



# Achieving your Potential

## Key Stage 3

The first step to succeeding at Key Stage 3 and beyond is by making sure you are doing everything you should be during and for your lessons.

Make sure you can answer yes to the following questions for **all** your subjects.

If you can't, that's your first target for improvement!

- *When you enter the classroom, do you get settled and started straight away?*
- *Do you always have the equipment you need for your lessons with you?*
- *During the lesson, are you focussed 100% of the time?*
- *Are you an active (rather than passive) learner?*
- *Do you contribute during whole class discussions/group and pair work?*
- *Do you always try your best, even if it's difficult?*
- *Does your behaviour allow everyone in the class to learn?*
- *Do you ensure you self-assess work when you can, using green pen to make corrections?*
- *Do you respond to all teacher feedback (either verbal or written) as fully as possible?*
- *Do you always complete your homework on time and to the best of your ability?*
- *Do you seek clarification if you don't understand something?*

However, just doing the above doesn't guarantee that you will achieve the best that you can! **You also need to study independently.** The rest of this document is dedicated to helping you do this as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

Also, don't forget that it's really important to have a healthy school-life balance!

Make sure you take time to:

- Get enough sleep
- Eat well and drink lots of water
- Exercise regularly
- Spend time with family and friends
- Partake in some extra-curricular activities
- Take some time for yourself!

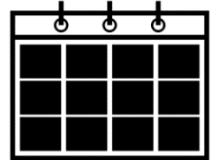
# Independent Study at Key Stage 3

For many students, studying at Key Stage 3 is the first time they've had to organise their own independent work. Luckily, cognitive science and general experience has shown that there are some common approaches that can be applied to most (if not all) subjects.

There are four main steps to an excellent study strategy:

## 1. Plan

Work out what you need to revise and when you need to revise it by.  
Organise yourself and get your revision resources ready.



## 2. Understand

Strengthen your understanding of content by reviewing skills and content.  
Capture what you know in a way you can use to help you learn later.



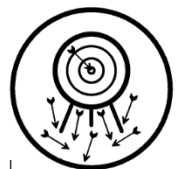
## 3. Learn

This is the hardest part. Learn the key facts and information off by heart, so you can recall it with ease in the exam. This will free up space in your working memory, allowing you to tackle questions that are more complex.



## 4. Practise

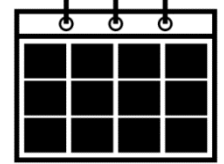
Apply what you know in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts.



**To achieve the best grade that you can, you need to complete all four of these steps – there are no short cuts!** However, each subject will require different levels of each step; for example, Maths may require more practise, whilst English Language might need more of a focus on understanding and Science may need more time spent on learning off by heart.

This document aims to help you improve your independent study skills at Key Stage 3, in preparation for your GCSEs and beyond where it becomes even more important! The first part will run through some common tips and tricks for all subjects for the four sections listed above, before delving into subject specific hints and tips (including links to recommended websites and resources) in the second part.

# Step 1: Plan



The first thing you need to do is make a plan of action! This could be for general revision across multiple courses in the lead up to end of year exams or could be a more specific plan to improve in a certain subject.

## 1. Prepare to F.A.I.L. (First Attempt In Learning)

Failure is a vital part of learning. While in some subjects you may thrive and understand everything with ease, there will undoubtedly be some subjects where this is not the case. There is absolutely no shame in this! The hardest step is the first step, and remember you can always talk to your teachers, form tutor, head of year and any other adult in school, as well as your friends and family! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Prepare to F.A.I.L.](#)

## 2. Prepare your study space & study time

Make sure you have somewhere to work with minimal distractions. This could be at home, but could also be elsewhere, e.g., the LRC. Also set out when you will study – little and often is better than cramming everything into one long session! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Working at Home](#).

## 3. Know your timescales

When does this studying need to be done by? E.g., when is the end of unit test that this skill will be tested in? If there is no specific timescale to work to, make one for yourself – you are much more likely to study if you have a deadline.

