



# Djanogly

City Academy Sixth Form

# INDEPENDENT

# LEARNING BOOKLET

# 2025-2026

# Your Pathway

# Your Career

# #Seeingisbelieving



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## Introduction

Success at Sixth Form depends on how well you manage your time outside of lessons. Every subject specification emphasises the importance of independent study—you will only reach your full potential if you put in the work beyond the classroom.

You should aim to spend **at least FIVE hours per week per subject** reviewing content, completing homework, and preparing for assessments. The time you invest in independent learning will directly influence your final grades.

Consider this:

You only spend around **8% of your total time** in lessons:

- 36 out of 52 weeks per year
- 5 out of 7 days per week
- 4 out of 24 hours per day

This makes what you do **outside the classroom** just as important as what you do inside.

In Year 12 and 13, **you are in charge of your own education**. This means:

- Attending all lessons
- Being punctual and properly equipped
- Meeting homework deadlines

You will also need the following equipment for successful study:

- ✓ A folder for each subject
- ✓ Coloured dividers
- ✓ Lined paper
- ✓ Pen, pencil, and ruler
- ✓ Highlighters
- ✓ Diary or notebook to record homework

Being organised and proactive is essential to thriving in Sixth Form.



## Essential study skills

### ***Increasing your motivation***

- Have high expectations of yourself and don't give up.
- Make sure you have chosen subjects you are genuinely interested in.
- Set yourself achievable goals.
- Listen to feedback from your teachers.
- Celebrate successes.



### ***Managing your time***

- Make sure you understand what is expected of you in each subject.
- Get into a weekly routine and make sure work is completed by the deadline set.
- Create a study timetable which breaks each subject down into bite sized chunks.
- Complete Proactive Study as well as completing the set work.
- Make 'to do' lists – this will help you to prioritise.
- Record each deadline in your diary/notebook.
- Revise & Practice throughout the year and make sure all your revision materials are created **by Easter at the latest**. After this you should just be focussing on actually revising.



### ***Improving concentration***

- Beware of interruptions and distractions and use your study periods wisely. Remember to take advantage of the study hub and library.
- Divide your study time into hour blocks – this could be one task or a number of tasks. This will prevent you getting bored and procrastinating.
- Try working with someone else. If you can teach something to someone else it shows you understand it and it will also help you remember it. Teaching is the best form of learning!



# YOUR **PATHWAY** YOUR **CAREER**

## **Seeking help**

- Don't suffer in silence! If you are struggling your teachers are there to help you.



## **Organising your workspace**

- Work in an environment where you won't get distracted. You can study in the Sixth Form until 4:30pm if you want.
- Keep your workspace tidy – working in clutter won't help you.
- Make sure your folders for each subject are neat and organised into sections using dividers.

## **Taking responsibility for learning**

Independent learning in the Sixth Form is an essential requirement for every student aiming for success.

Learning that is focused solely on the content of your lessons will not offer you the scope and breadth of knowledge required for A Level study. Students in the Sixth Form must be prepared to seek out additional learning material through the library resources and should be regularly accessing online academic journals to expand their subject knowledge.

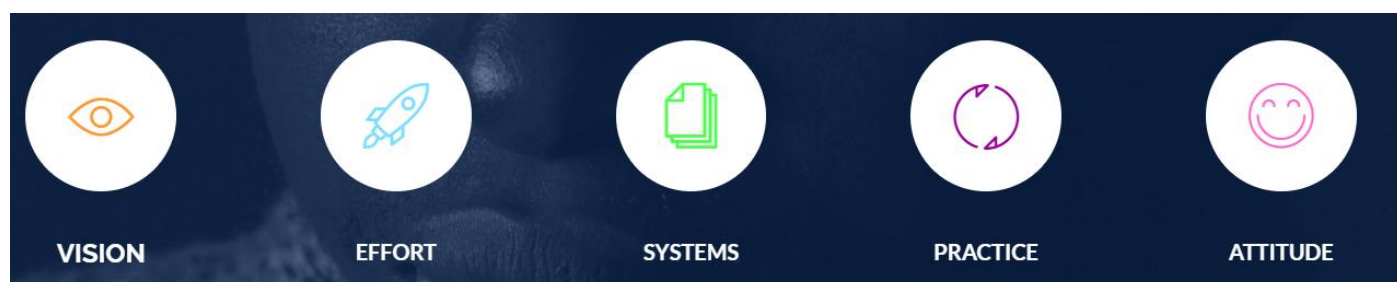
This is an essential requirement for proactive students in the Sixth Form.

