

MT ALBERT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Student Guide for NCEA SUCCESS



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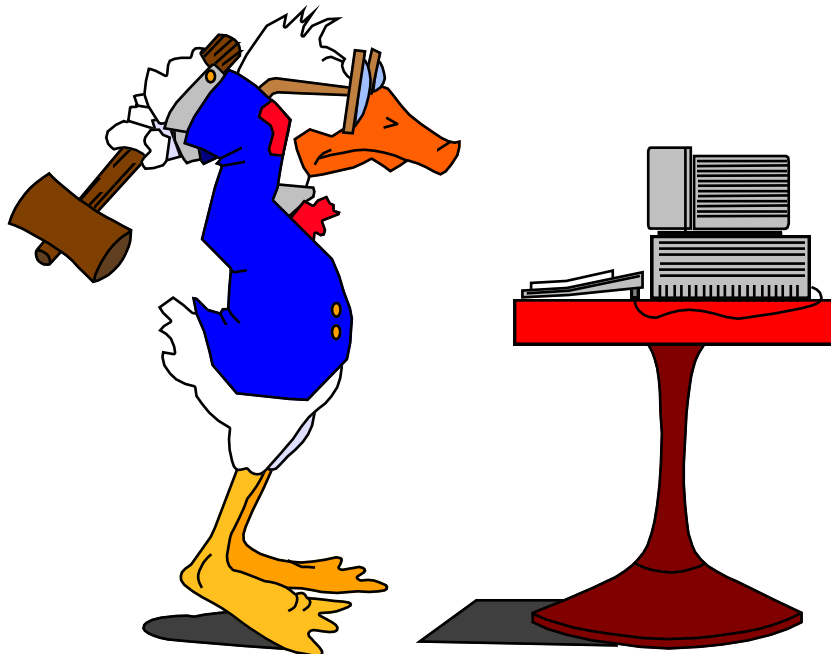
INTRODUCTION

Would you like to do well at NCEA? Surely everyone should answer “**yes**” to that question. Reading this book might help you. It certainly can’t do you any harm! Some people might say, “I don’t care”. This is just one of the ways in which people prepare themselves for failure. **If you prepare yourself for failure then that is what you will achieve. If you prepare yourself for success, then you will succeed.**

In the end, of course, it will come down to you and the exam paper but what happens for that short period of time on a summer’s day in the examination hall will be affected by every single thing that you do between now and then. It will be affected by

- What you do
- what you read
- what you think
- how you feel
- what you eat
- how you rest
- how you exercise
- what you say to your friends and to your family and, of course
- what you learn and remember.

You **can** succeed. What you do between now and then will make a huge difference. The **hard** road to success is working alone; get help from your family, your teachers and your friends. Most people only take NCEA Level 1 examinations once.



HOW DO I LEARN?

What Is The Best Way to Revise?

Get it into your head – there is no “correct” way to revise. Don’t forget **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REVISE THE SAME WAY FOR EACH OF YOUR DIFFERENT SUBJECTS.** It may be that one technique works better for Science where a different one will work well for History or Technology. If you find the right way to make things stay in your mind you have taken a giant step towards achieving success at NCEA

A. Remember what you have heard about Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic learning.

Highlight the activities you think will work for you.

VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC
Form pictures in your mind	Use tapes	Pace/walk as you study
Take notes	Watch TV	Physically “do it”
See parts of words	Listen to music	Practise by repeated motion
Use “cue” words	Speak/listen to speakers	Breathe slowly
Use notebooks	Make up rhymes/poems	Role play
Use colour codes	Read aloud	Exercise
Use study cards	Talk to yourself	Dance
Use photographic pictures	Repeat things orally	Write
Watch TV	Use rhythmic sounds	Write on surfaces with finger
Watch films	Have discussions	Take notes
Use charts, graphs	Listen carefully	Associate feelings with concept
Use maps	Use oral directions	Write lists
Demonstrate	Sound out words	Repeatedly stretch/move in chair
Draw/use drawings	Use theatre	Watch lips move in front of a mirror
Watch lips move in front of a mirror	Say words in syllables	

<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml>

Very useful to diagnose your preferred learning style

POSSIBLE REVISION TECHNIQUES:-

- **Highlight key points.** Why not try underlining or colour coding particular pieces of information? A series of different colour highlighter pens might be useful here. This is a very useful first step to breaking down long pieces of writing into more usable short lists or diagrams.

Highlight the key words in this passage. Underline any important phrases.

