

**SIXTH FORM  
Intervention  
VESPA  
Support Booklet**



**Queen Elizabeth High School**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **VESPA – Vision – Effort – Systems – Practice - Attitude**

Along with other sixth forms across the country, we are embracing VESPA and supporting our students in having the right sixth form mind set.

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To achieve your true full potential in your sixth form studies requires so much more than simply reviewing the specification for each of your subjects and ensuring that you know the content.

You must have the right study skills, the right environment, the right mindset and the right attitude and commitment - and not just for one day, one week or one month, but, ideally, throughout the two years.

Some students made significant progress in developing these skills through their GCSE years and learnt what it took to self- motivate to study and achieve – some students need greater support in that journey.

The positive is that you can still develop these critical skills and, being part of the small intervention group of students, the additional help is absolutely aimed at supporting you.

Good luck!

# VESPA

HAVING  
A CLEAR  
VISION

COMMITTING  
FULLY to THE  
EFFORT  
REQUIRED

PUTTING  
SUPPORT  
SYSTEMS  
In PLACE

PERFECT  
PRACTICE  
MAKES  
PERFECT

DEVELOPING  
A POSITIVE  
MENTAL  
ATTITUDE

# VISION

**What do you want to achieve  
Can you visualise how you are going to get there?**

- **Short term** –
  - in the next week
  - in the next month
  - in the next term
  
- **Medium term**
  - at the end of this year?
  
- **Long term**
  - at university (where and what?)
  - your career aspirations



**Keep an eye on your long term goals – put pictures up at home BUT**

**Do NOT take your eye off what steps are needed to get you there – they are the paving stones that lay this path on this journey.**



# EFFORT

## What are you putting in to achieve your vision?

“Nothing worth having was ever achieved without effort”

– Theodore Roosevelt



## How many hours of independent work are you putting in each week?

- In your study periods
- In your free periods
- At home / outside of school hours

## Think about those students considered to be the hardest working, most committed in year 13. Be honest with yourself.....

- How do you compare?

In *The Recipe for Success* (2009), hundreds of high earners were interviewed and the author identified 10 characteristics to gain success. She termed these as the “tenth graft”, by which she means putting in the hours.

- STUDENT WHO WORKS NO FREE PERIODS = 17.5 hrs/wk
- STUDENT WHO WORKS ALL FREE PERIODS = 25 hrs/wk
- A 9am –5.30pm JOB = 37.5hrs/wk (- lunch)
- AVERAGE FULL TIME UK WORKER = 42 hrs/wk

*Recent UK research shows that high achieving A-Level students commit to an extra **20-30 hours** of independent study **every week!***

# SYSTEMS

## IS YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND ORGANISATION HELPING YOU?

- **What do you need to get you studying?**

- An alarm reminder that it is time
- A clear desk
- Quiet space
- Phone turned off / out of the room / on quiet
- Music off and no TV
- A drink / bite to eat before you start

- **How do you organise your workload now?**

- Is all your homelearning completed on time and to the very best of your ability?
- Do you regularly sort your notes or are they bundles at the bottom of your bag?
- When your to-do list is large, do you take the time to work through a prioritised list of actions?

- **Use a weekly timetable to include -**

- Lessons
- Study periods
- Evening independent study
- Rest and relaxation time
  - Eating
  - Exercising
  - Sleeping



# PRACTICE

## Perfect Practice makes for Perfect Performance

You may know all the content in your text book / as defined in the specification, but to really achieve your potential requires perfect practice!

### Some things to consider for practice-

- Do you know what the exam questions look like for each of your exams in each of your subjects?
- Do you know what skills could be tested in addition to knowledge?
- Do you know where your strengths and areas of development are?

### Some things to action for practice-

- Complete exam questions in timed conditions
  - If timing is a problem, try changing the colour of your pen when your 'time is up' and adding any additional content in
  - This will help you to appreciate whether time or knowledge is the underlying issue
- Use mark schemes and **fully** annotate your answers to include key words and phrases (what is absolutely needed)
- Review the examiners reports carefully – what are the common errors / what guidance do they offer? –sometimes it's fabulous
- Compare model answers against your own work
- Work with your friends to create your own exam questions





# ATTITUDE

**GREATNESS ISN'T BORN. IT'S GROWN – Daniel Coyle**

**Try again. Fail again. Fail better – Samuel Beckett**

As an A level student, you are constantly challenging yourself – each and every day you are learning something new. It is no surprise that at times, you might feel overwhelmed but the key is to ensure that you use challenge as a positive.

