

Study Skills Strategies for Assessment - a new pilot program

Aim

To coach students how to revise and prepare for test and exams.



Background

St Peter's College has steadily developed a culture that encourages students to aim high and chase the best academic results possible. We proudly focus on the well-rounded student but remind students that an academic focus is the most important reason to come to school.

Students generally want to do well and can set a target (eg "I want to get a B average" or "I want to get endorsed with merit") but this does not mean they know how to achieve their goal.

Many students most probably don't realise that they don't know how to study. They spend lots of time flicking through notes or doing past exams (too early) but don't understand that this is not a good revision technique.

Think of the analogy of an archer aiming for a target. He knows that success involves hitting the target but he doesn't know how to hold the bow properly. He thinks he is doing it the right way; other people seem to be doing it this way – maybe this is as good as it gets?



What does your son need to do well?

- He needs to know stuff (mainly learnt in the class room)
- He needs to practise what he is learning (school and at home)
- He then needs to apply what he learnt to the question in the exam

What should your son (with your help) do?

- dedicate regular time slots in each day or week and stick to it (home and/or school),
- develop a work plan with simple targets (eg complete a summary sheet for a topic)
- develop simplified notes that may include pictures, symbols and short quotes – the fewer the pieces of paper the better,
- regularly revisit the summarised notes and check he can still reproduce them (this can include testing from a parent)

Revision tips

1. Study alone.
2. Do NOT listen to music you like*.
3. Take regular timed breaks
4. Go over a topic several times rather than spending a long time at one go
5. Create a summary or put key words on index cards for each topic
6. Read your essays to yourself. Check you have 5 points and supporting examples
7. Use past exam papers to assess how well you are doing.



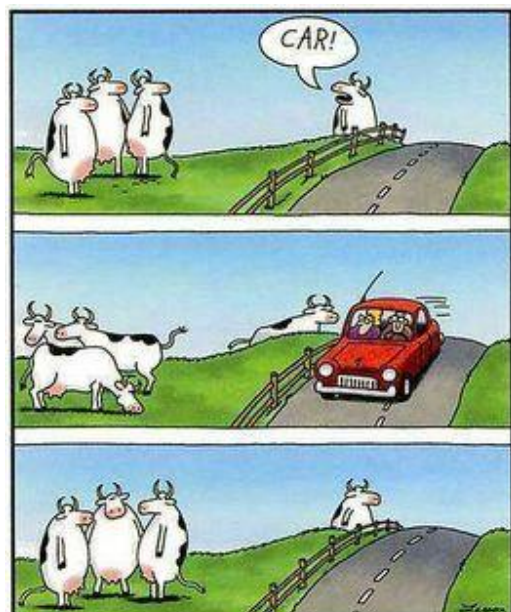
** If you do want to have music on then it should be quiet, have no words and be unfamiliar (eg classic or Gregorian chants). This kind of music acts as white noise and blocks out the annoying little noises you will focus on when you hit a hard topic.*

