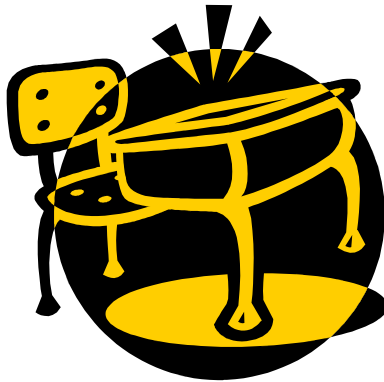


# Study Skills Handbook



London Christian Elementary School  
202 Clarke Road  
London, Ontario  
N5W 5E4  
519-455-0360  
[www.londonchristian.ca](http://www.londonchristian.ca)

# STUDY SKILLS HANDBOOK



## **AT SCHOOL**

1. Organizing your Binder
2. Taking Notes
3. Making Outlines
4. Using the Library and the Internet
5. How to Organize a Project or Research Paper

## **AT HOME**

1. The Importance of Homework
2. Getting Ready to Study
3. Good Study Skills
4. Studying Hints
5. Methods of Studying
6. Using Cue Cards
7. Underlining or Highlighting your Notes
8. Studying your Unit Notes
9. Studying for Each Subject
10. Writing the Test

# AT SCHOOL



## Organizing your Binder

Any time of year is a good time to make resolutions! If yours include getting better grades, you might want to start with getting organized.

- **Start by reducing the clutter.** The less you have to organize, the quicker it will be. This means going through your books and recycling those notes your best friend gave you, those invitations to a birthday party last year, and the page of doodles you scribbled on. Be careful not to throw out any important notes, though!
- **Get a hole punch and put holes in all the important papers** so they can be added to your binder.
- If all your subjects are in one binder, **put in dividers** and label each subject.
- If you keep each subject in a separate book, **make sure each book is clearly labeled.**
- **Use your agenda book.** It is a quick and easy way to keep track of what needs to be done and remembered.
- **Use the pocket flap** in the front of your binder for homework or papers to hand in for the day.
- **Find a home for your pens, pencils, and calculator** in the plastic envelope in the front of the large binder.
- **Label your calculator** with your name.

Done all that? Great! Now you can get on with organizing the rest of your life the same way.

**And one more tip - do it today; the mess will be bigger by tomorrow!**



## Taking Notes



1. **Be on time for class** and be ready to start LISTENING.
2. Have more than one pen or pencil ready.
3. Make sure you have **reviewed material from earlier classes.**
4. **Know how to spell.** If you can spell you won't have to waste time trying to figure out HOW to spell. If you are hopelessly beyond spelling when under pressure, learn to spell words as they sound. Then immediately after class, make very sure you go over notes and put correct spelling in or you will never remember what you have written.
5. **Be quick taking notes.** It's far better to have too much material than too little.
6. **If your teacher writes it on the board, make sure you write it in your notes.**
7. Use symbols when you can (&, #, %, @...)
8. **PRINT important words.** The eye and brain recognize print faster and you will remember it longer.
9. **Skip lines.**
10. If you miss something, **leave a blank in your notes.** You can fill it in later.
11. **Do your homework before you come to class.** If you have read the assigned reading, new information will be familiar and it will be easier to decide what to write and what to skip.

## Making Outlines

The reason you make an outline is to help you think through your topic carefully and organize it before you start writing. A good outline is the most important step in writing a good paper.

Example of an outline:

- I. **Shakespeare's life**
  - A. Early life in Stratford
    1. Shakespeare's family
      - a. Shakespeare's father
      - b. Shakespeare's mother
    2. Shakespeare's marriage
  - B. The Elizabethan Theatre
    1. The Globe Theatre
      - a. History of the Globe Theatre
      - b. Owners of the Globe Theatre
    2. Acting companies
- II. **Shakespeare's plays**
  - A. Hamlet
  - B. Romeo and Juliet



# Using the Internet and the Library

## THE INTERNET...

As always, be careful when researching online. You will be able to find much of the information you want. Be aware that as helpful as the Internet is, there are also many sites that are inappropriate and harmful.

### Keys for Surfing the Net

- For general or background information, check out general encyclopedias (Britannica, or Encarta, etc.) or use Search Engines ([www.google.ca](http://www.google.ca), [www.yahoo.ca](http://www.yahoo.ca)).
- Pay attention to the ending of an internet address:
  - .edu (educational institution),
  - .gov (government), or
  - .org (non-profit organization).
  - (These sites represent institutions and tend to be more reliable.)
  - .com (commercial) sites (many of these contain mostly ads)
- Depending on the information you are searching, the Internet is not always the easiest or the first place you should try. Often an encyclopedia, a dictionary, an almanac, or a directory, can provide you with the needed information much faster.



