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Stress Management

Obstacles are there
for us to
demonstrate our
strength and
motivation

Stress

The weeks leading up to an exam can be an extremely stressful and difficult period. Even the most confident student can be affected by exam stress. A certain amount of stress can be effective in motivating us to study. When our levels of stress cross that line to the point when it begins to prevent our ability to study and learn, this is when it becomes a major problem.

Examinations are the most common method of assessment and thus usually a vital component of all courses. Knowing how to deal with them and the stress that surrounds them is an essential skill that every student needs to learn.

Signs of stress

- ◆ Difficulty in concentrating or an inability to make minor decisions
 - ◆ Headaches, abdominal pain, unusually cold hands and feet, tightness in chest, pounding heart, breathing difficulties.
 - ◆ A loss of efficiency in school
 - ◆ A lack of joy, spontaneity, happiness, or enthusiasm
 - ◆ Preoccupations with certain thoughts, especially negative ones
 - ◆ Being unable to sleep, persistent nightmares or the recurrence of a disturbing dream
 - ◆ Abnormal eating habits
 - ◆ An intolerance of people and irritability or outbursts of anger, especially during discussions or disagreements
 - ◆ Loss of sense of humour
 - ◆ Increased use of stimulants, especially alcohol and tobacco
 - ◆ Withdrawal from friends and social situations
- (VHI, May 2002)

If you can deal with the stress surrounding exams, they can become a great opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge on the subject to your lecturer.



Learn to relax

Take mini breaks throughout the day. Work on relaxation techniques, such as taking slow deep breaths.

Get organised

Have a realistic daily schedule including revision, sleep, eating, relationships and recreation.

Exercise

Physical activity provides relief from stress. The brain uses 20% of oxygen in the blood so you need to think about your posture and exercise to make sure your body gets enough. 30 minutes of sport or a short walk will do the trick.

Be positive

Talk positively to yourself! Don't pay attention to that internal voice saying you can't do it; tell yourself you can do it and you will do it.

Time

Recognise that you can only do so much in a given time. **Try to pace, not race.**

Stress Management



Talk

Talking and meeting with friends and occasionally sharing deep feelings and thoughts can be helpful in reducing stress.

Make a list

Make a list of the things that are worrying you and the possible things that could happen – then your brain will stop bringing them forward all the time.

Stay calm

Make sure you are in a calm, positive mood before you start studying.

Sleep

Don't become overtired by forcing yourself to work late. Your brain needs time to sort out the information it has come across during the day. Your ideal sleep time is about 8 hours a night.

Be healthy

Watch your eating habits. Make sure you eat sensibly and have a balanced diet. Avoid too much chocolate, cola, caffeine and foods with lots of additives.

Drink lots of water.



Sleep and Relaxation:

It is clinically proven that uncontrolled stress causes the memory to forget (J. Folk, M.Folk, 2018). This means that all the study you have done will be wasted as you cannot control your stress. Therefore, it is very important that we learn to control our stress and stay relaxed, especially in exam situations. Sometimes, we have to practice to become relaxed as we are so engrossed in work we don't realise how tense our body is and how stressed our minds are.

However, on the other hand, some stress is important, but only if you learn to control it. It can be used to motivate you to achieve your goals, if your goals are set accordingly. If your goals are unachievable or unrealistic, good stress can turn into bad stress. Good stress also shows that you care, have passion to succeed and can develop resilience. Practicing exam situations, relaxation activities such as yoga/ meditation and planning effectively with the guidance of your teachers and a study plan will all help keep stress as good stress.

Useful apps/ activities for Sleep and relaxation

- Headspace App
- Stop, Breathe and Think app

These apps are very useful in times of stress for example, when a student gets overwhelmed when doing homework or study or can also be very effective just before bed time. Try 5-10min every day.

- Simply get a diary, write down how you feel or all the things that worry you so that it is out of your mind and onto a page.

Other useful websites:

- <http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/>
- <http://ie.reachout.com/inform-yourself/money-work-and-study/exams/managing-exam-stress/>
- <http://www.spunout.ie/health/Education/Exams/Exam-stress>

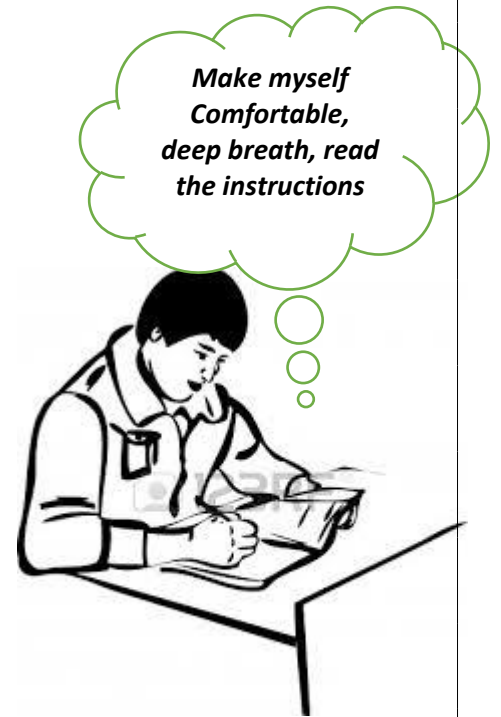
Can you add some more:

DON'T PANIC

If you panic in an exam you will not do as well as could.

How can you keep calm at the start of an exam?

Make a list of things you should do before you begin to answer the questions. What should you do when you have finished??



Which

One

Are

You?



*I'll never answer
all these
questions*



Now give yourself some practice by looking at a past exam paper and answering these questions:

1. How long is the exam
2. How many questions do you have to answer?
3. Are there any special instructions?
4. What equipment (if any) do you have to provide?
5. What equipment is provided for you?
6. Are any questions compulsory?
7. How many marks do you receive for each question?

Finally, work out how much time you can allow for reading through the paper and answering each question.



1. Time Management Method
The ABC daily to-do's

1. Write out your daily to-do list the night before. Write everything you want to accomplish
2. Label each task A, B and C
3. A's on your list are those things that you are most important - homework due in other jobs which need to be completed
4. B's on your list are important, but less so than your A's someday! These tasks are important but not urgent
5. C's do not require immediate attention - C priorities are often small, easy jobs
6. Schedule time for all the A's. The B's and C's can be done in odd moments during the day

Avoid C fever!! Sometimes we want to do the easier tasks first but stick to your schedule! Pin your schedule up!

Create a schedule of activities for the weekend and label them A, B and C

To Do List for Today

(tip: keep each job short, break larger jobs into parts)

An Important skill is learning how to prioritise! Treat your revision schedule like this.



Break it up

Sometimes it helps to break a subject into smaller sections

Breaking a subject into smaller sections can make the task of studying less overwhelming.

It also allows you to plan your study into block times where you can deal with one section at a time.

Subject needed	Smaller Sections	Time
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. _____2. _____3. _____4. _____5. _____6. _____7. _____8. _____9. _____10. _____	

Subject needed	Smaller Sections	Time
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. _____2. _____3. _____4. _____5. _____6. _____7. _____8. _____9. _____10. _____	

Planning

Where to start: Don't know which topic to start with? Start with topics which come up every year in exams, your teacher will tell you this or your exam papers

DO NOT over do it. Plan your study but don't overstudy. overstudy leads to burnout

Strike out the days/ mornings/ afternoons that you will not be studying e.g. shopping trips planned, socialising, holiday, birthday party.

Guide to effective use of a revision timetable

Remove all distractions e.g. phone, music, tv.

Always plan tomorrows work today. Try stick to that plan

Praise yourself at the end of each day if you fulfilled your plan.

If the planned didn't work ask yourself why? Maybe you aimed to do too much? Maybe you didn't focus

Step 1: choose a subject
Step 2: ensure you have all material e.g. exam papers, notes, textbook.

Step 3: Choose a topic
Step 4: Use the revision guide to help



Plan your evenings: Fill in when you have dinner, if you have training, what time you start and finish homework, what subject + topic you plan to study each day.

