

Helping my Child to Learn



A Guide for Year 8 Parents

Parents often ask us for advice on how they can best support their child with their learning. We have put together a simple set of study tip for both parents and pupils. Thanks to the staff who gave their time to contribute. Please let us know if you find it useful!

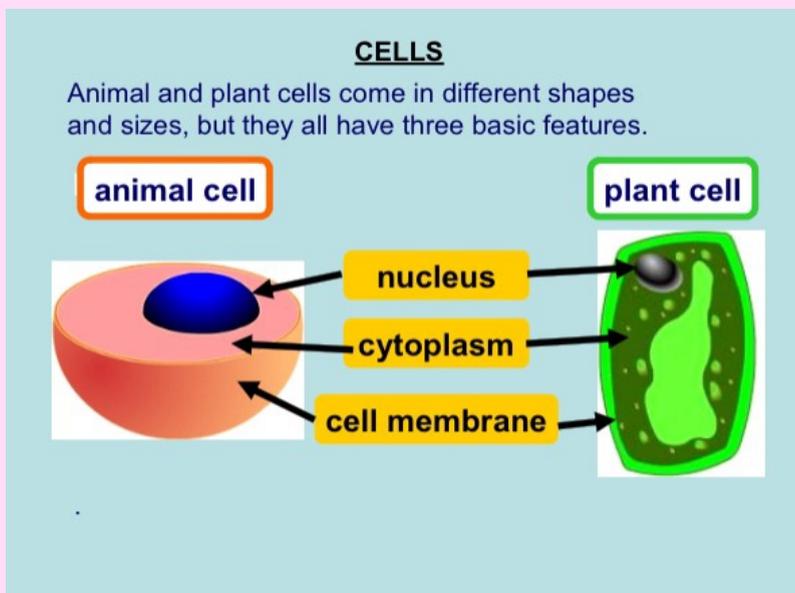
- Improving learning in Science Page 2
- Study tips for Languages Page 6
- Strategies for revision in Mathematics Page 8
- Strategies to improve Reading Page 10
- Strategies to improve Reading for Meaning Page 13
- Strategies to improve Spelling Page 15
- The role of the parent Page 17
- Tracking dates and reporting Page 20

Your child has had an experience of study skills during Personal Development lessons

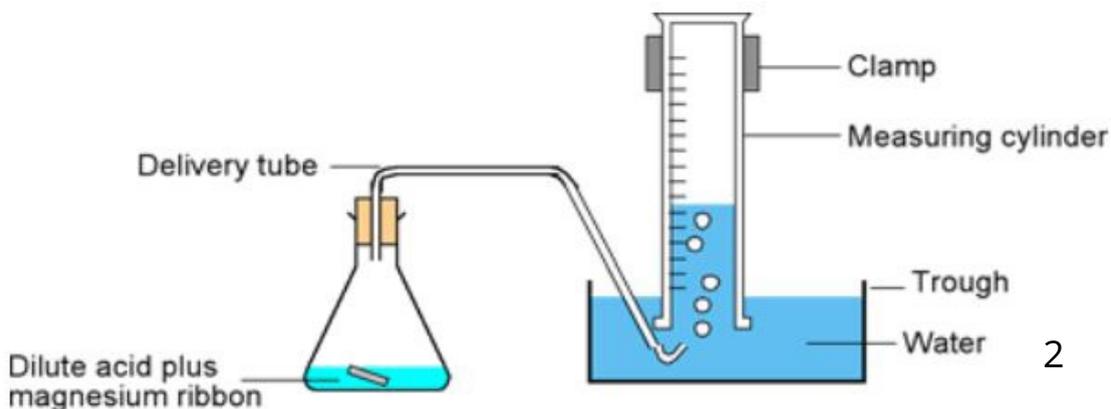
How can we improve pupil learning in Science?

In Science pupils have to learn and recall important diagrams, definitions and facts. For example:-

Year 8 pupils learn about the structure of cells. In a test pupils may well be asked to label a diagram such as shown below and so the correct spelling of keywords is important.



