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INTRODUCTION

Students of all abilities are often at risk when it comes to using successful learning strategies. Learning how to learn – applying successful techniques – is like mountain climbing with a backpack equipped with appropriate tools.

Throughout life, we are always facing new and challenging mountains, and we depend upon the tools we carry with us to help us reach the top and attain our goals. It is vital for us to stock our backpacks with both the right background experiences and the tools to achieve a successful ascent. Most students forgo learning basic climbing skills or carefully gathering learning tools because they don't feel the need for them. But then, when the mountain finally looms before them, they often cannot begin to climb (much less scale) the peak. They are lost.

For many, the big mountain appears overwhelming and the climb hopeless. They begin to doubt their abilities, intelligence and capabilities for learning.

Some potential climbers have natural ability and do not bother with extended practice, essential equipment and critical experience. They may succeed for a while, but they usually become lost when they need this combination of resources the most. All too often, students find themselves suddenly facing the stressful predicament of acquiring *unfamiliar learning skills* and *content* simultaneously. They find themselves out on a ledge with no tools to help them.

Learning and practising good, useful and appropriate study skills builds self-confidence so that when faced with the challenge, students can successfully conquer their own mountains. It is vital they *learn how to learn* along with what they learn. Learning to learn is one of the most basic and important lifelong skills we can acquire. Our lives of learning are filled with hills and mountains. It's simply not enough to know what to climb; we must also know how to climb.

Learning to Learn: Time Management and Organisation Skills is a book intended for students who want a hands-on guide to improving your approach to study at school and at home. This book is not a book simply to read – it is a book to use, write in and tear apart. It is an interactive book filled with practical hints, methods, tips, procedures, resources and tools that will help students succeed in school and in life. Care has been taken to omit any “educational jargon” and to present the material in a straightforward manner.

The format of organised step-by-step procedures has been broken down into manageable blocks that can apply across the content areas. Throughout the book, the main concepts are stressed with a positive attitude, a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth and a sense of humour. Good ideas are easy to find, digest and put to immediate use.

Begin today to fill those backpacks with terrific lifelong learning skills and climb any “learning mountain” with confidence!



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TIME MANAGEMENT

Time plays a major role in every enterprise on Earth. Time schedules form a foundation for every kind of work that is done.

Young people are naturally less conscious of time than people who have lived longer. During a child's early years, parents help to watch the clock and manage the child's time. The child begins to think of time as something invisible, controlled by their parents, regulating what they can do. As the child grows up and begins to think about gaining independence, they often imagine that this new freedom means no longer having to live by time rules.

The first and easiest way for a young person to gain more freedom is to prove their skill in handling time. When an individual can manage a time schedule successfully, without prodding or reminding from parents, he or she is well on the way to self-reliance. People learn to trust such an individual. Even more importantly, the individual learns to trust themselves.

Setting up a time schedule and making it work is something that requires commitment and perseverance. There are countless pitfalls in planning activities and assignments in terms of weeks, days and hours. There are good reasons for "putting things off", and many mistakes often are made in determining how much actually can be done in a certain amount of time.

Discovering these problems is the first step toward progress – not a sign of failure. The second step is to revise your schedule to better fit your immediate need. Make this second revision more realistic, but set the goal a little beyond what you think will work. Again, this step will take more patience and persistence, but it will produce a more satisfactory system. The end result will be a more efficient and successful habit that subsequently gives you more time to spend as you wish!

As you review these time management techniques, focus on the elements that best fit your learning modality. Learning modalities are simply the ways in which you naturally take in and process information. You can learn more about them in another book in this series, *Learning to Learn, Learning Styles and Memory Techniques*. A few suggested time-management aids for the three modalities are:

VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lists to keep track of assignments and activities. • Create written reminders on a digital device. • Create a visual diagram of schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record daily to-do list on a digital device. • Orally review and repeat assignments. • Read schedule aloud daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage schedule and to-do list on a tablet or computer. • Post blank schedule on wall; manage details with movable sticky notes. • Draw a diagram/timeline of tasks; colour segments as tasks are finished.

HOW WELL DO YOU STUDY?

Just how well do you study? Have you thought seriously about how, when, where and why you study? Knowing the answers to these questions can help you form some very important habits or improve the habits you already practise.

If you don't know the answers to these questions or you aren't sure if you're using time efficiently, perhaps some of these questions will help you think about what you need to do to improve.

Take a few minutes to complete the "Study-Habits Inventory" (pages 12–14). You may find out some new things about yourself!

