

Daily planner and time log activity sheet

Day

Date

Priorities (in order)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

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- 8
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- 10

Study plan

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Time log

Time	Activity	Amount
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True goals and how to achieve them

For most of you using this workbook, your goal will be to pass the HSC well enough to get into the course of your choice. Your goals may also include achieving a certain mark in a certain subject, or even being in the top 1% in the state.

However, while it is important to aim as high as possible, you must also be realistic. If you aim too high, you may find the workload overwhelming and feel so stressed out that you 'freak out' two weeks into Term 1, or even quit.

The first step in setting achievable goals is to have a full and frank discussion with your parents, your career teacher and your subject teachers. You need to find out:

- 1 what you want to achieve, regardless of parental and school expectations or peer pressure. Your parents may want you to follow in their footsteps and become
 - a doctor
 - a lawyer
 - a corporate chief

while you want to become

- a photographer
- an acupuncturist
- an engineer.

It may not be easy to persuade your parents to accept your career choice, but you will feel less pressured and frustrated if you're able to discuss, without too much recrimination, what it is you want to achieve.

- 2 Having established this, or a reasonable compromise, discuss with your careers teacher
 - the subjects you need to take
 - the mark you need to achieve
 - the expected workload.
- 3 Then write down your goals:
 - Short-term
 - Medium-term
 - Long-term.

In the case of the HSC, this probably means

- Short-term—Term 1
- Medium-term—Term 1 & HSC Trials
- Long-term—HSC Exams & tertiary entrance/job

- 4 Write them down **now!** Use a pencil. Use the worksheets on pages 26–27.

Checklist

Tick

- 1 Discuss your goals with parents and teachers.
- 2 Aim high but be realistic.
- 3 Make sure you are taking the correct subjects to get into the course of your choice.
- 4 Write your goals down!



Short-term goals chart

How to use goal setting

1 Note whether short-term (1–4 weeks), medium-term (mid-year) or long-term goal (HSC, career training).

2 Set a deadline.

3 Be as specific as possible. While *improve note-taking* and *improve fitness* are worthwhile goals, *score in top 5* is much more concrete. Then it's easier to assess how much you've achieved.

4 Once you've decided on the steps towards your goals, you need to **factor them into your study plan**. In goal 1 step 3, it might have been better to note watch ACA Tues. & Thurs.

1 _____ Goal

Subject/Area	Deadline	Steps towards goal	Achieved?/Assessment
1 Improve my note-taking skills	28/2/2015 2	1 Re-read Survival Guide page 30	OK but need a book about this!
		2 Apply for study skills course (ask Ms B which is good)	Attended Nth Sydney TAFE 13/2/2015 5 excellent!
		3 Practise 2 x 15 min per week 4	ACA sucks!
		(Notes from A Current Affair: compare with Marlee)	Tried 4 Corners – good practice
2 Score in top 5 of class in Unit 2 Eng Ass 1 *	12/3/2015 2	1 Ask more questions in class	Ms B says much improved every class *Mr Stoya stunned!
		2 Revise essay writing technique (Mon nights)	Had to do 2 & 3 together 5
		3 Try old exam question (Tues 4:30–5:15)	Practice imp't not just theory CAME 6th! Yay! 5
3 Improve fitness	Good Friday 2	1 Walk to school twice a week (Mon & Thurs)	Now 4 times
		2 Eat 1 piece of fruit per day/ only 1 Big Mac per week	Borderline pass FAILED
		3 Five min floor exercises every 1 hr study!	Fell asleep
		4 Ask Mum for gym membership for b'day	Mum said I don't need it & she can't afford it

5 It's important to assess how you went. In this case Jason came close to achieving most of his goals. If you don't manage this, consider alternative strategies. Also consider whether you may have set goals you couldn't possibly achieve in the time available. In other words, be realistic.

Follow through:

- 1 There is another blank chart for you to make multiple copies of on page 26.
- 2 For a specific action, e.g. *Do old exam question*, transfer this to your diary study plan.
- 3 Assess your goals. If you haven't achieved one, but you feel it's realistic, transfer it to next week/month.
- 4 Use the *Comprehensive goals sheet and score chart* on page 27 to note down goal marks and scores next to what you actually achieved.

