

STUDY SMART NEWSLETTER

**JAN TO FEB 2023,
SECOND NEWSLETTER**

INTRODUCTION TO OUR PROJECT

Hello again! We are Study Smart, and we're here to help you with your studying needs. All of our newsletters will contain interviews with high-scoring students from Years 12 and 13 on how to pass your IGCSEs, while obtaining high scoring marks in various subjects. A student's perspective on the course is the most valuable, and we'll be providing you with that too. Our newsletters also contain tried-and-tested studying tips to help students achieve higher grades, as well as key information on the exams to hopefully give you guys a head start.

For any more information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eunice Wong (12D) at eunice.wong@online.island.edu.hk!



-INTERVIEW- ENGLISH WORLD LIT

This newsletter will focus on English, a subject all IGCSE students who took English First Language in year 10 are required to take in year 11! We conducted an interview with Audrey Wong (12D) and asked her questions about her journey in IGCSE World Literature. She achieved grade A* (90%) in English World Lit.

Below is our interview, hope it will help with your IGCSE World Lit revision!

-WORLD LIT INTERVIEW! (1/3)-

Q: WHAT DO YOU THINK STUDENTS SHOULD EXPECT GOING INTO THIS COURSE/SUBJECT?

Students should have a good understanding of the novels/books/work they will be doing throughout their course. I don't think there was as much workload as other subjects but there is coursework that needs to be done throughout the year.



Q: WHEN DID YOU START TO STUDY FOR THE SUBJECT BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM IN MAY/JUNE? HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND STUDYING PER DAY OR PER WEEK?



I generally studied on and off for a month leading up to the exam, and then around an hour a day in the week leading up to the exam in May/June. This is because I already learnt a lot in class throughout the year, and there isn't much I hadn't already studied, English isn't a subject I think you can study for a long amount of time.

Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FOR STUDYING THIS SUBJECT?

Make sure you put effort into the coursework throughout the year as it counts towards your final grade. Make sure you make annotations in the novel you are studying in class and practise with past papers for unseen poems as it is impossible to know what kind of poem will show up in the unseen text.



-WORLD LIT INTERVIEW! (2/3)-

Q: HOW DID YOU EFFECTIVELY MANAGE YOUR TIME BETWEEN STUDYING FOR THIS SUBJECT AND OTHER SUBJECTS?



I started studying for the subjects that are more content-heavy with memorisation before I started studying for English so I didn't need to split my time between studying English and a lot of other subjects, so I could solely focus on English.

Q: ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE GRADE YOU RECEIVED? IF NOT, HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE IT OR WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

I was generally satisfied with my grade, but I could have improved some of my coursework since my *Of Mice and Men* coursework grade was one band lower than my *Romeo and Juliet* coursework. I could've achieved this by rereading the *Of Mice and Men* book to ensure I understood it all.



Q: WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT THIS SUBJECT?



I had Mr Atkinson as my English teacher so I found English very enjoyable thanks to him. I especially liked reading and analysing *Romeo and Juliet* because it was different from the other works we studied.

Q: DID YOU USE ANY SPECIFIC WEBSITES OR RESOURCES WHEN STUDYING FOR THE EXAM?

I only used the annotations I made in class because I made very detailed notes throughout the year. I advise students to make annotations in class as this helps with revising in the future.

-WORLD LIT INTERVIEW! (3/3)-

Q: WHAT DID YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING ABOUT THIS SUBJECT AND HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS SUBJECT IN TERMS OF CHALLENGE?

I found the unseen texts (poems) the most challenging since you can't study much beforehand for this exam and I considered this subject to be one of the easier subjects in IGCSE.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO STUDY METHOD FOR THIS SUBJECT? (E.G. POMODORO)



I mostly used the notes I took in class to memorise parts of the novels/works we studied. For the set text exam, I made sure to memorise at least 3 quotes for each character. I memorised the quotes by writing and reciting them until I could remember. I would recommend rereading the novel before the exam to make sure you have a clear understanding of it.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO NOTE-TAKING METHOD? (E.G. CORNELL NOTES)

Using highlighters to highlight quotes that you can use for the exam, make annotations and write down key concepts discussed in class. This method helped me immensely in preparing for the exam.



-QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS-

Q: HOW DO THE FINAL EXAMS WORK?

The final exams will take place over the course of around one and a half to two months. In some courses, your grade will be determined by both your coursework and your final exams. Other subjects will grade you based on only your final exams. Each subject has around 2 papers (some only have one, some can have up to 3). Time spent sitting those papers can range from 45 minutes to 120 minutes, depending on which paper it is, how many marks the paper is worth etc.



Q: ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM AT SCHOOL, HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME REVISING BEFORE IT STARTS?

Depending on how early the exams are, some students will choose to arrive at school a bit earlier to study with friends or find teachers if they have some last minute questions. If you prefer to study at home before, making summary notes for a quick refresher of the subject is a good way to remind yourself of some details you may have forgotten or missed. If you're studying with friends, quizzing each other is a fun way to revise.

Q: HOW DO STUDENTS MANAGE TO BALANCE THEIR WORKLOAD AND REGULAR LIFE?

A good way to maintain a good work-life balance is to have a good social life and support system. Having supportive friends ensures that you can spend some time away from studying, helping you relax more. Since there may be quite a few exams at times, make sure you don't procrastinate tasks such as homework and revision. Procrastinating your tasks will make it much more stressful for you when the deadline nears, so make sure to spread out your workload over a reasonable amount of time. Additionally, having enough rest every night will make you more focused and productive during school. Remember that studying is not everything and that enjoying your life and relaxing every so often is just as important.





Q: WILL TEACHERS HELP YOU REVISE WHEN YOU'RE ON STUDY LEAVE?

Some teachers may organise a few optional revision sessions during your study leave, but not every subject or class will have that. Most, if not all teachers will be open to you emailing them about any questions or concerns you have while studying, so don't be scared to ask for help. If you really need one-on-one sessions for revision, you can try to organise a time with your teacher, but you may need to travel to school for that. You can also ask for extra revision materials such as past papers if you want to do more studying.

-STUDY METHOD - POMODORO-

SO this studying method is a method based on studying in intervals. It was invented in 1999 by an Italian guy called Francesco Cirillo, and it's been widely used for over 23 years now. Therefore there must be something about it that works.

Cirillo found out that it was easier to break large, seemingly unmanageable tasks into smaller chunks, which he called "pomodoros" (tomatoes in Italian; it was named after his tomato shaped timer)

It works like this:

1. Set a goal: How many chapters, how much of your essay, how many hours do you want to/need to study for? Break that goal into smaller chunks (pomodoros)
2. Set a timer for 25 minutes, and *try* to put away all distractions before putting your head down and focusing on your studies
3. STAY FOCUSED. It's just 25 minutes. Try to write down what you're studying, it'll keep you from getting bored
4. After 25 minutes, take a short 5-10 minute break (you'll take 10 anyway). Grab a snack, scroll through your phone, or just close your eyes and meditate
5. Do it all again now. For as long as you need and as many pomodoros as you have. After 4 pomodoros, (if you get that far) take a longer 20-30 minute break before going again