Below are some examples of steps taken by independent learners:

| <b>Your learning</b>               | <b>Dependent learner</b>                                                                | <b>Independent learner</b>                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Motivation to learn</b>         | You respond to the pressures of the Sixth Form through deadlines, penalties and grades. | You respond to external pressures but you are also seeking personal satisfaction to learn as much as you can.          |
| <b>What you learn</b>              | Resources and content are determined by teachers ( <b>Directed Study</b> ).             | Teachers give guidance on resources but you happily seek out and create your own materials ( <b>Proactive Study</b> ). |
| <b>Managing your own learning</b>  | You follow teacher's instructions but do not go beyond it.                              | You are keen to develop strategies for learning that work for you ( <b>Proactive Study</b> ).                          |
| <b>Reflecting on your learning</b> | You find little opportunity to reflect on your learning.                                | You are keen to reflect on what and how you learn ( <b>Proactive Study</b> ).                                          |

**Incorporating the 5 key components of scholar success in Sixth Form**

***The VESPA model:***



**Vision:** Having a clear goal. What do you want to do after Sixth Form? Research this using Unifrog.

**Effort:** How much 'efficient effort' you put in. Completing both 'Directed Study' and 'Proactive Study'

**Systems:** Having good organisation and project management skills 1. organising your learning (folders) 2. organising your time (planning)

**Practice:** 'Deliberate practice makes perfect'. Regularly complete past papers, exam questions & use mark schemes

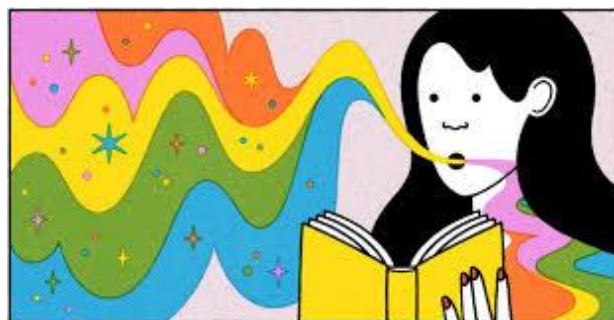
**Attitude:** Developing confidence, emotional control, academic buoyancy and growth mindset

As part of your study skills programme, you will be equipped with the tools that will support you with each steps of the VESPA model.

## Reading and responding to material

Reading is one of the core activities of studying. In Sixth Form you are faced with the following challenges...

- Volume of reading material
- Complexity of reading material
- Trying to remember what you have read



The following are techniques to help you....

- **Skimming:** This involves looking quickly through the book and reading only things like the contents, headings, introductions and conclusions. It's a quick and efficient way of familiarising yourself with a publication and is useful if you wish to check whether a book is relevant, or for finding particular information or ideas quickly. You may skim the newspaper to find the articles you want to read, or a textbook to identify a relevant chapter.
- **Scanning:** This is a rapid search for important points. It may be a diagram, a title or a key word. The essential thing is that you deliberately ignore everything except the one item for which you are scanning. Scanning is useful when you want to identify a particular piece of information – for example some specific chemical formulae.
- **Reading to understand:** This involves studying a chapter, passage or article in detail in order to absorb all the major facts and ideas. You may read it more than once, and take notes to summarise what you have read. Reading to understand is useful when you want to study something thoroughly.
- **Word-by-word reading:** Sometimes you actually need to read every word extremely carefully – for example, when reading an English Literature text or an exam question.

To study effectively you need to vary your reading style and become proficient in each type of reading.

## Taking and making notes

Taking notes forces you to think because you have to decide what to write down and how to say it.

Notes should...