The States of matter

All matter can exist in three states – solid, liquid, and gas. Solids have a fixed shape. Liquids have no fixed shape, but their volume is fixed. Gases have no fixed shape or volume. They spread out (diffuse) to fill all the available space. Unlike solids and liquids, gases are easy to squeeze into a smaller space (compress). The state of a substance can be changed by heating or cooling.

- **Make a Mind Map.** Some of you will be more familiar with this than others. A mind map is really a spider diagram-using colour so that each leg of the spider is a different colour. Research shows that colour can help us remember things. It really is worth trying this – if your brain works this way, mind mapping is a perfect way of remembering huge amounts of information. It may not work for you but you do need to practise a little before you can make that decision. Try using **PICTURES** as well as words and making each map funny or memorable in some other way so that it will stick in your mind. Don't forget these are your revision materials – they can be as outrageous as you like.

Add colour and witty images to your mind map.

- **The Shrinking Mind Map.** The aim of the game in revision is to reduce a lot of material into a small space. If you have produced a mind map, the idea of a Shrinking mind map is to create the same chart with fewer branches.
- **Cassette Tapes/Podcasts** Take some of the lists or the notes that you have made and record them on to a cassette or podcast

List the topics you could learn well from a tape: -

.....

.....

- **Song, Rhymes, Mnemonics and Acronyms.** Making up **catch phrases or rhymes** can help you with crucial bits of information, e.g. to help you sort out which is the x and which is the y axis on a graph you could remember “*x below y because y goes up high*”. It may make you cringe but you won't forget it! Or, “x is across” (a cross!).

A **mnemonic** is a word or abbreviation that helps you to remember. An **acronym** is a word made up using the first letters of a series of other words or the first word of a series of sentences. For example to remember the advantages of credit cards **for Business studies**

Convenient to carry
Outlets for use everywhere
Pay later
Security
Extras e.g. insurance

These five points, when arranged in this particular order, produce the word **COPSE**. This would be easy to remember in an exam.



Make up a song or an acronym for something you find hard to remember

e.g. **For Science** the reactivity series of metals or planets in the solar system.

Eg For History

RLAMB = Reparations, Land loss, **(no)** Anschluss, Military restrictions, Blame (war guilt)

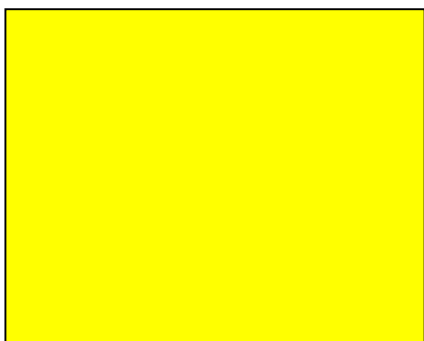
Explains the punishment that Germany sustained after WW1

Revision Tip: Don't forget – if you have remembered several of these for an exam it is not cheating to write all of the acronyms down as soon as you are told to start an exam. Make the words funny, personal, or even rude if it helps but this really is an excellent way of reducing a lot of information into a very small space to help your memory. Try it.

- **Post-its.** Research shows us that when our brain is storing information our eyes are often angled upwards to the right or to the left (depending upon how your brain is set up). Post-its can be a big help in remembering important information. Why not try making some brightly coloured signs or even just writing down key words that you want to remember and putting them up in your room at home? Maybe around your mirror or on your door.

Try different colours for different subjects or different areas of the room.

Design some post-its using words, lists or symbols:



- **Lists** It may be that all the “fancy” ways of revising we have talked about so far don't work for you. The traditional way of revision is to make lists of information and it may well be that your brain likes this better than any other way. If you are going to make lists, try and find ways of making them interesting and keeping them short. The temptation is always to write down too much and it may be that you use the shrinking technique (for mind mapping).
- **Study Buddy - Sharing Learning.** One of the most effective ways to learn is to teach someone else. This is why your teachers are so amazingly knowledgeable! Once you feel that you have a decent grasp of the information you are trying to remember, it makes sense to tell someone else what you know. You are probably better off being tested on the charts and lists that you are trying to remember for the exams than by having somebody look through your folder of work and asking you questions here and there.

List your subjects:

Subjects Who could you ask to be your study buddy?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

- **Practising Previous Exam Questions.** All exams are written in a coded language because, to be honest, there are often not many different questions that you can be asked about particular subjects. What does happen is that the same questions are asked in different ways or wrapped up in what can be confusing language. A massive key to success in examinations is understanding the question that you are being asked.