Pupils may be asked to draw pieces of apparatus as shown below and then recall these in tests and exams.



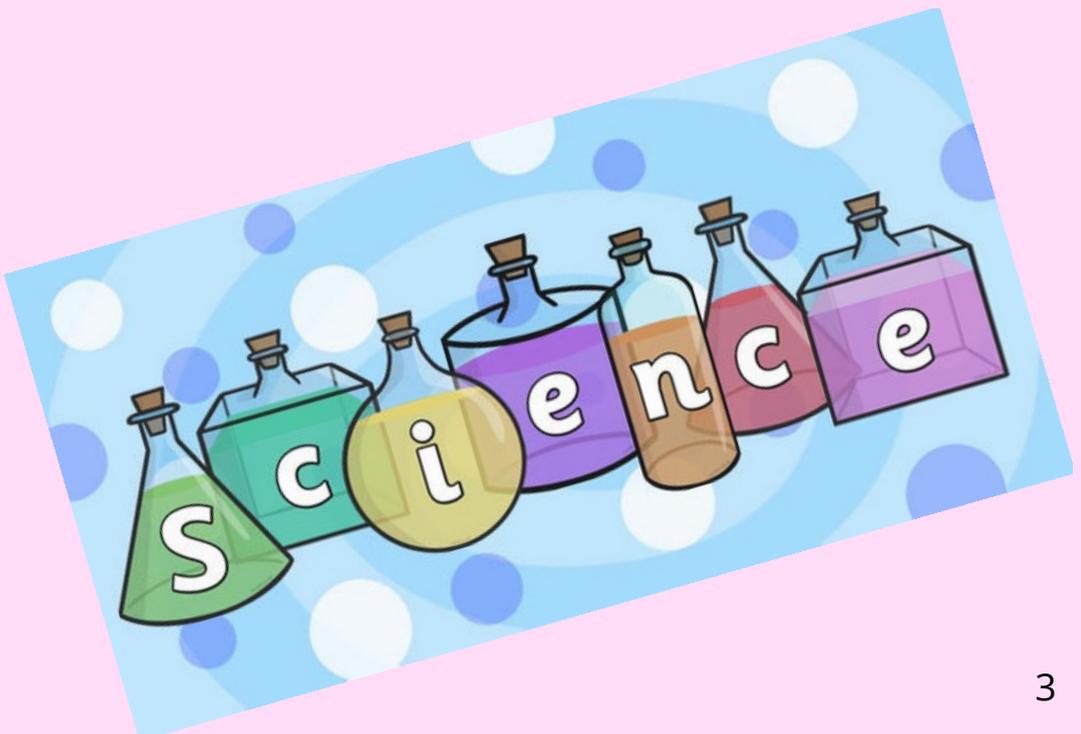
How can pupils study Science effectively?

Pupils demonstrate greater understanding and knowledge of work covered in class when they are involved in active learning.

How are pupils involved in active learning in the classroom?

During class we would encourage pupils to:-

- Highlight important points in their notes
- Get actively involved in the learning process e.g.:-
 - ...Answer questions
 - ...Carry out practical work
 - ...Summarise what has been learnt at the end of the lesson
- At the end of each topic the pupils are taught a new revision technique to help them become effective independent learners.



How can pupils be involved in active learning at home?

This is how Science teachers encourage pupils to study at home and you may find this useful when trying to support your child.

- **Repeat** the words or definitions out loud
- **Practise** labelling diagrams
- **Write out** key words or equations - remember correct spelling!
- **Use mnemonics** e.g.

Mammals

Reptiles

Fish

Amphibians

Birds

- Produce summary sheets of work covered e.g.

PROPERTIES OF METALS

- hard + strong
- Solids
- Shiny (when polished)
- good conductors of heat
- good conductors of electricity
- malleable + ductile
- dense

USES

metal

metal	USES
COPPER	A conductor of electricity / electric cables
iron + steel	Hard + strong USE for cars + bridges
aluminium	Conductor of heat + aeroplanes (light) make mtr cars + jewellery
Gold + Silver	malleable + ductile

FIZZES and BANGS

REACTION OF METAL WITH WATER.