- Summarise the key themes of a chapter
- Highlight key ideas and arguments
- List any important facts or statistics

Notes are best presented using sub-headings with key points underlined or highlighted. Notes should be detailed enough to cover the relevant material in depth but not too detailed that it makes revision overly time consuming.

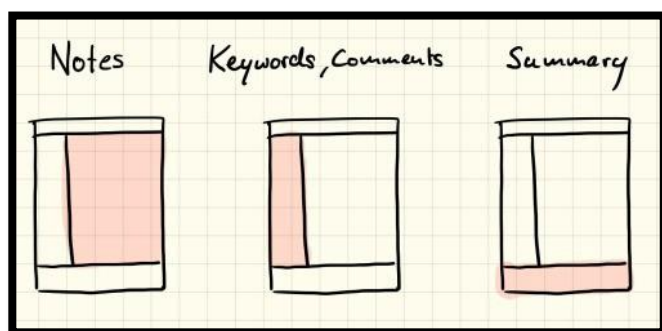
Good notes act as...

- An extension to your memory – giving you access to a wider range of knowledge.
- A symbol of progress – providing you with evidence of the work you have done.

### **Cornell note taking**

There are many different ways of taking notes in Sixth Form or at the university however, Cornell note taking is superior to others and science has proven that it is not only more efficient but also makes it a lot easier to review notes, for example when preparing for an exam.

1. All notes from the lesson go into the main note-taking column.
2. The smaller column on the left side is for questions about the notes that can be answered when reviewing and keywords or comments that make the whole reviewing and exam preparation process easier.
3. When reviewing the notes, a brief summary of every page should be written into the section at the bottom.



When making notes...

- Always write the date and title at the top of the first page to make filing later easier.
- Make sure you write down key words/phrases.
- Devise your own shorthand system of writing – this may involve symbols and abbreviations to make writing faster.
- Always re-visit the notes you make in a lesson to consolidate learning.

#### How to make notes from written sources

You will also have to make notes, often in your own time, from a variety of written sources such as:

1. **A handout** – Start by reading through the text and highlighting/underling the key words and main ideas. Then write a summary in your own words, adding your own comments or responses.
2. **A textbook** – Start by reading through the text, then note down key words and ideas. It can sometimes be useful to try and summarise each paragraph in one sentence. This helps you focus on what the really important points are.
3. **Your own lesson notes** – To remember the information effectively, it is best to return to your lesson notes the same day. Research has shown that after only 10 minutes your ability to recall knowledge begins to decline sharply and by the end of 24 hours you will only have retained 20% of the information unless you have reviewed it.

**Some suggestions for writing up notes**

You must experiment with different techniques and formats until you find a style of note-making which works for you. It is worth spending time on revision notes to avoid panic later!

1. **Write legibly** - If you have difficulty revising from your own handwriting it might be worth typing your notes.
3. **Use pictures, symbols and diagrams to illustrate your notes** - These will make them seem more personal and will help recall.
4. **Use headings, sub-headings and bullet points** - This will make it easier to find information and to learn from your notes.
5. **Use abbreviations** - Don't write in full sentences.
6. **Use capitals or underlining for key words.**
7. **Don't copy out chunks from books** - Always put notes into your own words.
8. **Check spellings** - This is especially important for subject-specific vocabulary. You will be penalised for incorrect spelling of these words in the exams.
9. **Make revision materials as you go along** - Record key facts on flashcards cards while they are still fresh in your mind. When you do this throughout your course it relieves the sense of being overwhelmed as exams or deadlines approach.



## Abbreviations in Post-16 Learning

Post-16 learning is a much more academic style of learning than that undertaken at Key Stage 4. You will be required to understand what these abbreviations are in order to support your response to teacher feedback. In addition, these abbreviations may be used in academic texts or be required when writing coursework pieces within your chosen subject.