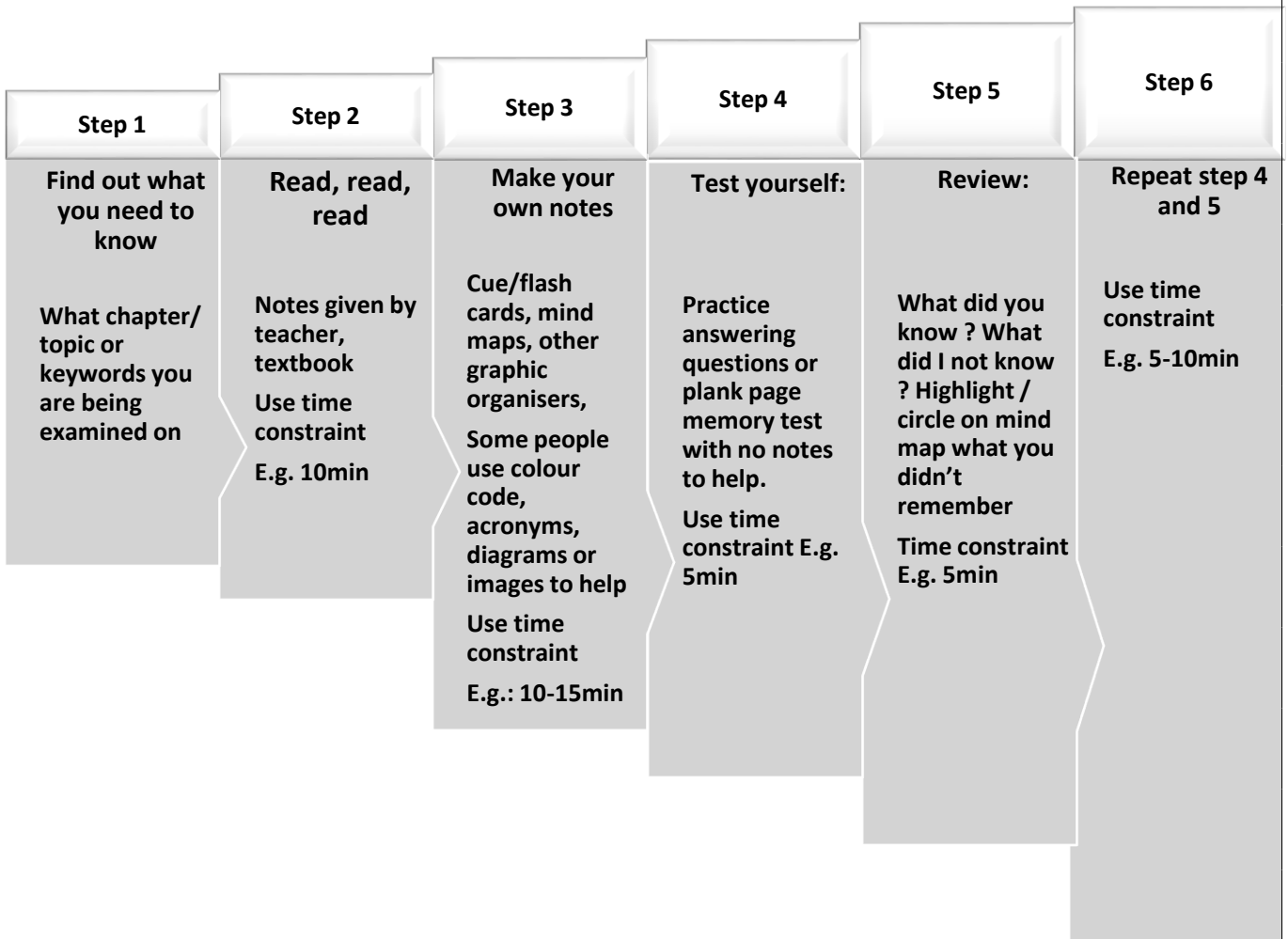
Date: _____

Time	Monday (sample)	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
4pm	HOME AND DINNER				
4.30	Start Homework - see diary for topics/ subjects				
5.00	Homework				
5.30	Homework				
6.00	Homework				
6.30	Study: Subject: <i>Geography</i> Topic: Fishing Plan for tomorrow				
7.00	Football Training				
7.30	Football Training				
8.00	Football Training				
8.30	Snack and Shower				
9.30/10	Get ready for bed				

How did I do this week? _____



Steps to Study





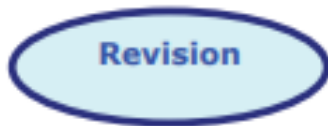
What is revision? Tips on how to revise?

Revising for your exams

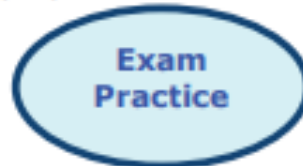
Exams are a crucial aspect of education and, as previously mentioned, the most common form of testing. Adapting easy revision strategies can help you be well prepared for an exam. There is no reason that with proper revision and a calm cool attitude on the day of the exam why you can't excel in the exam situation.

There are 2 central elements for exam preparation.

1.



2.



If you concentrate on these 2 elements of exam preparation you should find that the exam situation will be a lot easier for you. Like with other aspects of your study you also need to organise your time and plan your study. Cramming the night before an exam is not a good revision technique. Instead you should space your revision time over a few months.

There are several methods of revision that work depending on your learning style. Tailor your revision techniques to correspond with your specific learning style.

Visual learners



Use visual maps, highlighters, visual charts, diagrams and images to represent essays and key information

Auditory



Rehearse your notes by talking out loud to yourself or someone else. Study groups are good for auditory learners. Try recording your essays onto audio-tapes and listening to them over and over again.

Kinaesthetic



Rewriting your notes repeatedly can help you learn them. If you find this tiring try typing them out on a computer. Turning your revision notes into a chart or diagram can be beneficial for kinaesthetic learners.

Strategies

1. The PQRR technique

The PQRR technique stands for previewing, questioning, reading and reviewing.

Previewing

When you begin a chapter in one of your text books have a quick scan (2- 3 minutes) over the whole chapter before you begin your in-depth reading. This gives you the basic idea of the chapter and its layout. As you move through the chapter highlight the paragraphs that you think are of particular relevance to you.

Question

To get the full benefit of reading the chapter you must first ask the question as to why you are reading the chapter. Are you reading it to gain information about a new topic? Or are you reading a novel in order to write an essay on it? Establishing these questions before you go into indepth reading can help you bias your reading towards the information that is of particular interest to you. For example you might have a particular character to focus your essay on; therefore you would pay more attention to that particular character when you are reading the novel. This is a great way of being an active learner. Identify the information that you need and then source the answer to that information.

Read

Read the chapter very slowly, absorbing as much of the information as possible. Use highlighters, index cards and colour tags to highlight the important information. Have a pen at the ready to write down any important information. If you are finding the material overwhelming, take it extra slow and try to summarize each paragraph in your own words as you go along. Keep in sight the study questions that you laid out in the previous step. This will help you keep on track with your reading goal. Anything that you don't understand, write it down and source its meaning and then continue. There is no point in continuing your reading if you don't understand a key term.

Reviewing

After you have finished the chapter review what you have learned. If you have broken down each paragraph into your own words read over your own explanation and assess if you have understood the central idea in the chapter. Ask yourself "Am I able to answer my original study questions?" The more you review the information the more you are likely to absorb. If the material is particularly difficult then reviewing after each page

can often help you understand the subject more easily. Break everything down into small digestible chunks.

Quick Summary

- Identify your reading goal
- Read in short achievable time frames
- Highlight the important information as you go along
- Using a ruler or index card can help keep your concentration.

