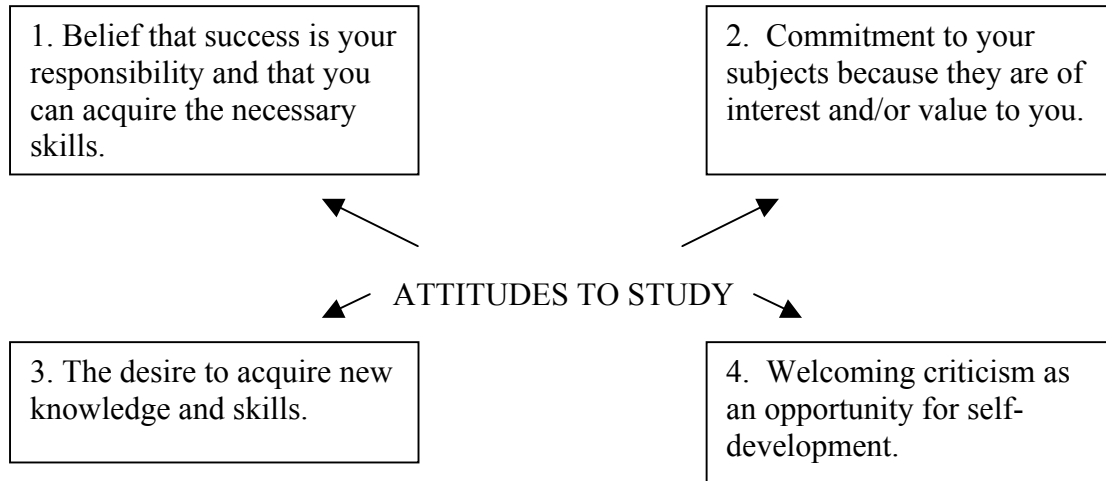
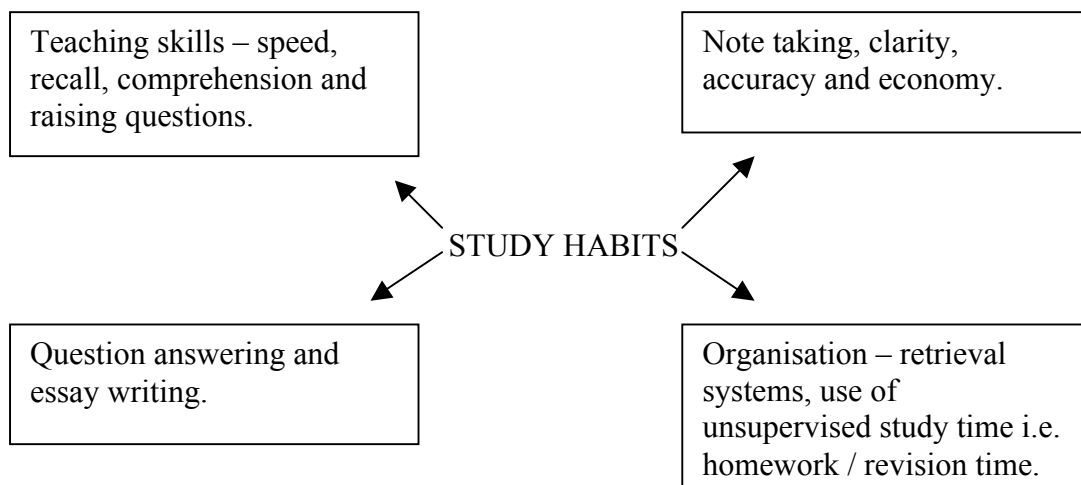


REVISION AND STUDY GUIDE

Good study habits depend on your attitude to study. The two simple diagrams below highlight the factors which determine your success or failure in a course of study which demands prolonged effort.



With a little thought, you will see that the opposite of the four attitudes set out above are likely to lead to failure. In the case of (1), the opposite would lead you to blame the school or your teachers rather than take responsibility for your own success by systematically thinking about and improving your study skills. Equally, if you interpret every criticism as an attack upon you or as evidence that the teacher dislikes you, then you will learn little. Learning is a positive and active process and involves critical thought. You will find it helpful to discuss these attitudes in a serious way with your friends and in the tutor group.