Revision strategies to consider

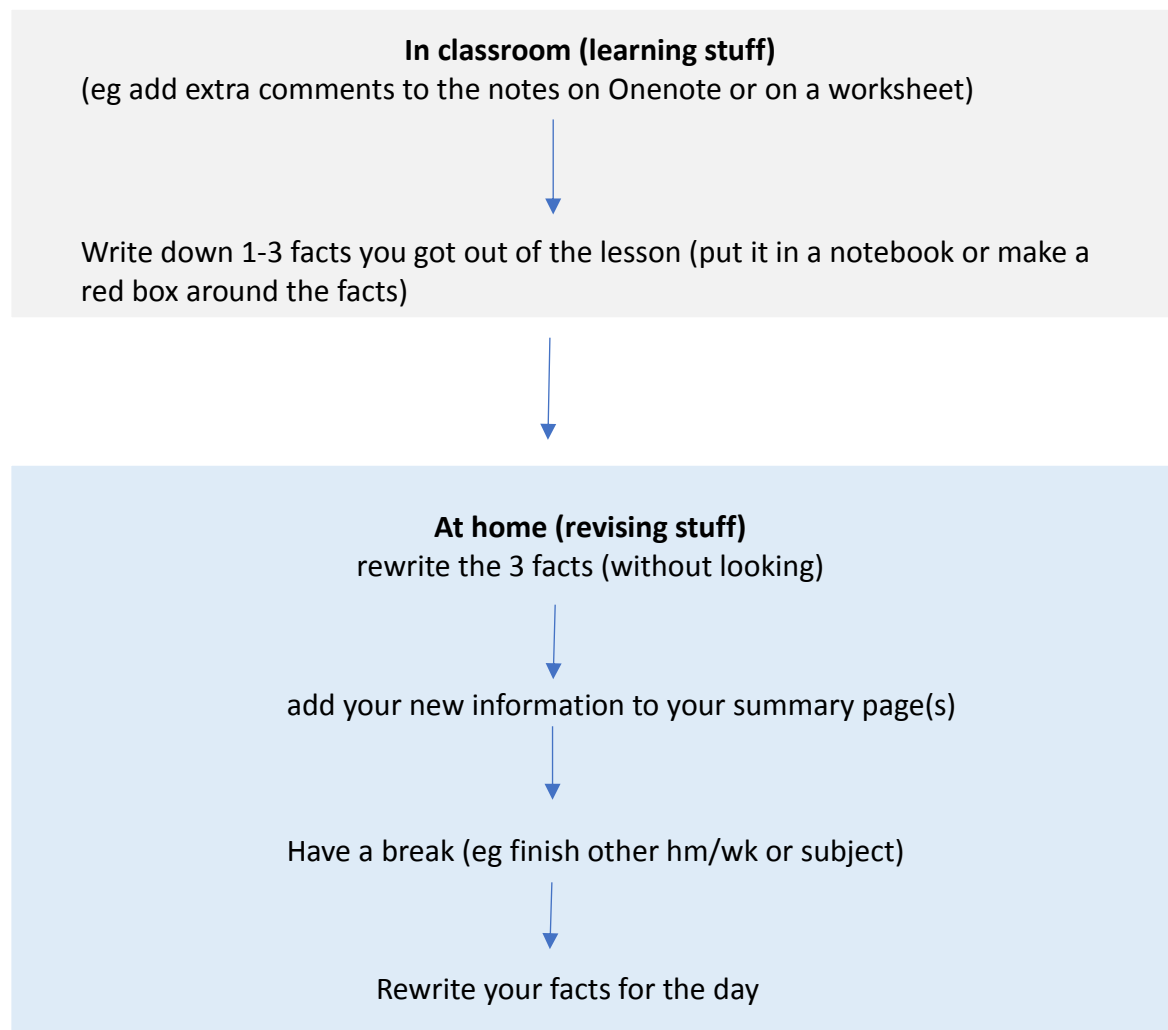
- “One page” summaries
- Graphic organisers (eg. diagrams and mind-maps)
- Memory aids (eg post-it notes)
- Flash cards (see i-pad)
- Summary of key questions (and the answers)
- Problem sheets to practise
- Writing-heavy subjects: tables of pros and cons or key facts; character summaries
- Past papers
 - CIE: <https://papacambridge.com/>
 - CIE: <https://pastpapers.co/cie/>
 - NCEA: <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/subjects/>

What can Parents / caregivers do?

- Be aware of what he is doing
- Offer to test him on a set of facts from a topic
- Offer to help with flash cards
- Ask to see his (dated) revision notes
- Offer to be a “set of ears” as he explains a concept (you might have his summary sheet)
- Support him and keep him calm



How to enrich what you learn in the classroom with your study program



The more you can summarise key ideas at school, the more useful your notes will be at home. Use a separate 1B5 book to write these down (few words) or capture things you always get wrong.

Your summary pages are for YOU. Do they help you remember stuff? Use colour, symbols, diagrams, short sentences that make it easy for YOU to remember.

