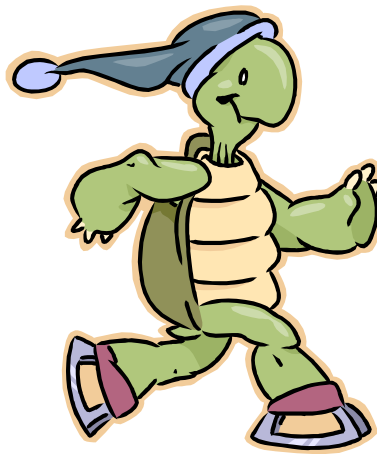


# Ready



# Steady.....

# Study

June Knowles  
Learning Support Consultant  
SALTIRE  
University of St Andrews

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### **Acknowledgements**

The information within this booklet has been gathered from workshops personal experience, colleagues, students, the internet and from a booklet previously compiled by Fi Morris (1997/98).

I would also like to thank the contributors to Fi Morris' booklet:

Dr Colin Mason, Mr Philip Mallet, Paul Corrigan, David Kinnen and Judith Dann.

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Learning Support Consultant  
SALTIRE  
University of St. Andrews*

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## **SALTIRE's mission**

SALTIRE's mission is to promote excellence in learning and teaching at the University of St Andrews. It attempts this by assisting students and staff to explore new approaches to learning and teaching and by helping both individuals and the institution as a whole to monitor and evaluate progress through innovation, review and enhancement.

## **Study skills**

SALTIRE supports the delivery of study skills (and other key skills) both online and via traditional routes including individual consultations, small group tutorials and large group seminars for students who request support.

The following study skills areas are supported by SALTIRE:

- Study organisation
- Study techniques
- Note taking
- Reading skills
- Essay writing
- Report writing
- Practical Laboratory or Field Work reports
- Presentation skills
- Research skills

If you want help or advice on any of the topics above, or any other study topic, contact:

**June Knowles**  
**Learning Support Consultant**

or

**Carol Morris**  
**Unit Administrator**

✉ [learning@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:learning@st-andrews.ac.uk)      ☎ (01334) 462141

Alternatively print out and complete the form on our web page:

[www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire/studyskills/refer\\_form.shtml](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire/studyskills/refer_form.shtml)

and send it to:

SALTIRE, North Street, St. Andrews, KY16 9AJ

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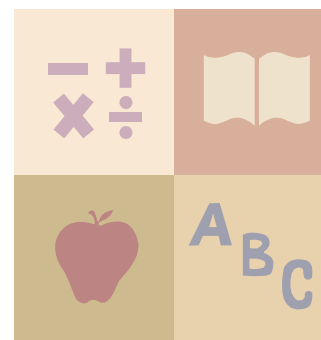
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## Study Skills

### Introduction

Study skills – this sounds like something that will not come up high on your list of priorities for life at University. It probably sits somewhere between ‘the pub’ and ‘Neighbours’. However, it is really something that you should be thinking about from the moment you start at the University of St. Andrews. If for no other reason, it will help ease the pressure whilst here.



There will be times when you will think that other students are: better prepared, or better taught, or cleverer than you are. Practically every student thinks this at some point in their academic career.

Have a look around the rest of your class. This will be **your** graduating class. This may come as a surprise to you, but courses are designed for success. If you are good enough to get here, then you are good enough to get your degree here. There are always more applicants at St. Andrews than there are places.

Having got here – you need to survive and thrive. This booklet is not designed to be read just now in its entirety – but for you to dip in and out of when the time or the need is right. This is where we, at SALTIRE, can also help.

Hopefully, this booklet will deliver some gems which will help your future academic life, so enjoy.

Top Tips will appear as:

***keep this booklet in a safe place  
... your academic career may depend on it!***

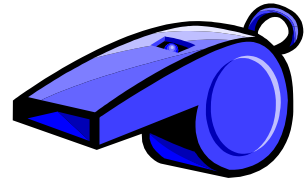
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### Take Charge

Ask yourself: 'Why have I come to St. Andrews?', 'What are my reasons for studying?' The main difference you will find between school and University is that you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning. No homework here!



The best way to handle this is to take responsibility for your learning as early as possible. No one is going to abandon you and often there will be constraints on your time, but whenever you can, try to follow this quick outline:

- make your own agenda – what, when, where your study, etc.
- make each piece of work your own and decide what you want to gain from it
- assess your own work honestly, make your own judgements matter as much as the tutors
- make good plans, stick to them but if they turn out to be bad plans – dump them

### SWOT

No - this is not the name for a teacher's pet! It is a plan for attack!

- Analyse your **Strengths**
- Analyse your **Weaknesses**
- Look at the **Opportunities**
- Prepare to meet the **Threats**

Make lists! Consciously explore what you can and can't do – don't let the 'can'ts' come as a surprise to you. Keep reviewing your lists and be ready to change them in the light of feedback, comment by other students, etc. Decide how much time to give to overcoming weaknesses and plan how to meet the threats. Always enjoy the opportunities.

In the battlefield of education, follow this plan of action and victory could well be yours.

When you make a list always start off with:

1. Make a list

This way you always have something to cross off!!

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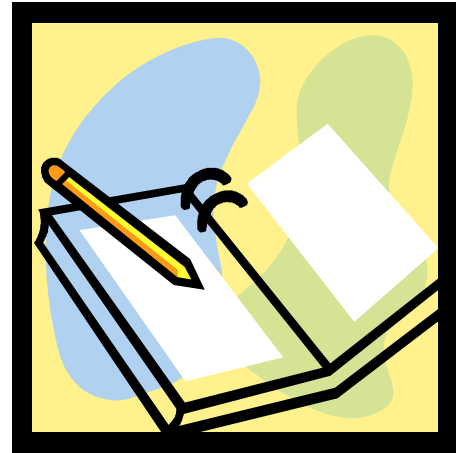
### **Study Habits**

#### **Study Times**

'Easier said than done', I hear you cry! The following are a few ideas to help:

Set aside a certain time for study each day. The least favourable periods are those immediately following meals and when a person is sleepy or tired.

