

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SUCCEEDING IN HIGH SCHOOL

elevate[✓]
education

Eight things you can do to make studying at high school easier.



START HERE

Nobody is born good at school

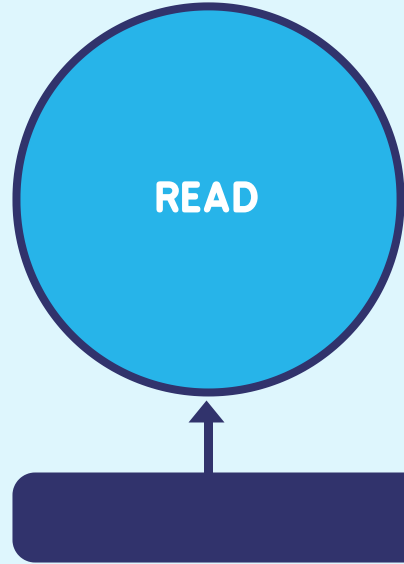
Have a think about the kid in your class who makes school look easy. Homework done. Good marks. Still at training Tuesday night.

Most people tend to think they pull that off because they've got no life. No mates, no sport, just a desk and a completely free weekend.

If you're thinking that, give us a nod. Go on. Yes, you're nodding at a book. Nod anyway.

Lovely. Now the good news: none of it's true. They play sport, they've got mates, and they watch what you watch.

At Elevate Education, we've done our research into what the top students actually do. And the core differences are just eight small things nobody's told you about, and none of them take long. Ten minutes to read this, and you can start tonight.



How learning actually works

most people skip this one



NOTES

REMEMBER

TIME

Before any of the tips, it helps to know what's actually going on when you learn something. Everything you learn at school has to get through three steps before it's any use to you in a test.

READ. You read it, or your teacher tells you.

NOTES. You turn it into something you can look at again later.

REMEMBER. You get it into your head.

The problem is, almost all of us skip the middle one. We read the chapter, then go straight to trying to remember the chapter, then wonder why none of it stuck. That's not a bad memory. That's a missing step.

And underneath all three sits the one nobody thinks about at all, which is finding the time to do any of it.

This guide tackles all four of these issues, and gives you the top tips that the best students are using right now to succeed in High School. So let's get into it!

Don't read it yet!

To start, I want you to imagine you're in a classroom. Unless you're already in a classroom. In which case, imagine you're exactly where you are right now.

Your teacher hands you an article and says "read this". So you start at the top, and you read it.

That's you, isn't it. Don't nod this time, people are watching. It's what nearly all of us do, and it's the mistake.

Think about a detective turning up at a crime scene. They don't wander around describing the sky and the trees and the parked cars. They're not looking at EVERY SINGLE DETAIL in the crime scene. They walk in already knowing exactly what they're hunting for.

When we're reading an article, we can do the same! Here's four questions to ask yourself before you read your first sentence.

Why am I reading this?

- 1 Look at what subject it's for, and any questions you've been given.

What's the writer's main point?

- 2 It's almost always in the title, or the first paragraph.

What are the key points?

- 3 They're the headings, or sub-headings. Read those before anything else.

What's the proof?

- 4 Now you can **read properly**, hunting for the facts and examples that back it up.

Why teenagers need more sleep than adults

The title, or main point

Your brain on eight hours

Heading

The proof: facts and examples

What the research found

Sub-heading

Why school starts too early

Heading

This is a super-quick tip to get your bearings around any article faster than anybody else!

Leave yourself a secret code

Now imagine it's the night before a test. You've a ton of articles and pages to look over and revise, but you don't want to read them all over and over again, word-for-word every time! So what do the top students do? Firstly, quick history lesson. Stick with it, it's worth it.

In the 1930s, America ran out of jobs. Men and boys, some of them only a few years older than you are now, left home and rode freight trains around the country looking for work.

They never stayed anywhere long enough to learn a town. So they started chalking marks on walls and fences for the strangers coming along behind them.