‘Over 60% of all errors in exams are caused by not reading the question properly.’

<u>List your standards</u>	<u>Which subject has given you practice papers</u>	<u>Which subject have you bought a revision workbook or exam pack for?</u>

Are there any Revision books you should buy or sites that you can go to?
See last pages of this book.

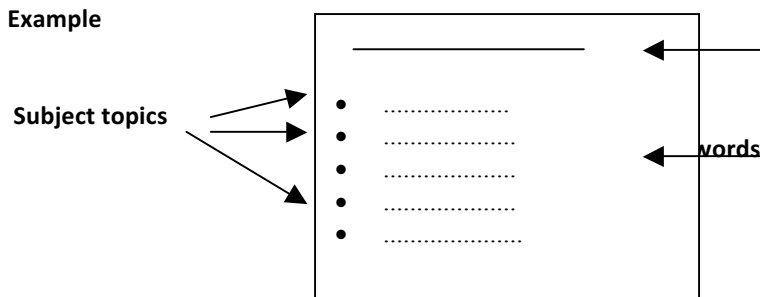
- **Show You Know.** There is no point reading information and then saying to yourself “yes I know that” and moving on. You must demonstrate to yourself that you do know the information. How do you do this? It is up to you.
 - Recite things out loud
 - Write down lists
 - Stop yourself from eating that next biscuit until you can recall everything that you need to – whatever it takes.
- A. i) without cheating write down all of the previous 8 “how to learn” suggestions.**
ii) look back and fill in the others. (The order doesn’t matter).
iii) Cover up the list and say all 8 out loud!

Repeat (ii) and (iii) until you can do it correctly!

- **Revision Cards or Cue Cards.** Some people like to condense information onto small cards which they can then carry around with them more easily. If you do this, try and keep the information on the cards to a minimum and try and have some organisation, for example, one card per topic. Make the cards different by using colour, pictures – anything that will help the information stay in your mind.

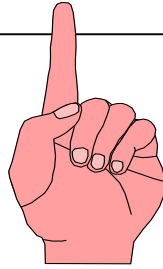
A. Make a cue card for one topic you know well.

Example



Revision Tip: TAKE A BREAK People learn best at the beginning and the end of each revision session – so have lots of beginnings and ends! The maximum time that you can concentrate is 40 minutes. Reward yourself by finishing something and then taking 5 minutes out for a cup of tea. Then get back to it!

AND FINALLY SOME DON'TS



DON'T:

- Kid yourself that you know something just because it seems familiar when you read it. Of course it does, you have just read it!
- Revise with friends if you are only going to chat and not revise any work. A friend is for life but NCEA exams pass this way only once.
- Fool yourself that you are revising by reading things. People spend hours reading and re-reading notes without ever breaking them down or testing their knowledge. In the end the very thought of picking up that huge file and starting to read it again is so depressing that they don't bother.
- Go on revising when you are tired. Give yourself a break. If you plan properly, there is time to get everything in.
- Don't give in to panic and start staying up half the night. The information won't stick; you get stressed out and become less efficient as a reviser. Be strong about this.
- Think about more than one subject at a time. Much revision time is wasted by thinking about what you are **not** doing for subjects B, C, and D when you are trying to revise subject **Make a plan and stick to it.** If you have confidence in your plan then you know there is enough time to cover everything.

WHERE DO I LEARN?

Having a comfortable place to revise is a crucial element of success at GCSE. Everyone will have different circumstances at home and not everyone will have sole use of a bedroom or a study area. There are problems with younger brothers and sisters, television, music etc.

You may need to break the habits of a lifetime and talk to your family about your needs over the months ahead. What you need most of all is one place in the house that you can use alone and without noisy distractions.

Your work place should include, as far as possible, the following things.

- A desk or table
- A comfortable chair which supports your back
- A good level of lighting
- A comfortable temperature
- All the resources you need including all your revision resources, pens, pencils, scrap paper, colours etc.

Don't give yourself excuses to keep on breaking into your revision by going to get things that you need. Put it all in one place to begin with. Organise the space. Research has shown that untidy rooms can have a major effect on self-esteem and self-confidence. Keep the room neat and tidy and you will give yourself the feeling that you are on top of the revision. These small things can be important. At all times you will be doing well if you feel that you are in control – untidiness suggests a lack of control. **SO CLEAR THE CLUTTER!**

Music

Without doubt, some people work better with a musical background but for all of these, there are many people who spoil their revision by having musical distractions. Like it or not, all of the current research suggests that music with a fast beat will stop you learning effectively. Slow and quiet instrumental music can have a relaxing effect on your brain. This will promote the ability to learn but do you possess music of this nature? If not - the best advice might be to do without altogether. Be honest with yourself about this – you might like it but is it doing you any good?



