



# SCOIL MHUIRE GAN SMÁL

Study Tool kit

Name:

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# Using This Booklet

The SPHE Department at Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál have created this booklet to encourage all students to develop and use correct homework and study skills. This booklet will run from 1<sup>st</sup> year to 3<sup>rd</sup> year highlighting key skills for each year group. This booklet will be used in SPHE class to explain and demonstrate the use of each skill. Each of these skills can be practised in school and at home by students. Use of these skills will make study seem less daunting for students and will allow all students the opportunity to achieve to the best of each student's ability.

**Remember revision can be easy and fun....just give it a try!!**

## Using the Journal

Every student in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál will have a student journal. This journal is an extremely important item to have. The journal is not a private diary but a book for all students to record homework, late passes, hallway passes and notes.

You need your journal EVERY DAY. Your journal needs to be kept neat and tidy at all times. Do not draw on your journal. Make sure your name and class name is written on your journal in case it gets lost as it will be easy to return to you.

Your journal is used for a number of things. If you need to use the bathroom during class or you need to go to another classroom the teacher must write this into your journal before you will be allowed go. If you are late or need a uniform stamp this will be put into your journal. If your parents need to tell a teacher something, for example you were sick due to an illness this needs to be filled in the space provide at the rear of your journal. Teachers will use your journals to write notes to your parents/guardians if they need to contact them. As you can see, your journal is very important!!

Your journal is laid out in a week by week view from Monday to Friday. Space is provided to write the subjects that you have for each day, the homework required for that subject and when it is due. Your tutors will check your journal on a weekly basis to ensure that your homework is written in correctly.

### How do I write my homework in correctly?

To write your homework in correctly it is important to firstly get into the habit of writing all of your subjects in for each day into the space provided. Your teacher will allocate time during class to write in your homework. Make sure you take it down correctly. If you are unsure about your homework always ask your teacher to explain

again. It is important to take down homework correctly to ensure it is completed correctly.

### But what if I have no homework?

Sometimes you might get no homework in a subject. It is still important that you write the name of that subject down in the space provided and write down to revise what you did in class. If you get no specific homework, it is a good idea to revise what was covered that day in class by either looking at your book, copy or hand out if one was provided.

### Let's do some practice!

Write in the following homework to the journal page provided below.

Irish: question 4 page 5, Geography: revise volcanos for test tomorrow, English: write a headline for a newspaper article about a charity event, French: Learn the verbs we looked at in class, History: question 5 and 6 page 10, SPHE no homework, Maths question 7, 8 and 9 page 15, Business: Learn the sale of goods and supply of services act 1980

## Organising Ourselves, Good Habits and Environment

Organisation is the key to success. To do your homework and study correctly you must organise yourself. Have a look at these tips below.

### **A GOOD PLACE TO STUDY**

- Have a table and chair, just like an exam situation
- Have only study items on the desk such as books, dictionaries and pens
- Remove all distractions like posters, TV, Mobile phones.
- Try and find a place to study that has good lighting is warm

### **ROUTINE**

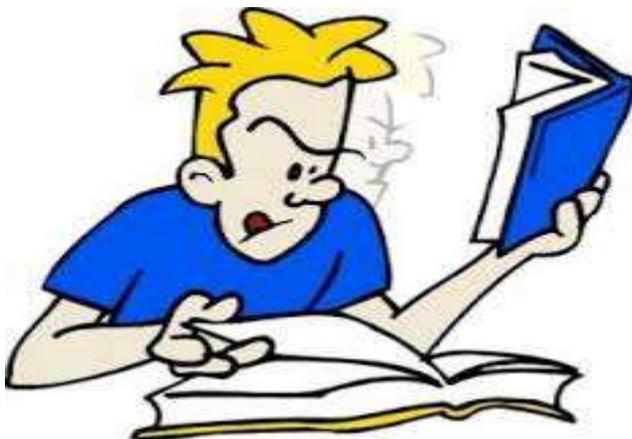
- Study in the same place and same time each day if possible
- Have a daily routine and try and stick to it. Do your homework first, then your study
- Make time for extra activities, football training and dance etc
- Set daily, weekly monthly goals. Make sure they are realistic. See page 23 for goal setting tips
- Select questions from revision exercise at end of topic or chapter
- Get an adult to test you

### **STUDY TIPS**

- Before you start studying write down briefly what you know about the topic.