Short-term goals chart

Goal _____			
Subject/Area	Deadline	Steps towards goal	Achieved?/Assessment

Comprehensive goals sheet and score chart

Subject	Assign 1		Assign 2		Assign 3		Assign 4		Term 1		Term 2		Term 3/Trials—Finals				
	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	Goal	Actual	HSC mark

Study skills

The good news is that you have already acquired many study skills throughout your school years. You have learnt to read, to write, to do homework, to take notes, to listen and to discuss. This chapter is about fine-tuning your study skills so that you can do your best in the sometimes dark and difficult days leading up to the exams.

A useful way of approaching study skills is to **break them down into three major categories**.

- 1 School
- 2 Home
- 3 Organisation

School includes the use of the following skills.

- Listening
- Note-taking
- Discussing
- Questioning your teachers
- Use of the library and other resources

■ Listening

Listening can sometimes be the hardest skill of all to learn and to refine. Think about it. When your teacher is yelling at you, how often do you actually listen? Most of the time your brain has gone off duty while your mouth is saying 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know'. How often, when you're bored in class, have you drifted off into a daydream, only to come back to consciousness and realise that you haven't heard a thing?

Solution?

Listen consciously and actively to everything that's said to you. Even though you won't like some of it, you WILL remember it.

To test your comprehension and recall, try this exercise.

Listen for ten minutes to a conversation on the bus or perhaps between your parents. Then sit down and write down the major points of the conversation. This will begin to fine-tune your listening skills so that even boring material delivered in class is recalled easily.

■ Note-taking

Especially when we're young, we think we'll remember information just by listening. This may be true to a certain extent, but it won't earn you the HSC score you deserve. In class, while you're reading, while you're studying, take notes constantly. This doesn't mean writing down everything you hear and read. It means taking down the most important points **in your own words**. At the end of the day—before you complete your homework or attempt to complete part of an assessment task—read through the notes you have taken in class and revise them. Mark the key points and important facts with highlighters and then transfer this important information into a table, mind-map or dot points using word processing software such as MS Word or Pages. File these in your folder.

For more information about organising your notes, see page 34.

■ Discussing

The higher you get in school, the more you'll be required to discuss issues, rather than simply listen to your teacher saying 'This is so. These are the facts'. It's vitally important that you participate in these discussions, to speak your own mind and to hear others' points of view. If you're too shy to open your mouth and voice your opinion, try this exercise. Think of the most confident, outspoken member of your class. Maybe you're intimidated by him or her. Take a few moments to visualise what this person (or even teacher or principal) looked like in nappies. This will at least bring a smile to your face, and remind you that no-one was confident, articulate and absolutely correct from birth. Then make a deal with yourself. In every classroom discussion, promise yourself you'll make at least one comment. Soon you'll find how easy it is to participate. It may be vital to your HSC score.

If you continue to find it difficult to share your ideas with the class, consider writing your contribution to the class discussion down in your workbook. When you get home, email

your ideas to your classroom teacher, add it to an HSC forum or your class blog/edmodo group/wiki. Today there are lots of other ways to communicate your ideas if you feel overwhelmed or intimidated in a face-to-face situation. Make the most of today's social networking tools!

■ Questioning

As with discussing, it is vital to practise this skill. Even the best teacher may not always explain things so you understand. We all learn differently and at different rates. If you don't understand something, ask. Try to do this in class to improve your confidence in speaking up, but if that is sometimes impossible, go to the teacher after class or school and ask. Your teacher won't think you're a dag or a nerd just because you don't understand something.

Once again, use the tools available to you to ask questions of your teacher—email, class forum, wiki or blog. There are lots of ways to get your questions answered in the 21st century!

■ Teachers

Love 'em or hate 'em, you're stuck with them. They are also your best source of guidance and information. That's their job and that's what they're paid to do. Make the best possible use of them by:

- trying not to treat them like the enemy
- listening to them (teachers know the difference between listening and daydreaming—don't kid yourself)
- participating in discussions
- asking them questions
- asking them for extra work, or to be referred to different books (teachers love keen students)
- letting them know ASAP if you don't understand something
- getting your work in on time. If you don't, don't make up stupid excuses and don't lie. If you're having problems at home or

with your boyfriend or girlfriend, they'll be much more inclined to help you than if you say that the dog ate your Maths homework

- asking for feedback on essays and past papers that you have completed for extra personal study.

■ The library and other resources

Apart from your teachers, the library is usually your best source of information.

- If you don't already know how to use your library (either at school or the local one) tell the librarian you're doing the HSC and you need to know how to access books and articles.
- Ask your school librarian how best to use the school's library website. This website will house information about the resources in the library (books, DVDs, articles, etc.), as well as extra links to useful information for studying. Librarians are a wonderful source of information and well worth having a chat to!