Sourced from: City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee/National Learning Network May 2010

1. Memory Tips

1. Visualise as much as possible - use diagrams to help you summarise points.
2. Study in a quiet place in the house
3. Recite and repeat. Say it out loud! **LOOK SAY COVER WRITE CHECK**
4. Record your own voice reading out notes
5. Spend more time on your weakest subjects, vocabulary, mathematics, spelling
6. Teach it to someone else
7. Use mnemonics to help you learn eg Planets

**Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune
Pluto**

My Very Earthly Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas

"In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue."

Can you devise a Mnemonic for something you have to learn in your subjects? Have a go!!

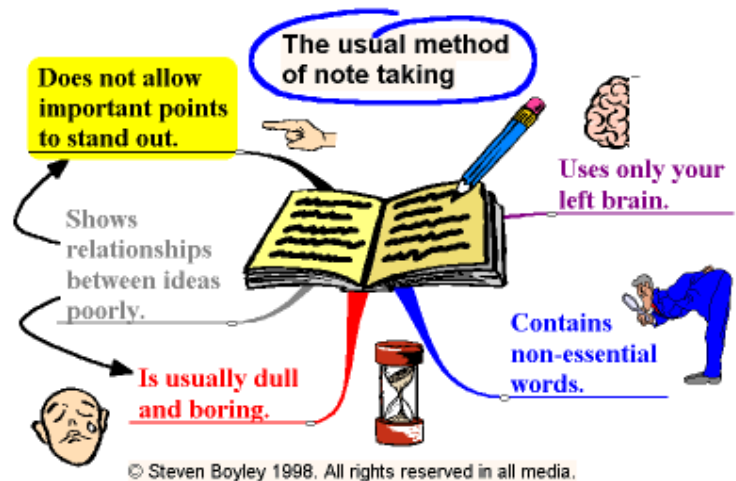
1. Science?
2.
3.

2. MIND MAPS:

Make mind-maps or association maps rather than taking linear notes. Mapping your notes by radiating key words out in a pattern of links from a central point will make best use of your memory. If you use colour and images on the maps, you'll be harnessing the power of both sides of your brain - creative and logical.

How to mind map:

1. Start with the theme in the middle of the page.
2. Then develop your main idea.
3. Each branch must relate to the branch before it.
4. Use only key words and images.
5. Key words must be written along the branches.



6. Printing your key words makes them more memorable.
7. Use highlighters and coloured markers to colour code branches.



8. Make things stand out on the page so they stand out in your mind. (This doesn't show up well on a black and white photocopied booklet! You should use a different colour for each main branch and all its sub-branches)

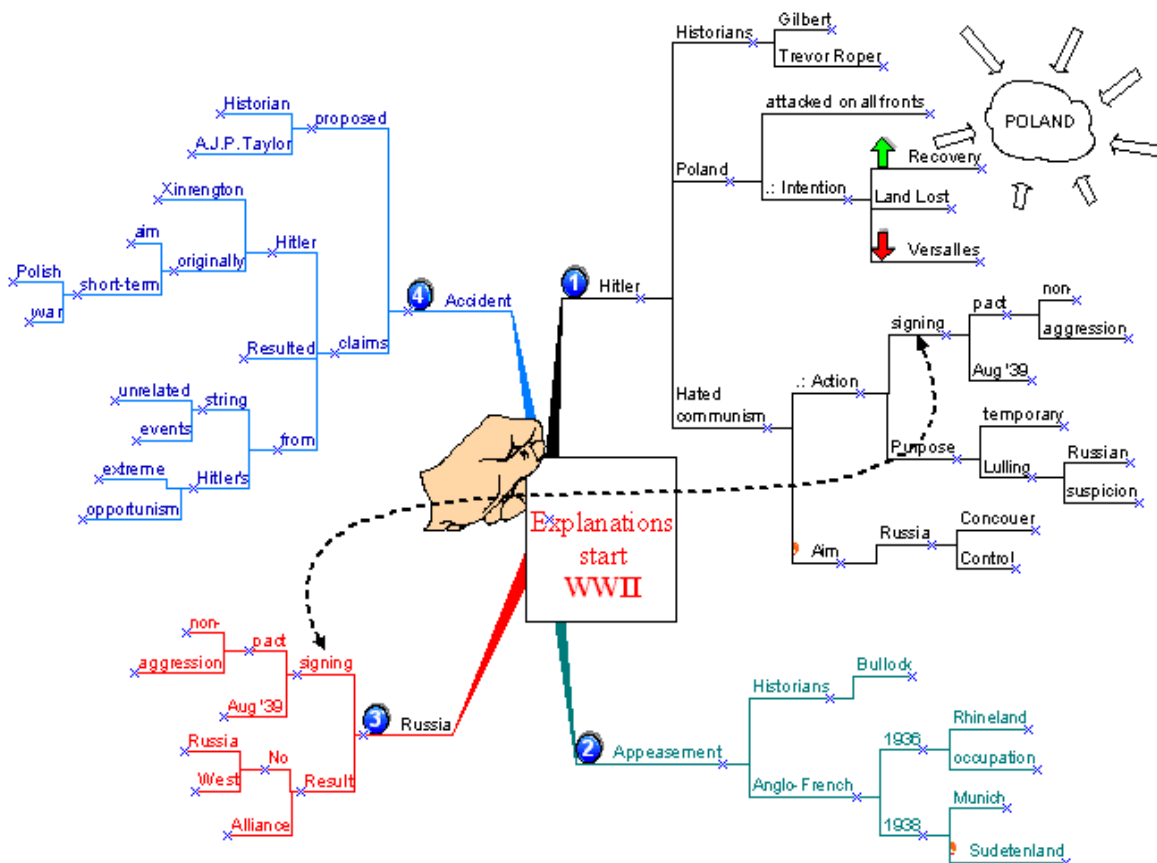
9. Brainstorm ideas. Be creative.



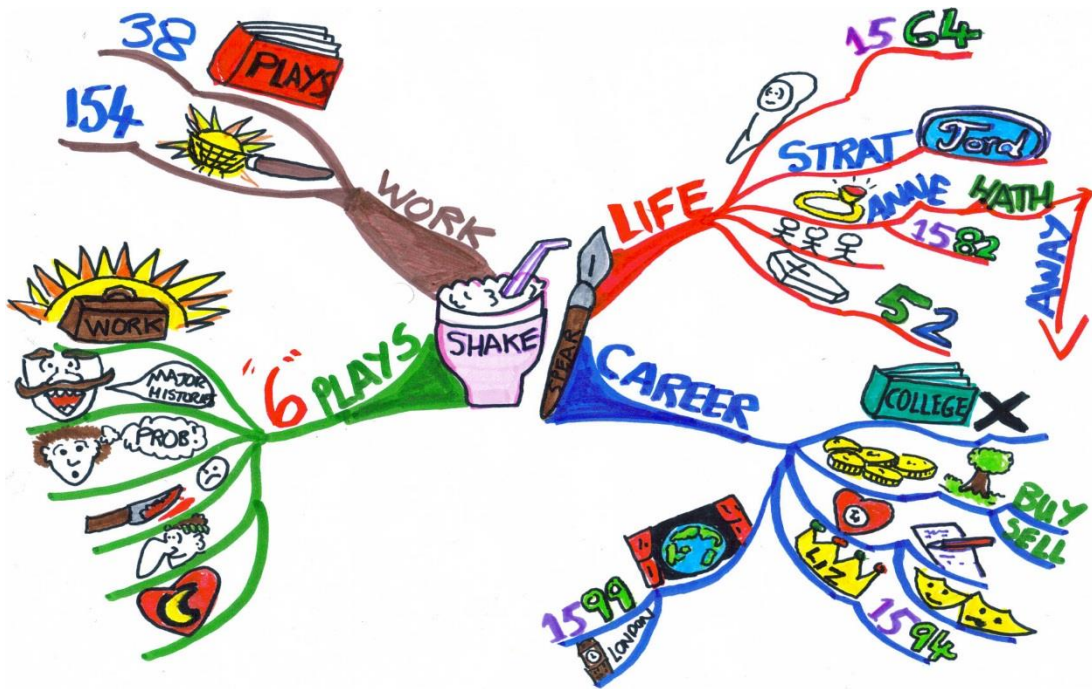
10. Design images you can relate to which will help you remember key information.

remember

Mindmaps can be mostly text...