## 4. Make sure you know what you need to know

Ensure you have a copy of the booklet/topic list/ key vocabulary/whatever it is that you need to learn ready, so you can organise your revision.

## 5. Work out what you need to work on

An excellent way of doing this is through traffic lighting – code the resource above using red, orange & green pens to highlight what areas you feel most and least comfortable with. More info on how to do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Traffic Lights](#).

## 6. Make a plan, making sure to prioritise the most difficult topics first

We all know that it's tempting to study and revise the things we find easy! However, to make the biggest gains, you need to give work on the things you find the hardest. Look at your red topics first and review them more often than those you find easier (although don't completely ignore the green areas!). Using the Pomodoro technique can be really

useful if you find it tricky to concentrate for longer periods - more info on how to do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Pomodoro](#).

## 7. Get your resources ready

It can be tempting to spend most of your study session finding the things you need. If you have them all to hand beforehand, it will be much harder to procrastinate! This could be your folder/exercise book, a textbook/revision guide or online resources. A list of useful general resources can be found below, with **other subject specific websites listed on the subject specific pages at the end of this document.**

### Useful Online Revision Resources

- General Revision:
  - [KS3 - BBC Bitesize](#)
  - [Free Homework & Revision for A Level, GCSE, KS3 & KS2 \(senecalearning.com\)](#)
  - [Oak National Academy \(thenational.academy\)](#)
- Quizzing
  - [Learning tools, flashcards, and textbook solutions | Quizlet](#)
  - [Educake | Hassle-free homework](#) (Sciences)
  - [Anki - powerful, intelligent flashcards \(ankiweb.net\)](#)
- Online textbooks:
  - [The UK's Favourite Educational Books | CGP Books](#)  
*(many of these are available at cost price on ParentPay)*

## Step 2: Understand



Before learning the content off by heart, it's important to **understand** the concepts that you have covered. The majority of this will happen in your lessons, but for those topics and subtopics that need a little more work the following might help:

- **Ask a teacher for clarification**

This could be during or after a lesson or could be via email. They may be able to arrange a time to go through the topic with you or might be able to point you to extra resources that could help your independent study.

- **Read the information in a different format**

Sometimes, reading a different explanation of a topic can help it click. Reading a different textbook/revision guide or finding the information on websites such as BBC Bitesize or Seneca Learning could help here.

- **Watch a video explanation**

YouTube can be a great resource, as sometimes hearing a different explanation or seeing live animations/graphics can help solidify your understanding. There's also the benefit that you can pause/rewatch. Take care though – don't get distracted by other videos, and don't fall into the trap that watching YouTube videos is helping you learn the information; it can be an easy way of tricking yourself into thinking you're doing effective revision!

- **Organise your thoughts in some way:**

Making revision cards/mind maps/notes from your resources to organise your thoughts can help make links between topics and can form connections. However, beware of simply copying notes down verbatim – you need to be doing something new with the information!

## Step 3: Learn



This is the step that is the most boring and potentially the most difficult, so it is the one that many students try to ‘skip’... you need to **learn** content off by heart! This is where **active revision** is important – the act of trying to remember something without looking it up and then checking your answers.

[Retrieval Practice](#) (i.e. the process of actively trying to remember something) is scientifically proven to be an excellent learning tool. Some examples of activities that can help include:

- **Quizzes**

Quizzing yourself is a great way to learn – it utilises the ‘testing effect’. Lots of quizzes can be found online, or you can make and then use them yourself!

- **Using flashcards**

Similar to quizzing, this is a great way to strengthen core knowledge. Either use flashcards you’ve made yourself (although don’t fall into the trap of spending hours making them then not using them!) or find ready-made cards online. You can also use apps such as Anki or Quizlet to help with this – these have the added bonus of automatically repeating the questions you found difficult more often than the ones you found easy, although you can do this for yourself if you combine your flashcards with a traffic light system! More info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn - Flashcards](#).

