases for information
- ◆ Use colour to separate ideas where necessary
- ◆ You may want to group together ideas into categories
- ◆ Find out what the main questions of your assignment are and use these as your key headings. You can then turn these into paragraphs (for an essay) or subheadings (for an assignment).
- ◆ Organise the categories so that they are in the same order as your paragraphs or subheadings



Brainstorming: An example

HUSBANDS & FATHERS AT WAR



ROLES IN WAR

*Ambulance drivers
Nurses*

**WOMEN
ROLES AT HOME**

*Mothers
Factories
Land Army*



WORLD WAR 2

SERVICES

*Army
Navy
Air Force
Medical*

AUSTRALIA

*Men at work
Industry
Agriculture
Attack on Darwin*

COUNTRIES

*France
Germany
Japan
Australia
Great Britain
USA*



Final drafts

Once you have planned your assignment, start writing! Try to get the whole thing written in one or two sessions and leave it for a little while before reading through it. This will help you to spot any mistakes better than if you try reading it immediately.

When you read through your assignment, think about whether you need to change the order/structure to make it easier for others to understand the finished article. You might swap paragraphs around or cut sections out. Also check whether your sentences are clear and will make sense to others. Fix any grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. Maybe get someone else to read your final draft so they can tell you if it is clear.

The “Final Draft Checklist” that follows will help you to check you haven’t made silly mistakes. You should also check the marking criteria for your assignment to make sure you have included all of the information that is required, that you have written the correct amount of information and prepared the assignment in the correct format/style.

The ... hand it in! It sounds really obvious but we know students who have done lots of work on their assignments and then forgotten to hand them in! Keep a copy as teachers have been known to lose assignments. If you have a copy you can show that you really have done all the work.

Checklist

1. Have I answered all the questions?
 Yes No
2. Have I answered all the different parts of each question?
 Yes No
3. Have I written enough information?
 Yes No
4. Is my writing clear?
 Yes No
5. Have I included references that are needed?
 Yes No
6. Have I used a variety of resources?
 Yes No
7. Have I drawn logical conclusions?
 Yes No
8. Have I checked for spelling or grammatical errors? (remember, spellcheck is not always right!)
 Yes No
9. Have I made a copy of my assignment?
 Yes No

Studying for exams

Sample

An important part of planning your study time is knowing what to study and when you need to study it. Using this form is a good way of remembering that information. If you use this form there should be no confusion about what will be covered in your tests and exams.

What date did the teacher tell me?	What subject and what will the test be on?	When will the test be?	Mark
2.02.17	<i>Maths: we will be tested on all three probability chapters in our text book i.e. 4, 5 and 6.</i>	9.2.17	
4.02.17	<i>History: it could be on anything in our notes on Australian Government</i>	17.02.17	

Studying for exams

Here is a form students can use to record when tests will take place and what will be covered. Some students may initially need help writing down enough information. Over time they should be encouraged to independently make decisions about what is written down.

What date did the teacher tell me?	What subject and what will the test be on?	When will the test be?	Mark

Surviving exams



You will handle exams better if you have prepared well. Here are some ideas about coping with exams.

Before the exam

- ◆ Go over old papers with a teacher and get specific feedback on your answers.
- ◆ Ask your year coordinator/school counsellor about the possibility of extra time, a writer or a reader if that helps you to feel calmer.
- ◆ Study using a mind mapping technique. We think it is a fantastic approach to studying, preparing speeches and doing assignments.
- ◆ Read some books in the library for more about study and exam techniques.

During the exam: planning

- ◆ Make sure you understand what these terms mean. They will mean different responses in an exam:
 1. Name and list
 2. Describe or analyse
 3. Explain
 4. Show working
 5. Use a diagram
 6. Compare and contrast
- ◆ When you sit down, write on a piece of paper any formulas or quotes that you think you will need. Do this as soon as you are allowed

to write and before you start panicking!

- ◆ Make a plan for the time you have available in the exam. Look at how many marks are allocated to each section and allow more time for the sections with most marks. Write this down on the paper
- ◆ Ask yourself how many minutes can you allow for each question. Give more time for questions worth more marks.
- ◆ Practice with this on old papers.
- ◆ Check occasionally how many questions you have left in the section you are doing.
- ◆ have a “self-talk session” e.g.
I will breathe slowly in and out;
I will relax my muscles;
I will read the paper and I know that I will find an “easy” question;
I will make a picture in my mind of the page of notes that I need to remember.

In reading time

- ◆ Read front-page instructions carefully before you write anything down.
- ◆ Get a feel for the length of the exam but don't read it in too much detail.
- ◆ Read the first part several times.