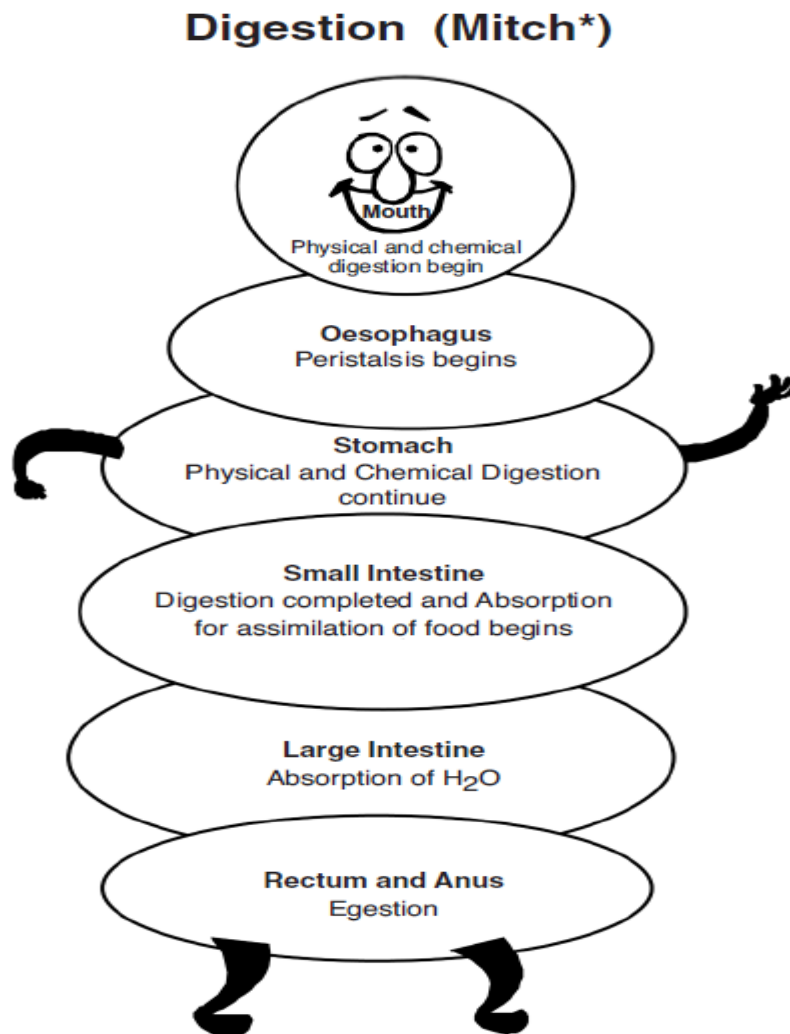
Or they can include more images (much easier to remember!) Look at this one summarising William Shakespeare's life..... (again – much better in colour!)



Resources

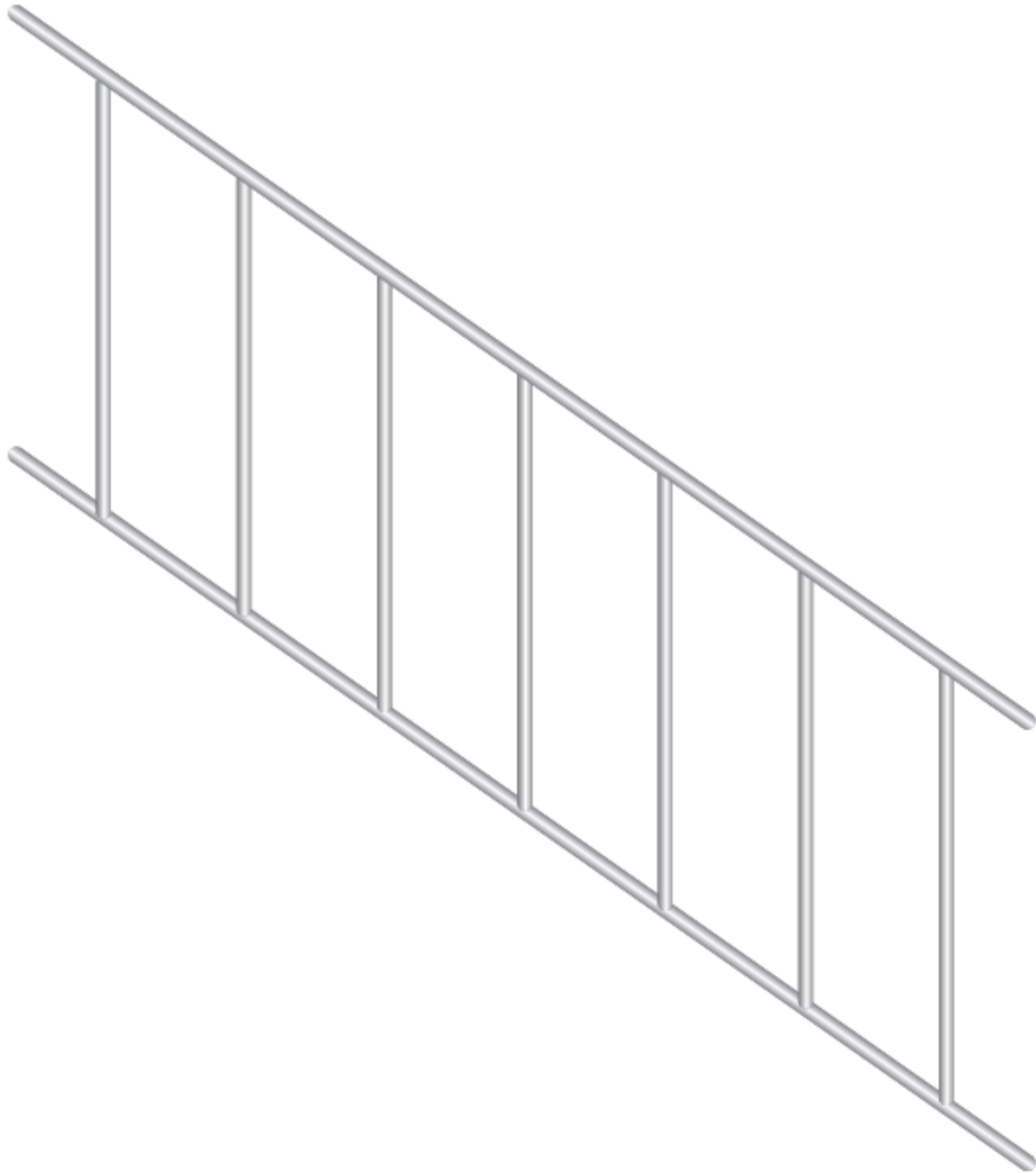
Graphic Organisers provide a visual method of developing, organising and summarising students learning. They help to structure disjointed information. They facilitate the learning process by providing a scaffold for the development of ideas and the construction of knowledge. Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners all benefit from using the organisers.

