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Rayner Stephens High School
Homework and Independent Learning Policy

September 2021

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1 Introduction

At **Rayner Stephens** we strongly believe that homework helps to embed knowledge and skills acquired in class and provides all students with an opportunity to develop a crucial range of learning habits including independent thinking, memory, resilience and initiative. All homework will satisfy three clear aims:

1. Develop effective independent learning habits;
2. Improve students' knowledge and understanding (fluency) as the building blocks of learning in all subjects;
3. Enhance students' literacy and numeracy.

Students' independent learning habits will be promoted through the homework tasks set on Class Charts and directly link to the knowledge organisers. In this sense, 'revision' lasts five years and not five weeks or five months. This long-term approach to homework becomes habitual and the same strategies are embedded in all students by the time they do external examinations in Year 11. All families can access their child's homework record via Class Charts. Teaching staff will record for each student whether the work was;

- **Submitted:** The student has successfully handed the completed task in on time.
- **Extenuating circumstances:** The student has not handed the completed task in on time, but had a valid reason to do so.
- **Late:** The student has handed in the completed task, but it was handed in past the deadline.
- **Not submitted:** The student has failed to hand in the completed task.
- **Not checked yet:** There is no submission record for the student.
- **Not assigned:** The student has not been assigned to the homework task.

When homework culminates in a low-level quiz preparation in advance with the knowledge organiser is expected, teachers may select 'Not submitted' to illustrate where there was a lack of commitment in preparation which is reflected in the score/result achieved.

2 Knowledge and Understanding

Students' knowledge and understanding is promoted through the publication of 'knowledge organisers' for each student in every subject termly. These will inform students and families exactly what knowledge the students need to acquire and understand as the building blocks of learning for that term. They are published on the school website.

'Commitment to homework' will be evident in students' mastery of that knowledge and understanding and their response to teacher feedback in lessons.

Students' literacy is promoted through the provision of a range of homework activities that develop student's abilities to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using a range of materials associated with varying contexts.

Students' numeracy is promoted through the provision of a range of homework activities that develop student's abilities to apply maths skills in order to make the best possible decisions including; interpreting data, charts and diagrams, processing information, solving problems, checking answers, understanding and explaining solutions and making decisions based on logical thinking and reasoning.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

All Students should:

- Log on to Class Charts daily to check homework tasks that have been set and to meet deadlines.
www.classcharts.com/student/login Students will not be issued with planners;
- Locate and use the termly knowledge organisers on the school website;
- Log on to their school email account daily to check for shared resources and messages from staff;
- Use the independent practice skills (see Appendix 1 and 2) to improve knowledge and understanding across the curriculum;

- Read regularly and widely including a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, such as newspapers, magazines, online articles etc.

All teaching staff will:

- Set structured tasks (eg revision set must include a structured task, not just “revise ...”) which promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding (fluency) in subjects;
- Relate tasks to the knowledge organisers for each subject;
- Publish homework tasks on Class Charts in line with the prescribed amount and frequency;
- Ensure the submission of homework tasks is recorded in the ‘submission’ facility in Class Charts;
- Test retrieval and memory through regular low stakes quizzing in class and regular formal assessments.

All families should:

- Ensure they have used their login code to set up their Class Charts account www.classcharts.com/parent/login ;
- Log on daily to Class Charts and check the homework that has been set;
- Encourage the completion of homework tasks every day and support the development of effective study habits;
- Ensure that reading is promoted and valued at home (see Appendix 3);
- Support students in acquiring factual knowledge and sound understanding of subject content by discussing academic progress at home;
- Use the subject knowledge organisers to check for understanding in preparation for tests and assessments at school.

4 Expectations

At KS3, the minimum homework students should be set by their subject teacher is below. This will also be supported by the opportunity to become involved in the enrichment opportunities offered within school. Health and Wellbeing homework will be set in Year 9 only.

Subject	Frequency per 2 week cycle	Subject	Frequency per 2 week cycle
English	2	History	1
Maths	2	Geography	1
Science	2	Computing	1
MFL	2	Design Technology	1
Art	1	Food, Music, Drama	1
RS	1	Health and Wellbeing	1 (Theory based) Year 9 only

At KS4, the minimum homework students should be set by their subject teacher is below.

Subject	Frequency per 2 week cycle	Subject	Frequency per 2 week cycle
English	3	Option A	2
Maths	3	Option B	2
Science	3	Option C	2

In PSHE no homework will be set.

Each homework task will include guidance regarding how much time students should take to complete the activity set.