- Test yourself, use exam papers or the questions at the end of the chapter to answer a question on the topic without looking- write the answer out using bullet points
- Correct the answer if it is correct you know it, if it is incorrect you need to revise it again
- Spider webs and mind-maps are a very good way of studying. Page 16 has information on how to create mind maps
- Sometimes telling a friend what you have read helps you remember and understand
- Take notes as you revise. Don't just read the topic!
- Do the hardest subject first and keep the easiest / favourite subject until last

**START TODAY!**



## Recall

Recall is the first study skill method we are going to learn. When students think about study I'm sure a large number would picture themselves sitting at a desk rereading their textbooks over and over. That is a tiring process and one that is not very effective.

Recall is a very easy method that actually works. The process is very simple.

### **Step 1:**

Look at what was covered that day in school or if you are studying for a test look at your book and notes and read the chapter.

### **Step 2:**

Put away the book and all your notes. Take out a piece of paper and try to remember as much as you can about what you just read. You have just recalled information and this process will allow this information to move from your short term memory into your long term memory.

### **Step 3:**

Have a look back over your notes, was there anything you forgot? Try and learn that part again and repeat the process of recall.

Remember to repeat the process with the information you want to remember at least three times with a break of ten minutes between each try. Then begin at step 1 and work towards step 3. Once you have this done three times you should know the information very well.



## Reading Strategies

Survey/Skim/Scan

Question

Read, Recite, Recall, Review

**Before you read, SURVEY, SKIM, and SCAN the material.**

- The title, headings and subheadings.
- Captions under pictures, charts, graphs or maps.
- Introductory and concluding paragraphs
- Summary.

**Question while you are surveying:**

- Turn the title, headings and/ or subheadings into questions, can you answer them?
- Read questions at the end of the chapters or after each subheading
- Ask yourself, "What do I already know about this subject?"

**When you begin to Read:**

- Look for answers to the questions you first raised
- Answer questions at the beginning or end of material.
- Reread captions under pictures, graphs etc
- Note all the underlined, italicized, bold printed words or phrases.
- Study graphic aids.
- Reduce your speed for difficult passages
- Stop and reread parts which are not clear
- Read only a section at a time and recite after each section.

### **Recite/Recall after you've read a section:**

- Orally ask yourself questions about what you have just read, or summarize, in your own words, what you read.
- Take notes from the text but write the information in your own words.
- Underline or highlight important points you've just read

### **Review: an ongoing process**

- Review all sections that contain any key words that you have forgotten
- Review by rereading, by expanding your notes, or by discussing the material.
- Tell/Explain information to someone else!



## How Do We Learn?

Did you ever wonder how you learn information? We use different senses to learn information.

- 1% through **TASTE**
- 1.2% through **TOUCH**
- 3.5% through **SMELL**
- 11% through **HEARING**
- 83% through **SIGHT**

## HOW MUCH DO WE RETAIN?

Now that we have learned the information once how do we remember it? We remember different amounts of information based on how we use that information.

- 10% of what we **READ**
- 20% of what we **HEAR**
- 30% of what we **SEE**
- 50% of what we **SEE** and **HEAR** at the same time
- 70% of what we **SAY** as we talk
- 90% of what we **SAY** as we **DO** something

So unless you **DO** some practise questions or writing out notes after class you will only remember 50% of what you saw and heard from the teacher in class. So homework is very important!

## Types of Learners

There are many ways to remember facts and how to apply them, whether it is for studying or for when you complete a test.

Not every method will work for you - this is because everyone has preferred ways of learning.

