

Learning To Learn

Study Skills

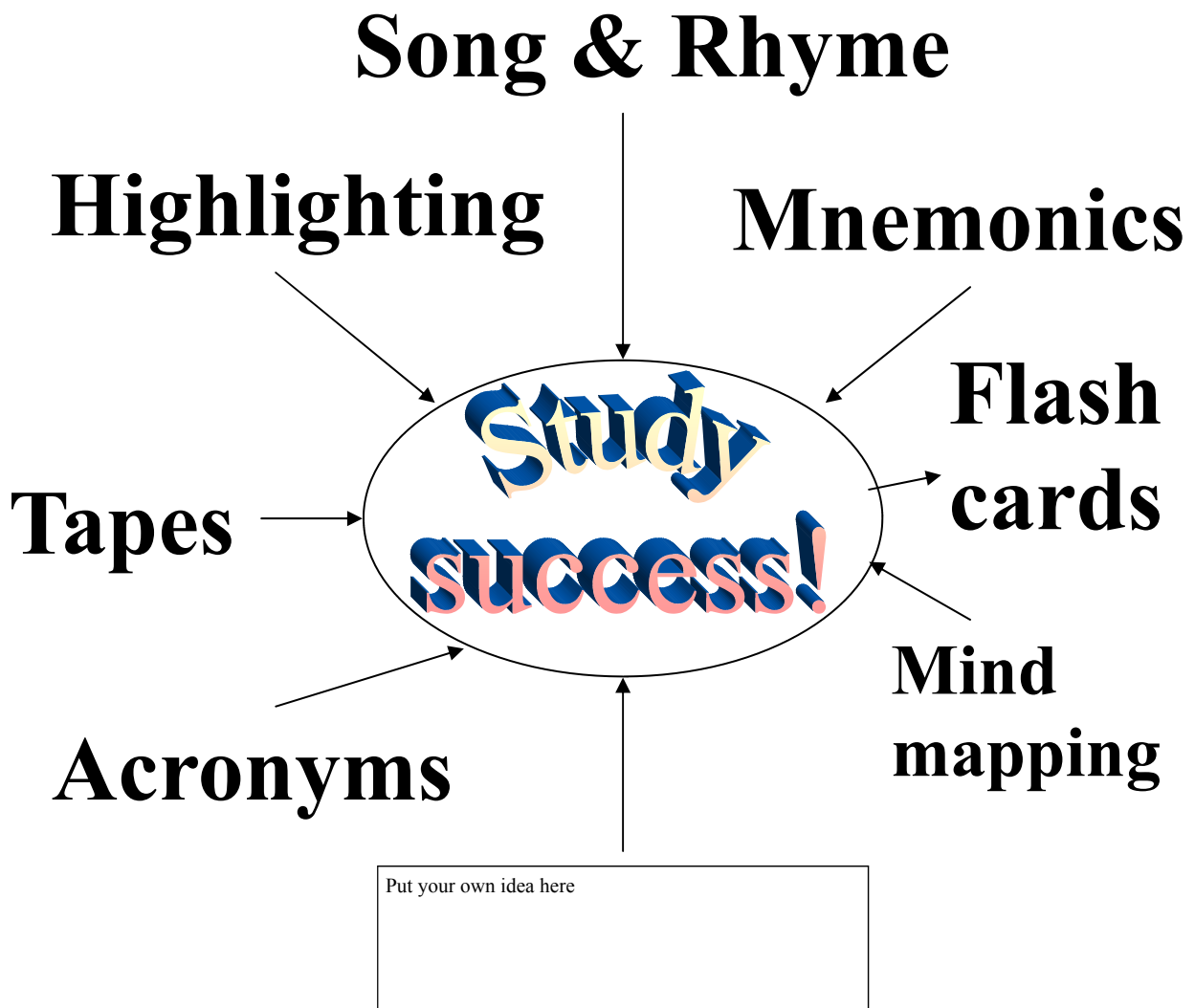
Reading this guide will give you

Write your name here and remember to always hand this guide back to your tutor.

the skills to improve your learning.

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Choosing the right techniques

What techniques could I use?

How are they useful?

Which is best for the task I am doing now?

You and Study Skills

"Do the same old thing in the same old



way and you will get the same old results".

Fine, if the way you choose to do things really works, but what if there is room for improvement, or if you are suddenly faced with a new or different type of task?

Study skills will help you to fulfil your academic potential. They can also take a lot of the hard work out of learning something new or revising.

Take control!

As well as the time you spend studying, you need to find the time to manage yourself. If you just study randomly and hope for the best you will waste a long time starting one thing, then another, and feeling low because nothing ever seems to get finished properly. Instead:

- 1. Decide what you want to achieve**
- 2. Work out ways to achieve it.**



Reflection: Me and my Study Skills now

Where do I study?