- **Mind maps/brain dumps**

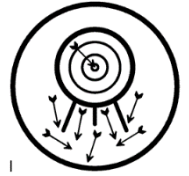
Make a mind map from scratch, or simply write everything you can remember about a topic down on a piece of paper. Then, check what you’ve remembered against a previously made exemplar or a revision resource. Another example of this is a read-write-review – more info on this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Read/Write/Review](#).

Other well-researched methods of improving learning include:

- [Dual Coding — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Concrete Examples — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Elaboration — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Interleaving — The Learning Scientists](#)
- [Spaced Practice — The Learning Scientists](#)

Notice how this list does **not** include rereading/highlighting/writing notes – this is not an efficient way of learning content, as it doesn’t make you think! A good general rule of thumb here is as follows: **if it feels easy, it’s probably not working!**

## Step 4: Practise



The final step is to **practise** applying the knowledge that you've learned. This can be a little harder than the other steps at Key Stage 3, as the easiest way to do this normally is through past paper questions but you don't really have many of those yet! However, if you can find some exam style questions, we recommend the following plan of action to make the most of them as you can:

1. **Answer as much as you can from memory to start with**, without looking back at notes. Sometimes, it will be appropriate to complete this in timed conditions, as you need to get used to that!
2. Once you are sure you have done all you can, **allow yourself the use of your revision resources** and go back through the paper with a **different colour pen**, adding in anything that you can now answer with that support. This will show you the difference between what you simply understand versus the content you know and understand.
3. Now find the mark scheme for the questions. Go through with a third colour, **marking and correcting your answers**. Make a note of any hints and tips you pick up.
4. Make sure you **savour your mistakes** – they are great opportunities to learn! More info on how you can do this can be found here: [Learning to Learn – Managing Mistakes](#).

# Independent Study at Key Stage 3

## Subject Specific Advice

Apart from the general advice & resources listed above, the following pages detail some extra subject specific hints and tips for succeeding at Key Stage 3.

They are listed alphabetically.

Also included are links to any subject specific websites that are recommended.

Remember, if in doubt ask your teacher - they are the best resource you have!

Don't forget to follow the advice/act on the learning targets your teachers give you for any formally assessed work as your first step in improving in that subject!

These are usually found on yellow paper.



## Art

### Other useful online resources:

- [Pinterest](#)
- [The Tate](#)
- [National Portrait Gallery](#)
- [ArtNet](#)

### To further improve in Art you could:

- Learn more about the artist we have been studying, think about their life, background and your own opinions of their work. You could include at least 3 images of a variety of artworks by them and comment on the ideas behind their work.
- Use subject specific vocabulary in your written work. Use paragraphs to structure your written work more clearly.
- Analyse artwork, commenting on the artist's intentions and meanings. Comment on the context of the work and clearly state the possible connections to your own project.
- Produce independent pieces of work in response to the artist.
- Use more complex compositions/layouts to make your image more interesting.
- Slow down when working and take more time applying media, to obtain a higher quality finish.
- Spend time refining drawings and add further detail and texture.
- Include tone to make objects look 3D.
- Develop your observational skills by carefully look for details on reference image/object and add them to your drawings.
- Be aware of proportions and make adjustments.
- Consider compositions and the overall presentation of your drawings.
- Use photography to record observations and support your work.
- Think carefully about composition/layout.
- Experiment with a wide range of media.
- Select materials which suit your artist's style and project theme.
- Take more creative risks and be imaginative with your drawings.
- Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses within a piece/project.

## Computer Science

Other useful online resources:

- [Replit: the collaborative browser based IDE - Replit](#)

To further improve in Computer Science you could:

- Maintain focus & always complete key tasks.
- Ensure your work area is organised.
- Ask for help and additional explanation when necessary.
- Ensure you make effective use of the resources you have been given via the class Team to extend your knowledge. Use the programming guides to improve your Python skills.
- To advance your skills look at using some Python guides online and attempting some new challenges from the challenges folder.
- Spend time revising some of the more advanced topics in Computational Theory using the resources you have been given in preparation for completing the end of unit summary sheet.
- Devote attention to the algorithmic theory aspects of the course in order to gain the technical knowledge you need. Carefully read the revision notes so your materials are as accurate as possible.

