

STUDY SKILLS: INDEPENDENT LEARNING

Some students take a long time to realise that there are actually two types of work in secondary school. There is the obvious work, the work your teacher specifically tells you to do and that is compulsory: homework, working on assignments, preparing for tests and assessments. But students who get good results in school take a larger measure of responsibility for their learning. This means that the nights where they do not have much compulsory work, they also do independent learning.

These are the additional things you do, if you have no other schoolwork to do that night, to improve your understanding of your subjects. It is what students who get good marks are doing, they are just not talking about it to their friends!

Examples of independent learning:

- Reading
- Reviewing what you have been learning at school that week
- Extra practise on questions you find hard
- Research on an area you are interested in learning more about
- Making a mind map about what you have been learning
- Making study notes on a topic
- Improving your touch typing skills
- Reading ahead in your textbook
- Improving your study skills (you can complete units on www.studyskillshandbook.com.au)
- Doing work from a different textbook or study guide for one of your subjects (check the school library, local library and bookshops).

Some nights you will not have time to do any independent learning. Other nights you will have no homework and will spend the whole time allocated to schoolwork for that night working on independent learning tasks. Your teacher may even give you a sheet that has suggestions of independent learning work for that subject. If you are unsure, you can always ask. This means in secondary school you can never say 'I have nothing to do' – this really just means 'I have nothing compulsory to do at the moment!'.

One component of independent learning in high school is making your own study notes or summaries. You can learn more about how to make study notes in the unit 'Summarising' on www.studyskillshandbook.com.au

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