When do I study?

How do I study?

What are the three main techniques that I use?

What seems to work well?

What could be improved?

How?

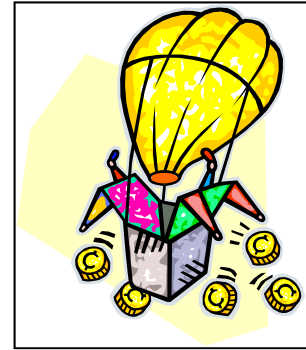
Learning is not something that you do alone!

Some of the most effective learning takes place when you share ideas and approaches with other people. Look at the chart on the next page. This show several different ways in which people can contribute to learning when they work together.

- Decide which description is most like you.

Most like me = _____

- Now ask a friend to say which they think is most like you, without telling them what you decided for yourself.



Most like me (a friend's view) = _____

- Next, get into a group and try to complete this task together:

GROUP TASK (5 or 6 people)

You are at 1000 metres in a hot air balloon, 10 kilometres west of your island destination, flying over a shark infested sea, in a westerly direction, at 20 kilometres an hour. You started out from the mainland an hour ago. You have run out of fuel, so the balloon is falling at a steady rate of 11 metres every 20 seconds. You need to lighten the load by 150kilos to stop this descent. You must decide whether to throw something or someone out of the balloon to lighten the load, so that the rest of the group can make it, or whether to try another strategy.



WHAT ROLES DO YOU PLAY IN CLASS?

Class-Role Type	Positive contributions	Likely weaknesses
CREATOR	Creative, imaginative, uses unusual approaches. Solves difficult problems.	Ignores things they don't see as important. May be too involved in what they are doing to communicate well with others.
COORDINATOR	Mature, confident, a good chairperson. Keeps other people on-task, helps group decision-making, delegates to others well.	Can often be seen as manipulative. Off loads personal work on to others.
EVALUATOR	Serious, a good planner and good at sensing how well things are going. Sees all the options. Makes accurate judgements.	Lacks drive and the ability to inspire others.
STARTER	Disciplined, reliable, cautious and efficient. Turns ideas into practical actions.	Somewhat inflexible. Slow to respond to new possibilities.
FINISHER	Careful, detailed and conscientious. Searches out mistakes and gaps. Gets work in on time.	Inclined to worry a lot. Doesn't like delegating tasks to others.
INVESTIGATOR	Extrovert, enthusiastic, likes to talk. Explores new opportunities. Develops contacts with new people.	Over - optimistic. Loses interest once initial enthusiasm has passed.
SHAPER	Challenging, energetic, thrives on pressure. The drive and courage to overcome obstacles.	Can be bad tempered. Can offend other people's feelings.
TEAMWORKER	Co-operative, mild, perceptive and diplomatic. Listens, builds relationships with others, calms things down.	Indecisive in crunch situations.
SPECIALIST	Single-minded, self-starting, dedicated. Provides knowledge and skills in rare supply.	Contributes only on a narrow front. Dwells on technicalities, may not see the big picture.

- Read through the situation on the previous page carefully.
- Each person in the group should play one of the characters in the balloon (you can read about your character and the others on Page 9).
- After 5 minutes preparation time, each character should take turns to tell the group why they should be allowed to stay in the balloon.
- When everyone has spoken you then have to make a group decision about what to do. Each of you should then write down your group's final decision below, including exactly what you have chosen to do and why.

- Lastly, share your decisions with the other groups to see if the whole class can decide what would be the best strategy.



Gorgeous George Davis (90kilos—Mirror 1kilo). Self-made millionaire and blood-donor. George divides his time between the office and his love for extreme sports of all kinds. In his youth he swam for his country and he still prides himself on his physical fitness. George is unmarried, and his critics say his only true love is himself.



Mandy Rogers (60kilos), vet and animal lover . Never separated from Bilbo (15 kilos), her pet dog. Mandy recently spent time as an aid worker in Africa, helping to cure poor people's sick cattle. She is terrified of water and heights and only agreed to take part in the flight when Bilbo was allowed to come with her. Although a vet, Mandy has several times offered first aid to people in emergency situations.



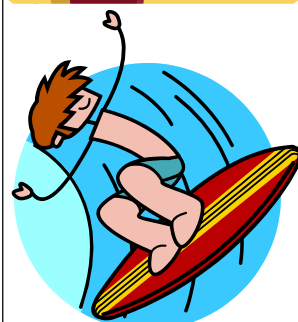
Sid Delicious (65 kilos), rock-star and hair-gel addict. Sid is a member of the popular band The Blunt Razors. However, he is currently surrounded by scandal, as he has been accused of miming and not playing his own guitar (10 kilos). Sid came on the flight as a chance to get away from it all. When not touring with the band he lives at home with his Mum and his favourite hobby is knitting. He can't swim and is anorexically thin.