Some students will avoid failure at all costs and therefore can use excuses – they don't fully complete or skip hard homelearning, do insufficient revision for tests so that they have an excuse, hide mistakes or say they fully understand when they don't – and so limit their progress

**Is this you?**

Dan Coyle (author of the Talent Code) argues mistakes are pieces of information. You become brilliant at something because you made lots of mistakes to begin with.

**As the old saying goes, “if at first you don't succeed, try, try again”**

Challenging yourself to change your mindset is a key.

As an example taken from “*Secret Study Skills – The Power of Positive Thinking*”,  
*Dahlia Miller April 2009*

**The Situation:** You receive a low grade on an essay.

**Negative mindset :** “I'm rubbish at writing essays”

**Positive mindset :** “OK, that didn't go to plan, I'm going to practice more to improve my essay writing.” / “Now that I see my mistakes, I know what I need to work on.”

Positive thinking is taking control over how you choose to think about a situation. With control, you can influence the outcome. Choosing a more positive perspective, you can gain more power and confidence .....

**You will see yourself as able to accomplish tasks that  
previously had felt out of reach..**

## Where are you now?

Rate each statement in line with your own attitude/beliefs:

1 = Strongly Disagree,

2 = Disagree, 3

= Neither Agree not Disagree,

4 = Agree,

5 = Strongly Agree

**\*Question 9 only:**

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often 5 = Very Often

1) Your intelligence is something about you that you can change easily

1  2  3  4  5

2) I'm committed to finishing school regardless of obstacles

1  2  3  4  5

3) I do my best in class

1  2  3  4  5

4) I know that attending university is the best choice for me

1  2  3  4  5

5) I try to do my best at any task

1  2  3  4  5

6) If a problem is very large, I divide it into small parts

1  2  3  4  5

7) I bounce back after disappointment or failure

1  2  3  4  5

8) I take good notes in class

1  2  3  4  5

9) I can write exam answers under timed conditions\*

1  2  3  4  5

10) I have a clear idea about the career I want to pursue

1  2  3  4  5

11) My work is very organised (answers/notes)?

1  2  3  4  5

12) I compare model answers against my own work

1  2  3  4  5

13) Others consider me a hard working student

1  2  3  4  5

14) If I don't understand class work, I talk to my teacher

1  2  3  4  5

15) I have a positive view of myself

1  2  3  4  5

### THE MARK SCHEME:

**Add up your ratings in the following groups:**

**Vision** = Questions 2, 4 & 10 \_\_\_\_\_

**A high score out of 15 =**

**Effort** = Questions 3, 5 & 13 \_\_\_\_\_

Strong Element

**Systems** = Questions 6, 8 & 11 \_\_\_\_\_

**A low score out of 15 =**

**Practice** = Questions 9, 12 & 14 \_\_\_\_\_

Area to Develop

**Attitude** = Questions 1, 7 & 15

## VISION ACTIVITY – SMART GOALS

**What** - a reflective planning activity to develop goals

**Why** - designed to support you in working towards an end goal by achieving sub-goals along the way.

### Action –

1. Pick one goal related to your current workload.
2. Try and identify how you can make it SMART.

### Specific:

- Be as precise as you can rather than general.

### Measurable:

- How will you know when you have reached your goal?
  - 'I will know I have achieved my goal because...'

### Action-based:

- What can you do to get the goal started?
- How? List the steps one by one

### Realistic:

- Has someone done it before that you can speak to?
- Is there evidence to suggest that you can do it?

### Time-bound:

- When do you want to do this by?
- Be precise / be specific (not 'one day I'm going to...')

<b>SPECIFIC</b>	
<b>MEASURABLE</b>	
<b>ACTION-BASED</b>	
<b>REALISTIC</b>	
<b>TIME-BOUND</b>	

Now try setting 4-5 smart goals for the next fortnight. This might include a piece of homelearning or an upcoming assessment

## VISION ACTIVITY – WOOP!

**Make sure that your goals are feasible**

This technique will support you in setting and achieving your goals.