For more helpful hints about accessing information online, see pages 40–41.

- Ask your teacher for a reading list of additional texts and articles, and get them from the library. One critical issue in gaining marks, especially in essays, is to be able to refer to and quote from a variety of sources and texts—not just from your class texts.
- Read newspapers regularly and watch current affairs programs on TV or the internet, or listen to them on the radio. This will be mandatory in some subjects but even when it isn't, it will broaden your general knowledge, improve your reading and comprehension skills, and enhance your ability to discuss, argue and criticise.

*He (or she!)
who is afraid of asking
is ashamed of learning.
Danish proverb*

Exam essay writing by subject

Economics, Ancient and Modern History, Geography, Legal Studies and Business Studies

If you prepare for such exams this way, bear in mind that the examiner is more interested in your knowledge and understanding than in your personal response!

The following are general suggestions for the special requirements of essay writing for individual subjects.

- Consult specialised study guides for that subject, such as the **Excel HSC Study Guides**.
- Familiarise yourself with the specific demands of the exam papers: these can change from year to year.
- Study actively, always thinking about themes and issues. Ask yourself questions as you study. Interpret information. What significance do these statistics have? What are the implications? How do they affect my ideas about this topic?
- Practise on past HSC Exam papers in that subject.
- Go over all assessments when they are returned. What are your strong points? What are your weaknesses? How can you improve on your strengths? How can you strengthen your weaknesses? Ask your teacher for additional feedback if necessary.

Subject-specific tips

Ancient History

HSC Ancient History is especially concerned with your knowledge and your ability to use appropriate sources. You must be able to quote primary sources (actual sources from that time) and secondary sources (other works). Secondary sources should be used as just that, secondary to the main sources. This is because you are concerned not merely with knowledge of the ancient world, but with an understanding of how we know what we know and how reliable that information is.

Students are required to write short-answer responses to some questions. These are like miniature essays and are actually harder than

more extended responses, since you are required to have such a command of your topic as to be able to get straight to the heart of any question asked about it. Preparation through thesis essays could certainly stand you in good stead here. Two particular qualities are required: concision and relevance. You must make your point as quickly and in as few words as possible, without lacking completeness. Part of this task is making sure that you introduce and discuss only relevant materials.

Business Studies

A major departure from usual essay-writing form in HSC Business Studies is that you are encouraged to use features of the report style, since this is a form appropriate to business writing. Features may include the use of:

- graphs
- headings
- tables
- points listed with bullets, boxes or asterisks, rather like this list.

The features of report formats all help to 'signpost' an essay and make it easy to read, so it would be worthwhile to look at examples of report formats and learn some of the 'tricks'.

As well as 'signposting' the way, headings are a reminder to you to stay on track! The HSC Business Studies Exam paper will include some short-answer and extended-response questions.

Economics

HSC Economics Exams involve both short-answer and extended-response questions. Short-answer questions will direct you to answer-specific issues.

There is a tendency for some students to get overly political or opinionated on some issues: stick to the facts and issues, using the terms of discussion provided by your teacher.

Again, wider reading is helpful and it is also impressive if you demonstrate an awareness of current issues, gathered from reading newspapers and keeping up with events.

With the short-answer questions, avoid the temptation to quote large slabs of the stimulus material. Reference to the relevant point by one or two words is quite sufficient: examiners are more interested in what else you know, not your ability to read what's before you!

You are allowed to use diagrams in an Economics essay, and these are often very helpful for expressing complex sets of facts in a way that is easy to grasp.

Geography

The HSC Geography Exam is different to others in that it involves many short-answer questions. One such type is the 'stem-and-leaf' question, which gives you a short series of steps to follow in order to answer the question fully. You will only have to answer one extended-response question, as well as questions based on the stimulus booklet provided.

In Geography you are encouraged to use sketch maps and diagrams.

Legal Studies

Like many essay-writing subjects, HSC Legal Studies employs a number of short-answer questions, although you will also be faced with the less structured forms. In HSC Legal Studies the short-answer questions do not require an introduction and conclusion: just make sure you answer the questions fully.

Modern History

In the HSC Modern History Exam, emphasis is placed on your knowledge, understanding, and critical and analytical skills.

Your argument is very important. It should display your critical understanding of a particular time or event in history. You should indicate this understanding from the start, defining terms if necessary. You are expected

to do wide reading for greater depth and breadth of knowledge.