Vera Verona (55 kilos) is a quiet, caring girl, most of whose friends are cats. She is part of a large family, with three brothers and three sisters. Vera loves the quiet and freedom of the air, and she is a trained balloon pilot. However, she is not yet fully qualified, as she failed the navigation section of her recent exam. Desperate for money, she is using her balloon for smuggling and her cat box is actually full of 100% proof spirits(40 kilos) and a number of inflatable beach balls.



Liza Mumbles (70 kilos), city slicker and highly-paid lawyer. Liza, a heavy smoker, is a fashion-conscious type who always wears lots of jewellery. Once mugged on the streets of New York, she goes in fear of this happening again, and secretly always carries a loaded revolver (3 kilos) in her make-up bag. Liza is a good swimmer and one of her hobbies is sailing.



Marlon Alfonso (85 kilos) is a dream teen. Top of his class at Updown Senior High School at almost everything, he is also class president. He was recently voted most popular guy by the girls in his year. Marlon is nearly always surrounded by a large group of friends, but can be cruel to people he doesn't like. Marlon went on the flight to try to spot the best waves for surfing. He has a pair of binoculars (2 kilos) with him and is sitting on the emergency life raft (50 kilos), which has space for only 4 people and no paddles.

GROUP TASK (continued)

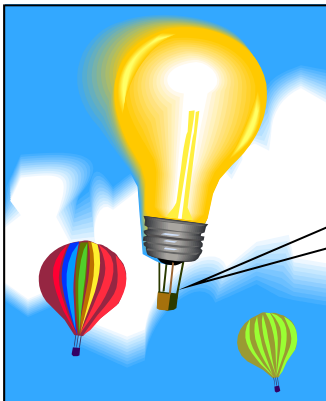
Working on your own, think back to the roles that you played during this group debate, looking at the roles in the chart on Page 7 again. Which best describes how you contributed to the group?

Now, back in your group, see if everyone else agrees with your view. If they don't, then write down their views below.

Now, having looked at the chart on Page 7 in three different ways, come to a final decision about which class role-type you play most often.

MY MAIN CLASS ROLE-TYPE IS: _____

Look at your likely weaknesses in the chart and the strengths that people playing other roles bring to group learning. What could you do to improve your contribution to learning in your class?



“I don't like this type of activity because I don't like being labelled!”

This is a fairly common reaction to this type of activity. What is your view?

STUDY SKILLS

Now let's turn to some of the techniques which will help you to learn and revise. Just as we all contribute differently in group situations, so we all get on better with certain techniques, rather than others. However, you will not know which are best for you until you have given each a try. So, in this next section, the golden rule is:

Try it and see!

Highlighting: Key Points

- Use colour (get yourself a pack of highlighters).
- Use more than one colour at a time.
- Choose at least two different types of information to highlight before you start.



Try this out on the following strange version of history, based upon mistakes students have made during examinations. You are trying to find out what kind of mistakes they have made. You decide that what you will look for will be (1) spelling mistakes (2) using the wrong word (3) getting the facts wrong (4) getting confused.

First, highlight the last sentence (above) in four different colours, then highlight examples of 1 to 4 in the article on the next page in the same four colours.

"Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies and they all wrote in hydraulics. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and travelled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinness's, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked, "Am I my brother's son?"

Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada. Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines, before a temple fell on his head.

The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a female moth. The Greeks were written by Homer. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name.

Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock. After his death, his career suffered a dramatic decline. In the Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the java.

Eventually, the Romans conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long.

One story from the Muddle Ages is William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head. It was an age of great intentions and discoveries. Gutenberg was a printer who invented removable type and wrote the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Walter Raleigh is a hysterical figure because he invented cigarettes and started smoking. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100 foot clipper.

In the USA the colonists won the war and no longer had to pay for taxis. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin discovered electricity by rubbing two cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead. Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. His mother died in infancy, and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands."

You now have all you would need to write a report in four paragraphs, or to decide which types of mistake were most common.

So, what was the most common type of mistake that these students made in their History exams?

Now choose just one incorrect sentence from the last page and write it out correctly.

Reflection:

So, when, before this exercise, was the last time that you used highlighting to help you learn?

Were you clear at the time about exactly what you needed to highlight, or did you just highlight anything that looked useful or seemed important?

Lastly, try to think of three reasons why it is a good idea to highlight things in different colours, and then three ways in which you could go on to make use of the information that you had highlighted.