Example



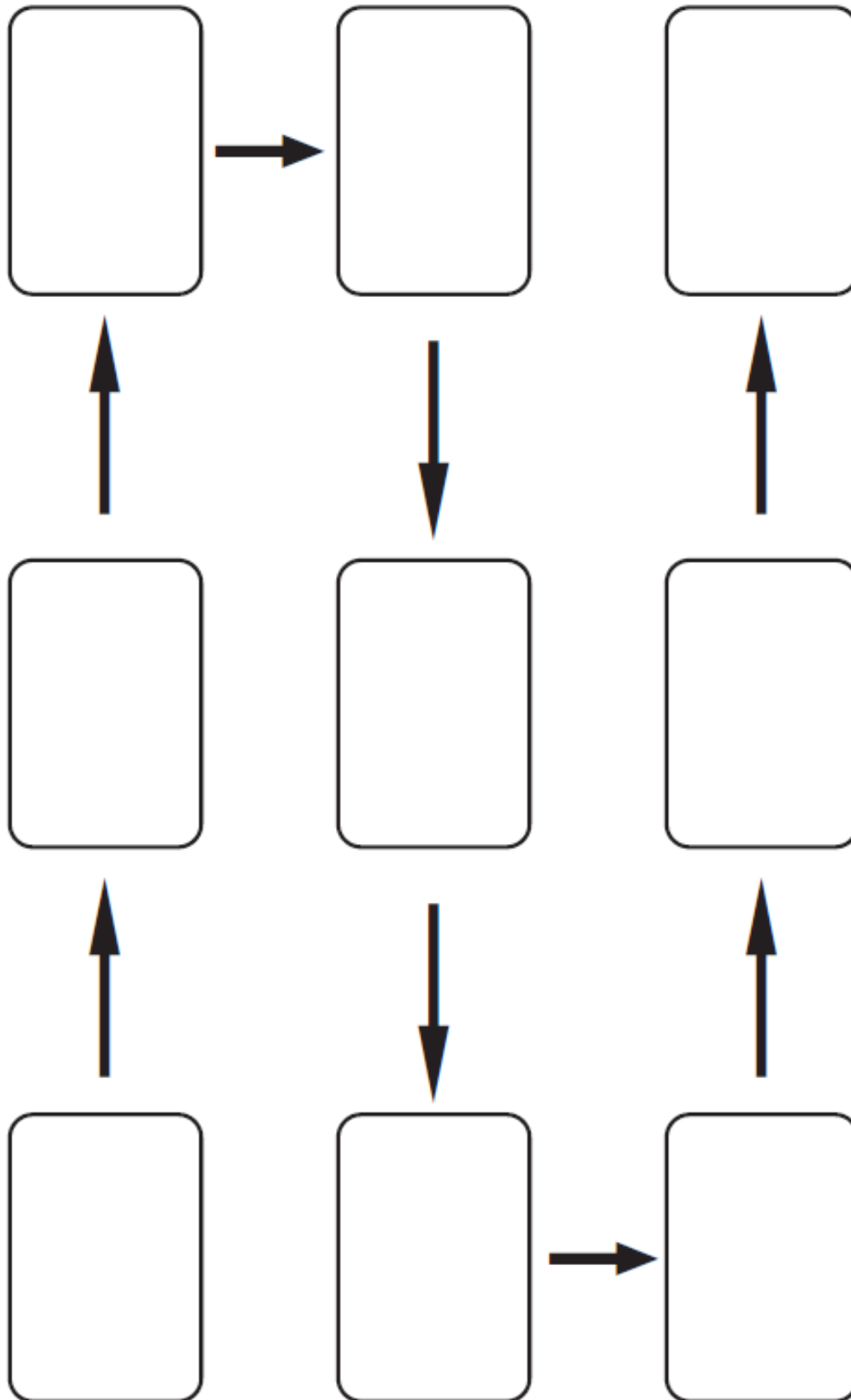
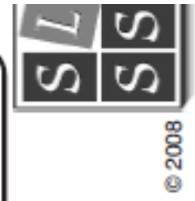


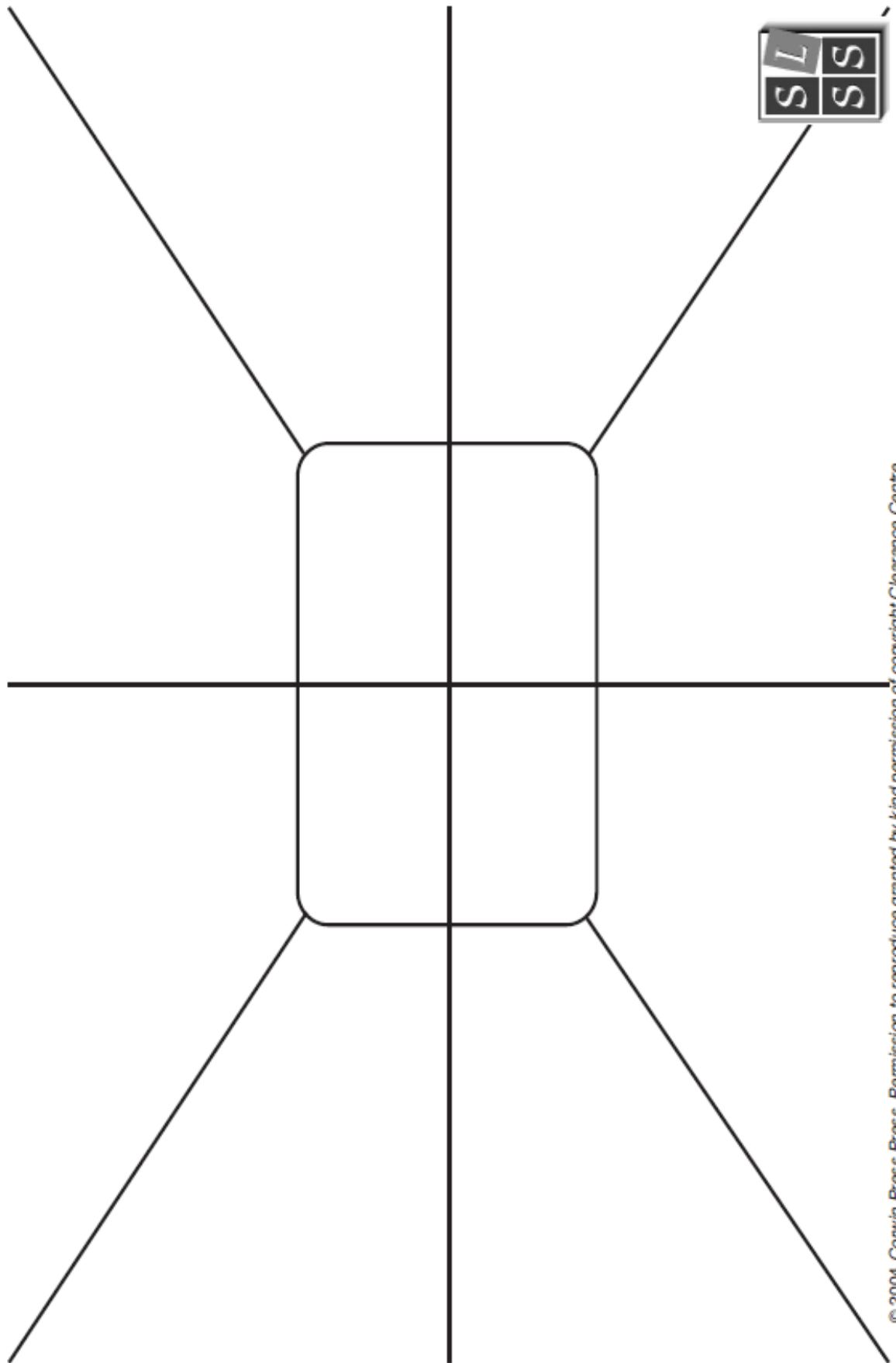
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Nóta a Scríobh

Cád?

a dhéanfaidh tú?
a cheannóidh tú?
a fheicfidh tú?
a fosaídh tú?

Céard?

a chonaic tú?
a léigh tú?
a bhí ann?

Conas?

a rachaidh tú ann?
a thiocfaidh tú abhaile?

Cathain?

a bheidh sé ar siúl?
a rachaidh tú ann?
a bhuaifidh sibh le chéile?
a thosóidh sé?