Therefore to understand what the best methods of remembering things are, you have to understand how you prefer to learn first! Look at the descriptions below to see what the main ways to learn are:

### A visual learner:

- Prefers to read, to see the words, illustrations and diagrams;
  - Talks quite fast, using lots of images;
  - Memorises by writing repeatedly;
- When inactive, looks around, doodles or watches something;
- When starting to understand something says, 'that looks right';
  - Is most distracted by untidiness.

### An auditory learner:

- Likes to be told, to listen to the teacher, to talk it out;
- Talks fluently, in a logical order, and with few hesitations;
  - Memorises by repeating words aloud;
  - When inactive, talks to self or others;
- When starting to understand something says, 'that sounds right';
  - Is most distracted by noises.

### A kinaesthetic learner:

- Likes to get involved, hands on, to try it out;
  - Uses lots of hand movements;
- Talks about actions and feelings; speaks more slowly;
  - Memorises by doing something repeatedly;
  - When inactive, fidgets, walks around;
- When starting to understand something says, 'that feels right';
  - Is most distracted by movement or physical disturbance.

You can do all of these if you try but you might prefer one of them or even two of them. Look below and see which ones you prefer:

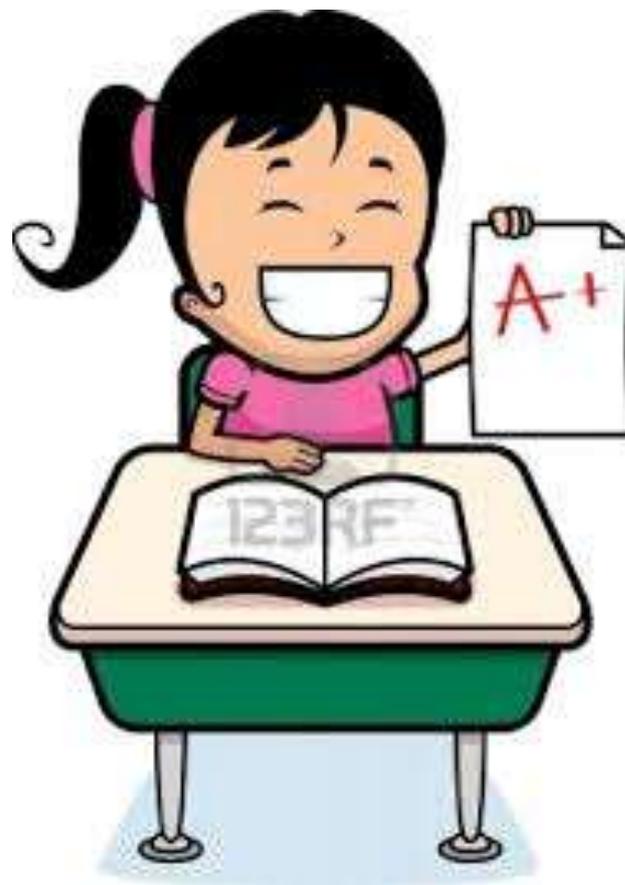
When you do this	Do you????		
	Visual	Auditory	Physical
<b>Spell a word</b>	Try to visualise it (does it look right?)	Sound it out (does it sound right?)	Write it down (does it feel right?)
<b>Concentrating</b>	Get most distracted by untidiness	Get most distracted by noises	Get most distracted by movement, or physical disturbance
<b>Choose a favourite art form</b>	Prefer paintings	Prefer music	Prefer dance/sculpture
<b>Talk</b>	Talk quite fast, but keep idle conversation limited. Use lots of images, eg It's like a needle in a haystack	Talk fluently with an even pace, in a logical order and with few hesitations. Enunciate clearly	Use lots of hand movements, talk about actions and feelings. Speak more slowly with more pauses
<b>Meet people</b>	Remember mostly how they looked/ the surroundings	Remember mostly what was said/ remember their names	Remember mostly what you did with them/ remember their emotions
<b>See a movie, watch TV or read a novel</b>	Remember best what the scenes/what the people looked like	Remember best what was said and how the music sounded	Remember best what happened/ the characters emotions
<b>Relax</b>	Generally prefer reading /TV	Generally prefer music	Generally prefer games, sports
<b>Try to interpret someone's mood</b>	Mainly note their facial expression	Listen to their tone of voice	Watch body movements
<b>Recalling something</b>	Remember what you say/people's faces/ how things looked	Remember what was said/people's names/jokes	Remember what was done/what it felt like
<b>Memorizing something</b>	Prefer to memorise by writing something repeatedly	Prefer to memorise by repeating words aloud	Prefer to memorise by doing something repeatedly
<b>Choosing clothes</b>	Choose clothes by how they look, coordinate and colour	The brand name, what the clothes say about you	How the clothes feel, the comfort, the texture
<b>When you are angry</b>	Become silent and seethe	Express it in an outburst	Storm about, clench your fists, throw things
<b>When you are inactive</b>	Look around, doodle, watch something	Talk to yourself or others	Fidget, walk about

