

# November Activities

**With mock exams coming up, November is one of the months that really count. It's not easy, though – the nights get darker, the weather's terrible and that December holiday still seems a long way off. So feeling pretty gloomy isn't unusual. This month's activities tend to focus on how to organise getting things done, which is something that will make you feel better! You'll be doing homework and classwork of course, but this is a month for taking on some extra commitments – you might re-organise your notes in preparation for an exam, struggle with a difficult topic, or call in a favour to get ahead in a subject. The resources here help you plan how you'll get that revision started.**

## 10. Practice Activity: Building Independent Learning

For some pupils the only work they ever do has been set by their teacher: do you ever do more?

We've found that the top performing pupils are usually setting their own work if their teacher hasn't set it for them. This can be hard, though, particularly if you aren't sure exactly what work to set yourself. Teachers quite often say to pupils that they should be doing 'independent learning' or 'reading around the subject'. But what does that actually mean?

We would suggest that you get much more specific and design your independent learning so that you know exactly what you should be doing and how long it should take you. (Some teachers provide their pupils with this sort of activity, so it might be an activity you can skip. If not, read on.)

### Five Independent Learning Activities

For each of your GCSE subjects we've suggest that you design five activities.

First, identify the topic. What is it you'd like to spend some more time on?

Second, what are you going to do? Watch a YouTube video, read a book or do some online research? Use this table of suggestions to get you started, and choose five:

Comparing your work with that of pupils who get higher grades.
Making a clear, visual overview of a course, connecting all the content in a huge diagram/mind-map.
Creating flashcards as a memory aid.
Reading lots of exam questions and seeing if you can recognise 'types' or 'genres' of question.
Asking for extra work to be assessed and carefully reading the feedback you get.
Creating a glossary of key words with definitions.

Expanding class notes with reference to textbooks.
Representing complicated information visually using a table, chart or diagram.
Reading through an examiners' report and making a list of dos and don'ts.
Choosing a specific area of difficulty and discussing it in detail with a friend.
Planning responses to past exam questions.
Borrowing someone else's class notes and using them to expand yours.
Finding a brilliant course textbook and reading a chapter, making notes as you go.
Watching online videos and interacting with associated VLE resources.
Arranging a meeting with an older student or sibling who has done the course before.
Writing for twenty minutes under timed conditions.

Third, where do you need to go to get access to the resources?

Finally, what activity are you going to do? Remember, doing some active work is going to be more beneficial than passive activities.

Now you've got a plan, complete the table below for each subject. The example below is for GCSE sociology.

**Subject: Sociology**

Topic	What	Where	Activity
1. Research methods	Watch the first YouTube video on statistics	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDjS20kic54">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDjS20kic54</a>	Make a mind-map while watching

Now use some of these others to plan what your independent study might look like for some of your other courses.

**Subject:**

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Subject:

Topic	What	Where	Activity
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Subject:

Topic	What	Where	Activity
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## Final Thoughts

This activity works well with the weekly planner. Could you timetable a specific time each week to work on your independent learning?