Section I of the HSC Modern History Exam paper contains a short-answer question. This still involves formal writing, but you get a series of questions which, although related to each other, do require separate answers. Pay attention to the weighting of questions, which can vary considerably.

Sciences

- You must definitely make certain that you answer the question! Few, if any, marks will be given for irrelevant answers. Writing whatever comes into your head when you don't know the answer will do you little good.
- Keep to the point and don't restate the question—that's a waste of time. Use formal, scientific terminology rather than writing 'in your own words'.
- Point form is acceptable in some subjects: check with your teacher. But don't answer in just one or two words—explain your answer fully.
- Pay special attention to the 'doing' key words: these are often very specific. Check the list of key terms on the Board of Studies website (see below). Going over old papers will make you familiar with the kinds of demands with which you will be confronted. Look up any words you are not sure of.
- Generally speaking, you may use diagrams.

Remember to visit the BOSTES NSW website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au) for further information about each subject's syllabus, past HSC papers, sample answers and markers' comments. These details change every few years.

Home environment

Home

The environment you study in is a vital component of your overall strategy.

Stick to the following rules.

- 1 Your study area at home must be quiet, well ventilated and well lit
- 2 Your desk should be large enough to be able to spread your work out on, with accessible shelves for easy access to books. You also need drawers to store your work in while it isn't in use.
- 3 Your desk shouldn't look like a tip.
- 4 You also need your motivation laid out clearly in front of you. Make up a chart out of butcher's paper, write on it and illustrate it.
- 5 You also need to work out a study timetable. Use the chart on page 26 to keep track of your progress. You might like to transfer this information to the calendar of your smart phone or iPod.

Getting started on home study

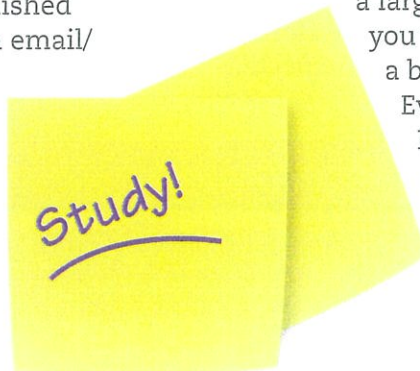
- 1 Refer to your study timetable and sit down at your desk at the time you've marked in your timetable. Your study timetable is a promise to yourself and is as binding (and important) as a promise to anyone else.
- 2 When you're starting out, you might like to use the time log on page 23 to check your progress. Are you overestimating the time tasks will take? Underestimating it? Use your time log so you can be more realistic in future.
- 3 Do your homework first. Read over your class notes for the day to refresh your memory, then do your homework. If there is something you don't understand, make a note of it and after you have finished studying for the evening, send an email/message to your teacher and ask for help. If you don't have access to the internet, write your concern/question on a post-it note and stick it to the front of your workbook for

that class. This will remind you to ask your teacher first thing when you see him or her the next day.

- 4 Once you've finished your homework, take a short break to stretch, or walk out into the garden for a few minutes. You may feel tempted to reward yourself by checking your social networks—this may not be such a good idea because you could easily be distracted for more than the allocated five-minute break. It's best to wait until ALL study is completed before rewarding yourself with social networking!

See pages 37–38 for relaxation techniques. There are others scattered throughout the diary pages of this book.

- 5 Time to work on that assessment task. Remember that the most successful students break assessment tasks into smaller manageable chunks. This means that the assessment is being worked on over a series of days or weeks, allowing for revision of draft work and ensuring that the task is not rushed the night before the due date. Always allocate time to work on assessment tasks.
- 6 If you're reading, make notes as you go. This will help you recall information later on.
- 7 If you find yourself drifting off or daydreaming, take a stretch break to refresh yourself. Remind yourself that you'll soon be taking a break for dinner or that once you finish your assigned task, you'll have the reward of phoning a friend.
- 8 When you've finished, tick the task off in your diary and give yourself a pat on the back. Remind yourself that you've worked hard and efficiently and that you're achieving your goals. If you've completed a large or difficult task, make sure you tell someone: your parent(s), a brother or sister, or a friend. Even the cat, dog or budgie. Rave about it a little. You'll be glad you did.



Getting stale and getting fresh

There's no getting round it. There will be times when you're bored out of your brain studying. The road looks too long. The material looks too unpromising. The reality is that you've got to get through it. There are, however, ways you can vary your study technique to relieve the boredom.

