

Minimise Study Time Maximise Scores



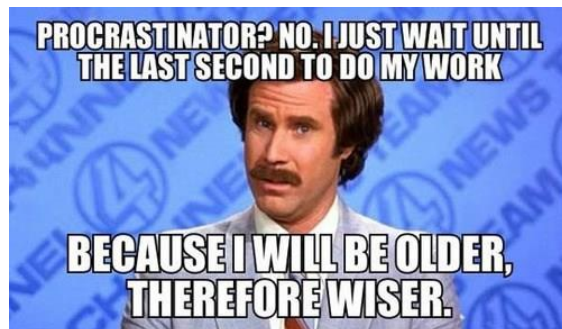
HSC Exam/Study Tip # 10: Productivity Boosters

- Losing just 1.5 hours of sleep reduces alertness by 32%, and avoiding junk food can raise your productivity 20%. Exercise helps you to better handle stress, makes you more alert, and gives you more mental energy.
- A good mood makes you 12% more productive, so joke with a study mate, watch a funny cat video, or chat with a friend.
- Find your 'power hours' – the times of the day where your energy, focus and motivation are at their highest levels. Use these times to complete difficult or challenging tasks. Don't work on concentration intensive tasks when your alertness and energy levels are low. Not only will you make avoidable mistakes, tasks will require more time and effort to complete, increasing the likelihood of you becoming overwhelmed or demotivated. Use these times to eat, relax, clean, sort, research or answer emails.
- Divide tasks into three categories – 'Must, Should and Want'. Focus your efforts on the "Musts".



- Stop multitasking. Not only is it less efficient (productivity decreases by 40%), it drops your IQ by 10 points. That means more mistakes, which you'll only have to go back and correct... wasting even more precious time.
- Practice meditation. It teaches your brain to tune out distractions and focus longer. Even 5 minutes a day can have a positive impact on productivity.
- Leave the last 5 to 10 minutes of each study session to review what you've learned, to note any questions you may have, and to document which sections you're having difficulty with.
- Allocate a time limit in which to complete each individual task. Work has a tendency to expand and fill the available time!
- Don't listen to music while studying. When you listen to music, you're making your brain work twice as hard. Half your brain is trying to listen to the music and the other half is trying to study. The result? A loss in concentration and productivity, which means that it will take you longer to complete each task.
- If you must listen to music, choose music that doesn't have lyrics in the languages you speak. Choose either instrumentals for ambience or white noise to block out sound instead, and you won't be as tempted to stop and sing along with the tune.
- Frequent pop-ups are distracting and almost guaranteed to pull your attention away from the task at hand. Therefore, if you're unable to shut down your phone or computer, shut noncritical notifications off so you can focus with greater ease. Alternatively, set your mobile phone to flight mode.

- Irrespective of which subject you're studying, the most effective way to learn is by 'doing', be that working through exam-style questions (which will provide a retention rate of between 80 – 85%) or verbal recitation i.e. the process of explaining materials in our own words and out loud. This powerful technique has a 90 – 95% retention rate, and is the most effective learning technique known to man. Learning in this manner will decrease study time up to 8-fold! This also means that you'll commit up to 8 times more information to memory in any set period of time!
- Set up study groups where you're given the opportunity to teach others what you've learned. If this isn't possible, try the family dog or cat (but chain the dog up so it doesn't run away)!
- To get the most from learning sessions (and cut down on study time), spread learning across a longer time frame rather than cramming before your exams (spaced learning). You will learn more in ten 2-hour sessions than in two 10-hour sessions!
- When preparing for exams, save huge amounts of time by attending quality revision programs, such as those delivered by TSFX. You'll also get a fully comprehensive set of **A+ notes** at no charge – saving you the time and effort of preparing your own!
- Decrease the temperature in your study area. If necessary, layer up with clothes and open a window so you get a continual supply of fresh air. Air from cooling or heating vents is recycled throughout the house and often has a lower concentration of oxygen, which reduces productivity.
- If you need to study in a noisy environment, purchase a cheap pair of disposable foam ear plugs (<\$1) and a pair of jackhammer ear muffs (<\$25), and enjoy the instant silence!
- Rather than let them collect and snowball, if a task takes less than two minutes to complete, you should do it ASAP.
- Research has shown that we're way more productive the less time we assign ourselves to complete our tasks (within reason). This is why Sweden has introduced the 6 hour working day – they realised that employees are likely to work harder, be happier, and use their time more wisely when there's less time available to get things done at work. Therefore, allocate less time than required to complete tasks.
- It's been shown that exercising in the morning can greatly improve your productivity and decrease stress levels.
- Drinking more water gives you more energy, keeps you healthy, and gives you an excuse to get up for bathroom breaks so you're not stuck in a chair all day!
- Eliminate your least favorite tasks first up, and you'll find the rest of your day to be more pleasant and productive.
- Working in small blocks of time can be a great way of increasing your productivity levels, as you can assign smaller bite-sized tasks to each block, rather than large overwhelming tasks.
- Studies show that exposure to sun light improves sleep, thereby improving your well-being and in turn, your productivity levels. So, if you can, try and work near a window. You'll get the benefit of improved productivity and better sleep as a result.
- Always batch similar tasks together when planning your day, it'll definitely make your work process flow more smoothly.
- Start using site blockers so that you can work without the constant threat of distracting websites.
- Clutter is extremely stress-inducing. A messy desk can make you feel overwhelmed and anxious, and make it much easier for you to procrastinate.



Regards, TSFX.