

# HERITAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDY SKILLS RESOURCE

Research has found that between the ages of 7 and 11, children begin to organize their thoughts into classes and systems. These classes and systems help them develop problem-solving strategies. Teachers and parents can support this process by helping children develop learning strategies or, more informally, study skills. Research has shown us that just as confidence in one's ability to learn promotes learning, lack of such confidence inhibits learning. Students who use study skills effectively are more likely to believe that they can learn. Therefore, they are more likely to be successful.

(<http://www.emstac.org/registered/topics/studyskills/studyskillsoverview.htm>)

This resource was compiled by the teaching staff at Heritage Middle School. It represents best practices and strategies for studying. We encourage you to use the strategies to determine which work best for your learner.

## MINDSET

What is your most difficult assignment? Get that done **FIRST** while your mind is still fresh. Take a small break, have a snack. Then finish the "easier" assignments after and it will make the night much less stressful.

Consider having a mindfulness exercise to help you focus on your task before you begin. It can be focusing or meditation.



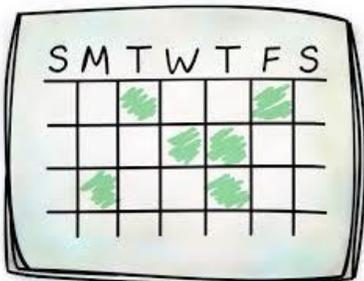
Possibly use a webpage such as:

<https://www.pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/>

## SCHEDULING

1. Prepare a weekly and monthly study calendar.

This is easily done in your student planner. At the start of each week, prepare a weekly study schedule. As the week progresses, update your calendar/schedule as new items arise. On your calendar/schedule include the following:



- Write down each of your classes.
- Write down all assignments to be completed that week (including studying for tests).
- Plan ahead. Do not wait until the night before an assessment to start studying.
- Add any after school or extra-curricular activities that would impact your study time. Plan around these activities!
- Designate what days and times you'll be working on particular assignments/projects.

2. Set an alarm on your phone so you remember to check Schoology.

3. Make appointments with your teachers for extra help when you first don't understand something - don't wait for it to build up. Have specific questions for your teachers. Demonstrate to them that you have attempted the assignment.

## ENVIRONMENT



Designate a quiet study area at home. Have the area stocked with materials you need on a daily basis such as a pen and paper. Choose a quiet, well-lit, low-traffic area away from distractions such as television, music and even other family members. Even better, make your study sessions “no communication” time periods. Save cell phone and the use of social media for after your schoolwork is done. Then reward yourself!

Put the phone away and other social media away. Your work will take you at least TWICE as long. Studies show it takes at least 20 minutes to focus and get into a task. Every time you are interrupted your brain has to reset. You will finish faster and more efficiently then you can chat all you want!

## STRATEGIES

Keep a log about what works for you. Studying, like most tasks, have more than one *right* way to do it. Ultimately, the result is what's important. If index cards work for you, use them. If online review tools work, use them. It is important to track what you are doing and what the results are so that you can find the right study tools for you.

Do not just “read over” your notes. You need to actively participate in studying. This could mean rewriting notes, outlining notes, drawing connections or drawing pictures/diagrams, completing practice problems, etc...

Review study guides to ensure that you understand and study all the topics covered on the exam or quiz.

Try using a study buddy. Most tasks are more fun when you do them with someone. With the 1:1 computer initiative, you have many ways to contact your buddy; just make sure you're actually doing work and not wasting time.

Write your notes in one color - your own thoughts and teacher notes in another color.

| sticky Note color | meaning of color                                   |
|-------------------|--|
| Yellow            | This is a very important point for me to remember! |
| Green             | Smarty Pants! I already knew this!                 |
| Pink              | Awesome! I want to share this!                     |
| Blue              | I have a connection! This reminds me of...         |
| Purple            | I have a question about what I read                |

Color code the main idea in one color supporting details in another.

Use post it notes when a reading a passage - writing down words or concepts that you do not understand. Go back later and look up words or concepts in your notes or online.

Use online tools to help you study such as Quizlet, Kahoot or Khan Academy.

Go to the online textbook to review the material and complete practice questions.

Take three ideas/note cards from the unit of study and write down how they connect to each other.

Put more effort into homework assignments, so it easier to study for a quiz or test.

As you read through a text, in print or in your device, highlight passages or ideas that can support important concepts and margin notes.

Review your own notes everyday If you come across a passage or section of a text that you do not understand underlined it and put a mark. Discuss this with your teachers before, during or after class.

Copy problems from your notebook onto scrap paper for practice (or cover the answers). Then check to see if you got the answer right. If not, try to figure out why.



### Use the ABCs:

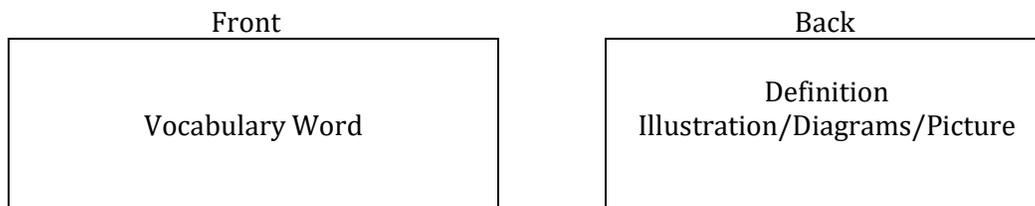
Using the letters of the alphabet, write as many vocabulary words as you can remember from the topic. You can write multiple words for each letter.

### Flashcards:

On one side of an index card, write a vocabulary term.