The four areas given above are crucial for success. Perhaps you can begin to see that you have to acquire a set of skills which extend those that you possessed at the beginning of your course. If you develop them, then you will get more out of the time you invest in study. All too often I hear a student say, “I work hard, but I don’t get anywhere”! The sensible thing to do is to learn to study efficiently and then enjoy your free time with a good conscience.

Study and Revision at home

When? Most revision will be done at home.

- a) Try, if possible, to have a work area in your bedroom.
- b) Neatness and tidiness will save you many panics before your examinations. You must be able to find your notebooks. A mislaid or lost notebook can be a great handicap.
- c) Have a place for paper, rulers and other necessities.
- d) Keep your text books in some order – by subject, or alphabetically by tutor.
- e) Carefully preserve all your notebooks and build up an index for them. A little time spent doing this can save much time later.

How?

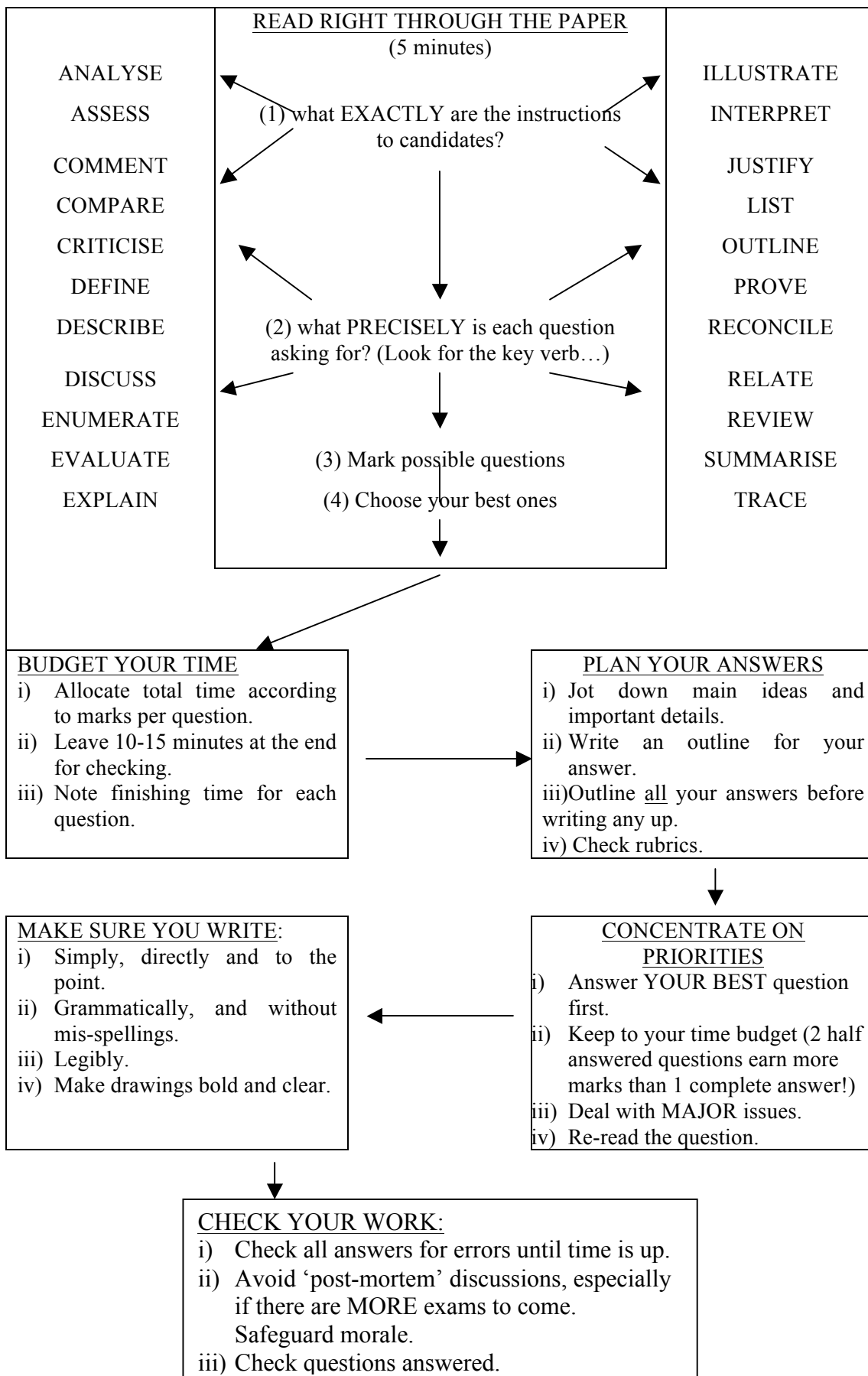
- a) Decide how you can best work at the task in hand – I find it best to work at a desk or table. Many students choose the recumbent style. This is taken lying flat on the bed and is more productive of daydreams or sleep than study or learning. It is impossible to make notes and is more likely to produce reprimands from parents than results. The clear separation of work and leisure means that the student can completely relax once he/she has completed his/her self-allocated tasks.
- b) Plan a revision timetable –long term and short term.
When planning your short term timetable bear in mind the need to:
 - Give yourself frequent breaks. These are essential if you are to maintain efficiency. They should not be too long. About 10 minutes is sufficient.
 - End each period of study by assessing what you have learned. You can test yourself in any way that suits you – you may summarise this in the conventional way or get your parents to test you. Check the accuracy of your recall by referring to your notes before you have the break.
 - Try to end each period of work with an activity or subject which gives you both pleasure and a sense of success.
- c) Before you finish, check what you are going to study next time. This will allow you to get started immediately, and will stop you saying, “I can’t get started on my revision I always mean to but”.