So how does this understanding make a difference to how you remember and apply information?

Look at the table below and note what activities someone with your preferred learning style would like to do and therefore activities to aid revision.

Preferred Learning style	Activities	Example Revision Strategies
<b>Visual</b>	Diagrams, charts, videos, films, graphs, posters, concept maps, pamphlets, textbooks, drawing, visualisation (creating mental pictures), collages, colour highlighting	Mind maps, spider diagrams, create a story using pictures, 'Look, Cover, Write, Check' with lists and key words. Summarising.
<b>Auditory</b>	Discussion, group work, pair work, debates, interviewing, expositions, presentations, improvisations, listening to guest speakers, mnemonics, writing notes and essays, poems, sketches, stories, reading	Mnemonics, sharing and testing ideas with your friends as part of a game, make up a pop song with the key words or themes in the lyrics and then record it.
<b>Kinaesthetic</b>	DART, role-play, dance, model making, simulations, 'show me' cards, freezeframes, improvisation, associating ideas with movements, human graphs, human sentences or timelines, field trips, games, competitions	Put post-it notes around the house with key words in them and walk around the house testing yourself. Create a dance which shows a sequence ideas of ideas like a chemical reaction.

If a lesson uses a learning style that is not your preferred one you can still use it. You just need to try a little harder at a style that is not your own one.





## Creating and using mind maps

If you are revising or you are covering a whole topic, **Mind Mapping** is really good!

First, get a nice big piece of plain paper and lots of coloured pens/pencils.

Write the topic in the middle of a page, using also pictures and colours to make it clear what the topic is about. Take 4 main ideas about the topic and draw branches coming from the middle, write you main ideas on each branch. Then think of any words associated with the ideas and draw mini branches coming from the main branch with the words on each one. Make it colourful so each idea is represented by a certain colour, use symbols/pictures to reinforce what it is about. Then try and see if there are any links between the ideas (branches) and make those clear on your diagram.

## Effective Group Study

Working with your friends or your classmates can be really beneficial.

There are many advantages to studying in groups. Group members support, encourage and draw strength from each other. Studying with others may be more fun than studying alone.

Groups have practical advantages too. They'll hold you more accountable for your study efforts. You're less likely to miss a group meeting than to tell yourself you'll "study later." You will gain practical experience in working within groups, a skill many employers value.

### *Forming a Group*

#### **IDENTIFYING MEMBERS**

- Be intentional. Someone needs to take the first step to get a group together - why not you?
- Look for students who participate in class, take notes, and ask questions. Ask them to join your group.
- Forming a study group with your friends is fine, but make sure you set ground rules for study; otherwise your sessions will turn into social gatherings.
- Include people with similar academic goals, but different backgrounds and situations. You can share both similarities and differences.

#### **THE FIRST MEETING**

- Invite the other potential group members to meet to talk about goals, meeting times and other logistics.

- Have a test run. If the first session works, schedule another. If things are going well, you can schedule a regular meeting time.
- Discuss expectations. Be sure you all want the same kinds of things from the group experience. Make sure to talk about schedules, length of time, convenient meeting places such as someone's house on a weekend morning.
- Limit the group to five or six people. Larger groups are not as effective.