REASONS

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

USES

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Mind Maps

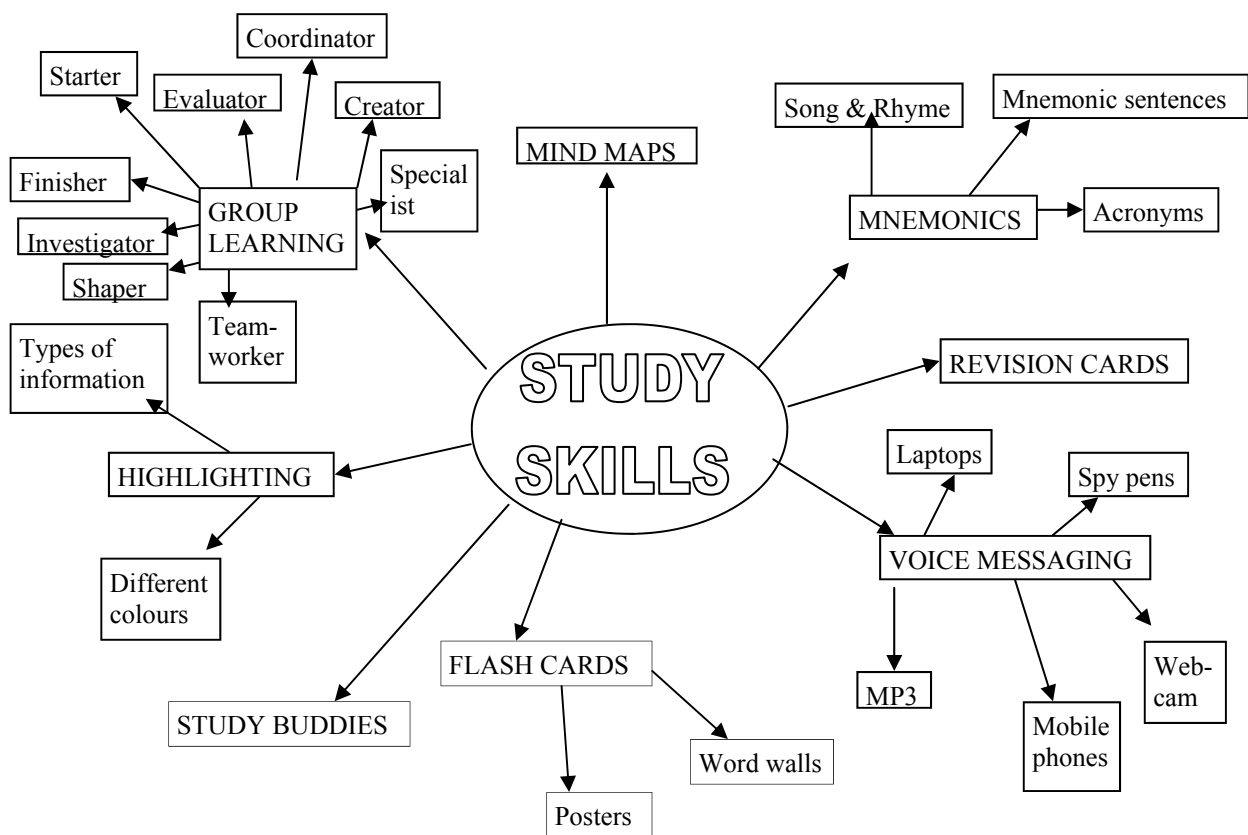
You can use these to make a picture out of your thoughts.

They will help you to:

- See gaps in your learning
- Organise your thinking into big and little ideas
- See how your learning can connect together
- Put your learning into groups and categories

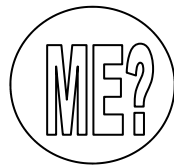


Here is a mind map of the main ideas from this booklet.



In the centre you should put the topic, the key question, or the main idea. Around this you put headings for each of the "chunks" of information that you can link to this central point. From these headings you can draw connections to smaller bits of information, and so on. If necessary, you can write on your arrows to explain how two bits of information are connected. It is also possible to draw arrows between different sections to show less linear connections that you could make. You can use colour to highlight strengths or weaknesses, or information that you are going to use to complete a task. Around the edge of your mind map you could make notes or list case studies to support the topic. It can be useful to include diagrams as well as words, if you want to memorise the mind map.

In the space below draw your own mind map about you. Include your thoughts, feelings, ideas and observations, but do it without stopping to think too much or trying too hard to be clever. Try to use colour and diagrams, as well as words. Most importantly, **DON'T STOP UNTIL EVERY CORNER OF THIS PAGE IS COVERED!**



Now show your finished mind map to someone you trust. Agree between you what to write in answer to each of these questions:

Who are you? _____

What are you like? _____

What are your strengths? _____

How do you learn? _____

Get yourself a piece of plain paper and try to turn the following list into a mind map, using concentric circles as well as arrows.

Mammal	Dog	Crocodile
Cow	Newt	Toad
Lizard	Owl	Fly
Animals	Beetle	Parrot
Snake	Lion	Swan
Frog	Reptile	Insect
ant	Kangaroo	Bird

Did you end up with three circles? What did you decide to put in each?

