



ST. ANNE'S
R.C. VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Independent Study
Policy
2020-2021

Independent Study

From September 2020, *homework* has been reintroduced at St Anne's under the title 'Independent Study'. We have also introduced the use of Knowledge Organisers and Key Vocabulary Lists as a learning tool to be used in class and at home. The move to Independent Study and Knowledge Organisers means that **no students should ever have "nothing to do" or "no homework"**. This move is supported by research from the Education Endowment Foundation who list 'Metacognition and Self-Regulation' as having a +7 impact on students' progress and 'Homework' as having a +5 impact in their Sutton Trust Toolkit (see <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>)

Independent Study at St Anne's has three main aims:

1. To improve students' knowledge and understanding (fluency) as the building blocks of all learning in all subjects
2. To develop effective independent learning habits and their own Metacognition skills
3. To enhance students' literacy and numeracy

Students' Knowledge and understanding will be promoted through the publication of 'Knowledge Organisers' for each student, in every subject, termly. These will inform students and parents of exactly what knowledge the students need to acquire and understand in that half term as the building blocks of learning for that scheme of work. Progress will be measured in class through regular short tests/low stakes quizzes. Students' commitment to their independent study will be evident in their mastery of that knowledge and understanding.

Students Independent learning habits will be promoted through the tasks set on EPraise and the direct link to the Knowledge Organisers. In this sense, students will be revising from the start of year 7 continuously as opposed to a new task for them to begin in KS4. the long term approach to independent study becomes habitual and the same strategies are embedded in all students by the time they do external examinations in year 11.

Students' literacy will be promoted through reading for pleasure at KS3 and measured by the students' progress with engaged reading time, Quiz participation and % correct in the Accelerated Reader programme

'Students' Numeracy will be promoted through the use of online learning platforms Hegarty Maths and Times Table Rockstars; which will allow them, independently, to work on key numeracy skills. Students' Progress in Numeracy will be measured by their scores in Numeracy Ninja activities (KS3 only), analysis and feedback given in Hegarty Maths and by their performance in regular short tests within lessons.'

What is a Knowledge Organiser?

A Knowledge Organiser is an A4 sheet of paper which outlines all the 'core/key' knowledge that pupils need to learn, memorise and remember for the long term, for any given topic. Some examples of the types of information that may be found on Knowledge Organisers are: key concepts, key quotations, key dates, key facts, key equations and formulas, key grammatical structures and key vocabulary.

Whilst the information on the knowledge organisers is not exhaustive, the aim is to ensure that the core knowledge and key concepts which teachers believe to be of utmost importance to pupils'

future learning are clearly mapped. This will ensure that pupils are being repeatedly exposed to the key concepts, principles and knowledge that will ultimately ensure success at GCSE and beyond. This does not mean that pupils study GCSEs from year 7. It simply ensures that the foundations which underpin success at GCSE are being mastered over 5 years to ensure deep and meaningful learning.

Knowledge Organisers will be provided to every pupil in every subject and for every topic. Teachers will ensure that pupils have access to these resources at the start of the scheme of work so that pupils are able to see the 'bigger picture' and how their learning from one lesson to the next fits into the learning journey.

Parents will also have access to all Knowledge Organisers via the school website.

How do pupils use the Knowledge Organisers?

Each child will carry a Knowledge Organiser booklet and Independent Study journal with them as part of their daily equipment.

Subject teachers will set pupils specific tasks to complete using the Knowledge Organisers. The focus for these tasks will be on building pupils' memory through the use of retrieval practice since Cognitive Science shows us that the best way to ensure that pupils' learning is being transferred into their long-term memories is through retrieval practice.