- 1 Make a recording of difficult words, concepts, theories, quotes or even whole essays. Download these to your iPod or MP3 player and listen to them while you work out at the gym, go for a walk or even have it playing as you sleep!
- 2 Plan to spend at least one afternoon or evening a fortnight in a library. This could be your school or local library, or one at the university. The quiet, studious atmosphere will encourage you to work. This is especially important if your home study environment is less than perfect. It will also help, on a sunny day, when you'd rather be doing anything else but studying, to see other people hard at work on their HSC or degree.
- 3 Research has proven that testing yourself frequently significantly improves your ability to retain information. Once you've read a difficult article or textbook

chapter, or listened to a lecture, quiz yourself with a free-form essay. A free-form essay simply requires you to write down in your own words everything you can remember from what you've just read or listened to. Go back to your original source of information and check how much you understood.

- 4 Go to the shop and buy a pad of post-it notes. Copy all the important equations, quotes, statistics and formulae that you need to know for your subjects onto individually coloured post-it notes. Stick these in places around your room and in your home that you look at regularly such as the fridge, toilet door, bedside table, desk, mirror, etc.

For more creative study tips check out the *Sneaky study tips for the 21st-century student* on pages 40–41.

Throughout the diary pages of this book you'll find other suggestions about how to vary your study technique in order to relieve the boredom.



Organising your notes

Australia may be drowning in a sea of paper but there's no reason why you should be. These tips will help you win the paper war.

- 1 Each time your teacher gives you a paper worksheet or handout, ensure that you put your name and the day's date at the top. This will help you organise your notes at home as you can easily see in what order they were given to you by your teacher.
- 2 Use a loose-leaf folder, or folders, to store all your class work in.
- 3 Use plain dividers, with labels, to indicate different subjects.
- 4 Within each subject, use coloured dividers to indicate different topic areas.
- 5 Regularly revise your notes by highlighting important parts and writing summaries. You will probably prefer to type these notes using word-processing software. Tables can help organise your information—use headings that relate to the syllabus points or topics/modules for that subject.

Allocate a few minutes each night, after your study is finished, to sort notes into the correct subject and topic area.

- 6 Regularly revise your notes and write summaries. This will keep down the mountain of paper and help you revise.
- 7 Use coloured tabs or marks to indicate the importance of various notes, e.g.:

Green—I know this

Yellow—I could be better at this

Red—I don't know this.

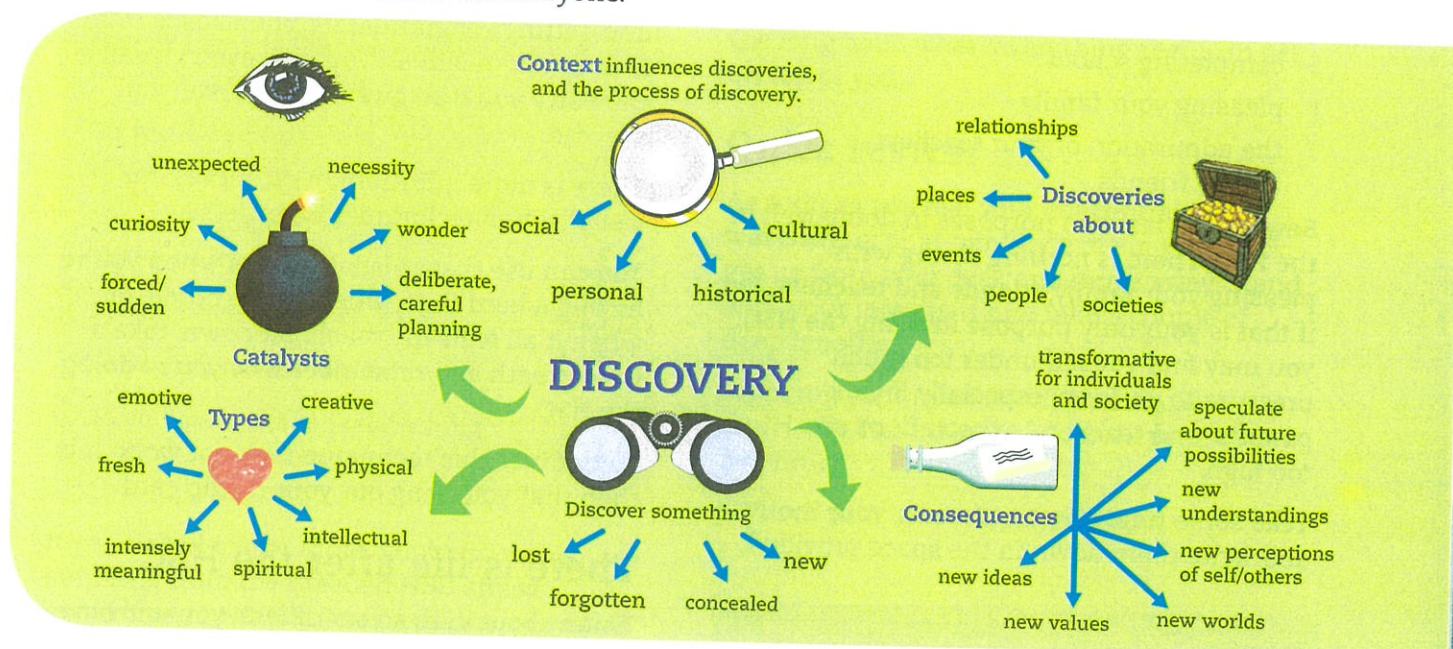
- 8 Clear your desk and file/store each morning and/or evening. Nothing is more likely to put you off studying than coming home to a mountain of paper that you have to sort through before you can begin your homework.
- 9 Be sure to name your files clearly so you can find them again. For example, create folders for each subject and within them a subfolder for each topic/unit of work. Name your files relevant to the topic, e.g. 'Hamlet-Act1-English.docx'. In the footer of each document, remember to include the date that you created the document.