On the other side, write a definition in your own words.

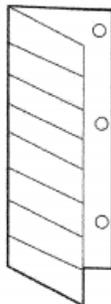
On the same side where you recorded the definition, draw a diagram, illustration or picture which can also help explain the definition of the vocabulary word.



### Organize your thoughts:

#### Vocabulary Book

Fold a sheet of notebook paper in half like a hot dog. On one side, cut every third line to create tabs. You can adjust the number of lines depending on the paper and the desired size of the tabs. Label the tabs with vocabulary words and write the definitions underneath.



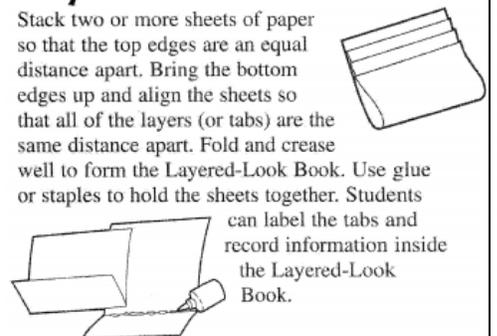
#### Folded Table or Chart

Fold a sheet of paper in half (for two columns), then in half again (for four columns). Do the same in the other direction for the desired number of rows, or simply make one fold along the top for column headings.



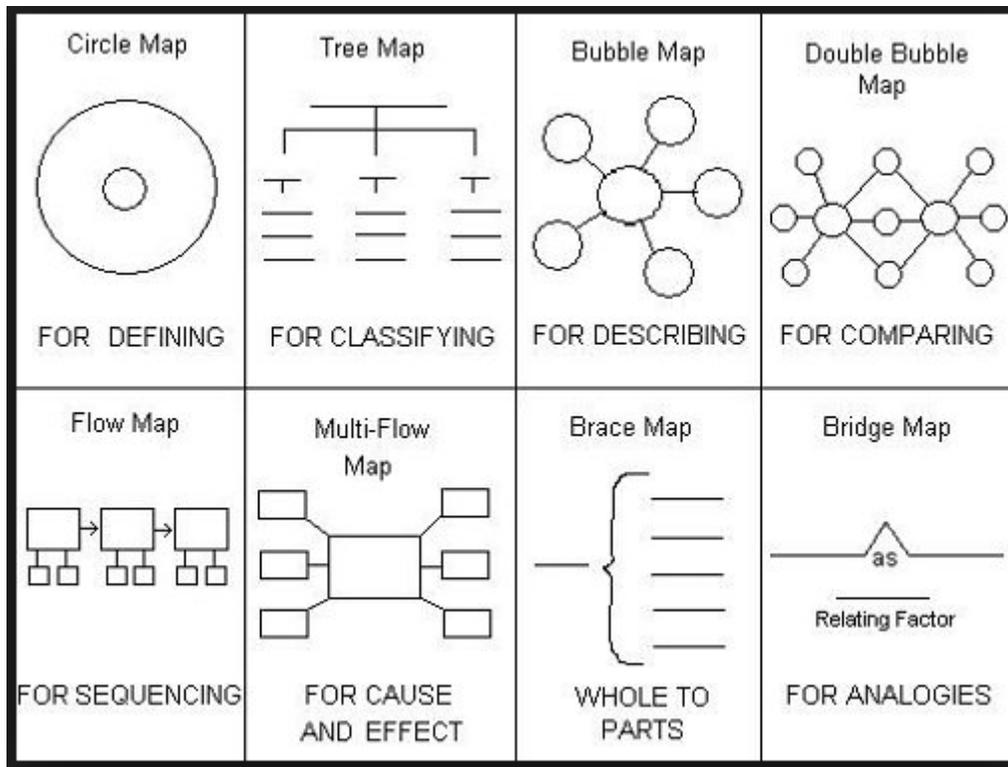
#### Layered-Look Book

Stack two or more sheets of paper so that the top edges are an equal distance apart. Bring the bottom edges up and align the sheets so that all of the layers (or tabs) are the same distance apart. Fold and crease well to form the Layered-Look Book. Use glue or staples to hold the sheets together. Students can label the tabs and record information inside the Layered-Look Book.



## Create a Thinking Map:

Thinking maps create visual patterns that assist in our thinking and learning. By visualizing our thinking we create concrete images of abstract thoughts. When we need to retrieve the information from our brain it is much easier.



**Elaborative interrogation** — Generating an explanation for why an explicitly stated fact or concept is true

**Self-explanation** — Explaining how new information is related to known information, or explaining steps taken during problem solving

**Summarization** — Writing summaries of to-be-learned texts

**Highlighting/underlining** — Marking potentially important portions of to-be-learned materials while reading

**Keyword mnemonic** — Using keywords and mental imagery to associate verbal materials

**Imagery for text** — Attempting to form mental images of text materials while reading or listening

**Rereading** — Restudying text material again after an initial reading

**Practice testing** — Self-testing or taking practice tests over to-be-learned material

## STUDY WITH A GROUP

Choose your group wisely.  
Your group can be a classmate or family member.  
After studying individually, it can be helpful to have someone to talk about the material with.  
Being able to teach someone else is a good sign that you understand the information.



## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE HOMEWORK IN A CLASS



Take some time for yourself during the time that you would do that classes' homework. Chat with friends and family. Read a book. Take some time to regroup and relax. Decide whether you want to do this first or last. Doing this first could rejuvenate you for your other work OR doing it last could be your reward after all your other work is done to keep you motivated. You could also use this time to get a jump on a long term assignment in another class. Whatever you do, spend your time wisely!