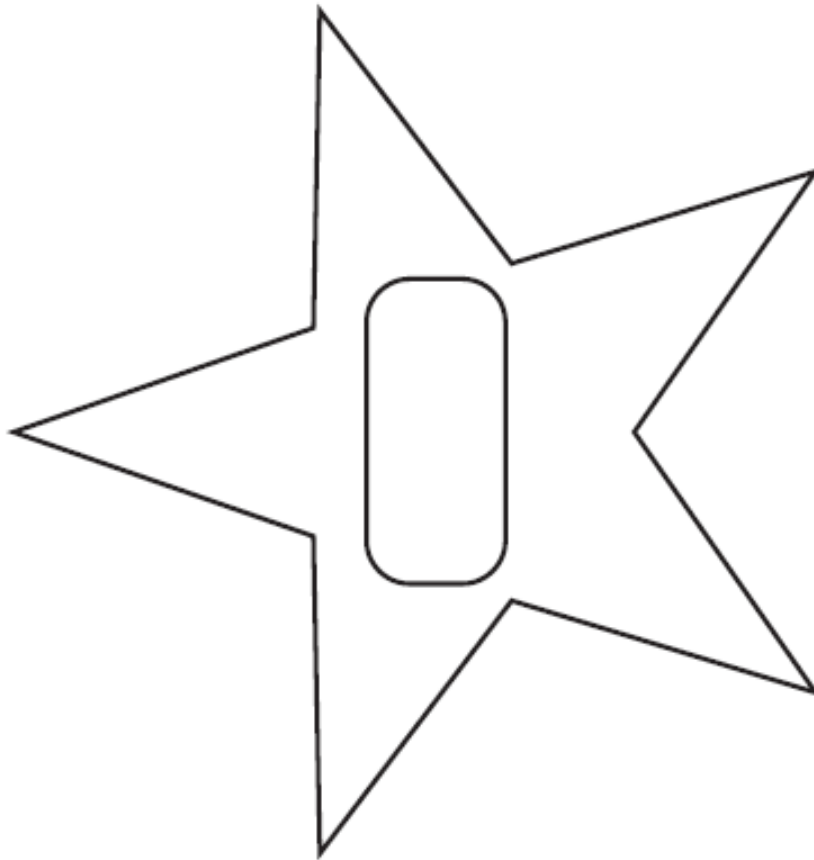
Ábhar

Cé?

a bheidh ann?
a fheicfidh tú?

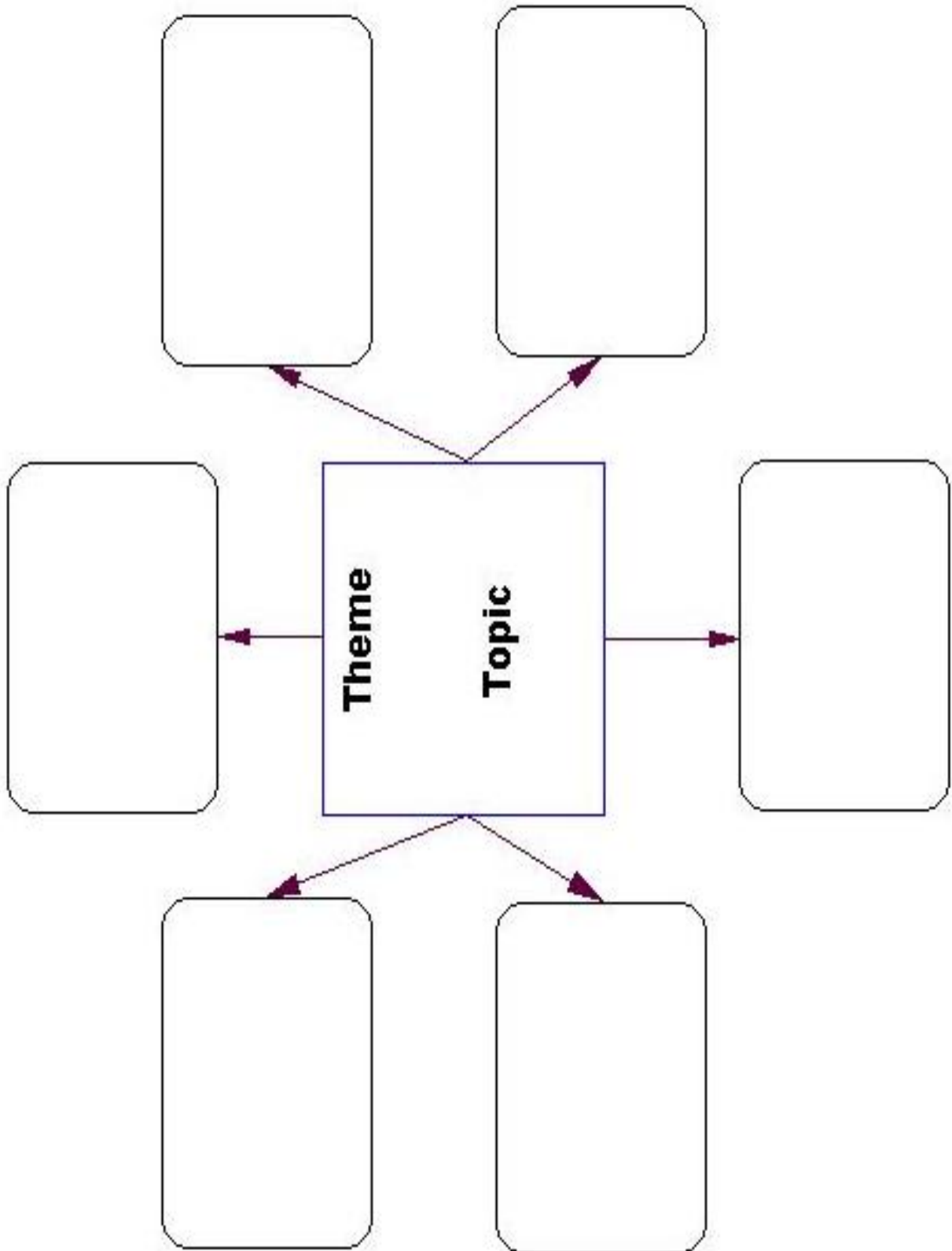
Cá?

mbeidh sé a siúl?
mbuaifidh sibh le chéile?





Q1	Answer	Q2	Answer
Q3	Answer	Q4	Answer
Q5	Answer	Q6	Answer





Name _____ Date _____ Class Period _____

Writing Project Planning Map

Topic _____



My Purpose (check one)

- To explain how to do something
- To give an opinion
- To tell a real story
- To tell an imaginary story
- To describe a person, place, or thing
- To give information about a topic
- Other _____