Using concentric circles allows you to go into progressively more detail. Add another circle to your mind map on the theme of "**Distinguishing features**" and try and put in two or three characteristics that are unique to each animal. Lastly, use colours to shade in each animal according to whether you think it is a carnivore, an omnivore (meat and veg.) or a vegetarian.

Voice Messaging



Lots of modern technology allows you to record voice messages. Examples include tape recorders, mobile and land-line phones, MP3/4 players, webcams, computers with microphones, most laptops and spy pens. If you create a voice message to help you learn or revise, just a one minute message can contain a surprising amount of information. However, you will still need to plan what you are going to record first, perhaps writing a script, and this planning time will help your learning too. Tips:

- **Swap over who speaks—this will help to keep your attention.**
- **Record some suitable background music with the message.**
- **Record your message for someone else to listen to (think of a suitable audience).**
- **Include key questions with your message (perhaps with answers at the end, or multiple choices).**
- **Start with the big points and ideas, then go on to the supporting points, evidence and examples.**



Recording onto a mobile phone or MP3 player, you can play back your messages during “dead time”, for example, whilst travelling.

If you haven’t got anything suitable to record on to, this technique is still very valuable. *Write a one minute script (try it out yourself to get the timing right) on a theme or topic that you are trying to learn. Now learn the script, so that you can recite it without reading from what you have written(try a 30 second one if one minute proves too much).*

Mnemonics (memory tricks that help us learn)



1) SONGS & RHYME

"I before E except after C, but not when sounded "A", as in neighbour and weigh" is a well known example from English. *"High to Low; look out below. Low to High; clear blue sky"* is an example from Geography, about high and low air pressure and the weather each brings. Think of a topic that you are learning at the moment and invent, then write below, your own rhyme or poem to help you remember something.

What topic are you going to try? _____

Which bit do you find most difficult to remember?

What are the key words and phrase involved?

What words and phrases might rhyme?

Rough out your ideas then write your final rhyme or poem below:

2) Mnemonic sentences



"Jason Sat Under Ninety-Eight Vicious Monster Munching Penguins" gives you a way of remembering the planets in our solar system, from the largest to the smallest (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and so on, although some of you will know that Pluto is no longer considered a planet!).

"You Go Brown Before Potting Black" gives you a way of remembering which order to pot the coloured balls when playing snooker.

Now write your own mnemonic sentence to help you remember the Form Group letters in your year e.g. Elephants Forget Great, and so on!

Now think of a list of information that you have recently had to learn in one of your subjects and write a mnemonic sentence to help you remember it, asking yourself whether it needs to be remembered in a particular order (if you can't think of one, use the Scandinavian countries: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia).

When you have finished, get someone to test you by asking you to recall your list of information in the correct order.

Mnemonic sentences are a useful way of remembering difficult spellings. For example, **"When I am embarrassed I go Really Red"** is a good way of remembering that "embarrass" has two R's in it. Think of a word from one of your lessons that you have trouble remembering how to spell, look it up in a dictionary, then write a mnemonic sentence to help you remember the correct spelling. In most classrooms you will also find an orange list of words that are commonly misspelled on the wall.

3) Acronyms

These are words made from parts of other words. One example would be ASDA (Associated Dairies), another would be AfL (Assessment for Learning) and a third GPS (Global Positioning System). See if you can write down a few more examples below.

You can use acronyms to help you learn all sorts of information. For example, if you were going to write about Henry VIII in an exam, you could use the word "History" to help you:

H = Henry VII (father)

I = Italian pope

S = Six wives

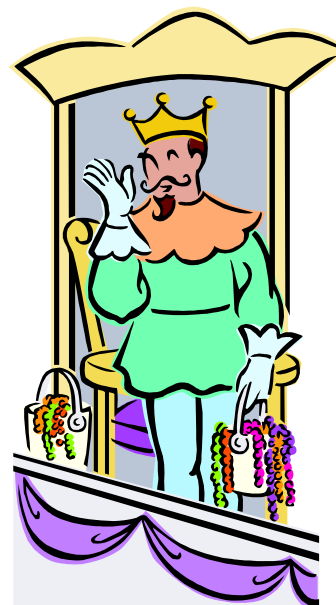
T = Thomas Cranmer/Cromwell/More (important characters)