## Drama

To further improve in Drama you could:

- Make sure your attendance is as high as possible, so you don't miss any Drama lessons.
- Remain focused and on task at all times.
- Ensure you bring all resources to every lesson.
- Explore your vocal skills more fully during our current scripted work.
- Explore a greater range of ideas when rehearsing your scene.
- Ensure you have learned your lines.
- Assert your ideas more fully, especially when developing ideas.
- In performing your scripted piece, aim to demonstrate greater awareness of the audience.
- Aim to be more willing to work collaboratively with your peers.
- Aim to develop character beyond your conversation by trying a range of ideas.

## D+T

### Other useful online resources:

- [Technologystudent.com](http://Technologystudent.com)

### To further improve in D+T you could:

- Use the manufacturing methods you have learned (for example electronics, plastic forming and wood processes) to design a different product in detail, for example an electronic game or a radio.
- Record in your diary of making for projects:
  - H+S and QC considerations for each stage of manufacture.
  - Full technical descriptions for example 'some acrylic rods were too tight/loose because of variations in rods diameter'.
  - All the tools, materials and components used (e.g. soldering iron, MDF strip, acrylic 3mm rod).
  - Measurable data (quantities, length, widths, diameters etc).
- Choose a different electronic product (e.g. a toy) and consider where/how the circuit is fitted and what material the casing is.
- In electronics questions remember the names of electronic components (capacitor, resistor) and their SI units (e.g. ohm, Farad) and the values of prefixes (e.g. k = x1000), use key words to describe components (long, short, IC pins etc) and correct soldering method (concave, shiny, dry joint, bridges etc).
- Improve the consistency of soldering, ensuring each soldered joint is the correct size and shape (concave) with no bridging or dry joints.
- Be more creative with ideas by designing and using a variety of forms (rectilinear, curved, angular or organic)
- Ensure accuracy in your technical drawing (Isometric) and render correctly different forms like curves and planes.
- Ensure your folder of work is presented and maintained to the highest standard with notes and annotations written carefully with a sharp pencil.
- Pay full attention to Health and Safety rules in demonstrations and complete machine tool comprehensions before attempting practical work.
- Consider using the manufacturing methods you have learned (vac forming, laser cutting, machine tools etc) to design a product in detail wholly by you over a longer time span (as in GCSE NEA)
- Consider assembly and tolerance of products (such as Lego or an iPhone case)
- Consider designers' work (past and present) and include this in your own designs and thought processes (for example apple products or automobiles)

## English

### Other useful online resources:

- Word Games: [Vocabulary games – Best online games for KS3 and KS4 English - Teachwire](#)
- Learning about Literature: [KS3 English - BBC Bitesize](#)
- Independent Learning: [Oak National Academy Online Classroom \(thenational.academy\)](#)
- Poetry: [Poetry | Read Write Think](#)
- Writing: [Homepage - The Day](#)
- Developing Writing Style: [News, sport and opinion from the Guardian's UK edition | The Guardian](#)

### To further improve in English you could:

- Develop your vocabulary by reading a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Use your reading journal to log these.
- Make a list of interesting new vocabulary from your wider reading and endeavour to use some of this in your own writing.
- Revise the use of complex punctuation and aim to use at least five different examples in future assessments.
- Review any spelling and punctuation mistakes you made last term. Write the correct spellings in your reading journal and devise strategies to help you avoid making mistakes in the future.
- Review your short-term learning targets and ensure that you address them thoroughly in order to make meaningful progress from one assessment to another.
- Ensure you are participating in small group discussions to build confidence in speaking and listening skills.
- Contribute to the department's extra-curricular programme this year: attend Debating/Public Speaking societies and/or submit a piece of writing to the school magazine.
- Focus in lessons and complete all class work tasks to the best of your ability.
- Memorise different sentence starters and question scaffolds to help you to complete assessed questions in the level of detail needed.
- Leave time to check work for avoidable errors, including mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Amend accordingly.

