



**LORETO COLLEGE
FOXROCK**

JUNIOR CYCLE
STUDY SKILLS BOOKLET

STUDY SKILLS WEEK

SEPTEMBER 2021



Dear Students,

Based on research done in the school, the information we gathered informed us that students wanted more subject specific study tips from their own teachers. We would like to thank all participating students for their input. This body of work was carried out by members of the Whole School Guidance Team.

Each subject department was asked to suggest study tips for their subject areas. This included input from students who were asked for their advice also. The Guidance Department collated the submissions into separate junior and senior study tips booklets. A big thank you to all subject departments for their contributions at a very busy time of year.

This year Study Skills Week is being held on the week beginning Monday September 6 and we hope that you will download or print out and familiarise yourself with this resource during the week and use this booklet throughout the year whenever you need to study. During Study Skills Week your teachers will discuss their study tips and techniques in classes, your tutors will spend the week going through material to help you to get organised and plan for study and your Year Head will also discuss their study advice at their weekly meeting with you.

Discovering, establishing and further developing your study skills will benefit you far into the future. Knowing how best you can study yourself, how to go about planning, organising and carrying out an effective study plan and being able to reflect on your learning will contribute positively to your well-being and self-esteem. Being more effective at studying and making the most of your time, studying smarter rather than harder, will allow you to better balance your need to study and fulfil your academic potential with your need for exercise, sleep, extracurricular activities, downtime, time with family and friends and fun!

Please make the most of Study Skills Week to focus on developing your own learning and study strategies.

The Guidance Department



Compulsory Subjects:

English

General Advice: Make English a part of your everyday life!



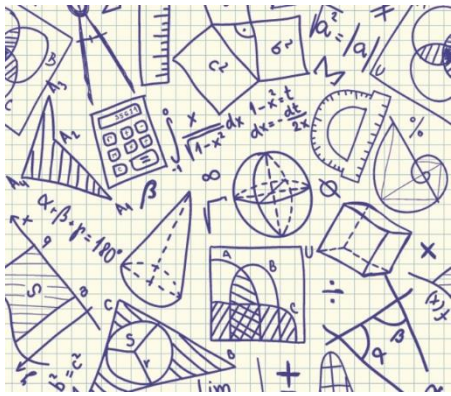
- Keep a personal spelling hit list, check out the commonly misspelled words section in your school journal.
- Be inquisitive! Be curious about the world around you so that you will know what is happening.
- Ask questions. Be open to current affairs.
- Listen to audiobooks and podcasts and watch Ted Talks for points and ideas for writing extended pieces and for CBA1.
- To learn quotes from your poems, Shakespearean play or novel, record yourself on your phone and listen on repeat, test yourself by writing them out.

READ

- Join your local library, use the school library as much as possible.
- Read for fun, read for pleasure, read widely.
- Challenge yourself to discover new authors.

WRITE

- Practice writing daily by editing, proofreading or writing in a diary. Reading good examples of writing counts too!
- First drafts don't have to be perfect, they just have to be written. Learning to draft and redraft is essential for improving in English. You need to start to reflect on the difference you notice between your first and second and even third drafts! Notice your errors or bad habits and correct them for next time.
- Can you make your sentences better? Sharper? Are there too many words? Am I explaining my point enough? Am I repeating myself?



Maths

Problem solving strategies

- Trial and improvement
- Draw a diagram
- Look for a pattern
- Act it out
- Draw a table
- Simplify the problem
- Use an equation
- Work backwards
- Eliminate possibilities

General advice

- Practice basic numeracy.
- Make colourful mind maps to help with your study, by breaking up a chapter into different sections. Include examples in each section.
- Use flash cards to remember key terms or definitions. This is particularly useful in geometry.
- Learn content of a topic before attempting questions on it.
- Test yourself/practice using exam paper questions on the topic once revised. There are also revision questions available at the end of each chapter in your textbook for non-exam years.
- Timing is key in 3rd year. Work out how much time you have to spend on each section of the paper. When writing answers, even for homework try to adhere to this timing.
- Use resources like Desmos, Mathsopenref, Geogebra, Numeracy Ninja, YouTube or Khan Academy to find related video content or information on mathematical topics. This is especially important if you are a visual or audio learner.