Expectations

All teaching staff are expected to:

- Set tasks weekly at KS3 for core subjects and once a fortnight for other subjects
- Set tasks weekly for all subjects at KS4
- Set tasks which promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding (fluency) in each subject using the Knowledge Organisers
- Publish Independent Study tasks on EPrise in line with the prescribed amount and frequency
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made in line with the SEND Code of Practice and Equality Act 2010. Students who have identified specific needs must be able to both access the Independent Study tasks and be challenged by them in line with their level of ability.
- Assess the impact of Independent Study in lesson time and provide feedback to help students to improve.
- Where it is clear that a student has not engaged with Independent Study effectively, tasks should be reset and completed in the students' own time as appropriate.
- Provide support for students who require it

All students are expected to:

- Complete the Independent Study tasks set
- Engage in their Knowledge Organisers using the Independent Learning Strategies in addition to specific Independent Study set tasks
- Show the impact of their Independent Study in lessons and be prepared to repeat any tasks that show poor commitment to Independent Study

- Speak to their class teacher in the first instance if there is a barrier to them engaging in their Independent Study

Parent/carer support:

Students will need to work more independently as they move closer to their GCSE exams and parent/carer input is vitally important in helping them to do well:

- Provide a quiet environment and necessary equipment.
- Have a regular independent study routine.
- Praise effort, rather than achievement.
- Show an interest
- Use the Knowledge Organisers to test student's subject knowledge.
- Contact school if you/your child has any barriers to accessing Independent Study

Setting Independent Study Tasks

All Independent Study tasks should 'retrieve' knowledge that has been taught in lessons from the current scheme of work or any previous schemes (interleaving). The way in which tasks are recorded on EPrise should show a clear link to the Knowledge Organisers and the Independent Learning Strategies or tasks being set.

For example:

1. Instead of "revise cells", the task should be "Produce a Mind Map to show what you know about cells in preparation for next lesson". This ensures that the students know HOW to 'revise' and their producing a mind map supports all 3 Independent Study aims. This task can be adapted using the 'give a lecture' or 'knowledge drop' Independent Learning Strategies.
2. Instead of "read for 20 minutes", the task should be "Try to read on average 20 mins per evening and at the end of the week, write a paragraph summarising what you have been reading" OR "Keep a reading journal – after each chapter, write a reaction to what you have read on a post it note and stick it in your reading book" OR "Which character in your book best typifies the school SACRED Values and why?" These approaches may limit the students focus on clock watching and nurture more of a reading for pleasure approach.
3. Instead of "Write definitions of the 15 key Science/ Music/ Drama/ Technology terms", the task should be "Show that you understand the 15 key terms by using them in new sentences". This avoids the low-level rote task of writing definitions and reinforces students' learning by knowing and understanding words in order to place them correctly in context.

Suggested Independent Learning Strategies

Mnemonic: To remember important points.

B- Blame

R- Reparations

A- Army

T – Territory

To remember the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

What does it look like? (Creating symbols/ storyboards/ actions): Asking students to summarise an event or topic to make a storyboard can commit information to memory. Likewise, if a student uses actions on symbols to help remember key information this may also support recall.

Knowledge Drop: This could be a great task for knowledge recall from a previous lesson or a topic studied some weeks ago. It could be a spider diagram, or a list of important points jotted onto a blank sheet of paper. This could also be filling in a blank Knowledge Organiser or using the Look, Cover, Write, Check strategy.

Leitner Cards: On one side write a question from your subject. This can be an examination style question. On the other side bullet point, what you would write about.

Give a lecture: This can be done in class or at home. Ask the student to talk about a topic without repetition for 1 minute. The aim is to get the student to verbalise their understanding of a topic and hopefully recall lots of information. The student should be able to talk for longer after each revision session.

Condense it: Give the students some detailed information about a topic. Ask them to highlight or note key points. Then ask the students to condense it down further to 4 or 5 sentences or even trigger words.

Mind Maps are a great way of getting lots of key information on one page. 'A topic on a page' which the students can revise from. It's a good way of getting them to make links between events.

Online Quizzing Platforms such as Anki, Memrise, quizlet, quiziz, Plickers etc. Students select a topic and create a quiz using one of these platforms