## THE LIBRARY...

The library contains many valuable resources that will assist you. Volunteer librarians are often more than willing to help you find the information you need.

Become familiar with the Reference area. Reference books are not meant to be read cover to cover, but they give you information on almost any topic. Know what information is contained in a dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia, atlas and almanac.

Check out these print materials available in the Library:

- Almanacs and Atlases
- Encyclopedias and Dictionaries
- Government Publications
- Magazines and Newspapers
- Yellow Pages, Postal Code and Telephone Directories



The website for the London Public Library is [www.londonpubliclibrary.ca](http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca). On this site, you can search for books and resources at all London library branches.

# How to Organize a Project or Research Paper



## STEP 1: CHOOSE A TOPIC

- Choose a topic which interests and challenges you, but is manageable.
- Focus on a limited aspect, e.g. narrow it down from "Religion" to "World Religion" to "Christianity".

## STEP 2: FIND INFORMATION

- Check online and in your local library for the information you need.
- Read and evaluate. Check many sources. Decide if the information you find is helpful.
- As you gather your resources, jot down all important information (author, title, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, page numbers) on your work sheet.

## STEP 3: STATE YOUR THESIS (proposal or plan)

Do some serious thinking and write your thesis statement down in one sentence. The rest of your research paper will defend and support this sentence.

## STEP 4: MAKE A TENTATIVE OUTLINE

Include in your outline an INTRODUCTION, a BODY, and a CONCLUSION. Make the first outline tentative.

*INTRODUCTION* - State your thesis and the purpose of your research paper clearly. Explain briefly the major points you plan to cover in your paper and why readers should be interested in your topic.



*BODY* - This is where you present your arguments to support your thesis statement. Find 3 supporting arguments for each position you take. Begin with a strong argument, then use a stronger one, and end with the strongest argument for your final point.

*CONCLUSION* - Restate your thesis. Summarize your arguments. Explain why you have come to this particular conclusion.

### STEP 5: ORGANIZE YOUR NOTES

- Organize all the information you have gathered according to your outline. Check that the information is up-to-date, and correct. This is the most important stage in writing a research paper.
- Do not include any information that is not important and do not include information that you do not understand.



### STEP 6: WRITE YOUR FIRST DRAFT

- Start with the first topic in your outline.
- Put all your note cards or paper in the order of your outline. Before you know it, you have a well organized term paper completed exactly as outlined.

### STEP 7: REVISE YOUR OUTLINE AND DRAFT

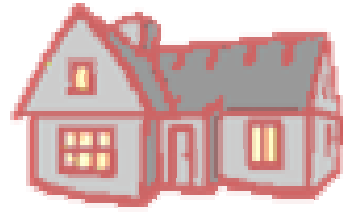
- Read your paper for any mistakes. Arrange and rearrange ideas to follow your outline.
- Re-read your paper for grammatical errors. Use a dictionary or a thesaurus as needed. Do a spell check. Correct all errors. Get someone else to read it over.

### STEP 8: TYPE FINAL PAPER



- Proofread final paper carefully for spelling, punctuation, or missing words. Make sure that your final paper is clean, tidy, neat, and attractive.
- List all the books you have used as sources. Write a bibliography (list books and resources by author's name in alphabetical order).
- Aim to have your final paper ready a day or two before the deadline. Before handing in your assignment for marking, ask yourself: "Is this the VERY BEST that I can do?"

# AT HOME

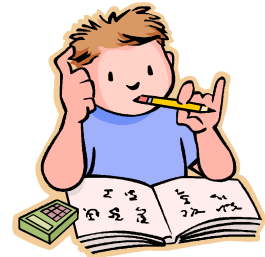


## The Importance of Homework

Homework requires good habits. Daily working through each day's assignments at night will enable you to succeed in your school subjects. You want to do your best. Take the time to work through each project and reading. Tackle the difficult work first. By doing this, you make sure that you're not the most tired when working on your hardest subject. You can reward yourself by looking forward to working on your easiest subjects. Every person has different needs and different goals to reach, but make sure you stick to the goals you set for yourself.