|      |                                    |
|------|------------------------------------|
| e.g. | For example                        |
| i.e. | (Latin: id est) that is            |
| etc. | (Latin: et cetera) and the rest    |
| &    | And                                |
| cf.  | Compare                            |
| no.  | Number                             |
| ch.  | Chapter                            |
| C    | Century                            |
| +    | Plus                               |
| -    | Minus                              |
| ^    | insert, omitted                    |
| ~    | approximately                      |
| @    | At                                 |
| N.B. | (Latin: nota bene) note well, take |
| @    | At                                 |
| N.B. | (Latin: nota bene) note well, take |
| <    | less than                          |
| >    | more than                          |
| =    | Equals                             |
| ∴    | Therefore                          |
| bec. | Because                            |
| exc. | Except                             |
| fig. | Figure                             |
| B4   | Before                             |
| v.   | Very                               |
| opp. | opposite                           |

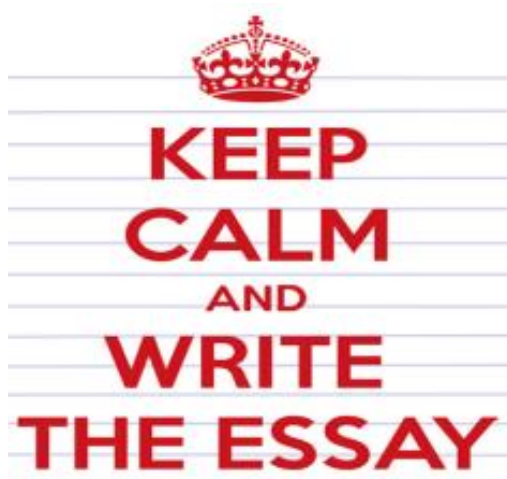
## **Resources**

- Computers: There is a wealth of knowledge out there and the internet offers lots of information. However, you need to consider the source of online information – there is little vetting of material so it is difficult to know how reliable the source is.
- Distractions: Social media sites are a distraction. It's impossible to concentrate on academic work if notifications on social media are popping up continuously. To avoid distraction, don't log into these sites whilst you are studying; use them as a reward after a study session. They are enormous drains on your time!
- Textbooks: In most subjects, you will use a textbook as your main source of information. You may be asked to take notes directly from the textbook in preparation for or after a lesson.
- Past Papers: These are one of the most valuable study aids you have. After all they represent exactly what it is you will be asked to do in the exam, so the more past papers you complete the better prepared you will be.
- Online Journals: You can search the contents pages and/or the full text of journals to find articles on a certain subject.
- Homework: Teachers do not set homework just to waste your time. Teachers set homework to check that you have grasped the content and to give you the opportunity to practise applying your knowledge. Therefore copying homework from someone else and passing work off as your own serves no purpose. However, don't be afraid to ask for help with homework – before it is due in. There is no point on the day homework is due saying 'Oh, I couldn't do these questions.' You should have contacted the teacher long before then.
- Assessment Feedback: Teachers do not provide feedback for it to be ignored. Feedback from your teachers is essential for identifying the steps you need to take to improve your class score, work towards your progress exam and better equip you to reach your predicted grade. Responding to feedback should be an integral part of your learning journey.



## **Essay writing**

1. Look at the essay title – Read the title carefully and underline key words to make sure you address all aspects of the question. It's also worth annotating the question.
2. Gather materials together – Look back through your class notes to find out what is relevant to the question set. It's then worth using these materials to create yourself an essay plan.
3. Planning your answer: When you have gathered your material together you need to organise it into an essay plan. This could be done by bullet pointing ideas under subheadings or creating a mind map.
4. Construct the essay: How you actually construct an essay varies from one subject to another, however most essays should:
  - o Have an introduction, outlining the topic to be discussed.
  - o Be relevant to the question set. Cut out any information not directly related to the essay title.
  - o Have a logical and developed argument.
  - o Have a conclusion which summarises the main points and directly answers the question set.
5. Write the essay: This is best done in one go, as this will help the flow of your argument.
6. Review your essay: In doing so, check the following:
  - o Are your spelling, punctuation and use of English accurate?
  - o Do the sentences make sense?
  - o Do the divisions into paragraphs work?
  - o Have you given sufficient explanation?
  - o Most importantly, have you answered the question in the title? Your answer should be relevant and structured rather than a "tell me everything you know about...."



## **Effective study and revision techniques from Sixth Formers**

**Repetition:** If you spend an evening learning something don't leave it and come back to it weeks later. Look over it again briefly the next day, a few days later, the following week, two weeks later and so on.