### **Study Strategies**

- Ask each other questions. Agree to come to the session with four or five questions, then you all take the "test" together.
- Practice teaching each other. You know the material when you are able to teach it to someone else. Divide the material to be covered and assign each group member a topic.
- Compare notes. Each group member may learn something different from class sessions, especially those with different learning styles. This is a good time to ask each other questions about areas where you were confused during class.
- Discuss material you don't understand. Even if none of you knows "the answer," you may arrive at an understanding through the group process.
- Structure your meetings. Choose activities such as those listed above and set a time limit for each during the session. Make sure to set an ending time and use the last few minutes to assign tasks to each member for the next meeting.

## Question and index cards

Question and index cards can be a very effective way to study. You will need to buy some colourful index cards in the shop and you're ready to go.

### Index cards

Index cards are a great aid when it comes to study and learning. Many subjects have definitions and/or formulas to learn. For each subject you must first pick a topic. Then write up a set of index cards with the definition name/ formula on the front. On the back write the explanation to the definition or formula. Shuffle all the cards and test yourself on them. You could also get a classmate/friend/family member to test you as well.

### Question Cards

Make up some question cards with the question on the front of the index card and the answer on the back. Make a Right, an Almost and a Wrong pile. Keep going through the questions till they are all in the right pile but make it FUN! Give yourself rewards when you get them all correct.



## Mnemonics

'Mnemonic' is another word for memory tool. Mnemonics are techniques for remembering information that is otherwise quite difficult to recall: A very simple example is the '30 days hath September' rhyme for remembering the number of days in each calendar month.

The idea behind using mnemonics is to encode difficult to remember information in a way that is much easier to remember.

**You can do the following things to make your mnemonics more memorable:**

- Use positive, pleasant images. Your brain often blocks out unpleasant ones.
- Use vivid, colourful images - these are easier to remember than drab ones.
- Exaggerate the size of important parts of the image.
- Use humour! Funny or peculiar things are easier to remember than normal ones.
- Similarly, rude rhymes are very difficult to forget!
- Symbols (red traffic lights, pointing fingers, road signs, etc.) can code quite complex messages quickly and effectively.

Look at these examples:

- The lines on the staff: Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge (E, G, B, D, F) (Treble Clef Notes)
- RICE for the instructions for treating a sprain (Rest the injured area, Ice the sprain, Compress with a wrap or bandage, Elevate the injured area)
- Columbus sailed the ocean blue in fourteen hundred ninety-two

## Multiple Intelligences

What comes to mind when one thinks about the word intelligence? I bet you think of someone really smart. Did you know that there are seven different ways that a person may be considered intelligent?

In 1983 Howard Gardner explained that there are seven different types of intelligence. Therefore we know that everyone will learn the information in a different way and will be stronger at certain subjects over others.

Lets take a test to find out what kind of intelligence you have!

**Visual-Spatial** - think in terms of physical space, as do architects and sailors. Very aware of their environments. They like to draw, do jigsaw puzzles, read maps. They can be taught through drawings, verbal and physical imagery.

**Bodily-kinesthetic** - use the body effectively, like a dancer or a surgeon. Keen sense of body awareness. They like movement and making things. They communicate well through body language and be taught through hands-on learning, acting out or role playing.

**Musical** - show sensitivity to rhythm and sound. They love music, but they are also sensitive to sounds in their environments. They may study better with music in the background. They can be taught by turning lessons into lyrics, speaking rhythmically, tapping out time..

**Interpersonal** - understanding, interacting with others. These students learn through interaction. They have many friends, empathy for others, street smarts. They can be taught through group activities, seminars, dialogues.

**Intrapersonal** - understanding one's own interests, goals. These learners tend to shy away from others. They're in tune with their inner feelings; they have wisdom, intuition and motivation, as well as a strong will, confidence and opinions. They can be taught through independent study. They are the most independent of the learners.

**Linguistic** - using words effectively. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and often think in words. They like reading, playing word games, making up poetry or stories. They can be taught by encouraging them to say and see words, read books together.