A cat meant *a kind woman lives here, she'll feed you*. Two shovels meant *there's work going*. A square with a dot in it meant *don't bother knocking*.

What this meant was that anybody who was visiting a town for the first time could orientate themselves super quickly. And you can do the same with what you read in class! How? By leaving yourself a secret code!

Mark up in the articles, or on the margins of your page (like we've done on this page!), using the codes below to help yourself find important bits when you come back later. For example, right on the margin of this line, I've left a "!", because this is the Key Point of the page!



The main idea



A key point



Evidence. The proof.



Two bits that connect



The best part



Come back to this

2. NOTE-TAKING

Seven words beat sixty-seven

67 WORDS

Virtual Reality (VR) is the use of computer technology to create a simulated environment. Unlike traditional user interfaces, VR places the user inside an experience. Instead of viewing a screen in front of them, users are immersed and able to interact with 3D worlds. They do this through the use of VR headsets, gaming controls and a media source such as a smartphone, gaming console or computer.



7 WORDS

- 3D environment
- user interacts
- headset, controls, console

At school you'll be taking notes nearly every day, so it's worth learning to do it in a way that actually helps you remember. Look at the two panels above. Same information, both times. The difference with the text on the right is that it's 60 words fewer than the one on the left, and as a result you'll be able to remember a whole lot more!

And you already know how to do this, by the way. Ever written a reminder on the back of your hand? Nobody writes *take home the permission note and get Mum to sign it before Friday* all the way down their arm. You write **FORM**. One word, and the whole thing comes back.

That's called a **trigger word**, and your notes should be made of them. A trigger word isn't a summary and it isn't a heading. It's the one word that, when you read it back next week, drags the rest of the idea out of your memory with it. In the VR example, *headset* is doing the job of fifteen words. You don't need the other fourteen written down, because your brain fills them in the second it sees the trigger.

One more way to think about it. If I throw you a pen, you'll catch it. If I throw twelve at once, you'll drop the lot. A page crammed with words is twelve pens.

Rule a line down the page

Now you know what goes in your notes, here's how to set the page up so trigger words happen on their own. Rule a line straight down the middle of your page. Everything you write has to stop at the line. You're not allowed past it.

Now, that sounds like a completely pointless rule, and I get why. But it's the whole trick. Once there's a fence down the middle of the page, you physically can't fit a full sentence in, so you're forced into trigger words whether you like it or not.

Heading at the top. Key ideas underlined. Facts bulleted underneath them. Then all that space on the other side is yours, for drawings and anything else that'll jog your memory.

And no, you don't have to be any good at drawing. Cook sounds like cooking, so draw a chef. Gravity sounds like gravy, so draw a jug of it. Nobody has to understand your notes except you.

VIRTUAL REALITY

What it is

- computer-made world
- you're inside it

How

- headset + controls
- phone / console / PC

Why different

- no screen in front
- interact w/ 3D



The slides these notes came from had **400** words on them. The notes have **28**.

Learn a word in thirty seconds

When you get to High School, you might be learning a language, or have tricky definitions, dates and formulas that you'll just have to remember in exams, so here's an awesome tip the top performing students use to remember important information.

Example: Arroz is Spanish for rice. You could spend 10 minutes repeating "arroz is rice, arroz is rice, arroz is rice". OR, you could read this paragraph once and remember it forever:

You're sitting in a restaurant. There's a bowl of rice in front of you, steaming hot, and you can smell it. Three robbers kick the door in and start shouting. So you grab the bowl and hurl it at them, and as it flies through the air every single grain of rice turns into an arrow. The robbers go down. The whole restaurant claps. The chef comes out and gives you free chicken.

Arroz. Arrows. Rice.

Now shut the book for a second. What's rice in Spanish?