**Revise continually:** Don't leave your revision until a few weeks before the exam. Revise throughout the year – starting in September – and have all revision materials (e.g. posters, flashcards, mind maps) created by Easter.



**Revise smart:** There's no point reading a textbook all day if you don't take anything in. Divide your time into hour blocks – you should aim to revise for 30 minutes, then apply it to exam questions. You then need to check what information you have missed.

**Assess-Action-Apply (3As):** Assess (test) yourself on a topic, Action (revise) the topic and Apply (test yourself again).



**Traffic light revision:** After each revision period, highlight areas of strength in green and areas of weakness in red. This will help you focus your revision when you return to the topic.

**Exam question mind map:** After you have revised a particular section, create a mind map around an exam question to summarise the content you would need to include for that question.

**Model answers:** Look at model answers and examiner's reports to help you understand what the examiner is looking for.

**Memory challenge:** Revise for 30 minutes, cover it up and try to write/draw what you remember. Then return to your original revision materials and compare the two.

**Use your study periods wisely:** Don't let your study periods drift away without getting anything done. It's important you find a suitable place to study to complete work set and revision.

**Divide your time equally between subjects:** It's easy to become bogged down in a particular subject if you've got a test/coursework looming in that subject. However you need to stay on top of your other subjects too.



# YOUR PATHWAY YOUR CAREER

## Good examples of revision

### Revision timetable

#### Psychology: Approaches revision

#### Psychology: Social Influence

| P1                                          | P2                                        | P3                                  | P4                                            | P5                                               | After School                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AS psychology<br>top 10 terms & definitions | Psychology<br>revision                    | Media<br>revision                   | AS Sociology<br>topics & families             | Psychology<br>revision                           | Media<br>revision                                                  |
| Psychology 9<br>Phonology                   | A3 psychology<br>top 10 concepts          | Sociology A2 =<br>topic 10 concepts | Media<br>revision                             | A2 Psychology<br>top 10 concepts                 | A2 Sociology<br>top 10 concepts                                    |
| Psychology 9<br>Lesson                      | Sociology lesson<br>revision              | A3 psychology<br>approaches         | Sociology<br>Lesson<br>revision               | Media<br>Lesson                                  | Media =<br>3A + 1B<br>post questions                               |
| Media -<br>topics & key<br>bits & pieces    | Psychology -<br>classroom<br>conditioning | Media<br>Lesson                     | Sociology<br>Lesson<br>revision               | Sociology &<br>Media view<br>on the<br>family    | Psychology =<br>Drug<br>theory                                     |
| Media -<br>Napster<br>revision              | Psychology<br>Lesson                      | Sociology =<br>green<br>crime       | Media =<br>names of<br>theorists              | Psychology<br>Social<br>influence<br>Social dev. | Sociology =<br>Church, Sects,<br>types of religious<br>places      |
| Saturday                                    | Media =<br>Audience<br>revision           | Psychology =<br>Schizophrenia       | Media =<br>functionalist<br>view on<br>family | Media =<br>representation<br>Lesson              | Sociology =<br>different<br>explanations<br>due to social<br>class |
| Sunday                                      |                                           |                                     |                                               |                                                  | Media<br>Revision<br>depending on<br>time & place -<br>online etc. |

M = Monday  
 Tu = Tuesday  
 W = Wednesday  
 Th = Thursday  
 F = Friday

= lesson  
 = topic to revise  
 = break

**WEEK ONE**

#### Media: audience revision

### Summarise what you know/don't know

Build up a weekly bank of topics that need further attention before the exam starts.