Roinn na Gaeilge

- 5 minutes revision of new vocabulary every night
- 5 minutes review of one small aspect of grammar every night e.g.

An Chéad Réimniú san aimsir chaite

- While in class, make note of new vocabulary & grammar points and revise for homework.
- Rewrite corrected work and incorporate feedback from teacher into your new draft.
- With every written exercise, ensure time is allocated to reading over your work. The reading over of your work is as crucial as what you've written.
- Watch ten minutes of TG4 live or online on a regular basis.



Science

- Spend five minutes every night reading over the text from that days' class.
- Read over any notes taken and handouts given.
- Put handouts and notes into your science folder/copy.
- Only then do any written or learning homework.



When approaching a test:

1. Learn the definitions of the **keywords**: (Key words highlighted in yellow) Write on a page/Make flip cards/chant/walk .
2. Ensure all the **diagrams** make sense and learn the names of the different parts of the diagrams and their functions: use markers/colour key for labels/labels to add on/no labels/labels.
3. Ensure any **formulae** make sense and can be applied.
4. Read the **success criteria handout** and highlight the most important parts (the most likely to be asked in an exam) in the textbook/notes/handouts).

Geography

General Advice:

- In physical geography, practice drawing & labelling **diagrams**.
- Make colourful **mind maps** to help with your study, use only key terms.
Include examples also.
- Always test yourself/practice using **exam paper questions** on the topic once revised. These questions are also available at the end of your chapter.
- Use **flash cards** to help with remembering key words and definitions.
- It is important to **learn your notes** every night, do a little often and well. Geography is a large course!
- **Watch the news**, stay up to date with what's happening in the world around you.
- In 3rd year, get familiar with how the state paper is graded and know just how much information is required in an answer (your teacher will help with this).



History



- Make a note of **key terms** in class and review each time you do your History homework. Test yourself on them by writing out a sentence explaining each one.
- Make flashcards/placemats of each topic and write key concepts on this card. Review at start of class every day and at homework time.
- Make a list of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of historical sources. Have it open each time you work with sources in class or for homework.
- Look through the pictures and maps in your book and see if you can explain them before reading the text.
- Make notes on a topic without writing any words. See if you can do it in picture form.
- Read about the topic online and watch history documentaries.

Religious Education



- Your **key concepts** are very important. Ensure you are able to explain each in your own words. Perhaps explain them to someone else to check you really do understand them.
- At the beginning of each new section, read the **self-assessment sheet**. This has the success criteria for each section in Religion. When you get to the end of the section, review the self-assessment sheet and see if you need to go over any part.
- When you are revising in Religion, do not start by reading the textbook. Begin with your **section checklist**, identify what you need to re-learn and only then go to your book and target that area.
- Don't forget your Religion teacher is always there to help you, remember to ask questions in class.

TIP:

When studying RE, if you don't understand something, write your question on a **Post-it**. Leave the post-it in your textbook and this will remind you to ask your teacher about this issue in your next RE class.

Studying the Optional Subjects:

Art

- Practice.
- In class you will be taught techniques and skills about how to draw. The most effective way to improve your skills is to practice outside of class time in your visual art sketchbook.
- Always draw from primary sources. These are mandatory in the Junior Cycle Art Specification.
- Primary sources are actual objects that you can observe or photographs that you have taken yourself.
- Secondhand images from the internet are not acceptable.



Business

- Learn **key terms/words** – make a key terms section in back of copy.
- Write out a **definition** of any terms you don't understand, in your own words.
- Use of mind maps to **summarise a chapter** - build a bank for Christmas/Summer exams.
- When working on the Accounting section of the course, practice is key. Your accuracy and speed will improve with plenty of practice of exam style questions.