Demonic mnemonics

Demonic mnemonics

- 1 Mnemonics simply means 'an aid to memory'. You are probably already using mnemonics that you learnt very early at home or at school. One common spelling example is 'i before e except after c', which reminds you how to spell words like *believe*, *piece*, *receive* and *deceive*.
- 2 Most mnemonic devices revolve around:
 - rhymes ('i before e ...' above), as well as many funny ones
 - using the letters of your name to remind you of a complicated formula or series of events.
 - using the shape of numbers (in Bingo, 11 means 'legs').
 - visual association
 - clustering—an example is given opposite.
- 3 Each of your teachers will probably have a favourite mnemonic device for a particularly difficult topic
- 4 Try them out by all means, but if they confuse you or don't work for you, don't worry. No mnemonic device works for everyone.



Mnemonic mind game

Instructions for use: you are in the HSC English exam and have chosen a question on **Discovery**. You've done a lot of study on this one. All of a sudden, your mind goes blank. This may be due to nerves. Don't panic! Draw a large circle. Write *Discovery* inside. Write down everything you can remember about it, e.g. *catalysts for discovery*, *consequences of discoveries*, *types of discoveries*, etc. Pretty soon you'll find yourself remembering many more points and, even more importantly, the connections between them.

Spend 10 minutes making associations: you should then have enough material to answer the question.

Mind-maps are excellent memory aides that can help you understand connections between events, ideas and information. They can also help you retain and retrieve information more efficiently if you prefer to learn through images.

There is a range of free online mind-mapping tools that are easy to use and work as excellent study tools. Just type *mind-mapping tools* into your search engine.

Want to know more about mnemonics? Try *Use Your Memory* by Tony Buzan, BBC Books, 1986. You can also watch video tutorials from Tony Buzan on YouTube. Just search for the name *Tony Buzan*.

Motivation

Motivation is a big-sounding word, which we hear a lot these days. As you work for your HSC you'll be hearing it a lot more. It has a very simple meaning:

You naturally want to do as well as you can in your HSC. Your motivation might include:

- 1 getting into the course of your choice which will train you for the career of your choice
- 2 the pleasure and pride you will feel in getting the best HSC score you're capable of
- 3 topping the state in one subject
- 4 topping the state, full stop
- 5 completing school
- 6 pleasing your family
- 7 the admiration of your teachers and/or friends.

Beware the last two purposes in doing well in the HSC. There is nothing wrong with pleasing your family, friends and teachers, but if that is your only purpose in doing the HSC, you may find yourself under too much pressure to perform, especially if your parents' and teachers' expectations are too high.

Take some time now to consider your motives and write them down in the space provided.

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Now that you've stated your motivation, try to visualise the outcome.

If your motive in doing the HSC is to get into the course of your choice, sit down and visualise it.

You might visualise yourself on your first day of university, walking into a lecture theatre and enjoying the first university lecture of your life, or swanning around the campus with your friends.