Try not to write too much otherwise it will get boring and you will stop using this routine.

What does a summary page look like? – Here are some template examples

Name _____

Informational Prewriting Sheet

The template features a central circle with a scalloped border labeled "Topic". Six lines radiate from this circle to six rounded rectangular boxes, each labeled "Fact". The boxes are arranged in two columns of three. At the bottom of the page, there is a line of text: "If you have any more information you want to include in your report, write it on the back of this page." A small vertical copyright notice "© 2015 Teacher's Pay

Fact

Fact

Fact

Fact

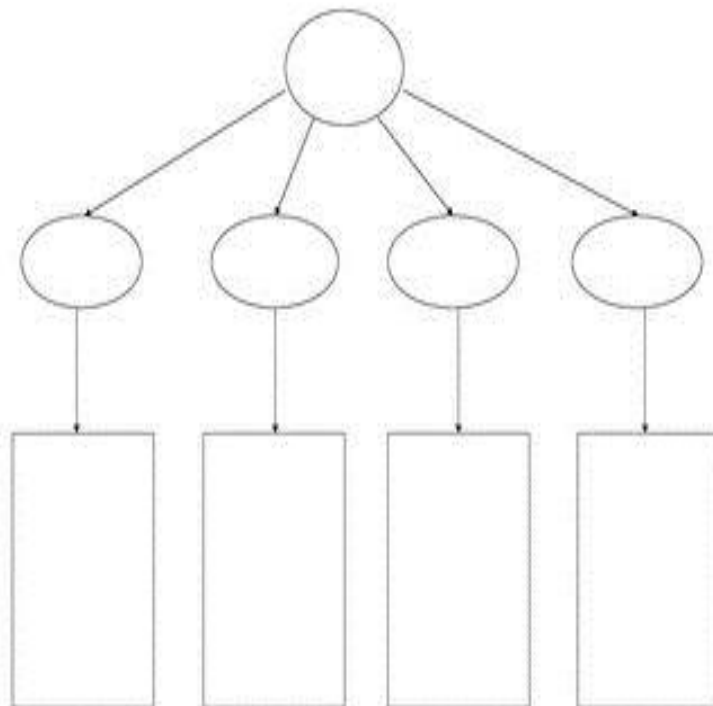
Fact

Fact

Topic

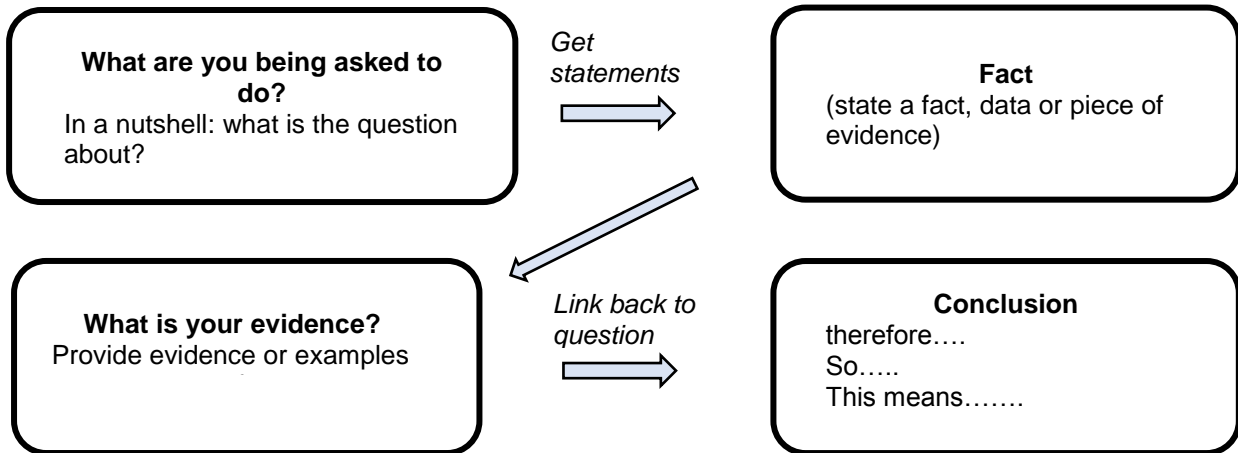
If you have any more information you want to include in your report, write it on the back of this page.