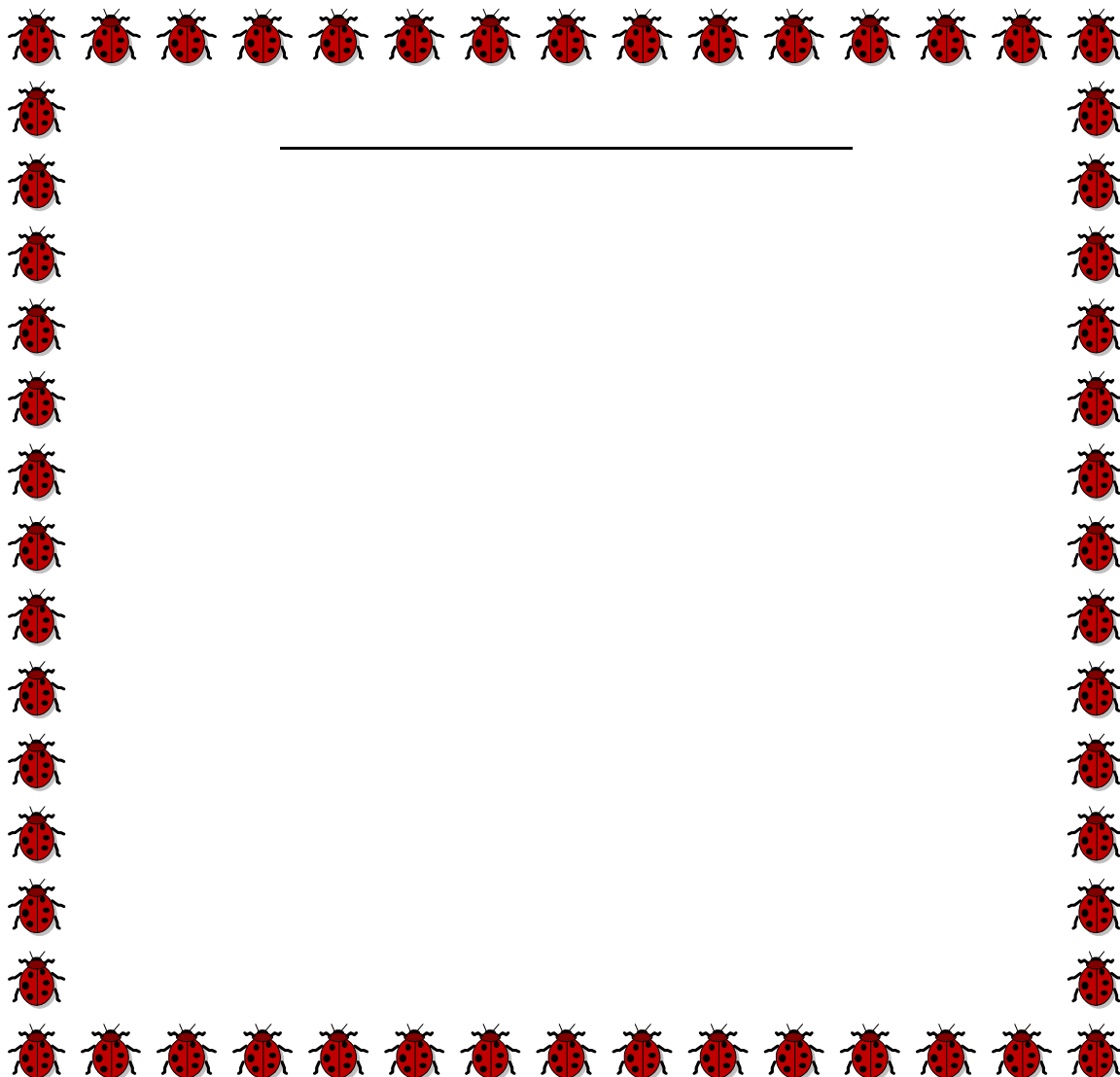
O = Ordered to close (monasteries)

R = Religion (catholic/protestant)

Y = Years (1530-47)



Think of a topic that you are doing in Science or DT at the moment. Write down a one-word topic heading then try to turn this word into a useful acronym below, to help you remember the topic's most important points.



Flash Cards

All you need to do here is to cut yourself a set of very small blank cards. Think of a topic, then write and/or draw key words, people, images, ideas or examples to do with it on each card (Try to do just 10 cards to begin with).



A useful variation is to put different things on the back of each card which come from a different topic within the same subject.

Ways to use these cards:

- Shuffle them, then put them all one face up to show just one of your topics.
- Put the cards in a line to make a story or an explanation. Discard any you would not use.
- Put the cards in order of importance to the topic.
- Play pairs or snap with a friend. You have to be able to describe a realistic connection between two cards to win.
- Make a mind map of your cards, creating new cards as you think of new connections.

Cut out the cards on the back page and use them all to make a story.

A useful revision technique is to take your flash cards and use them to help create a topic poster that you can display in your room. **Try this with the cards from the back page by turning your completed story into an A4 poster, into which you can stick each of your cards.**

Random Word Walls

These can be very useful for developing your thinking skills and also for checking how well you really understand a topic. **Think of a topic that you have studied recently then, working with a partner, try to think of links between this topic and each of the words in the random word wall below.**

WATER	RED	COLD	HOUSE
FEELING	TOGETHER	PLAIN	HAMMER
BOLD	WOMAN	LOUD	CRADLE

Now come up with your own random word wall and use it to try and make links to a different topic.