Metal Observations

Metal	Observations
Calcium	- fizzes - sank - disappeared
Sodium	- fizzes on surface - formed globule - yellow orange flame - diss appeared
Potassium	- some as sodium only - lilac flame.

Burning Metals

They will also react with oxygen to form metal oxide

general reaction:
metal + oxygen → metal oxide

SALT NAMES DEPEND ON THE ACID !!

Hydrochloric acid → metal chloride
Sulphuric acid → metal sulphate
Nitric acid → metal nitrate

REACTIONS OF METALS WITH ACID

some metals won't react with water or steam but will react with acid

general reaction:
metal + acid → metal salt + hydrogen

MEALS WITH STEAM

mag. ribbon + steam → mag. ribbon + hydrogen

Bright white white powder left

flame of hydrogen

mag. ribbon

REVISION

Flannagh
New-some
9x

If we all work together in the classroom and at home, the pupils can enjoy studying and learning Science so that they can reach their full potential in all tests and examinations.

Such study skills and techniques are usually transferable to other subjects.

Study tips for Languages

- **Check vocabulary using the textbook** - Use the glossaries at the end of each unit to double check that you have copied your words down correctly in class.
- **Use different colours** - use 2 different colours, 1 for French and 1 for English. This makes it much easier to learn.
- **Label objects** - Use post-it's around your room or house when trying to learn different objects.
- **Postcards** - these are great for summarising topics or to use as revision cards. You could have all the masculine animals on one side and all the feminine on the other, for example.



- **Diagrams** - key word in the middle with different branches of other key words. For example:
vegetables.

- **Acronyms/Mnemonics** - For example:

MRS VAN DE TRAMP

to help remember the verbs which use être in the past tense.
This is useful in Y9.

- **Cover and test** - cover the French/English side of your vocab and try to memorise the other side.

- **Websites** - hundreds of websites with vocab building games
e.g. Languagesonline.org.uk & linguascope.com

- **Group words with accents** - isolate words with accents and learn them together.

- **Group m/f/pl words** - put all the masculine nouns together, all the feminine nouns together and all the plural nouns together on a postcard, for example.

- **Visual/Oral aids** - flashcards/pictures/sounds.

- **Reality** - get the objects out in front of you e.g. Fruit and vegetables.

- **Timer** - useful to time how long it takes you to learn a certain number of words/phrases.

Strategies for Revision in Mathematics

Many people believe you cannot revise in Mathematics. This is certainly not true and there are a variety of methods to help in revision.

Pupils should think about:

- consolidation of skills taught in class
- further practice in problem solving
- learning of facts and equations
- going over examples explained in class

One of the most important methods is to work through a set of mixed questions and generally this can be found at the end of each unit.



*Test yourself
after every topic*

In the Year 8 booklets there are many questions on each topic and pupils can practise these. Time can be spent solving selected problems in every exercise throughout each booklet. This will be far more beneficial than just reading information.

All pupils also have access to a website that the department subscribes to: www.MyMaths.co.uk. Here topics can be found with "lessons" to go over material and "online homeworks" where they can source practice material and check answers.

Other Internet resources can be used to find worked examples, practise solving problems and even answer a quiz online to test understanding in particular topics. Topics can be 'googled' but some useful websites include:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks3bitesize/maths/>

<http://www.gcse.com/maths/>

www.corbettmaths.com/contents

www.mrbartonmaths.com

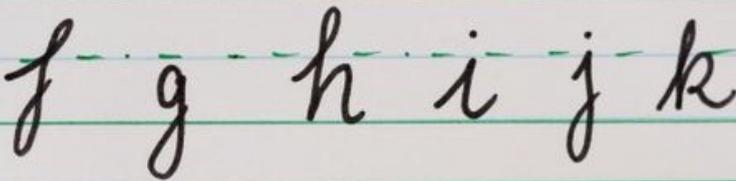
Some strategies to improve your child's reading