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An approach to subjects that require you to write essays

Hammer paragraphs were introduced in year 7 and 8. Other departments use similar approaches. Start by keeping it VERY simple (few words almost bullet points). As you get better you can build on your essay and practise using important joining words.



Name: _____

Hamburger Writing

Topic Sentence: _____

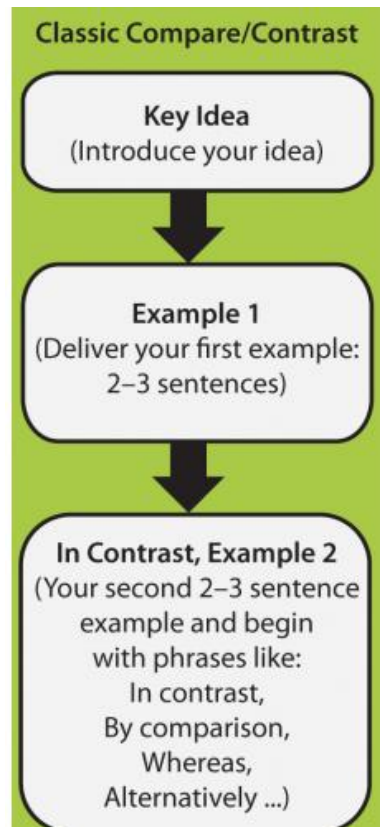
Detail #1: _____

Detail #2: _____

Detail #3: _____

Closing Sentence: _____

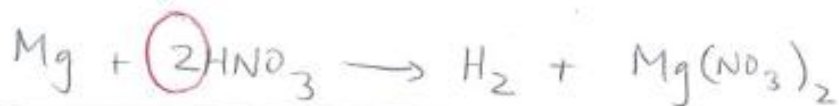
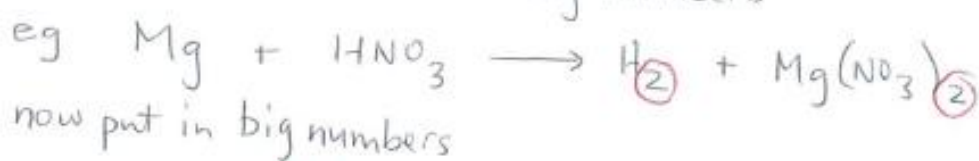
Super Teacher Worksheets - www.superteacherworksheets.com



An example of a summary sheet with key ideas (year 10 chemistry)

Mistake I keep making
(Important notes)

Balancing equations
check PT → - do small numbers 1st
what is the charge? ↓
then do big numbers



Group 1 = +1
group 2 = +2 etc.



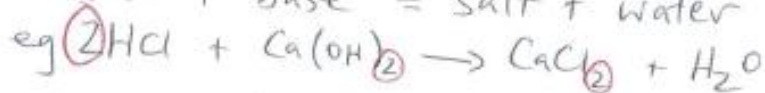
Acids = HNO_3 , H_2SO_4 , HCl

Ammonia is a base (NH_3)

Most of the gases are 2 atoms (H_2 N_2 O_2 F_2)