Plan your hours of after class time carefully and you will have more time for study and pleasure too. It is easy to budget your time if you make a chart, in which each hour is accounted for. On the chart leave a space for each hour. See the next page for a chart – you can photocopy this chart if you wish.



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<b>Day →</b>							
<b>Times ↓</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>
7am – 8am							
9am – 10am							
10am – 11am							
11am – noon							
12noon – 1pm							
1pm – 2pm							
2pm – 3pm							
3pm – 4pm							
4pm – 5pm							
5pm – 6pm							
6pm – 7pm							
7pm – 8pm							
8pm – 9pm							
9pm – 10pm							

You can change the times to half hour slots or any other time period that fits with your mode of learning or study

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### Study Environment

Have a definite place to study. It should be equipped with all the study tools you will need - pencils, erasers, paper, paper clips, etc. The top of your desk should be almost bare except perhaps for a dictionary and study materials of one kind or another. Everything should say to you '**Study, Study, Study**'.



Those using a computer on which to write essays etc, should have easy access to this resource for continuity of study. This resource is **always** available during the university day - somewhere!

You should have a comfortable chair, but not one which invites you to settle back and relax fully. Your feet should rest comfortably on the floor.

The desk, chair, lamp, books, staring you in the face - these objects have a more important function than that of mere tools. When you have used them for a time, they should soon produce in you a feeling for work. Try not to use them for any other purpose than for studying. Read your magazines, listen to the radio or watch TV somewhere else - **NOT** in your study environment!!! There is a sound reason for this - when you lie down on your bed and close your eyes, these actions serve as a reminder to bring on sleep. In the same way as sitting down at your study desk and picking up a pencil or a book can become reminders that studying at this place is an effective, natural and easy thing to do.

Make sure the lighting is sufficient and the room temperature is comfortable - not too hot - you do not want to fall asleep.

You do not want distractions - so let your family, flatmates, friends and others know that you are studying and you do not want disturbed.

Once you're happy with your work space make it **your** space – do not allow others to intrude without being invited. Put a sign up saying:

**DO NOT DISTURB**

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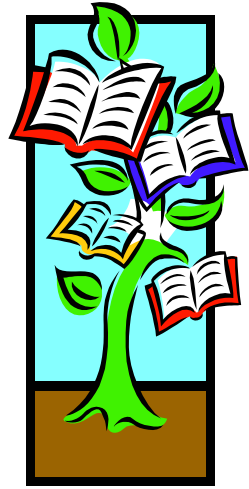
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## How to Study

Learning to study is a skill and therefore has to be practised. The following is a strategy for improving your study and concentration:

1. Assemble beforehand all the tools and reading materials you will need during your study session.
2. Try to study in a room apart from the rest of family / friends activity. Use a desk / table for your books and papers.
3. Jerk your mind back to the subject the moment it wanders. Do not give your mind time to get involved in other subjects.
4. Ask yourself questions about the materials you are studying to bring your mind back.
5. Sometimes read aloud from your study materials.
6. Keep your thoughts on track by restating aloud, in your own words, the material you have been studying.
7. Try to train your family / friends to respect your privacy and study time.
8. Remember why you are studying the subject. Surveys indicate that students who are highly motivated can concentrate even if they are surrounded by noise and distraction.
9. Give yourself a reward when you have completed a study session.
10. Put your thoughts in writing. Pencil and paper are practical tools for building concentration. If you find yourself dozing, shake yourself and write down a one sentence description of the paragraph / diagram you are studying.



It often helps to keep a pad of paper next to you when you start on the writing of a piece of work to jot down any ideas that spring to mind.

You never know when inspiration will strike next.

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### Use all Available Resources

There are many, many resources available to you at the University of St. Andrews – use them all, or as many as you need to fulfil your studies.

Some of the resources are:

**Tutors** – Although tutors are invariably busy that does not mean that you cannot consult them – so do not be afraid to ask questions. Make appointments, directly with a tutor or through the departmental secretary and be prepared with your questions before you go.

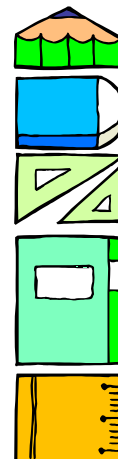
**Library and secretarial staff** – value their support, departmental secretaries often know as much about the organisation of a module or course as the tutors do. Librarians are in charge of one of the University's main learning resources. Often they will be able to help you find that book that you have to read – even if it does not appear to be on the shelf and is 'in' the library.

**Fellow students** – students vastly outnumber staff and are a huge resource which is underused. Try working in groups, this can help in many areas eg. Information searches, brainstorming – this list can go on and on.

*Remember.* You are dealing with people and it always helps to be polite, enthusiastic, punctual and so on.

**Internet** – there is a huge (and ever growing) amount of materials on the world wide web. There are many useful study skills sites – see the SALTIRE web site ([www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire/studysk.shtml](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire/studysk.shtml)) for links to appropriate and suitable study skills sites.

**SALTIRE** – SALTIRE staff are happy to help you with any of your study skills needs, eg. Note taking, essay writing, time scheduling, report writing, study techniques, reading skills etc.



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### **A Final Note**

SALTIRE hopes that this chapter will help you in your academic journey. We wish you success in your studies and hope that you will visit us if the need arises.

We, at SALTIRE, will be pleased to meet with you at a time that is mutually convenient.

Visit our website [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire) to see the range of support that you can access, either as an individual or as part of a group.