Completing the exam

- ◆ Start with the first question you read that you know you can answer easily.
- ◆ Read the question to find out what facts you need.
- ◆ Underline or mark important points.
- ◆ Reread, if you have time, to check you haven't missed anything.

If you are using a writer

- ◆ Be clear with instructions.
- ◆ Be clear with words you use.
- ◆ Imagine you are dictating to a secretary!
- ◆ Read over what you've already answered - this reminds you what you've already said.

When you are answering questions

- ◆ The more marks a question is worth, the more points required.
- ◆ Don't spend 10 minutes on a question worth 1 mark.

Remember

- ◆ It's better to write something for each question.
 - ◆ You may pick up extra marks making an educated guess.
 - ◆ You won't get marks if you don't write anything.
 - ◆ Show all your working out, planning and drafts, it might get you marks.
-



Summary

Returning to school after a brain injury can be a pretty big milestone, but sometimes it feels like the start of another big challenge rather than the end-point. You might find that it's harder for you to concentrate, remember information, organise your time or complete tasks than it was before you had your injury.

In this fact pack, we have given information about ways to maximise your study success by:

1. Setting up well for your learning – making sure your mind and body, as well as your study space are well-prepared and looked after
2. Using strategies to help you manage your study time better – such as diaries and other planning tools
3. Using strategies to learn information more effectively
4. Providing tools that will help you to organise and complete assignments, projects and exams

We hope that the suggestions and tools are useful for you. Remember that not every strategy will work for everyone, but you will find what works for you through trying some and reflecting on if they helped. Your parents, teachers and therapists will be happy to help you select and reflect on what might work best.

If you need any further help, feel free to contact the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team on swbirs@health.nsw.gov.au.

References

WEBSITES FOR STUDY SKILLS

Academic Tips:

<http://www.academictips.org/highschool/ability.html>

Deakin University:

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/studying/year-11-and-12-study-skills>

Education Corner:

<http://www.educationcorner.com/study-skills.html>

Project Learnet

<http://www.projectlearnet.org>

BOOKS FOR STUDY SKILLS

Study skills handbook (available at www.studyskillshandbook.com.au),

Ylvisaker, M. (1998). *Traumatic brain injury rehabilitation: Children and adolescents*. (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Butterworth-Heinmann.

WEBSITES FOR GENERAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

KidsHealth:

<http://teenshealth.org/en/teens/>

Paediatric brain injury services in NSW

Inpatient Services	Phone	Address
Sydney Children's Hospital Network - Westmead	(02) 9845 2132	Cnr Hawkesbury Road & Hainsworth Street Westmead NSW 2145
Rehab2Kids, Sydney Children's Hospital (Randwick)	(02) 9382 1590	High Street Randwick NSW 2031
Kaleidoscope Paediatric Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team (John Hunter Hospital)	(02) 4925 7963	Kookaburra Circuit New Lambton Heights NSW 2305
Community Services	Phone	Address
South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (Albury)	(02) 6041 9902	335 Reservoir Road Lavington NSW 2641
Southern Area Brain Injury Service (Goulburn)	(02) 4823 7911	PO Box 274 Goulburn NSW 2580
Illawarra Brain Injury Service	(02) 42238470	8 Eyre Place Warrawong NSW 2502
Mid Western Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program (Bathurst)	(02) 6330 5114	Heritage Building Bathurst Health Service Howick Street Bathurst NSW 2795
New England Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (Tamworth)	(02) 6767 8350	Dean Street Tamworth NSW 2340
Mid North Coast Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (Coffs Harbour)	(02) 6652 2856	39 Victoria Street Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Paediatric brain injury services in Victoria

Other nearby services (based in Victoria)	Phone	Address
<p>Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Service (VPRS) <i>Provide interdisciplinary rehabilitation for children with congenital, developmental, or acquired conditions that require rehabilitation. There are 8 sites across Victoria, the two covering North Victoria are:</i></p>		
<p>Goulburn Valley (Hume region)</p>	<p>(03) 5832 2322</p>	<p>Goulburn Valley Health Graham Street Shepparton VIC 3630</p>
<p>Bendigo (Loddon Malle region)</p>	<p>(03) 5454 6001</p>	<p>Bendigo Health John Lindell Mercy Street Bendigo VIC 3550</p>
<p>Melbourne City Mission Statewide Paediatric ABI Service <i>Assist those working or living with children and young people (aged 0-18 years) with an ABI.</i></p>	<p>1800 343 287 (Disability Services Intake)</p>	<p>Head Office: 164-180 Kings Way South Melbourne VIC 3205</p>