My Audience

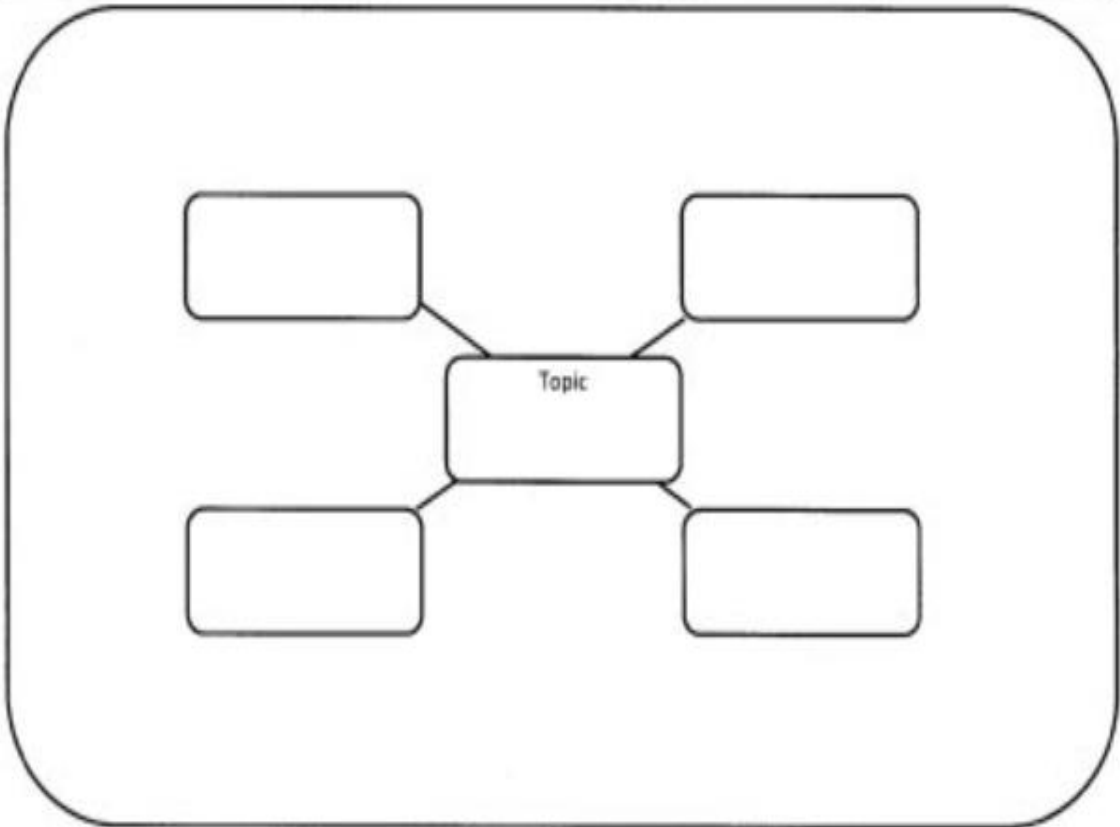
Who will read this? _____

What do they already know about my topic? _____

What do I want them to know? _____

What part of my topic would interest them most? _____

My First Ideas (draw more boxes and lines as needed)





Name _____ Date _____ Class Period _____

Story Idea Generator

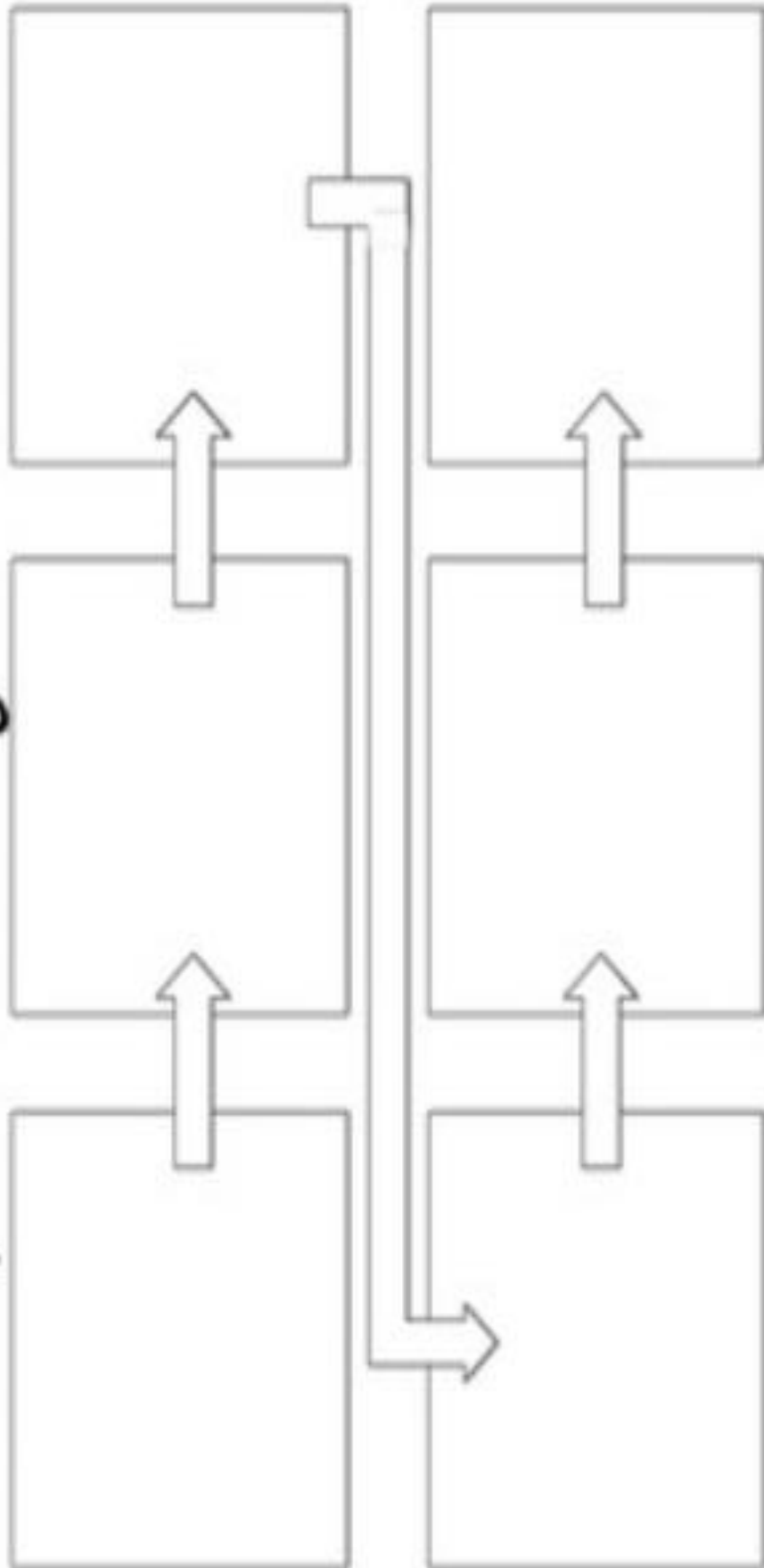
What if . . . (something that could happen)	Then, (something that could also happen)	But, (a complication or a problem)	So, (this happens because of the problem)	Then, (how the problem is solved)
--	---	---------------------------------------	--	--------------------------------------

Plan Your Story Here

	→		→		→		→	
--	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--



Sequence of Events





<https://careersportal.ie/pdfs/StudySkills%201-7.pdf>

Student Name: _____

Study Skills - 1

Place of Study

Is your place of study optimised for efficient and rewarding study?

Below are some tips offered by students who achieved their goals and got the results they wanted. Read through each item and decide if it applies to the way you currently study. If it does, mark the box on the left - indicating that this contributes to your study success. If not, mark the box on the right, indicating that this is moving you away from your study goals.

- I study by myself:** If possible do your study/school work in a room by yourself. Arrange with parent/guardian that you have a place of study that is quiet and is separate from others in the house.
- Not too hot, not too cold:** It is important that the temperature is comfortable in the room you study in. A room that is too warm or stuffy or too cold can have a big impact on your ability to concentrate.
- There is good lighting on my desk:** A desk lamp is useful to avoid eye strain. Place your lamp on the opposite side to the hand that you write with. This way you will avoid shadows falling across your page.
- I keep my desk free from clutter:** Ensure that your desk is tidy and free of clutter before you start a study session. Before you begin spend a couple of minutes organising your desk. You will be amazed how much better it makes you feel to work on a desk that is neat and free of clutter.
- I actively discourage interruption:** Getting distracted by others can be very annoying and frustrating. Get the support of your parent or guardian on having your study place free from interruptions and noise. Turn off your mobile as soon as you start study.
- I made sure the chair I sit at during study was suitable:** During study you need to sit for a long period of time. Make sure that your chair is as comfortable as possible.
- Assign study times and let your friends know:** It is important that you inform your friends, parents and family members of your study times. Arrange to text, phone or see friends outside study times. You will not lose friends by letting them know what you want!
- There are no TV / Radio / Internet distractions:** Reduce or cut out distraction from TV and music during your study times. Research tells us that it is better for students to work without background music or radio. If this is difficult for you to forego then try rewarding yourself with them during study break times.
- Have necessary resources to hand:** Always have the textbooks and equipment at hand that you are going to need for the study period.
- I reserve my study desk for study and study only:** Never use your study desk for leisure activities such as listening to music. Get your brain to associate your place of study with study activity and nothing else.