## French

### Other useful online resources:

- [Linguascope\\*](#) (Vocabulary Practice)
- [Language Gym\\*](#) (Sentence Practice)
- [Conjuguemos](#) (Verb Conjugation Practice)
- [Languages Online](#) (Grammar Practice)

*\*Pupils have accounts for these or have been issued with school username and password. The others are free.*

### To further improve in French you could:

- Regularly check your understanding of lesson content by flicking through your notes after each lesson.
- Test yourself on vocabulary from your vocab book by covering the English column and saying aloud the meanings of the French words, then covering the French column and writing out the spellings of the words in French.
- Regularly check your ability to say and write small bits of French in each tense for each topic you study.
- Use French you know. Avoid translating your thoughts word for word from English as this rarely results in good French.
- Slowly translate your written French back into English to check for missed words and avoidable errors.
- If a reading or listening question is in French, answer in French. If it is in English, answer in English.
- Look over French you have written and try reading it aloud, paying close attention to rules you know: do not pronounce final consonants unless followed by a vowel, make R sound from the throat, etc.
- Know what you will say in your speaking assessments by saying it aloud plenty of times when revising.
- Make your pronunciation sound more French by typing words into Google Translate, clicking on the microphone icon, then repeating what you hear.
- For learning homeworks, don't just read or look. Use 'look - say - cover - write - check'.
- Read French articles online and make note of structures that could be of use in your own writing/speaking.

## FPN

### Other useful online resources:

- [Free Homework & Revision for A Level, GCSE, KS3 & KS2 \(senecalearning.com\)](https://www.senecalearning.com)

### To further improve in FPN you could:

- Be organised! Remember your booklet and ensure that it is up to date and completed to a high standard.
- Arrive with enthusiasm and be ready to learn.
- Refer to your exam question assessments and ensure you go through your fix its.
- Practise the PEEL technique by answering additional extended questions at home.
- Use the success criteria when undertaking written assessments to ensure you cover all areas of the task.
- Use food science terminology in your written work to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding on the functional properties and working characteristics of ingredients.
- Be proactive and undertake a range of challenge tasks. They are clearly stated in your work booklet.
- For practical lessons, ensure you arrive to lessons fully prepared and ready to make.
- Read your recipes the evening before your practical lesson.
- Remember to keep your practical learning journey up to date.
- Continue to develop your practical skills by cooking at home on a regular basis. Use the recipes in your booklet or challenge yourself to try something new.
- Enrich your knowledge and understanding by listening to podcasts e.g. The Food Programme, BBC Good Food.

## Geography

To further improve in Geography you could:

- Stay focused throughout each lesson.
- Make sure you fully participate in lessons and ask for clarification where you need it.
- Complete recommended extension and proactive tasks.
- Participate in class discussions, sharing your ideas to check understanding.
- Get organised! Ensure your folder is up to date in order to effectively revise topics.
- Carefully work through your previous topics. For the topics you are finding most difficult, revisit your class notes & make sure they are thorough enough.
- Look back at your assessments and ensure that you understand your fix its.
- Read around the topics studied to develop your geographical understanding.
- Practise your extended writing ensuring you add the detail required.
- Make full use of subject specific language and always include specific data in your answers.
- Plan your written answers so that they include a relevant detail and a good depth of explanation.
- Revise key knowledge across the different topics, using BBC Bitesize/SharePoint resources to help you.
- Practise resource interpretation by completing practice questions on graphs, diagrams and maps.
- Practise geographical skills such as map interpretation by using OS Map Zone/BBC Bitesize to help you.
- Use flashcards/glossaries to learn key definitions.