Topic _____

Lastly, choose any topic from any subject, then try and find a word that you **CANNOT** connect to that topic. *It is actually really hard to do!*

TOPIC= _____ **UNCONNECTED WORD=** _____

Danger! Corny phrases like this one can be seriously difficult to forget.



Study Buddies

Page 6 was all about how people learn together. Here are some study ideas that you can try out with a partner:

Play "20 Questions" about your topic.

Fold up topic words on pieces of paper and put them into a container. Each person in a group has 30 seconds to describe one random word at a time, without saying it, whilst the others try to guess what each is.

One person describes a diagram to a second person, who has to try to draw an accurate copy without seeing it.

Each member of a group draws a nine square grid and fills each square with any of the numbers one to twelve. The group then writes down 12 important facts about the topic (numbering them one to twelve). Each group member then takes it in turn to ask a question whose answer is one of the twelve facts. The others play bingo, crossing through whichever number on their grid represents the correct answer.

Play topic consequences with a partner, each person taking it in turns to write the next sentence of a topic report (try this orally in larger group too).

Test whether you have learnt something by teaching it to your partner.

One person writes a list of questions about a topic, another a list of information. Next work together to join appropriate questions and information, then jointly fill in any gaps.

With a partner try to come up with a symbol to represent what you have just learned.

Ask your partner to list three learning points from a lesson. Share your own list and discuss possible reasons for any differences, or for anything that either of you had forgotten.

One person writes down one idea from a topic. The next person links this with an arrow to a second point, and so on.

Crossword. One person writes down a topic word. The next person then interconnects a second topic word, using one of the letters from the first, and so on. You could then draw up a blank version of your crossword, add questions and ask others in the group to solve it.

Reduction. Take it in turns to cross out the least important words or sentences in a piece of writing, until you can't go any further without removing something vital.



Try out three of the previous suggestions for learning together with others. Which activity helped you to learn most and why?

Which activity helped you to learn least and why?

Which other activity looks worth a try?

List three positive personal qualities that you brought to this study partnership:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Describe your main weakness when you work with a partner and how you could overcome it:

Revision Cards

These can be round, rectangular, or various other shapes and can be organised in all sorts of different ways. The key point is that you learn at least as much in the making of them as you do from studying them afterwards. As you can use both sides of the card you can also pack a lot into a small area. Simple divisions and headings can help you to organise your thinking. Here are some examples:

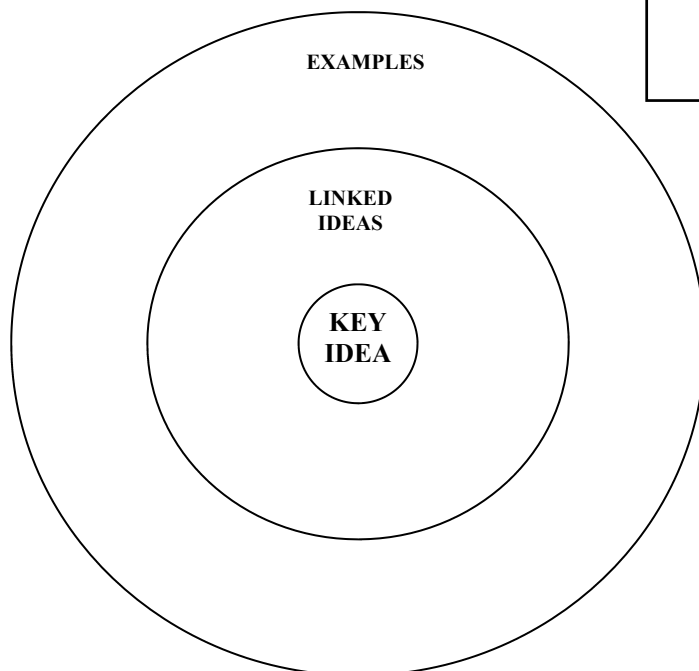
<u>PROBLEMS</u>	<u>SOLUTIONS</u>

<u>CAUSES</u>	<u>EFFECTS</u>



KEY IDEA:	
SUPPORTING IDEAS:	EXAMPLES:

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>



<u>KEY QUESTIONS</u>	<u>KEY FACTS</u>

It is important that you choose the right kind of revision card for the particular topic. Once you have created a card check it with someone else to see how complete and how clear they think it is. Keep your cards somewhere safe, but close to hand, so that you can use them whenever you have a few moments spare. You can also work with others to make different cards on different topics and then photocopy them for everyone.