#### I know this...

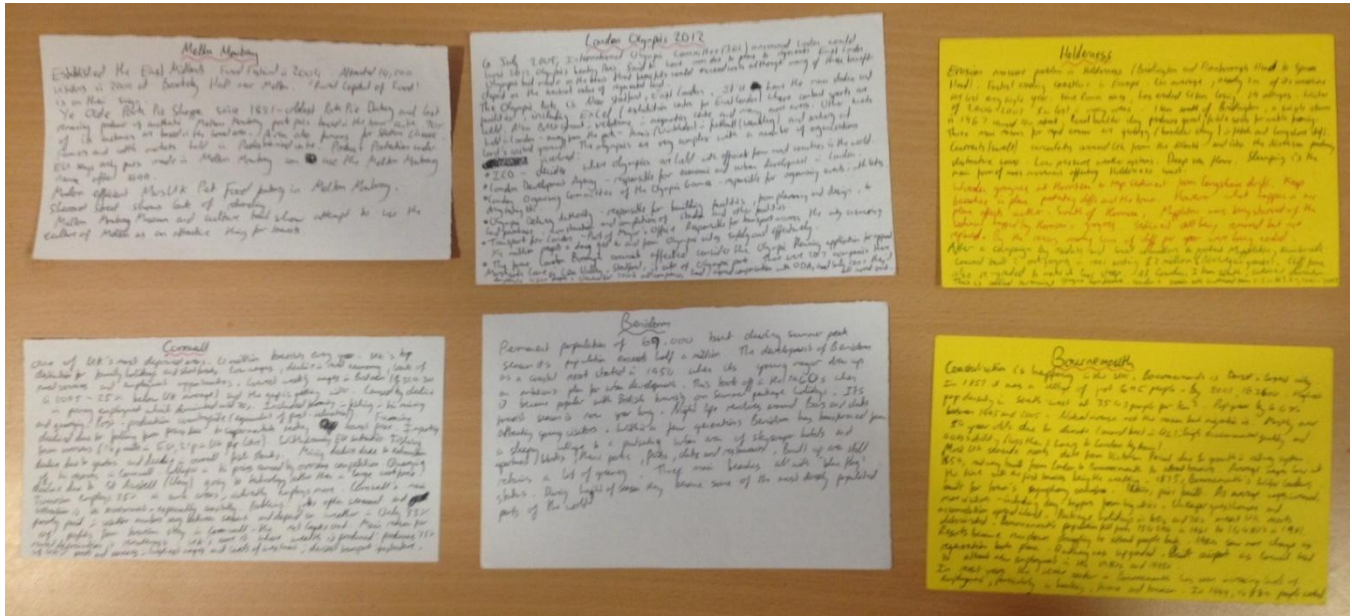
1. Psychology....
2. English Language....
3. Biology....

#### I don't know this....

1. Psychology....
2. English Language....
3. Biology....

# YOUR PATHWAY YOUR CAREER

## Flashcards



## Annotate and summarise key concepts

Large store of myoglobin, Supply of glycogen, Rich supply of blood vessels, Numerous mitochondria  
→ source of metabolic energy

**Fast-twitch** – Contracts more rapidly with more power but only for a short period of time. Adapted for intense exercise by:

- Having thicker and more numerous myosin filaments, having a high concentration of enzymes used for anaerobic respiration, a large store of phosphocreatine to provide phosphate to make ATP
- to provide energy

**Neuromuscular junctions**

Many neuromuscular junctions are spread through the muscle for simultaneous contraction

Each muscle fibre has one motor neuron associated with it. The muscle fibre and the neuron make up one motor unit

When only a small force is needed only a few motor units are stimulated

When a nerve impulse reaches the neuromuscular junction, the synaptic vesicles join with the presynaptic membrane and release acetylcholine which diffuses across to the postsynaptic membrane and stimulates it to allow sodium ions to enter. The acetylcholine is then broken down by Acetylcholinesterase and then diffuses back into the presynaptic neuron.

**The Neuromuscular Junction**

Arrival of action potential causes  $Ca^{2+}$  channels to open +  $Ca^{2+}$  enter synaptic knob

$Ca^{2+}$  influx causes synaptic vesicles to fuse with membrane

release acetylcholine into cleft

acetylcholine binds to receptors on muscle fiber membrane

causes  $Na^{+}$  ions to enter muscle fiber

creates new action potential

acetylcholinesterase breaks down acetylcholine into ethanoic acid and choline

prevents from creating a new action potential diffuses back

ATP released by mitochondria used to reabsorb acetylcholine into synaptic vesicles

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