Given the importance of homework to students’ education, it is necessary for it to be monitored, supported, rewarded and enforced when necessary. Students will be rewarded when they complete tasks set. If a

student persistently fails to complete the homework activities to the best of their ability they will receive consequences according to the school's procedures and families will be made aware via Class Charts.

Rayner Stephens High School provide opportunities for students to work in the ASPIRE Centre on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 2:50 -3:50pm if they need a quiet space or want some help with their learning.

Students should be working proactively to address their learning gaps, go back through their class notes, create resources for revision and build their long-term memory through regular testing and quizzing. The provision of knowledge organisers and strategies students can deploy at home means there are lots of opportunities for students to develop effective homework habits.

5 Proactive Study

We also have the following resources to support students;

ACTIVE LEARN (KS3 and KS4 MFL)

Active Learn is a web-based learning platform that includes key course content to support student knowledge and understanding.

BBC BITESIZE (KS3 and KS4 Subjects)

BBC Bitesize is a free web based interactive learning platform that combines theory, video clips and both KS3 and GCSE course content with low stakes testing to help students remember more.

EDUCAKE (Science)

Educake allows teaching staff to set students a range of personalised learning and assessment tasks to complete.

MATHSWATCH (Maths)

MathsWatch allows teaching staff to set students a range of personalised learning and assessment tasks to complete.

OAK NATIONAL ACADEMY (KS3 and KS4 Subjects)

Oak National Academy provides students with access to a web-based learning platform in a range of subjects at both KS3 and KS4 delivered by subject specialists to support student knowledge and understanding.

SENECA ONLINE LEARNING: (KS4 Business, Computer Science, Science, MFL, History)

Seneca Online Learning provides students with free access to a web based interactive learning platform which combines lots of gifs / memes / video clips GCSE course content with lots of low stakes questioning to help students remember more.

TEACH ICT (KS3 and KS4 Computing/Computer Science)

Teach ICT provides students with access to a web-based learning platform including key course content to support student knowledge and understanding. Students will be provided with a username and password to access resources.

MEMRISE (KS3 and KS4 MFL)

Memrise is a free online learning platform to support student knowledge and understanding of foreign languages.

QUIZLET (KS3 and KS4 Subjects)

Quizlet provides students with free access to a range of science backed study tools in a range of subject areas to support knowledge and understanding of key concepts.

Appendix 1: A guide to how to prepare for tests and examinations effectively

Students need clear direction to complete work independently in order to develop subject fluency in terms of knowledge and understanding.

The following information should be used with students to support them in developing effective independent practice habits.

Firstly, it's ok to forget. That's an important part of making memories last.

Tying shoes is a hard task when we are little. We had to think hard about which laces went where. Now we can do it automatically.

There is some basic knowledge which needs to be as easy to retrieve as tying our shoes, so working memory can be used for more critical tasks.



Need help? Try www.getrevising.co.uk

So how do you actually revise?

- No cramming-spaced practice as part of an ongoing commitment to independent practice.
- Consistent, short study sessions -2 hours on a Sunday becomes 30 minutes on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday.
-

There are FOUR STEPS to success; Understand, Condense, Memorise, Review

One of the key elements to succeeding in exams and turning effort and your ability into marks is Effective Independent Practice.

Know your stuff. Too many students spend hours 'revising' – but it's ineffective; it's not going into the long-term memory.

Follow these simple steps using knowledge organisers and subject exercise books.

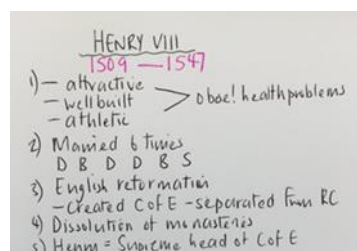
Step 1: Understand

You won't remember a unit of work for long if you don't understand it. Think of each topic you study as a giant jigsaw puzzle and everything you learn as a piece to completing the puzzle. If you understand how it all fits together, it will be less confusing and you will be able to memorise it all easily.

Step 2: Condense it

Make notes to condense chunks of text.

Henry VIII was King of England from 1509 until his death in 1547. Henry is said to have been an attractive, well-built and very athletic man, accomplished at many sports. Later on in life, he had a succession of health problems, partly due to becoming very obese. He is famed for having been married six times. He divorced two of his wives, another two of his wives were beheaded, one wife died and then Henry himself died whilst



Step 3: Memorise it

1. Create an A-map to summarise notes
2. Create mnemonics or first letter triggers to aid memory



All Boys Should Come Home Please

To remember the names of Henry VIII’s wives- **A**ragon, **B**oleyn, **S**eymour, **C**leves, **H**oward, **P**arr

3. Visual triggers

On the one hand...
On the other hand...