If your motive is to top the state in one or more subjects, visualise yourself scanning the results in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, underlining your name in red, jumping for joy and getting congratulatory phone calls from friends and relatives. You may even visualise the party you'll be given to celebrate your success.

There is more information on successful visualisation techniques on page 38.

You can use these visualisations when you're having a hard time, when you're bored, or when it all feels too much. Sit down, take a deep breath and remember why you're doing the HSC.

Sometimes this technique may not work. It is then that you bring out your trump card.

There is life after the HSC

Think about it. In a year or less, you will have completed your HSC. Your life will go on, whatever the outcome. You won't always feel as panicked, as stressed and as anxious as you do now!

Repeat this to yourself half a dozen times a day when you're feeling overwhelmed.

There is life after the HSC.



Rest and recreation

Stress quiz

Tick

- Do you have trouble concentrating?
- Do you get regular headaches?
- Do you often yawn and doze off?
- Do you catch yourself daydreaming frequently?
- Do you have problems sleeping?
- Do you fly off the handle regularly at your mum, your dad, even Sooty the cat?
- Is your heart racing even while you answer this quiz?
- Do you wake up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat?
- Do you indulge in regular eating frenzies?
- Do you have no appetite?
- Do you often feel vague?
- Do you sometimes feel nothing at all?

If you ticked five or more, you're probably suffering from the dreaded **HSC stress syndrome** or HSCSS. One of the major causes is overwork. Yes, overwork.

The law of diminishing returns states that the more work you do, the less you achieve. When your body or brain is tired you achieve less in more time, e.g. you find you've read the same page five times and you haven't taken in a thing. That's when it's time for a break. For example, it's Saturday morning and after a hard week at school, you're looking down the barrel of ten hours' solid study. Suddenly you can't get out of bed. That's when it's time for a break.

Throughout the text and diary of this Survival Guide, you'll find a number of tips to help you relax, revive and survive the HSC. Here are two: one for a quick pick me up and one for the long haul, when everything seems to get on top of you.

Quick reviver

As soon as you feel your concentration wavering, or that familiar ache in your neck, get up from your desk and move away. Stand with your legs apart and take a couple of deep breaths.

Then roll your head slowly in a circle anticlockwise, then clockwise. Repeat five times.

Go back to your work, refreshed.

To study effectively, you need to take a short break every hour.
To really relax and give your mind a rest, you need at least one night a week study free.



Coping with stress

Super stress anxiety fighter— for the long haul

This technique is called creative visualisation. It's about talking to your subconscious and giving it positive feedback.

When you feel a panic attack coming on, go and sit in a quiet place where you know you won't be disturbed. With feet on the floor and hands loosely in your lap, or by your sides, take half a dozen deep breaths and begin to empty your mind of all cares. Start counting backwards from ten and as you do, mentally transport yourself to a favourite, quiet place. It could be the beach, a riverbank or a national park. Visualise yourself sitting there, drinking in the peace of your chosen place. Then, when you're perfectly relaxed, visualise the day you get your HSC results.

See yourself opening the envelope. See the sheet showing your score. See that the score is good, easily enough to get you into the course or career you want. Feel the joy of your success. See yourself surrounded by your family, your friends and your teachers. They're all congratulating you on your hard work and your excellent result. Feel the joy and excitement of that moment. Really experience it in your mind and create a strong mental image. Stay with the feeling as long as you like. Then, when you're ready, slowly count from one to ten. Open your eyes. Your panic attack will have disappeared. You'll feel relaxed and refreshed.

You might like to record this exercise and play it to yourself on your iPod or MP3 player rather than trying to remember it. Or get a friend or family member with a particularly soothing voice to make the recording for you so you can use the exercise whenever you feel stressed.



Sneaky study tips for the 21st-century student

Knowing when to 'disconnect'



One of the hardest parts about living in our hyper-connected 21st-century world is knowing when to disconnect. Studying requires a frame of mind separate from the distractions of other people. How can you ensure that you get the quiet required to study well but also don't feel that you are disconnected from your network of friends and family? Be proud of your study goals—share them with your network. Message, tweet and post your study times to your network—this is your social-networking 'blackout' period. Make it a group thing and encourage your friends to do the same. And remember: during the SN blackout period, ensure you turn off notifications to your phone—this means you'll be less tempted to 'check' what's happening.

Don't try to re-invent the wheel (crowd-source!)