### WISH:

Think in detail about something you want to accomplish (e.g. the grade you want to achieve in a particular subject) **OUTCOME:**

Imagine the best thing you associate with having achieved that outcome. (e.g. getting onto your first choice course at University )

### OBSTACLE:

Identify what obstacles are most likely to get in the way?

(that thing that can hold you back internally or that one key distraction)

### PLAN:

Draft an 'if...then' plan for what you will do when that obstacle arises. ('if I find myself checking twitter, then I'll get up and turn off the wifi')

## WOOP Four-Step Technique

WISH \_\_\_\_\_

OUTCOME \_\_\_\_\_

OBSTACLE \_\_\_\_\_

PLAN

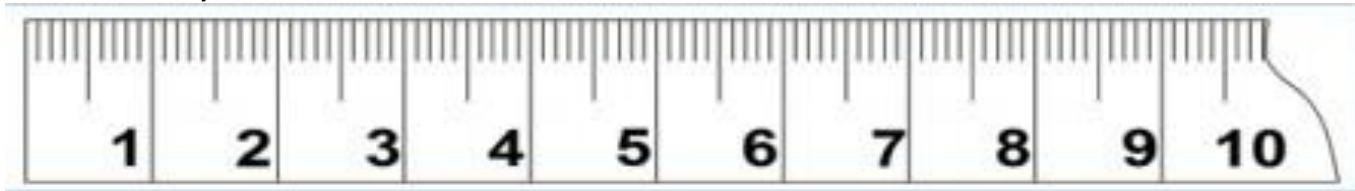
If \_\_\_\_\_ then I will \_\_\_\_\_  
obstacle action to overcome obstacle



# EFFORT ACTIVITY – THE ONE TO TEN SCALE

On a scale of 1 to 10 -

1. Look at the work you've done so far this term and think about the levels of effort that you have put in to your studies:
2. Mark your efforts on the ruler



Little or  
no effort

Some effort – you're  
working 'hard' at times

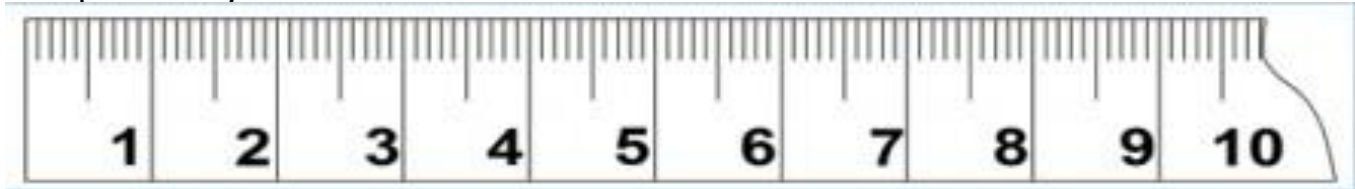
The hardest you  
could possibly work

**BUT**

- These numbers mean different things to different people- they are subjective
- It does not tell you how you compare with other people,
- How you compare with the hardest working students •

So let's take a look at the scale again.

This time think of the amount of time you spent last week, working independently



1 to 2 hours of  
independent study a  
week

5 to 10 hours of  
independent study a  
week

Around 20 hours of  
independent study a  
week

If you answered high on the first ruler but low on the second, are you **honestly** trying your best?

Step it up week by week – you should be aiming for **21 hours** of **UNDISTURBED** independent study

**START NOW** – how much can you increase this next week?

**REMEMBER:** You **could** achieve a lot of these hours by working during in your frees – **are you doing this?** You should still have time for socialising and hobbies.

## SYSTEMS ACTIVITY – SNACK DON'T BINGE

### **Little and often beats last-minute cramming...**

- a. Set aside an hour a week where you will be completely undisturbed
- b. Split the hour up evenly into 15 minute segments
- c. For 15 minutes at a time- review the week's work in each course:
  - i. Check your notes are clear, legible and in order
  - ii. Summarise your learning in e.g. mind-maps
  - iii. Highlight stuff you've found hard – things to work on during your independent study time
  - iv. Go through the homelearning you have and the deadlines and make a prioritised list for the week ahead

**Get into the habit of doing this every week - it will pay off!!**

**Make a note here of how you are going to use your undisturbed hour every week:**

# SYSTEMS ACTIVITY – EISENHOWER MATRIX

**A levels are tough and deadlines can mount up.**

This tool is aimed at supporting you in prioritising and so meeting your deadlines.