4. Rhyming/phrase triggers

Q: What Happened to the wives of Henry VIII?
Divorced, Beheaded, Died, Divorced, Beheaded, Survived

Struggling to remember facts? Try these four strategies.

Strategy 1: Dump it!

- Take a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
- Identify a specific topic to focus on but don’t open any books.
- In 60 secs, dump onto the paper anything you can remember about the topic. **TEST YOURSELF!** Don’t worry about the structure and organisation. Odd words are fine.
- This activity helps access prior knowledge and also sends signals to the memory. Importantly, it establishes what you know and what you don’t.
- Put the paper to one side and do a revision activity for 15 mins using books, revision cards, mind maps etc (READ, COVER, REMEMBER).
- Put books away and ‘dump’ again in a different colour on the same sheet of paper as before, but in a different colour.
- Students will typically add at least 7 new pieces of information second time around-a visible sign of success. Success is a powerful motivational tool!

Strategy 2: What does it look like?

- A picture says a thousand words.’ (The brain prefers images to words!)
- Take a section of written notes.
- On a plain sheet of paper, try to reproduce as much as possible of this information in 15 minutes without using any words. Numbers, symbols and initial letters are acceptable.
- This tool forces students to personalise their notes- a great way to develop understanding.
- This could be developed by explaining their drawings to somebody else.
- Stick the sheets of paper up at home in a prominent place like a wardrobe door or a bedroom wall. Change them regularly.

Strategy 3: Talk until you stop

- Spend 5-6 minutes reading through some notes
- Give a ‘lecture’ on the topic without the notes. This can be to a friend, family member or even an empty room! The objective is to find the point at which the student stops talking. That is the point which is not fully understood or isn’t remembered.

- When the student stops, they have discovered their limit and the starting point for the next revision session.
- Great for those who are good at kidding themselves about how much they know and understand.

Strategy 4: Post-it notes

- Spend one 20-25 minute session writing a set of notes onto post-it notes. Only one point for each note.
- Stick all the post-it's on a wall, door or notice board in a random order.
- Over the next few days, rearrange the post-it's into any order which seems to make sense i.e. chronological, most/least important, thematic, causal.
- The student will see and remember the post-its 100's of times if they are displayed.
- Post-its can also be used to match dates with events, themes with poems, chemicals with reactions etc

What else?

Use Apps such as Memrise and Quizlet to use or create quizzes based on revision topics.

Students can create them, test yourself or get someone to test you, it works!

There are a number of types you can create:

- ✓ Multiple Choice Questions
- ✓ True or False
- ✓ Short Explanation Questions
- ✓ Odd One Out

How to use flashcards

Simply create with questions on one side and answers on the other side. You can colour code for specific topics and quiz yourself or others. Post its can be also useful for key words and timelines



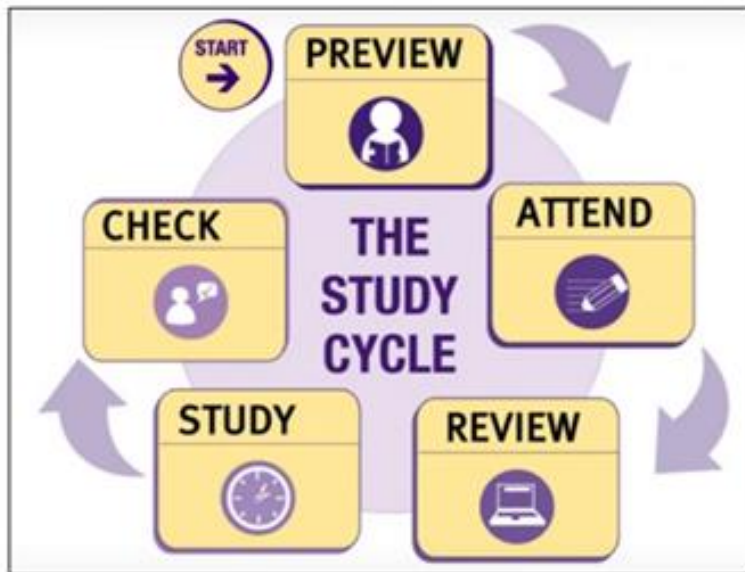
Try the Leitner Method, using this video <https://youtu.be/C20EvKtdJwQ>



Create excellent flashcards online or on your phone using Quizlet which also had an app.