You are not alone. Many, many thousands of students and teachers endure the HSC every year. Wonderful HSC resources have been created by both teachers and students, and can be accessed online. When searching on Google or a similar search engine, make sure you search for blogs and wikis relating to your subject. Your teacher may even have created a website, Facebook or Edmodo group, blog or wiki for your class—make sure you access this regularly and navigate it carefully to make the most of the resources being shared.

Sharing is caring (using social networking to your advantage)

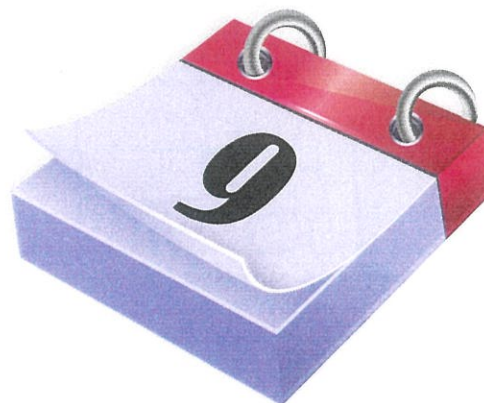
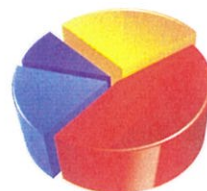
Make use of this by asking questions about your studies on social-networking platforms such as Twitter, Facebook groups, blogs, wikis and forums like Bored of Studies (www.boredofstudies.org).

Try not to spend too much time connected in this way—set aside time on your study timetable to find resources online.

Unleashing the Web 2.0 beast (using Web 2.0 tools for success)

There are many wonderful web-based tools that can add variety to your study. These tools allow you to create your own study aid or search for study aids created by teachers and other students. Some of the best web-based tools are:

- **presentation tools**—Animoto (www.animoto.com), Prezi (www.prezi.com) and Slideshare (www.slideshare.net)
- **flash card tools**—Anki (www.ankisrs.net), Brainflips (www.brainflips.com) and Quizlet (www.quizlet.com)
- **organisation of ideas**—Bubbl.us (<https://bubbl.us/>), Exploratree (www.exploratree.org.uk), mindmeister (www.mindmeister.com) and Evidence Chart (www.evidencechart.com)
- **search engines**—internet Archive (www.archive.org), Find Articles (www.findarticles.com) and Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com.au/>)
- **make or find a quiz**—Make A Quiz (www.makeaquiz.net) and Quiblo (www.quibblo.com/create).



Mobile learning (study on the go!)

The 21st-century is so cool—you no longer need to be strapped to a desk in a dark room to study. Most students will still spend the majority of their time studying at a desk, but there are times when you will want to be studying on the go. One mobile device can open up so many study possibilities to you—these are just the tip of the iceberg!

- **Check out iTunesU** for a range of university lectures that have been recorded for your listening pleasure—many of them are free downloads. Listening to university lectures on your study topic will give you a competitive edge over other students.
- **There are literally thousands of applications (apps)** for free and to purchase on the App Store. Search for terms related to your study topic and you will find useful apps to help you study on the go.

Excel has a range of apps for the most popular HSC subjects—see the inside front cover of this book for more details.

- **Most mobile devices have a notes application** or one can be downloaded. This can be very handy for recording those inspired ideas that you sometimes have when you're out and about. You can even email the notes to yourself as a reminder of your momentary genius!
- **The built-in timer and alarm on mobile devices** can be very handy for helping you keep to your study timetable.
- **The calendar application** gives you access to your study timetable wherever you are—you can even add alarms to remind you to begin and finish studying!
- **Use the voice-recorder application** to record key essay quotes, formulae, statistics, equations or whole essays and then play them back as you walk or work out at the gym!

Seek and you will find

If you're finding it increasingly difficult to study independently—perhaps one of your subjects is really causing you trouble—you may want to consider looking online for help. There is a range of online tutors and essay-writing help available online. There are also workshops and lectures that you can access online. Use your search engine to look for the right person for you. Search terms such as *essay help*, *online tutor* and *writing workshop* should help you find what you're looking for.

Master the basics

Get the right information about your studies at the touch of a button! Check out the official BOSTES NSW website (www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au) for information on your own personal examination timetable, and to access the syllabus, past papers and markers' comments on all your HSC subjects. Visit NSW HSC Online (www.hsc.csu.edu.au) for overviews and explanations of all HSC subjects, as well as sample tasks and activities to complete.

