

Independent Learning Newsletter Tips

Secondary School Success

Every parent and teacher would like to see students achieving their personal academic best at school. Knowing how to work efficiently can help students navigate the mire of academic demands in secondary school in a stress-free way. Working through the units on www.studyskillshandbook.com.au throughout this year will help students build skills and learn techniques to become more effective learners. We encourage all students and parents to log into the site and browse the units to become familiar with the topics covered.

One of the recent handouts added to the site was for students starting secondary school (go to the More menu then Things to Print). However many of the lessons for students beginning high school are relevant for all secondary students. So here are the top five tips about making the most of your time at school this year and working efficiently at home.

1. **Independent Learning:** There are two types of work in secondary school. The compulsory work your teacher tells you to do, and independent learning that you are expected to do when you have no homework. You can print a handout on the Things to Print page that will give you examples of the types of things you are supposed to be doing for school when you have no homework.
2. **Work Smart:** If you want to still have a life, but get your schoolwork done (for most students this will be 1-2 hours per night) then you need to work smart. Keep your personal life and schoolwork separate. Don't do work in front of the TV, switch off your phone and Facebook. Work in half hour blocks and focus only on your schoolwork during that half hour block. If you are super busy with lots of activities then a great idea is to draw up a timetable for the week and allocate time for schoolwork over the week. You might like to visit these units on the site: Time Management Skills, Dealing with Distractions, Overcoming Procrastination.
3. **Be Organised and Plan:** Being organised makes your life easier! So have an organised space to work in, record homework in your diary, keep track of completed work and reschedule work not done. When you are told about a test or an assignment, plan the work out to be done over the available time. Make the most of your time in class, being organised and focused in the classroom means you will find it easier to complete your work and work on big things like assessments at home. Check out these units on the site: Home Study Environment, Organisation and Filing, Managing Workload, Using Classtime.
4. **Ask For Help Early:** If you don't understand something, ask for help. The sooner the better. If there isn't time in class see your teacher before or after class or during the break times. No-one expects you to do things on your own. One of the most important contributors to being successful academically is to ask for help often and early. See if your school offers extra support or has a homework help service. And don't forget family and friends, they might know more than you think! There is a unit on the site all about Asking for Help.

5. **Learn How To Study Properly:** If you still think that to study for a test you just read your book over and over, time to learn how smart people study! The main things to remember about study for a test are: Make study notes or summaries first (write down in point form what you need to learn), learn these notes not just by reading but by testing yourself on them and do as many different questions as you can as practise. You can learn more from these units: Summarising, Active Studying, Preparing for Exam Blocks, Test-Taking Techniques, Your Brain and Memory.

You may also like to check out all of the skills units and technology units.

So learn more this year about how to improve your results and be more efficient and effective with your schoolwork by going to the links section in your portal and opening the ELES handbook.