1. Encourage your child to **read widely**; texts that are appropriate for their age (use the Y8 Reading Guide distributed during Parents' evening, Library, book shops, online retailers, teachers, book swaps)
2. Encourage the use of new vocabulary in written pieces of work.
3. Encourage them to read for **different purposes**:
 - Ask them to **skim** a page of a novel and explain the '**gist**' of what happens
 - Ask them to **scan and locate exact** information e.g. In a textbook
 - Encourage closer reading by asking them questions such as: **what** happens? **Who** are the main characters? **How** do they feel? Can you relate to any of the situations?
4. **Highlight interesting articles in daily newspapers** and ask them questions about them: encourage active and questioning reading
5. 15 minutes everyday will make all the difference not just in English but right across all subjects

Top tips for written work

When your child completes a piece of written work they should ask themselves the following questions:

1. **Is my work set out properly?** Date, title, underlined (depends on each subject)
2. **Have I followed all the instructions?**
3. **Is my handwriting as neat as it possibly can be?** E.g, Formation of lower and upper case letters
4. **Have I used paragraphs?** (If appropriate)
5. **Have I checked my work for:** spelling, punctuation, grammar?



Use apps such as 'TextHelp Read&Write' available on the C2K network.

Individual Support for Spelling, Reading and General Literacy:



Please do not hesitate to
contact the School's
Literacy Coordinator Mrs
Farmer

In LGS library find magical fantasy, football frenzy, kid spies and crime also beautiful animal stories, horrible histories and weird sci-fi.

Come in, have a look and find a book, there is something for everyone.

Read with your child (It shouldn't stop in Year 7); Download the NI Libraries App

Reciprocal Teaching

What is reciprocal teaching? It is a dialogue between learner and teacher/parents in order to jointly work out the meaning of a text, composed of interactive techniques suitable for all learners, especially those who are capable of decoding but poor at comprehending.

How does it work? The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies which encourage and monitor understanding:

Predicting Clarifying Question generating Summarising 

1. Predicting

- When predicting, the child is anticipating what will come next, and the structure and content of the text
- Through discussion, prediction allows readers to confirm/reject their ideas
- Predicting encourages learners to 'think ahead'

2. Clarifying

- When clarifying, readers are aware of unfamiliar vocabulary; unfamiliar structure; new or difficult concepts; when they lose track of meaning
- After recognising the 'problem', they are then able to fix issues by re-reading, using the content of the passage
- Use a dictionary/thesaurus, atlas/encyclopaedia/road map etc.

3. Question Generating

This helps the learner explore the meaning of the text in depth:

- ask appropriate questions
- offer possible solutions
- find relevant information to answer questions
- monitor their own comprehension
- help other learners answer questions

4. Summarising

A basic summary of their understanding of the text requires the following:

- the learner needs to identify important information
- set the information in context

How do you use this strategy?

You may use it with any kind of text, and in any subject. Simply break the text into 'chunks' and work your way through each one. Eventually, the pupil should be able to use this method naturally and independently.

Make sure your child reads through the entire text again - you (and they) should notice a marked improvement in their level of understanding!

Strategies to Improve Spelling

What makes a good speller?

- * having a good auditory and visual memory
- * knowing a range of strategies to use
- * taking risks
- * having a bank of words, automatically known
- * having a list of common spelling mistakes

Some useful strategies to improve your child's spelling:

Phonemic segmentation (breaking the letter sounds down)

- D-I-A-R-Y would distinguish it from dairy

Syllabification

- nec-ess-ary

Sounding out

- Wed-nes-day

Extending using affixes - prefixes and suffixes

- Friend: friendly, unfriendly, friendliest, befriended, friendship

Words within words

- There's **rat** in separate
- **Get** and **table** in vegetable

Mnemonics

- Big elephants can always use some eggs - because
- 1 collar, 2 sleeves - necessary