## German

### Other useful online resources:

- [Learning tools, flashcards, and textbook solutions | Quizlet](#)
- [Linguascope\\*](#) (Vocabulary Practice)
- [Kerboodle\\*](#) (Echt textbooks, used at KS3)
- [Verbix](#) (Online verb conjugator)
- [WordReference](#) (Online dictionary)

### To further improve in German you could:

- Regularly revisit and revise the key verbs **haben**, **sein** and **werden**. These are crucial in their own right, but also essential when accurately forming other tenses, a key aspect of higher attainment.
- Make sure you annotate texts and transcripts, highlighting meanings of new vocabulary, so it stands out for future revision.
- Consistently check back through your work for accuracy such as spelling, verb endings and capital letters for nouns, using available reference materials. This prevents avoidable communication errors
- Incorporate 'complex structures' in your speaking and writing, for example: *weil/obwohl; um ... zu ...; entweder ... oder ...; ich glaube, dass ...*
- reinforce your knowledge by regularly revising core vocabulary and structures at home.
- Work hard to master key word order rules and ensure the verbs in a sentence are in the correct position.
- When completing writing and speaking tasks, make sure every verb you are using is conjugated correctly, so it matches the subject of the sentence.
- Ensure you have a thorough knowledge of high-frequency, irregular verbs in the main tenses. (Irregular verbs are those which do not follow the regular patterns).
- Rote learn the key expressions which help you simply describe what you can see in a given photo; this supports your progress in 'photo card' speaking tasks.
- Work on your pronunciation of key sounds / letters in German (e.g. v/w/z/sp).
- When you have received feedback on your work, make sure you complete all 'green pen' corrections, asking your teacher for clarification if needed.

## History

### Other useful online resources:

- [BBC History Magazine, BBC History Revealed & BBC World Histories - HistoryExtra](#)
- [History Hit](#)

### To further improve in History you could:

- Organise your files in chronological order and make sure all notes are complete and detailed. Use the course booklet to tick off what you have and find out what might be missing.
- Listen to history podcasts to extend and deepen your knowledge and understanding e.g. from BBC History Extra, History Hit etc.
- When writing essays:
  - Each paragraph should start with a statement related to the question. This will avoid description and narrative storytelling.
  - Support all your statements and explanations with more detailed, specific and relevant knowledge. For example, have you used dates, names, places, key terms?
  - Your essays should include lots of explanation rather than description. You should be including words and phrases like consequently, therefore, this led to, this resulted in, as a result of this, because, this meant that etc. Focus on the question consistently throughout the essay.
  - Can you make your argument and judgement run throughout your essay - every paragraph makes the case that one reason is most important and others are less important. You should start with the most important reason and show how the factors are linked and depend on each other. Does one factor impact more on the other factors?
  - You must include a supported judgement in your essay. This will usually come in the conclusion - what was the most important cause of the event you are explaining?
  - Make inferences from the source content rather than just repeat or describe what it says/shows. What does the source suggest about the topic/question that it doesn't say directly? Select one or two details that are relevant to the question topic and which you can support with knowledge.
  - Support the inferences you have made with accurate and precise knowledge. Use the knowledge to show that the details/argument in the source are accurate, typical, valid, representative etc
  - Make sure you refer to the actual details of the source - small quotes, descriptions of images etc.
  - Comment on the provenance of the source - the author, audience, purpose, date. What is useful about the provenance. Is the author in a position to know, is it an authoritative account, typical of a certain view, does the date add to the use of the source?
  - If relevant analyse the limitations of the source - is it unreliable for the stated enquiry, does it exaggerate, persuade, deliberately leave details out?
  - Support your statement on the limitations of the source with precise and relevant knowledge - prove that it has exaggerated, lied with facts.
  - Write a final sentence summarising what the source is useful for in relation to the question focus.
- When completing an assessment make sure you use all of the class resources that you were given - writing frames, class notes, worksheets etc
- For assessments completed at home make sure you read through your work and ensure that you have corrected any spelling mistakes and that it makes sense.
- Be mindful of the timings in an assessment. Make sure you complete the essay/answer in time.

