



The biggest difference between GCSE and A Level is the amount of independent work you are expected to do. Completing it is *essential* to ‘*acing*’ your A Levels.

Independent work will help you to consolidate the work you do in class and gain deeper understanding of your subjects. It should be enjoyable – after all, you’ve chosen your subjects because you’re passionate about them!



Questionnaire results of previous students shows that in order to succeed at A Level you should aim to spend 6 hours a week on independent study and homework per subject in addition to lessons.

Keep your tasks varied. Although your teacher may set you independent work, take a look at the ideas list below and choose your own tasks. Keep a record using the sheets in this handbook.

## Independent Learning Ideas:

- Cornell note taking technique
- Listen to a podcast
- Weekly Review Sheets
- Timed questions from practice papers
- Summarising lesson notes using mind maps, flashcards, quizlet.com, bullet points
- Explain concepts to a study buddy
- Produce your own quiz questions. Do the quizzes!
- Reading and summarising books, magazine or news articles
- Summarising Wikipedia entries
- Producing Mnemonics and Acronyms
- Using the “Scribble Technique”(\*) to revise pages from textbooks
- Watch a relevant TV programme, documentary or TED talk or use library resources

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\* **What is the scribble technique?** The book “Ace your A Levels” suggests this technique as a really effective way of learning material. Focus on memorising the material and you’ll be happy to make mistakes and forget things when scribbling because you will open the page again and see what you got wrong or missed.

- 1) Open your text book
- 2) Read through 1-2 sides
- 3) Close the book
- 4) Scribble down everything you can remember
- 5) Open the book and see what you forgot/got wrong
- 6) Read next 1-2 sides and repeat

## Academic Courses

### What to study?

Some people appear to be born knowing which A Levels to take, others arrive at the start of Year 12 a little uncertain. If you know what your future plans are, select a combination that supports your ambitions. If in doubt, take the subjects you love the most – a little passion goes a long way.

The expectation is that you will finish your time at The Willink with three qualifications, equivalent to A Levels. There is a widespread belief that some universities require students to have taken 4 A-Levels, this is no longer true. If you have the ability to do more than 3 subjects and enjoy studying, consider taking an AS level in Core Maths or studying an EPQ.

It is important you take responsibility for making the right choices for you – advice is available from a member of the Sixth Form team or Mrs Desai (our careers lead).

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## Can I change my mind about my subjects?

Yes, but think carefully! It is possible to change subjects before October half term. You need to ensure your new subject choices fits with the timetable and option blocks and you meet the entry requirements. This needs to be done in consultation with the relevant subject staff, your tutor and a member of the Sixth Form Team.

## Study Skills

The sooner you settle into a good routine, the more progress you will make during your time with us and the more time you will generate for your extra-curricular and enrichment activities. We will monitor your achievements and attitude to learning via reporting systems.



Do you:

- follow a timetable for your non-contact periods?
- use a variety of revision and recap strategies to embed new knowledge?
- engage with your subjects *outside* the classroom?
- work collaboratively with subject peers to reinforce knowledge?
- take notes in lessons then transfer them to revision guides or other useful revision tool (such as flash cards)?

We are serious about doing our bit to help you succeed – you need to be serious about taking responsibility for your learning and your results.

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