French

Remember the **6 tips** on the '*How to Learn French*' poster in your classroom:

- Have fun with the language
- Leave your comfort zone
- Listen
- Speak
- Read
- Be curious



Improving vocabulary skills:

- Take 5 or 10 mins every night to look back over your vocabulary notebook. Test yourself or ask someone to test you.
- Add to your vocab notebook yourself whenever you find a new word/phrase – don't limit it to class
- Revise your vocab by creating your own quizzes on apps like Kahoot or Quizlet

- Create mind maps of vocabulary by theme
- Download the apps Wordreference or Reverso so you can easily look up words
- Use online tools and apps like Duolingo, Memrise and Linguascope (user name and password available from your teacher)
- Read magazines or newspaper articles online or subscribe to them on Twitter
- Listen to French as much as you can by:
 - Watching French movies or trailers (with or without subtitles)
 - Listen to French music – Google the lyrics and read while you listen or use the website <https://lyricstraining.com/fr/> to fill in the blanks while you listen to a song
- Try to read from a novel or short stories in French from the school library
- Follow a famous French person on Instagram or Twitter
- Read the French version of the instructions that come with products you buy

Improving listening skills:

- Go back over listening exercises done in class and try to write down as much information as you hear
- Watch French movies or trailers (with or without subtitles)
- Listen to French music
- Listen to French radio stations online (you could download an app to your phone)
- Watch/listen to the news in French online
- Use Educateplus.ie to download examinations

Improving speaking skills (the only thing that works is practice):

- Find a friend to speak French with – pick a day/time in the week when you're only going to use French!
- Facetime/Whatsapp video call a friend/relative who speaks French
- Sing your favourite French songs
- Record yourself on your phone and listen back to hear how you could improve ·Type what you want to say into a text-to-speech website such as www.ttsreader.com to help with pronunciation and intonation

To improve writing skills:

- Send an email/message to a friend or relative who speaks French

- Rewrite corrected homework/classwork exercises without the mistakes.

To improve grammar:

- Use online sites such as languagesonline.org.uk to practice
- Put verbs on display in your room/locker or anywhere you can see them and check them everyday
- Take a piece of text and see if you can rewrite it in a different tense (eg Pr sent to Futur)
- Take a piece of text and see if you can rewrite in from a different person’s point of view (“Elle” instead of “Je”)
- Take a piece of text and circle specific grammar points (eg all the present tense verbs)
- Read as much as possible
- Get a friend to read out a passage in French and see if you can write it down (this will help your grammar and your listening – and your friend will improve their spoken language!)

Studying for State exams:

- Use examinations.ie and marking schemes to practice exam questions
- Download aural exams and listen to them while reading the script (found on Educateplus.ie and examit.ie)
- Set up a conversation group with your friends and arrange to meet up regularly



Home Economics

- Organisational skills – It is really important to keep all resources (books, notes, cooking and sewing materials) neat and tidy.
- Be familiar with **key terms** in Junior HE books
- When you are revising in HE do not start by reading the textbook. Begin with the **learning checklist** in your workbook. Identify what you need to re-learn and only then go to your book and target that area.
- Use your memory tools, e.g. mnemonics, mind maps, flash cards etc.
- Make clear points when answering questions. Use bullet points/numbering in your answers. Paragraphs are not used in HE.

- Cooking skills are highly important. Remember to **practice** as much as possible at home.
 - *In relation to the cooking skills assessment, it is worth 50% of the grade. It is therefore essential that students are practising cooking skills on a weekly basis at home to consolidate skills learned in class.*

Craft	Cooking
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice all stitches before completing them on final product 2. Keep materials all in one place and label with your name 3. Evaluate/Reflect as you sew 4. Check success criteria 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice both sweet and savoury dishes at home 2. Practice all skills including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knife skills • Timing • Temperature control • Clean up • Evaluation of work

Spanish

Improving vocabulary skills:

- Take 5 or 10 mins every night to look back over your vocabulary notebook. Test yourself or ask someone to test you.
- Add to your vocab notebook yourself whenever you find a new word/phrase – don't limit it to class
- Revise your vocab by creating your own quizzes on apps like Kahoot or Quizlet
- Create mind maps of vocabulary by theme
- Download the apps Wordreference or Reverso so you can easily look up words
- Use online tools and apps like Duolingo, Memrise and Linguascope (username and password available from your teacher)
- Read magazines or newspaper articles online or subscribe to them on Twitter
- Listen to Spanish as much as you can by:
 - Watching Spanish movies or trailers (with or without subtitles)
 - Listening to Spanish music – Google the lyrics and read while you listen
- Try to read from a novel or short stories in Spanish from the school library
- Follow a famous Spanish or Latino person on Instagram or Twitter
- Read the Spanish version of the instructions that come with products you buy



Improving listening skills:

- Go back over listening exercises done in class and try to write down as much information as you hear
- Watch Spanish movies or trailers (with or without subtitles)
- Listen to Spanish music
- Listen to Spanish radio stations online (you could download an app to your phone)
- Watch/listen to the news in Spanish online
- Use Educateplus.ie to download examinations

Improving speaking skills (the only thing that works is practice):

- Find a friend to speak Spanish with – pick a day/time in the week when you're only going to use Spanish
- Facetime/Whatsapp video call a friend/relative who speaks Spanish
- Sing your favourite Spanish songs
- Record yourself on your phone and listen back to hear how you could improve
- Type what you want to say into a text-to-speech website such as www.ttsreader.com in order to help with pronunciation and intonation

To improve writing skills:

- Send an email/message to a friend or relative who speaks Spanish
- Rewrite corrected homework/classwork exercises without the mistakes.

To improve grammar:

- Use online sites such as languagesonline.org.uk to practice
- Put verbs on display in your room/locker or anywhere you can see them and check them everyday
- Take a piece of text and see if you can rewrite it in a different tense (eg Present to Future)
- Take a piece of text and see if you can rewrite it from a different person's point of view ("Yo" instead of "nosotros")
- Take a piece of text and circle specific grammar points (eg all the present tense verbs)
- Read as much as possible
- Get a friend to read out a passage in Spanish and see if you can write it down (this will help your grammar and your listening – and your friend will improve their spoken language!)

Studying for State exams:

- Use examinations.ie and marking schemes to practice exam questions
- Download aural exams and listen to them while reading the script (found on Educateplus.ie and e-xamit.ie)
- Set up a conversation group with your friends and arrange to meet up regularly

Take a look at the 'How to learn Spanish' posters in your classroom and remember the 6 tips:

- Have fun with the language
- Leave your comfort zone
- Listen
- Speak
- Read
- Be curious



Music

Practical (performance exam):

- Set aside practice sessions during the week where you will focus on preparing your practical pieces for your performance exam. Practicing regularly is very beneficial, even if they are short practice sessions at a time (hopefully you will look forward to working on your pieces on your chosen instrument!)
- Invite a friend to hear you perform your piece in full to help develop your confidence in performing.
- Take part in school performance events where possible – this is great performance practice!

Listening Element:

- When you are listening to music whether it's on the radio, or on Spotify/youtube; ask yourself the following questions:
 - What instruments are present?
 - What is the tempo of the piece?
 - What is the tonality of the piece?
 - Can you describe the texture?
 - What is the style of the piece? Explain your answer.
 - Who is performing the piece?
 - What dynamics are used throughout the piece?
- YouTube is an excellent resource for revising instruments of the orchestra (Woodwind/Strings/Brass/Percussion) and Traditional Irish instruments.
- Try to attend a variety of performances throughout the year where you are listening to live music. Venues may include the NCH, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, 3arena, Olympia Theatre etc.

Composing Element:

- Use solfa when you are composing for the junior cycle. Perform your compositions on your chosen instrument so that you can hear what your composition sounds like.
- Ask a friend to perform your composition if you are unable to. Record this composition and use it as a tool for developing your compositional skills in the future.

Some general advice on getting organised:

- You should study for your age plus 10 minutes at a time. (Average attention span)
- Break down all of your subjects into the 6 topics you feel you need to do most urgently that can be realistically covered in 25 minutes approx. Some chapters/topics may need to be broken into 2/3 separate sessions.
- Start with:
 1. Any topics/chapters you were absent for.
 2. Anything you are not sure of.
 3. Any questions you were unsure of/got incorrect in a class test/summer test.
 4. Anything the teacher suggests would be important to study!