## Maths

### Other useful online resources:

- [DrFrostMaths.com](https://www.dr-frost-maths.com/)
- [Maths Genie - Free Online GCSE and A Level Maths Revision](https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/)
- [Bicen Maths - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8F0X1U1111111111111111)
- [Corbett Maths](https://www.corbettmaths.com/)

### To further improve in Maths you could:

- Make sure you are ready to begin lessons promptly by having your books and other equipment open.
- Aim to complete as many maths questions as possible during lessons.
- Set out your work as shown in the worked examples, with full working-out.
- Always read the question carefully and check your answers make sense to ensure you are scoring the most marks you can on each question.
- Correct your work in green pen so you can learn from your mistakes.
- Hand in homework set so that you can act on the personalised feedback given on each task.
- Ensure that you catch up with any work missed through absence
- Ask for help if you are struggling!
- When revising, allocate time to practicing exam style questions on different topics in the same session, e.g. in 20 minutes, complete one algebra question, one angles question etc. so that you are confident with using different techniques.
- Use the courses page on DFM to focus on specific skills you find challenging, then answer past paper questions on these topics.
- Engage in further practice of your mental arithmetic techniques using DFM; this will increase your confidence and enable you to tackle challenging questions more easily.
- Set out your work logically, including all of the intermediate steps, especially on a calculator paper, and ensure that it supports any conclusions made.
- Take your time when reading questions. Underlining key words and refer back to these when you have completed your working.
- Improve exam technique by simulating exam conditions when revising. Time yourself when completing questions, giving yourself around one minute per mark.
- Prepare for GCSE Maths by completing exam style questions. These can be found on DFM, Maths Genie or Corbett Maths, filtered by topic.

## Music

### Other useful online resources:

- [teoria: Music Theory Web](#)

### To further improve in Music you could:

#### General Musicianship

- Learn an instrument! Or practice daily if you already do
- Sign up to perform solos in our regular concert series
- Audition for the Whole-School production
- Join tech club and support backstage
- Attend music ensembles in or outside of school
- Sign up to come on music trips or go to gigs outside of school
- Make sure you get involved with class discussion & group practical work during music lessons

#### Keyboard Technique

- Move away from using a keyboard guide and navigate the keyboard using the pattern of black notes.
- Focus on your hand position in keyboard work and always use the correct fingers to build technical skill and strength.
- Always practise your keyboard part with the metronome on, to improve your time-keeping.
- Focus on time-keeping during ensemble performances - this is achieved by practising using a metronome on the keyboard, and or taking turns to count the pulse for the rest of the group.
- Practise keyboard work slowly and always with both hands on the keyboard, to increase your performance level.
- Develop your performance fluency by trying to play from memory rather than following the score.
- Improve your performance level by adding your own style to your practical work, such as adapting the accompanying part or rhythms in the piece.
- Extend your musical performance by adding a greater range of musical elements and trying to add your own 'twist' on the piece, or by adding your own interpretation (including improvisation, contrasting sections and added musical sensitivity).

## Compositional Work

- Include more genre-specific elements in your compositions to make it really clear where the influence has come from. Listen to lots of examples from the same genre to help give you a sense of style.
- Exploit more features of the music technology to further enhance your composition, such as reverb effects, panning and volume automation.
- Always use a metronome when recording into Cubase so that all your layers align rhythmically and looping is straightforward
- Try to develop more contrast in your composition by changing the original motif's pitch and or rhythm.
- Focus on creating more distinct sections in your composition, by using contrasting frequency of notes, timbres or chords.
- Focus on showing off more of your keyboard skill in your Cubase composition by writing more complex melodies.

## Listening skills

- Watch YouTube videos of orchestral recordings to improve instrumental recognition
- Watch and listen to as many genres of music that you can
- Broaden the elements of music you use when listening, by focusing on those you find more challenging. Challenge elements are signposted in your booklets.
- Improve your confidence with instrument recognition by focusing on the timbres of the instruments and deciding on an adjective that you best associate with that type of sound.