## Getting Ready to Study

- Before studying, **make sure you have these items** with you:
  - ✓ Flashcards (3"x5")
  - ✓ Post-it notes
  - ✓ Pencil and eraser
  - ✓ Pencil crayons or markers
  - ✓ Lined paper
  - ✓ Highlighter
  - ✓ Ruler
  - ✓ Dictionary
- **Find a good place to study.**
  - ✓ Good lighting is essential
  - ✓ A comfortable chair
  - ✓ A cleared-off desk
  - ✓ A clock to manage your time



- **Write down each assignment in your homework book.**
- Have all **necessary text books and note books.**
- **Eliminate all distractions.** This includes TV, loud music, and friends and family.

- **Get enough sleep.**
- **Eat breakfast.**
- **Take breaks from studying.**
- **Return all books, instruments and agendas** to your backpack right away.



# Good Study Skills



## Regular Time:

Set up a regular time to study and don't change it. This is very important for setting up a routine for studying, which is a key to good homework habits. You could use an alarm clock to remind you when study time begins, when a break occurs, and when it's over.

## Regular Place:

Again, having a regular place in the home where you go to study will help you establish a routine that will quickly turn homework into a habit.

## Regular Procedure:

Establish a regular procedure that you follow each night as you work on your homework. Make sure that you are comfortable with it. A regular routine may look something like this:

10 minutes

Begin with an activity that has nothing to do with homework. Read a story with an adult. Ask them to read aloud to you or take turns reading paragraphs.

5 minutes

Take out the assignment you are going to work on or the information you will study. Pre-read it or skim it to get the main ideas. If there are directions from the teacher or book, read through the directions to see if you understand them.

10-15 minutes

Do the assignment, reading, etc. If you are reading for class the next day, write down three main ideas to help you remember what you read. If you are doing an assignment, put question marks by things that you don't understand.

5 minutes

Break

10 minutes

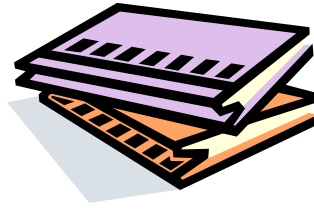
Review the assignment with your parent.

5 minutes

Talk about how the assignment/reading that night went. Notice what things you did well on and what things you had trouble with.



## Studying Hints



- Use a variety of ways to learn new information.
- Always test yourself to see if you know the information you have been studying.
- Limit distractions while studying or doing homework. Your brain can only be in one place at one time.
- Take frequent, short breaks.
- Use your sense of humour. You will remember information better if you can make it funny.
- Try to hook what you do not know to what you do know.

### Math Tips

- Use scratch paper.
- Look for key words that tell you what kind of computation is needed (i.e. less than, greatest, between, least, closest...).
- Write down each piece of information given in a problem, and circle what you are asked to find.
- Rewrite fractions with different denominators as fractions with the same denominators.
- Always reduce fractions to their smallest parts.
- Remember that an equation must stay balanced. What you do to one side, must be done to the other.
- Check subtraction problems by adding; check division problems by multiplying; check multiplication questions by dividing.

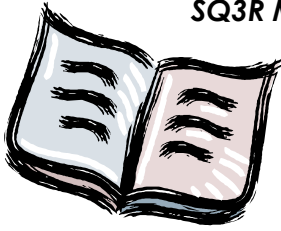
### Mnemonics

#### (Memory-Aiding Devices)

- Colours of Spectrum: *To remember the order of the colours of the spectrum:* "Roy G. Biv" (Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet)
- Geography: *To remember the names of the Great Lakes:* "HOMES" (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior)



# Methods of Studying



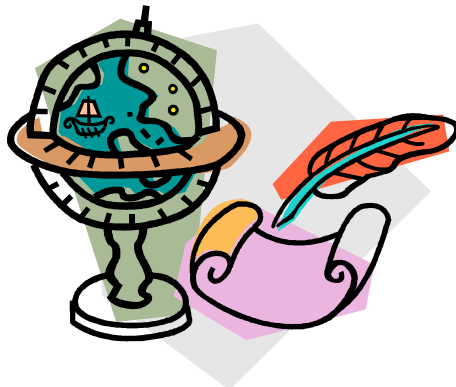
## **SQ3R Method– Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review**

- Survey: A survey of the headings and the summary of the chapter, article, or topic will give you most of the important ideas in it.
- Question: Once you've completed looking over the material, change the headings into questions. The questions make you think, and give you a purpose for studying.
- Read: Read everything in order to answer your questions. Be sure to look over pictures, charts and graphs.
- Recite: When you've read a chapter or section, take time to recite out loud what this section was about. Then answer the question you made for yourself. Were you right? 😊
- Review: This is the last step. Go over your information and review it. Look over your headings and questions. Can you answer them without looking in the textbook?

## **Read-Write-Check Method**

In this method, you are giving yourself mini-tests. This way you will find out if you really know the material.