You never tried to learn that, and you'll still have it next week. Here's the simple two-step formula to getting it right every time:

- 1 Swap the word you can't remember for an English word that sounds like it.
- 2 Build something ridiculous that links that word to what it means. If possible, make it at least one, if not all four, of these things:



WEIRD



ABOUT ME



SENSORY



INTERACTIVE

It has to be weird. You have to be in it. You have to be able to see it, hear it and smell it. And something has to actually happen. Get those four right and it sticks. And before you write this off as a bit silly, this is genuinely what world memory champions use to memorise a full pack of cards in under a minute.





Swap recognition for recall

Getting the information into your memory is half the job. The other half is knowing whether it'll still be there on test day. For example, try singing the second verse of your favourite song. Right now, no music, no help.

Can't do it, can you. But the second that track starts playing, you'll know every single word.

That's the trap, and nearly all of us fall into it. Reading over your notes and thinking *yep, I know this* is not the same as knowing it. With our notes, just like with your favourite song, there's a difference between Recognition and Recall:

RECOGNITION

Remembering when something reminds you. This is what nearly everyone practises.

RECALL

Remembering with absolutely nothing to help you. This is what the test asks for.

So practise the one the test actually asks for. Turn your notes **face down** on the desk. Say everything that was on that page out loud, to the wall, to the dog, to nobody at all. Then turn them over and find out what you missed.

Fair warning: it feels much worse than just reading them again, and you'll be tempted to go back to reading. That horrible feeling is the thing working! Do it four or five times and you've just turned recognition into recall, making it so much easier to remember in the exam!





The tomato

Everything in this book only works if you actually sit down and do it, and that's where most of us fall over. So here's the fix - but first, another history lesson:

Years ago a university student couldn't concentrate for more than about five minutes. So he went to the kitchen, grabbed a timer shaped like a tomato, wound it up and promised himself he'd work until it rang.

It worked so well it became a well-known technique for keeping focused. It's called the Pomodoro Technique, which is just Italian for tomato! Half the world uses it now, and it started with one guy and a bit of kitchen plastic.

Here's how you do it yourself at home, without needing a tomato timer. Set a timer for twelve minutes. Work. When it rings, stop and take three minutes off. Then go again.

And that's the bit that makes it work. Twelve minutes is never too long. Nobody has ever put off their homework because twelve minutes sounded like too much.

12

MINUTES OF WORK



3

MINUTES OFF



Phone in another room. Not face down on the desk.
Another room.



Anything on that desk that isn't what you need, off the desk.



Tell whoever's home you're not available until it rings.

Put the fun in first



The tomato sorts out the next twelve minutes. The rest of your week needs sorting too, and here's how almost everyone gets it wrong.

Here's how almost everyone builds a timetable. Rule up the week. Fill the whole thing with study. Then notice there's no room left for training, or Saturday, or the show you actually watch. Stick at it for about a fortnight. Get thoroughly sick of it. Bin it.

Nod if you've done a version of that.

Timetables don't fail because people are lazy. They fail because we build a week we don't want to live in.

So build it backwards. Training goes in first. Saturday with your mates goes in. The show goes in. School goes in. Then you look at whatever's left over, and that's where the work goes.

Think of it this way. Your life is already a full bottle. High school turns up with a second full bottle. You can't pour one into the other and hope for the best, so you have to be smart about what goes where. But putting the fun stuff in first helps you build a timetable you actually want to stick to!

	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
MORNING	School	School	School		Maths
AFTERNOON				Mates	
EVENING	Science	Training	The show		English

The whole book, in eight lines

1. Work out why you're reading it, before you read it.
2. Leave yourself a secret code.
3. Seven words beat sixty-seven.
4. Rule a line down the page.
5. Swap the word, then build something ridiculous.
6. Turn your notes face down and say it out loud.
7. Twelve minutes on a timer.
8. Put the fun in the week first.

Don't wait for the first test. By then it'll be much easier to keep doing what you've always done.

So pick one and try it tonight. Ten minutes is plenty.

And best of luck at High School!