Appendix 2: Using the Study Cycle model to embed independent practice strategies



Step 1: PREVIEW

When you direct study to knowledge organisers **before the lesson/topic study**, students will grasp the 'big picture'. Direct and support students in activities to deconstruct information in the knowledge organisers. When students have the 'big picture', detail becomes more obvious and relevant to learning and lessons are more engaging.

Ideas

How to study a textbook <http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2016/2/12-1>

Step 2: ATTEND

When students have the 'big picture', detail in subject content becomes more obvious to students and more relevant to their learning. Students are more engaged as a result. Class work has a place in a cycle of learning.

Step 3: REVIEW

Direct students to spend time reviewing their notes/class work. This process helps strengthen and transfer information from short term to long term memory. Reinforcing new learning and new concepts gives students more confidence.

Ideas

'Quick fire five' as a Do Now
10QQ Do Now
Dump it!
Talk until you stop...

Step 4: STUDY

Direct students to review and connect learning independently through summarising, condensing, producing A-maps, apply understanding to new problems. Repetition is the key.

Ideas

Dual coding, or combining visuals with words, is one of the 6 strategies for effective learning. The idea is that by combining a visual representation of an idea with a verbal representation of an idea, we will be able to learn the idea better.

Step 5: CHECK

Provide timely opportunities for students to evaluate their understanding of subject content, concepts and skills. Getting feedback helps students to recognise their strengths and the area they need to work on. ACTIONS for students should be of sufficient quality to move their learning on.

Ideas

Interleaving, elaboration, spacing, retrieval practice

<http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2016/8/11-1>

Topic and Quiz Spacing <http://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2017/5/11-1>

Appendix 3: Benefits of reading

PROVEN POWER OF READING

<https://readingagency.org.uk/about/impact/002-reading-facts-1/>

- Reading for pleasure is more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education and is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background.
- 16-year-olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life.
- Having books in the home is associated with both reading enjoyment and confidence. Of children who report having fewer than 10 books in their homes, 42% say they do not like reading and only 32% say they are 'very confident' readers. For children who report having over 200 books at home, only 12% say they do not like reading and 73% consider themselves 'very confident' readers.
- Children who read books often at age 10 and more than once a week at age 16 gain higher results in maths, vocabulary and spelling tests at age 16 than those who read less regularly.

10 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN TO READ

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read/10-top-tips-to-encourage-children-to-read>

1. Encourage your child to read

Reading helps your child's wellbeing, develops imagination and has educational benefits too. Just a few minutes a day can have a big impact on children of all ages.

2. Read aloud regularly

Try to read to your child every day. It's an opportunity to spend some quality time and enjoy a story. Stories matter and children love re-reading them.

3. Encourage reading choice.

Give children lots of opportunities to read different things in their own time - it doesn't just have to be books. There's fiction, non-fiction, poetry, comics, magazines, recipes and much more. Try leaving interesting reading material in different places around the home and see who picks it up.

4. Read together

Choose a favourite time to read together as a family and enjoy it. This might be everyone reading the same book together, reading different things at the same time, or getting your children to read to each other. This time spent reading together can be relaxing for all.

5. Create a comfortable environment

Make a calm, comfortable place for your family to relax and read independently - or together.

6. Make use of your local library

Visit libraries when you're able to and explore all sorts of reading ideas. Local libraries also offer brilliant online materials, including audiobooks and eBooks to borrow. See [Libraries Connected](#) for more digital library services and resources.

7. Talk about books

This is a great way to make connections, develop understanding and make reading even more enjoyable. Start by discussing the front cover and talking about what it reveals and suggests the book could be about. Then talk about what you've been reading and share ideas. You could discuss something that happened that surprised you, or something new that you found out. You could talk about how the book makes you feel and whether it reminds you of anything.

8. Bring reading to life

You could try cooking a recipe you've read together. Would you recommend it to a friend? Alternatively, play a game where you pretend to be the characters in a book, or discuss an interesting article you've read.

9. Make reading active

Play games that involve making connections between pictures, objects and words, such as reading about an object and finding similar things in your home. You could organise treasure hunts related to what you're reading. Try creating your child's very own book by using photos from your day and adding captions.

10. Engage your child in reading in a way that suits them

You know your child best and you'll know the best times for your child to read. If they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) then short, creative activities may be the way to get them most interested. If English is an additional language, encourage reading in a child's first language, as well as in English. What matters most is that they enjoy it.