- Step One: Read a unit of work (a page, a paragraph, or a chapter).
- Step Two: Turn over or cover the piece of material you just read. On a separate piece of paper, make a list of all the important ideas which were included in the unit. If the material is a map or a drawing, make a rough sketch of the map or drawing on a separate sheet of paper.
- Step Three: Check your work to see if it is complete and accurate. Then, and only then, you should go on to the next unit of work.



## Using Cue Cards

Using cue cards is another effective way to study. They can be used when learning new vocabulary, studying facts about a person or event, and preparing for a speech or presentation. Be creative!



### Vocabulary

- FRENCH: Write the English word on one side and the French word on the other side.
- LITERATURE/SCIENCE: Write a specific word on one side, and the definition on the other side.
- SPELLING: Use them for your weekly spelling words (have someone read the word to you; you respond by spelling it)
- MATH: Write a math equation on one side, and when you would use it on the other side.
- Spend 10 minutes each day reviewing these words.
- Have someone quiz you often.

### Facts about a Person or Event

- SOCIALS/HISTORY: Write the event that occurred on one side, and the specifics of that event on the other side. You could also write a person's name on one side, and that person's accomplishments (or failures) on the other side.
- LITERATURE: Write the author's name on one side and the book they wrote on the other side.
- MUSIC: Write a composer's name on one side, and their composition on the other side (or what they are famous for).
- Spend 10 minutes each day reviewing these words.
- Have someone quiz you often.



### Speeches or Presentations

- Write down one idea on each card. Put the cards into order.
- Practice giving your speech. Read it to yourself.
- Repeat it, seeing if you can not look at your index cards all the time.
- Practice in front of a mirror.
- Try different expressions, hand movements, tone of voice, etc.
- Practice by recording your speech or presentation on a tape recorder. Are you speaking loudly enough? Are you saying the words clearly? Is it too long? Is it too short?
- Give your speech or presentation to someone you know. Ask them what they think. If they make a suggestion, think about what they said.

## Underlining or Highlighting your Notes

When you are reading a book or magazine, you should underline (or highlight) key words and phrases. Remember that underlining is to help you so you won't read all the information again when you are studying.

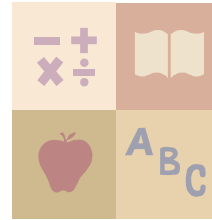
When you underline, you should read the paragraphs or passages first, think about it and then underline the key points. Try not to underline whole sentences. The first sentence is usually important. Read the headings and try to form questions about your topic. Think about the "what, when, where, who, why and how". Then underline those thoughts. The last sentence of a paragraph is usually important as well.



## Studying your Unit Notes

1. To begin with, **make sure your notes are complete, neat and properly organized.**
2. Once you have them properly organized, **read through your notes and highlight** all headings and special unit vocabulary.
3. **Read through your notes again**, one section heading at a time.
4. Once you have summarized, **change the section heading into a question.** You may be asking yourself the same questions that will be on the test.
5. **After you have completed section by section this way, ask yourself what the main theme of this unit was.** If you can answer this, you may have guessed one of the essay questions on your next test.

## Studying for Each Subject



- **Social Studies:** Use the QS3R or the Read-Write-Check method
- **Science:** Use the QS3R or the Read-Write-Check method
- **Literature:** Use the QS3R method
- **French:** Daily study is essential. Since you are learning to read, speak and write a new language, French must be studied daily. What you don't learn today will be a problem tomorrow.
- **Mathematics:** Daily study is essential. Re-do the questions of your assignment to see if you know your work. See where your mistakes are, and do those questions again.
- **Music:** Practice daily. Play each practice piece through two or three times. This will determine your success later on.



## Writing the Test

1. **Be on time for the test.**
2. **Have plenty of pens, pencils, paper - or whatever is required.**
3. When the test is handed out **listen to and read directions.**
4. **Make sure your name is on the test.**
5. It is a good idea to **read through the whole test before** you begin to take it. Make sure you don't spend too long on each section; you don't want to run out of time.
6. **Answer the "easy" questions first.**
7. Don't be afraid to **use the test as a source of information.** Often, another question will help you answer the one you are stuck on.
8. **On true/false questions,** be careful of words **such as NEVER, ALWAYS, ONLY.** Such words put great restrictions on the statement. If you can think of one exception, the answer is false.
9. **Go over your test when you are finished.** When you go over the test, make sure you read the question correctly and you answered what was asked. **Do not change answers unless you are certain that you made a mistake.**
10. **Always answer all questions.** If you don't know the answer, try to put down something that makes sense.