**Logical -Mathematical** - reasoning, calculating. Think conceptually, abstractly and are able to see and explore patterns and relationships. They like to experiment, solve puzzles, ask cosmic questions. They can be taught through logic games, investigations, mysteries. They need to learn and form concepts before they can deal with details.



## Target setting

### SMART Planning

When planning your goals for the year ahead, ensure that they are **SMART**. SMART is an acronym for the things that you need to take into consideration when planning goals. And if you are already applying the **SMART** method, it's a good idea to periodically revisit your objectives to see if they need to be adjusted to truly be effective.

SMART Stands For:

**Specific:** Setting vague goals is not a recipe for success. "I want to get an A in science is admirable, but how are you going to achieve it. A more specific goal would be 'by the end of the week I will understand and know the periodic table'

**Measurable:** Set benchmarks for yourself - "I want to do as well as possible on the verbal section" is not measurable, whereas "I will study 7 new words every week for the next month" is certainly something that you can track.

**Attainable:** Set a goal that you can achieve. Your goal should match your ability and interests. If you are struggling with a subject that you are uninterested in, it is unrealistic to expect an 'A' on a higher level paper.

**Relevant:** Set goals that will help you to achieve something that is important to you now, eg if you want to study biology or chemistry at leaving certificate, it would be important to improve your in science.

**Timely:** This is all about mapping your time well so that you know exactly what you're going to work on every day (or at least every

week) in order to meet the goals that you've set. The more organised you are, the easier it'll be to stick to your plans.

The **SMART** approach ensures that you're much more likely to achieve whatever objectives you set.



## Exam Preparation

Have a revision plan and stick to it. Fill in the one on page 28.

- Show your family your revision plan so they can be aware when not to disturb you or also when you might need help/support. Plan in some rewards for yourself for keeping to your revision plan.
- A healthy body equals a healthy mind. Avoid the crisps and chocolate as it will not give you the long term energy you need to study. Have regular meals. Snack healthily and drink plenty of water. Try to exercise regularly - take the dog for a walk, join a club etc. This will give you a clear head and limit any stress so you can revise efficiently. Make sure you regularly sleep well - no late nights if you can help it.
- Think positively - do not think of what you cannot do at the moment. Think of your strengths and how you can build upon them. Visualise success!
- Day before: The revision has been done. All you need to do is to refresh and remind. Try and avoid cramming at the last moment. Make sure you have all of the relevant equipment needed for the exam. Then relax.
- On the day:

**Read** - all instructions carefully so you know what questions to answer, what they are worth and which ones are compulsory. Avoid leaping to the first easy question.

**Plan** - which questions you want to answer and in what order. How much time you have got for each one. Look at where the clock is and how long the exam is. Check the clock at regular intervals. Use a quick bullet list of points to structure your ideas. Use any spare time to check through your answers to avoid silly errors.

**Write** - answers which answer directly the question. Keep to the point. Be neat. Do not spend too long on a single question. DO not leave

questions unanswered - an intelligent guess can often get you extra marks.

**Avoid** - cheating. It is not worth the stress. Make sure you do not communicate to anyone else in the exam hall - by looking as well as talking. Keep your head down. If you have a problem calmly raise your hand. Do not panic - sometimes rereading the paper helps! Also be aware of your breathing - take a couple of deep breaths to calm down and collect your thoughts.

If you take a water bottle in then make sure there is no label on it and put your pens and pencils in a clear plastic bag.

- After the exam - avoid worrying about it. You have done the best you can and so all you have to do is to keep visualising your success and relax.

### **Completing a revision plan**

Ask yourself the following questions:

- How many weeks to my first exam?
- What is the maximum amount of time that I am willing to revise on a weekday, a Saturday and on a typical Sunday?
- How many topics am I expected to revise for each subject?
- How hard do you find each topic and how big is each topic?

Using the answers from the above questions to note down in a Revision Planner how many hours you might need to revise each one.

Fill in the sample blank study timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Time	Saturday	Sunday