## PE

To further improve in PE you could:

- Attend sports clubs in and out of school.
- Be organised by packing your PE kit the night before and arriving at every lesson with the correct kit.
- Remember that the skill level of some classmates will be different to yours. Demonstrate empathy and respect for these peers by encouraging and being supportive.
- In Basketball Sports Leadership learn the basic rules of the game and apply these confidently when refereeing games. Research these on the internet and make a reference card that can be used in lessons.
- Take responsibility for a team and demonstrate leadership. Research on the internet the roles of team members and apply this knowledge confidently in lessons.
- In Fitness lessons be able to demonstrate how the body adapts and benefits from regular exercise. Research in your own time the long-term effects of exercise on the body and make a picture chart for display.
- Attend extracurricular Table Tennis on Monday lunchtimes and compete against challenging opponents. Research different ways to apply tactics, and practise appropriate skills and strategies to outwit your opponent.
- Be able to complete a continuous 10/20/30 minute run on the treadmill at a minimum of 8km/hr. Devise a personal exercise programme to achieve this.

## RE

### To further improve in RE you could:

- Keep focused throughout the lesson; getting distracted or distracting others can lead to a lower quality of written work and a poorer understanding of the topic. Show determination and energy.
- Make verbal contributions and ensure you show empathy and understanding during class discussions.
- Ensure you keep your RE folder/booklet neat and up to date. Your work should be well presented and each task completed to the best of your ability.
- Be ready to work as soon as you arrive at the lesson.
- Make the most of feedback activities. Use your green pen to add any additional information to your work to enhance the quality and depth of your initial answer.
- Make sure you complete peer assessment activities effectively. Any peer critique you offer should be kind, specific and helpful. Providing such feedback helps to reinforce your own learning.
- Try your best to elaborate in your verbal responses. You can do this by using connectives such as 'therefore, for example, in addition'.
- Demonstrate your subject knowledge by incorporating the key terminology for each unit into both your written and verbal responses.
- Stretch your own thinking by attempting all challenge activities.
- Develop your points clearly and thoroughly by using the PEE structure you have been taught.
- Revise effectively for assessments. One way is by looking over Summary Sheets we have seen in class and using the 'look, cover, write, check' method to ensure you have committed the information to memory.
- Revisit your knowledge on religious buildings. Make a table listing why such buildings should or shouldn't be sold to feed the poor. Try to rank your points based on how convincing you feel they are.

## Science

***\*\*Note – in Year 9, students have started studying GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry & Physics. Please see the 'Achieving your potential at KS4' booklet for further tips and advice. \*\****

Other useful online resources:

- [Educake | Hassle-free homework](#)
- [New Scientist | Science news, articles, and features](#)

To further improve in Science you could:

- As you go through a unit, make a flashcard or two for each lesson. You can then use these to revise as you go!
- Carefully read and carry out practical instructions to complete work in a safe and organised way.
- Focus on the use of key terminology when answering questions verbally or in writing. This will allow you to consolidate your understanding of key concepts.
- Carefully read and think about each question before beginning to write an answer. The focus of the question and the information provided must be clearly understood before attempting the answer. Use highlighter / underlining / shapes to indicate keywords or important information in the question
- When completing calculations, show all the stages of working clearly. Then check if the answer is a 'sensible' one and ensure you add a unit.
- When representing data, check that all columns in tables have headings (including units of measurement). Similarly, all graphs must have a heading that describe what is shown and ensure that axes are labelled, units of measurement are clear and scales are appropriate.
- Review key facts, challenging yourself to recite the answers from memory.
- Create tables or charts comparing topics
- Create a mind map for each topic
- Create a glossary for your folder which you can refer to, and add to, throughout the course.
- Make a note of links between scientific subjects, e.g. catalysts in Chemistry with enzymes in Biology. Make a note of these connections as they appear throughout the course.
- Read and respond to teacher feedback on completed and marked homework tasks by making any improvements, additions or corrections in green pen.
- Carry out some extension work for you current topic, such as reading scientific articles or textbooks (remember you can access New Scientist Magazine by visiting the website above).