What actions can you now take to increase your study success?



Motivation and Goal Setting

How to get and stay motivated?

First ask yourself the following:

What do you want from school?

What do you want in terms of career or college?

What will you need from school to go after the career/course/job you want?

The answers to these questions may not reveal themselves overnight. Students who have already been through the Leaving Cert have offered the following pointers as a way to get and stay motivated.

For each item, indicate how it applies to you. If you have already taken action on the points raised, mark the box on the left - indicating that this contributes to your study success. If not, mark the box on the right, indicating that this is moving you away from your study goals.

Make a written statement of what you want to achieve in your Leaving Cert: Revisit the **Setting Targets** worksheet and be satisfied that you are happy with the target results you have set. Seek the advice of a teacher, parent, or your Guidance Counsellor when setting these targets. Writing down the targets I wanted to achieve made me focus more on what I really wanted.

Clarify what you want to do with these results: If you are not sure, arrange an interview with your school Guidance Counsellor as early as possible. You can explore careers and college options by doing the following:

Set 30/60 minutes aside each week to browse college literature or visit college web sites for information on courses and careers in further education.

Attend College Open Days* and careers exhibitions during the year. Select the dates of 2/3 events that you will attend this year.

Take the online Careers Interest Test on www.careersportal.ie and explore the career and courses that match your interests.

Avoid missing out on class time: The more class time you miss the greater the risk of missing important learning points.

Cut out the part-time job: Hard to let go if you have one, but think about it - you have a job of study that will bring you great returns if you do it well.

Believe you have a bright future: There were never as many career and college course opportunities for those taking their Leaving Cert. as there is now. I explored the alternative routes to getting my dream. I think it's very important to explore as many options as possible.

Look after your health: Eat well and get adequate sleep and exercise. An obvious point, but it's easy to neglect your health as examinations approach. Psychology is now revealing links between physical and mental health. A person's physical well being has a huge impact on their ability to concentrate and relax when required.

What actions can you now take to increase your study success?



Student Name: _____

Study Skills - 6 Revising & Exam Preparation

Are you getting the most out of your hard work?

Tips for better Exam Preparation:

Below are some tips offered by students who achieved their goals and got the results they wanted. For each item, indicate whether you currently use this method/technique. If you do, mark the box on the left - indicating that this contributes to your study success. If not, mark the box on the right, indicating that this is moving you away from your study goals.

I studied previous years exam papers: Get to know how the course is laid out in the exam itself by studying past exam papers. Then put your time into the material that is important in the course. Learn from your examination of past papers how the marks are allocated.

I got to know in advance how much is expected: Analyse past examination papers. Answer the questions in outline form. Jot down the main ideas and the supporting ideas for your answer. When you have completed the process refer to you own notes. Fill out and change your notes as necessary. This process involves testing, recalling and checking where the gaps or mistakes in your knowledge/understanding may be.

Practice against the clock: Write a complete answer to the question along the lines of your planned outline. Do this against the clock, allowing yourself the time that would be allocated in the exam itself. Don't use any notes or textbook during this exercise.

I isolated major topics: Be certain to isolate the major topics in your revision and learn them very well. While going over the contents of your notes try to anticipate possible examination questions.

I rewrote the main points as I went through my notes: Keep writing down the main points as you go through your notes. The writing process will fix the ideas in your mind.

I prepared for aural and orals months in advance: It's not good enough to start preparing for aural and oral sections of the exam paper a week or two before the test takes place. Practice should begin at the start of the course and continue right through the year. Know the amount of marks awarded for these sections and be sure to give the proportion of study time to them that reflects the amount of marks awarded.

Revising

Revising your subject questions, topics and themes are vital to your plan to help you get what you want from school. When you are first introduced to a topic in class you may understand it, but most of what you learn will be forgotten if you don't revise. In fact research shows us that without revision we will lose up to 90% of what we learn within 6 months. Revision helps you retain the material for a longer period of time. Revising also helps increase your understanding of the topic.

Revisit the material covered in class within two days: Educational Psychologists have discovered that it is most important to revise within 24 hours of first learning something. This will often be in the form of homework.

I included some revision in each study session: I set aside time at each study session to revise questions or topics I had learned in the past.

I became part of a study group: Four students in my class set up a study group. We would each prepare a topic and teach it to the group. Each person would have a set amount of time to teach the topic. This worked well because we had definite starting and finishing times. We gave about an hour and a half each week to this learning.

What actions can you now take to increase your study success?



Student Name: _____

Study Skills - 7

Examination Performance

Can you deliver what you know effectively?

Below are some tips offered by students who achieved their goals and got the results they wanted. For each item, indicate whether you have used this method/technique in past exams. If you do, mark the box on the left - indicating that this contributes to achieving your target goals. If not, mark the box on the right, indicating that this is moving you away from your study goals.

- Read the Instructions!** Check the instructions at the beginning of each test paper carefully. There may be a small change in the exam format from year to year.
- Read questions carefully:** Read each question carefully. Highlight or underline the key words and phrases.
- Check for compulsory questions:** Tick the questions that must be answered in each section. Then tick off the question(s) you are likely to answer (using a different colour or symbol).
- Allocate time for each question:** This should be done before the exam itself. The amount of time spent on each question will be determined by the percentage of the overall marks going for the question. For example, the time you allow will double if the marks awarded are double those of other questions. Allow at least five to ten minutes at the start of the test to read over the paper and ten minutes at the end to read your answers. It's important that you try to stay within the time you have allocated for each question.
- Begin with your best:** Begin your exam with the question you feel you can best answer. If you do this you will build confidence in your ability to tackle the remainder of the test.
- Plan your answer:** Jot down an outline of your answers by noting the main points before you begin to work on the answer proper. It is good to let the examiner see this work.
- Avoid clutter:** Remember to allow plenty of space between points and sections and label all your answers clearly. Do everything you can to make the job of the examiner easier.
- Keep an eye on the time:** If you run over the allotted time when dealing with a question it may be better to leave a space and continue to the next question. Above all, avoid the disaster of not having time to attempt all the required number of questions.
- Don't waffle:** There are simply no marks going for repeating the same points or ideas. Be as clear and concise as you can. This does not mean that you don't explain things fully and give examples especially when you are expected to elaborate.
- Understand typical question formats:** Know exactly what is expected from you in an exam when asked to Compare, Contrast, Define, Discuss, Explain, Trace, Summarise, Describe and Outline. Take special note of words such as including, and, or.
- Just a small dose of post mortem's:** When your exam is over don't get involved in detailed post mortem's, turn your focus to the next exam. If you feel stressed or worried at the way things went it's best to chat with a sympathetic adult, or someone who can listen and offer you a balanced view of your performance.
- If you have time to spare re-read your work:** Don't stop working on your paper before time is up. There are no extra marks awarded for being finished early. Your exam is designed to be undertaken within the time allocated. If you have time left after you read over your paper read over it a second time. Ideas may come to you even at this final stage.
- Use notes:** It could happen that you discover that you have done something wrong, left a question out or perhaps misread a question. If time is not on your side, lay the correct answer out in note form first. Then elaborate on the notes. Try not to panic.
- Bring a drink!** Bring a drink of water into the exam hall with you in order to avoid dehydration.

What actions can you now take to increase your study success?

Reflect on your progress

Mock Exam Reflection

Name:



What was your **TARGET** level for the Mock Exam?

What was your **ACTUAL** level for the Mock Exam?

Were you happy or unhappy with your result and why?



Where did you get confused in the Mock Exam?



How did you prepare for the Mock Exam?



If you could go back in time before the Mock Exam, what advice would you give yourself?



What have you learnt from the Mock Exam?





Remember



Reference List

- City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee/National Learning Network May 2010 (accessed on 01/03/18)
- Google Images accessed on 01/03/18
- Irish Times Newspaper Website (accessed February 2018)
- www.BBC.co.uk/schools, 2018
- www.careersportal.ie
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