- Populate your study plan for the week with the topics you have chosen as your priority, as well as homework and study for what you are currently doing in class that week. You need to try to balance out the demands of homework and study.

- Always begin your study session with a subject/topic you don't like and are avoiding, then follow with your favourite subject and continue to fill in your study slots in this way. You need to fool your brain with novelty and variety to stay focused.

- Tick off topics as you get through them. When you study your top/worst 6 topics in each subject, begin the process all over again. If you find a topic particularly difficult you can repeat it. In this way you should start to feel like you are getting somewhere with your work. This will make sitting down the next time to study a little easier if you feel you are making progress!

- Once you complete a study session you need to reward yourself, get imaginative about how to do this, it should not always be the same!
 - Go for a walk with a friend/your mum or dad/the dog
 - Take part in your favourite hobby or activity
 - Ring or meet or message a friend to catch up

- Make nice plans for the weekend with family or friends
- Take some exercise (even just a quick walk!)
- Spend some time with family
- Spend time on social media (not too much!)
- Watch your favourite tv show
- Listen to music/podcasts
- Have a cup of tea and some chocolate!
- **Try to do something active after a study session, your body and mind both need the exercise!**

-Don't be disheartened if (and when) your plan doesn't always work out. Reflect on what worked and what didn't and figure out why. Decide what you need to do differently to make it work next time. Maybe you were too ambitious and need to be realistic about what you can get done in the time available?

-This is a learning process, a marathon rather than a sprint, and every little bit of work you get done is way better than not doing anything at all. Keep going and ask for help if you need it. Start with advice from your subject teacher if you are having a difficulty with their subject, then ask a friend who is good at the subject or an older sibling or parent who studies/studied this subject and you can always ask your guidance counsellor if you are still stuck.

Advice on individual subjects:

Maths:

To study maths you need to read the examples in the book, look back to find out how you did them in your copy, practice some revision questions, check your answers at the back of the book. To revise maths, you must do maths!

Science/business/history/geography/religion:

To study these subjects, you can break the chapters down into key words, definitions, examples, diagrams, case studies, topics, accounts (eg; budget), diagrams, key terms.

*Check over anything your teacher has given you notes on.

*Check over anything your teacher has asked you to underline/highlight in your book.

*Check over any end of chapter tests you have done. Do any corrections and look over what you used to know.

*At the end of most chapters in your textbooks for these subjects there are summaries of key ideas, and some sample exam questions and answers. These are useful to guide your study.

Languages:

You should know the verbs you have studied (I am and I have for example) and the necessary endings for past/present/future tenses (whichever you have focused on in class).

*Know your numbers, days of the week, months of the year.

*Know your vocabulary from the topics you have covered: For example: myself, school, family, hobbies, describing yourself, greetings, where you live, what you like...

*Sit down and learn these vocab/verbs off by heart!! Write it out, chant it, walk around, and say it to yourself over and over.

English:

-For studied material in English (novels/poetry/drama) you need to know your main themes and ideas, main characters' traits, and motivation as well as the central emotions and feelings of the texts with quotes to support your points.

-Then you need to know the shape your answers need to take; how to introduce and conclude your answers, how many points you need to make, how many paragraphs. You need to follow a structure such as: Point Quote Explain (Refer back to question) that your teacher will have practiced with you.

-For composition questions such as stories, essays, or speeches you need to collect ideas, plan out sample composition titles and come up with points. You should practice putting them in a logical order and thinking of ways to prove/support your points or ideas or develop the plot of your story.

Exam Year Students:

-Exam year students need to study past exam papers along with the marking schemes to ensure that their study is really focused and practical. **You should never be trying to learn off the whole textbook!**

-Questions are often repeated and being very familiar with the layout of your exams will be hugely beneficial for your confidence and time management.

-See www.examinations.ie