Group words with the same endings

- *ous*: dangerous, poisonous
- *eous*: courageous, advantageous
- *ent*: independent

General Strategies

- look, cover, say, write, check
- Highlight the difficult part of the word
- use a dictionary or a thesaurus
- having a personal spelling list
- proof read work before handing in

Look out for words that sound the same

- accept/except
- loose/lose
- who's/whose
- affect/effect

Use websites such as Spellzone or BBC Bitesize

Normally Study Club is open after school Mon-Thurs when your child can work on homework in a calm, controlled environment supervised by teaching staff. *This is open to everyone - no invitation necessary!*
Hopefully we can reopen before long!

What is the role of a parent?

You are your child's best teacher! School, educational games, television and a shelf full of books all can't accomplish what *you* can in the education of your child.

Parental support is eight times more important in deterring a child's academic success than other factors.

The practical things you can do...

Ensuring good attendance:

- make sure your child attends school everyday. Try to make medical appointments for out of school hours.
- only allow your child to stay at home if he/she is genuinely ill and unable to go out.

Maintaining home/school contact:

- attend all Parent/Teacher meetings and/or information evening as these will give you a clearer insight into the demands of the courses your child is following and can often give excellent advice on how you can help as a parent.
- if your child is experiencing difficulties in school and is unable or unwilling to resolve these then you should contact the subject teacher or form teacher as early as possible and seek to resolve the problem
- don't forget to use the homework diary

Overseeing homework

- Ensure that your child has an appropriate area to study in at home. This should be a quiet area with no distractions. Have pens, pencils, paper, calculator etc available.
- Remove distractions. If necessary restrict use of their phone and other devices. Be aware of your child's social media activity.
- Help your child manage the workload. Keep an eye on his/her progress and look for possible solutions when things are not going to plan. Reward your child when significant progress has been made.

Encouraging things you can do

- Expose your child to a wide variety of experiences including music, plays, sports, museums, travel, reading, dance, games, food, puzzles, ethnical activities, etc. One never knows how such exposure may influence future life choices.
- Talk with your child about the things you read and hear, especially the things you find interesting.
 - Ask your children how they feel about various issues (current events, relationships, values). Allow them to have opinions without passing judgment. Ask your children to help you understand why they feel the way they do.
- If you demonstrate excitement about learning and are open to your children pursuing their own interest areas, it will be hard for them to resist the opportunities.

- Explain to your child why he or she is learning, and how it will be worthwhile.
- Leave interesting books and materials lying around for your child to explore.
- Keep it fun....not stressful.
- Motivate them!

And When Things Go Wrong . . .

If your child achieves a low grade, try not to scream and yell, but instead support them in showing them what they did wrong and help them understand how to improve the next time.

Have an agreed and acceptable balance between school work and social life – try to stick to it whilst showing some flexibility if a ‘one off’, ‘special event’ comes up. Agree that the time can be made up at the weekend or following week.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child’s Form Teacher or Miss Doherty (Head of Year 8), should you have any concerns or would like further guidance or support.

And finally...

GOOD LUCK!



Tracking and Reporting

Tracking Dates

There are three major tracking deadlines for Year 8 pupils this year:

Tracking 1: Friday 4th December

Tracking 2: Friday 5th March

Tracking 3 (Summer Exam): Week beginning 24th May

*** ***Please Note** that these deadlines are for teachers to have completed their tests and recorded their marks. Tests may be set at any time before these deadlines.****

Reporting and Support

Shortly after tracking deadlines one and two, parents will receive a brief tracking summary. This will give the mark and grade for each subject, as well as the pupil's minimum expected attainment grade (MAG).

At the end of the summer term, after the summer exams, parents will receive a full report with all of the above information as well as comments from each subject teacher and your child's form teacher.

Should your child's results indicate that he/she is performing well below his/her Minimum Attainment Grade in a number of subjects, then you will be contacted and appropriate support strategies will be put in place.