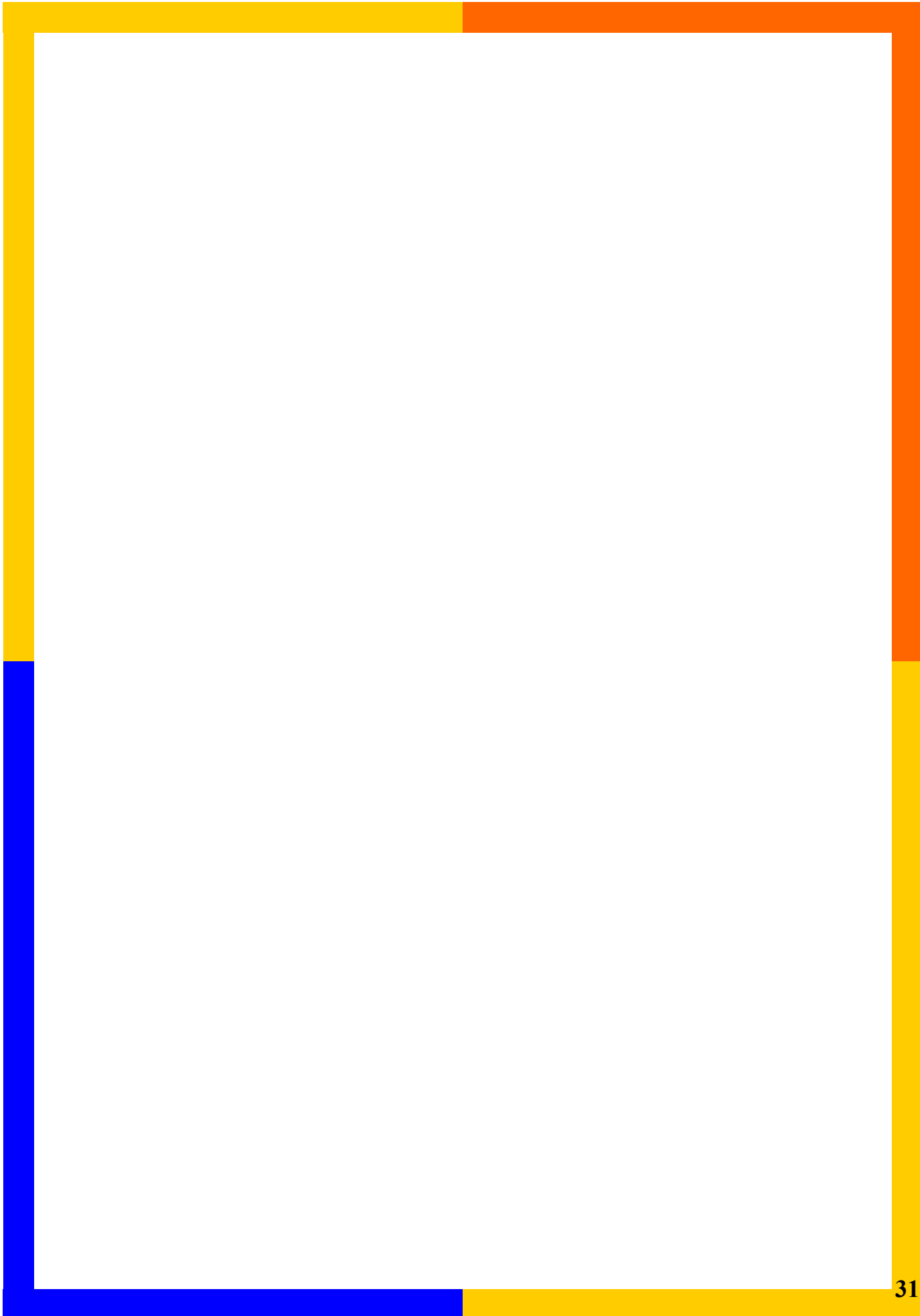
Study Skills Review

Before I started this topic my study skills were _____.

In group learning situations I am a _____
(Page 7). This means that I am good at _____
_____, but not so good at _____.

The three most useful types of study skills in this booklet are _____, _____ and _____. In particular, I can improve my _____ by using _____.

The students who are most likely to help me learn are _____.





STORM

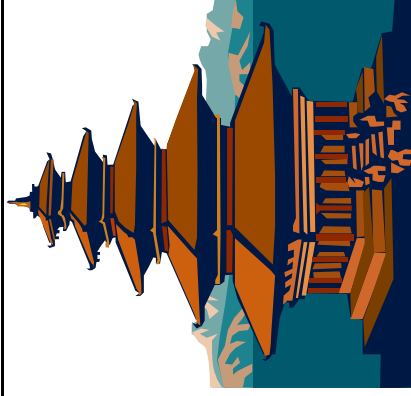
SLEEPY

ACCIDENT

CAMP

FIREWORK

LOST



TALK



WILLIAM

CLIMB