- List 10 tasks you need to complete
- Place them into the matrix under one of the headings
- Prioritise those which are urgent and important first

**Now aim to do this for the next fortnight**

## Eisenhower Matrix

<b>1</b>	Important / Urgent
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____

<b>2</b>	Important / Not Urgent
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____

<b>3</b>	Not Important / Urgent
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____

<b>4</b>	Not Important / Not Urgent
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____
•	_____



## PRACTICE ACTIVITY – REVISION QUESTIONNAIRE

**How many independent hours per subject per week do you work?**

Break it down into hours in and outside of school

Now, select below what sort of work activities you do

Tick either always, sometimes or never next to each statement.

	Sometimes	Always	Never
Reading through class notes (c)			
Using resources on online (c)			
Using course textbooks (c)			
Using mind maps diagrams (c)			
Making / re-making class notes (c)			
Highlighting or colour coding (c )			
Flash cards (c)			
Using a revision wall to display learning (c)			
Writing exam answers under timed conditions (s)			
Reading model answers (s)			
Using past exam questions to plan out answers (s)			
Marking your own work to a mark scheme (s)			
Studying mark schemes or examiner's reports (f)			
Working with other students in groups/pairs (f)			
Comparing model answers against your own work (f)			
Creating your own exam questions (f)			
Handing in extra exam work for marking (f)			
One to one discussion with teachers / tutors (f)			

**Did you notice the categories next to each item?**

Put in your scores for each category below:

**C = Content**

**C =**

**S = Skills**

**S =**

**F = Feedback**

**F =**

## PRACTICE ACTIVITY – cont/.

**Your revision should include all three techniques**

1. Did you see a trend in your answers towards one category?
2. What could you do to ensure you complete a balanced mixture of activities to help your revision?
3. List other activities that you carry out and assign them a category: c, s or f.
4. What do you do if you are struggling to understand something (try again, read textbooks, see tutors/other students ...)

Research suggests that there is a clear correlation between student success and not only the independent hours of study they put in but also the range of activities / techniques they use in their studies

<b>D Grade Students</b>	<b>A / A* Grade Students</b>
3 hours a week per subject	7 hours a week per subject
5-6 different revision activities	10 + different revision activities

**How will this change your approach?**

## ATTITUDE ACTIVITY – STOPPING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

***“If you always do what you’ve always done,  
you’ll always get what you’ve always got”***

John Maxwell in his book *Failing Forward* (2012) suggests that whilst some individuals fall backwards from failure, some use this failure as a springboard to accelerate their progress

Failing backwards	Failing forwards
Blaming others.	Taking responsibility.
Repeating the same mistake.	Learning from each mistake.
Expecting never to fail.	Knowing failure is part of the process.
Expecting to fail continually.	Maintaining a positive attitude.
Accepting tradition blindly.	Challenging outdated assumptions.
Being limited by past mistakes.	Taking new risks.
Thinking ‘I am a failure’.	Believing something didn’t work.
Withdrawing effort.	Persevering.

### Reframe the missing statements

I’m not going to get the grades to get onto the course I want	I’m going to have to work harder to get good grades – and I need to consider other course options
It’s good enough – at least I won’t get a text home for missing Home learning	
I’m not going to do well in my mocks so what is the point in trying	
This is just too hard – I cannot do it...	....yet. I need to put some more time and effort into it
I’m just not as smart as Fiona / John	What can I learn from the way they approach their work?

**Change what you can in your life – YOUR MINDSET!**

**Give it time. Like everything, perfect practice makes perfect!**

## **GETTING STARTED - NEXT STEPS**

1. Get into a habit of writing a list of things you have to do
  - a. Review of recent lesson content
  - b. Written homelearning tasks
  - c. Coursework if applicable
  - d. On line tasks (e.g. Seneca)
  - e. Exam question practice / Revision for assessments
  
2. Prioritise the list –what needs to be done first
  
3. Fill in your timetable plan each week
  
4. Talk to peers & teachers rather than building up stresses
  
5. Look at your extra-curricular activities or jobs –could any hours be cut out there?
  
6. Are you exercising regularly? Getting enough sleep? Spending some time relaxing? Do you have things to look forward to? (A reward for hard work)