Reading Skills – learning a body of facts,

Recall can be helped by the following:

1. Writing down key sentences or phrases as you read – NOT COPYING DOWN WHOLE SENTENCES OR PARAGRAPHS.
2. Looking for words which indicate a structured argument is being presented, e.g. first; second; therefore; this implies; and paying special attention to these paragraphs.
3. Paying careful attention to the topic sentences of each paragraph.
4. Looking very closely at the conclusions.
5. IMMEDIATE TESTING AND CHECKING AFTER READING.

EXAMINATIONS TECHNIQUE



A REMINDER:

This 'hand-out' does not give you a recipe for instant success. It treats you as a mature person who is capable of investigating various modes of learning and coming to an informed decision about their suitability for you. And remember: if you fail to prepare, then be prepared to fail! So give yourself a fair chance – this is almost the only chance or luck that comes into examinations.

EFFECTIVE REVISION AND EXAMINATION TECHNIQUES

Revision

Revision can never start too early – try to keep assimilating the material as you proceed through the course. You will find that it becomes part of you. Have a systematic method for recording and storing your notes. One idea is to buy some plain postcards and obtain an old shoebox. When you have taken your notes in class, condense them at home into the main points using headings on the postcards – USE DIAGRAMS as well. File the cards in subject order. You will then be able to find them quickly when necessary for revision purposes or for use in essays and other work.

Make sure that you plan your revision so that you allocate your time according to your needs and so that you do not suddenly find that you have a large topic to study and no time to do it in.

It is also a good idea to keep a diary of your work. This will highlight difficulties you are having and may well increase your work rate. Some students who have used this method reported that they felt guilty when they put down NO WORK (unless, of course, it was planned leisure period) and this made them get down to it more often than would otherwise have been the case.

Preparation for Examinations

1. Ensure that you are familiar with the layout of the paper. Look up past examination papers so that you know exactly what they look like.
2. Anticipate the stress of examinations by answering questions set in them with the same strict time limit.
3. Build up a set of summary cards which isolate the main points of a topic.
4. Make a revision time table and decide exactly which topic you are going to study in each revision session.
5. Never try to learn new material the night before the examination. Read through summary cards if you feel you must do something.
6. Make sure that the night before the examination you have all the items of equipment you will need next day: a watch, biros, pencils, rubber, ruler, mathematical instruments, etc.
7. Make sure that the night before the examination you have two hours complete relaxation – read something entertaining, watch television or have a chat with a friend.
8. Go to bed at your usual time and try to get a good night's sleep.