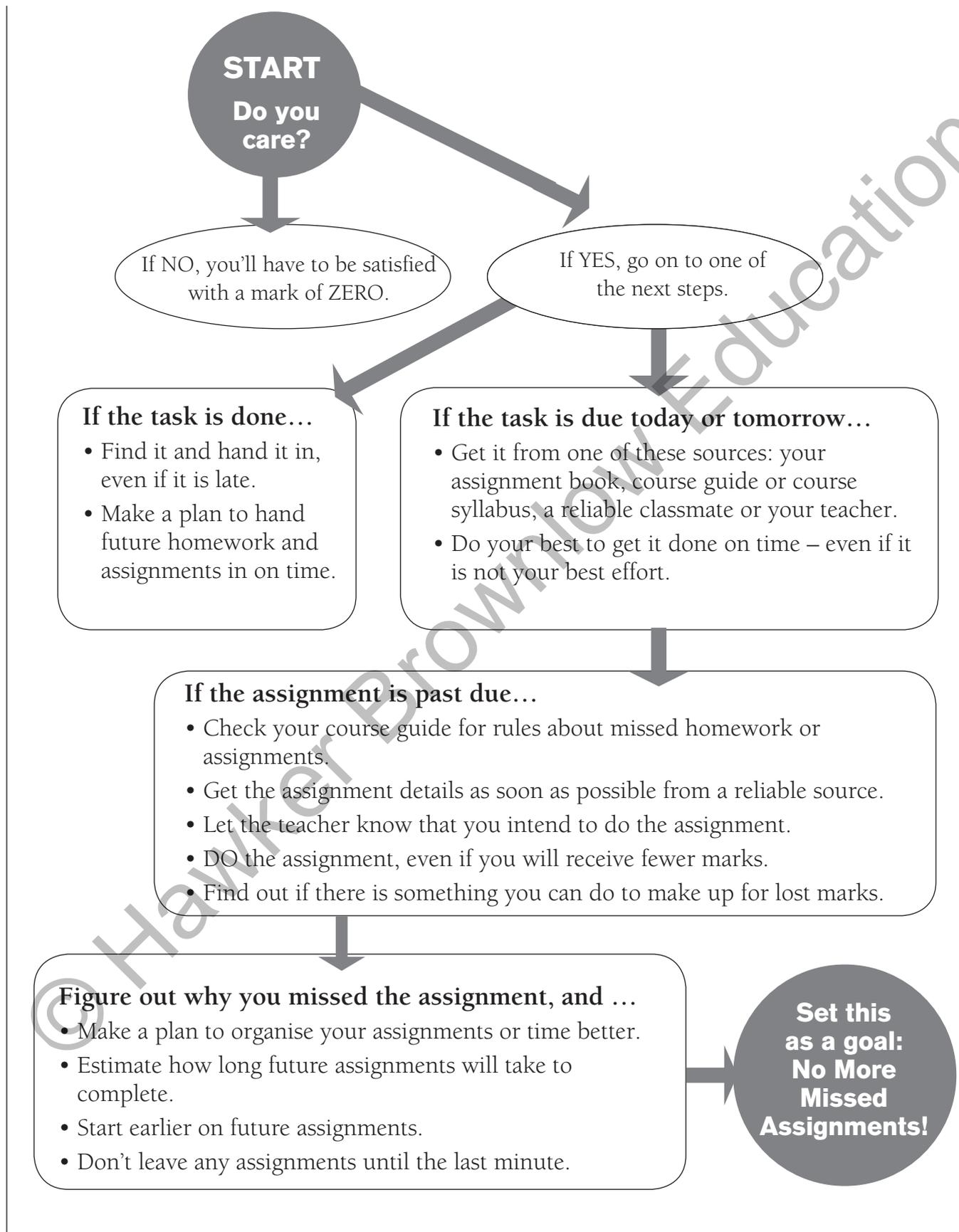


STUDY-HABITS INVENTORY

	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Almost Always
13. Do you break long projects into smaller tasks?	_____	_____	_____
14. Do you start on long-term assignments well in advance?	_____	_____	_____
15. Are you consistent about not leaving assignments until the last minute?	_____	_____	_____
16. Do you read and review all study guides supplied by your teachers?	_____	_____	_____
17. Do you start studying for a test several days in advance of the test?	_____	_____	_____
18. Do you get together with classmates to review notes, exchange what you've learnt, or quiz each other?	_____	_____	_____
19. When there is time in class to do assignments, do you use that time well?	_____	_____	_____
20. When you don't understand something that is taught in class, do you ask the teacher for help?	_____	_____	_____
21. Before you leave each class, are you certain that you understand the assignment?	_____	_____	_____
22. Before you begin an assignment, do you read the directions TWICE to be sure that you know what to do?	_____	_____	_____
23. Before you read an assigned text, do you scan the section's features to quickly gain information about the text (for example, titles, headings, bold words, summaries, review questions, picture captions)?	_____	_____	_____



WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISSED AN ASSIGNMENT



TARGET THE PROBLEMS & PRESCRIBE THE SOLUTIONS

The *Study-Prescription Worksheet* on page 56 is designed to be an activity that allows you to target and troubleshoot difficult classes, subjects and materials and more importantly, match each problem with a solution. Review this chapter for appropriate strategies, methods, hints and approaches to basic skills to find and fix your “trouble”

areas. Remember, for every problem there is a solution. It just may be that the process of finding the right solution is a bit frustrating at times. Be persistent and confident and don't forget to seek help from a parent, teacher or librarian if you need it.