Other equations to note:

acid + base = salt + water

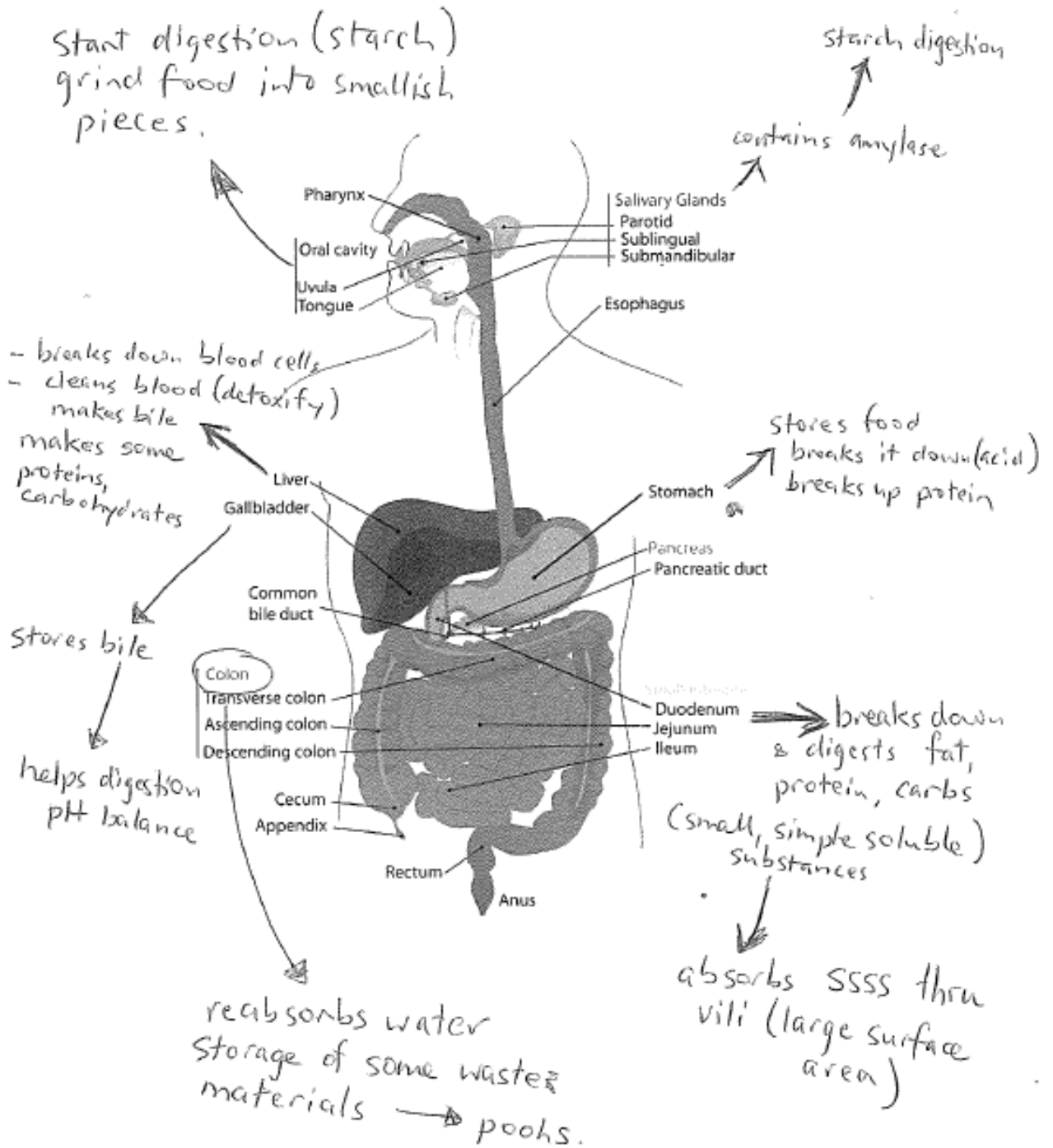


acid + carbonate salt → carbon dioxide + water + salt.



Building a min map based on a template

Abdomen – the digestive system



Regular tutorial and open classrooms

B13 (6 am – 8:30 am) – every morning and for any subject. Students often use it to finish off homework. Toast and cereals are generally provided.

Science: Thursday 3pm-4pm (B11)

Maths: Mondays 3pm – 4 pm (O13)

Maths: Wednesdays (O15)

English: generally at the end of big sections or before key exams