Distractions

Even when you've sorted out your work place and decided whether or not to listen to music, it's still far too easy to avoid that revision. Resist the temptation to watch a television programme, DVD or video 'in the background'. Ask your family to tell friends who call that you are busy. TURN OFF your mobile phone (don't just turn it to silent).

HOW DO I ORGANISE MYSELF?

Before The Exam – Making A Revision Timetable

There are many ways to make a plan and no one way of doing it properly but there are a number of things that you can do to make things easier.

The name of the game is **CONTROL**. It has already been said in this booklet that you will work well and achieve success if you feel that you are in control of your revision at every stage.

Control involves breaking “revision” down into subjects and those subjects down into topics. In this way you will end up with a definite number of steps that you need to take to achieve success. You will be more relaxed and effective if the answer to the question “what are you going to do tonight” is not the general “revise (groan)” but is the specific “History topic 6 and English topic 3”.

Start preparation for the first exams first, but don’t forget the other subjects.

TIME SPENT ON PLANNING IS NEVER WASTED. Planning is control. Control is the way to achieve success.

Step 1 Draw a table similar to this.

Week No				Weeks Remaining Until first exam.
	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Step 2 Diary dates. Fill in everything on your planner that you already know about - social events, holidays, sports fixtures.

Step 3 As soon as you have the dates of your NCEA examinations these, too, should be filled in on the chart. This will give you a perfect view of exactly how much time you have to prepare for each exam.

Step 4 Force yourself, wherever this is possible, to break down your subjects into **topics**. Once you have done that you can also break down your preparation into **standards**.

Now you can begin to fill in your revision slots. Work backwards from the final exam date and try to achieve an even spread of subject time. You may wish to consciously give more time to some subjects but at every stage you will know precisely how much time you are giving.

YOU MUST INCLUDE TIME FOR RELAXATION IN YOUR TIMETABLE and some blank slots to 'mop up' in case you fall behind or need to take an unexpected break from the plan. Even the most perfect student in the world cannot achieve success at NCEA without allowing for leisure time. If this is on your timetable you beat the revision devil called "GUILT" because, if leisure time is allowed for, you know perfectly well that you can afford to relax and forget all about studying.

Step 5 Put it on the wall and tick off the things you have done so you can see what you have achieved.

On Exam Day

In working towards an exam you should feel like an athlete building towards a performance at your peak. Just like an athlete, the amount of sleep that you get in the days before the exam and the amount and quality of the food that you eat will make a difference.

Try and get into a routine as each exam passes by so that you are not trying to solve problems on the morning of an important day. Know where everything is and give yourself time to do everything without panicking.

Think about some of these things:-

- Set the alarm to make sure you are up in good time – if you are a bad riser get somebody to check on you and drag you out of bed if necessary.
- Eat breakfast. For example, toast or cereal to give you energy.
- Put yourself in a positive frame of mind before the exam. This is a personal thing, for some it might involve a short burst of exercise to get that "feel good" factor; for others it might involve a reassuring look at some very brief revision aids (but don't get stuck into the files at this point).
- Give yourself plenty of time to get to the exam without rushing.
- Keep that positive frame of mind. Keep your head up and keep your shoulders relaxed. What are athletes doing before a big race? If you watch them they are telling themselves that they are going to succeed. They repeat this over and over again until they believe it. Don't forget if you want to succeed, you will succeed.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF?

Believe it or not, stress is quite good for you as long as you do not feel too much of it. Much of the advice on the earlier pages in this booklet has already dealt with different ways of reducing stress and the key word that has already been identified is **CONTROL**. Know yourself and be aware when things are getting too much to cope with. Knowing what you will do if you recognise a problem with stress.

UNDRESS STRESS!

Recap

Some of the things we have already talked about which can disperse stress include:-

Don't worry about what other people are doing. They may need to do different things and they may need to do more or less than you. It does not matter, they are not taking your exam and you are not in competition with them.

Listen to good advice but be aware some people say a lot and do nothing. It is the same point again. You get on with what you need to do and don't worry about other people.

- *Make a plan and stick to it.*
- *Establish a routine and stick to it.*
- *Eat properly.*
- *Get enough sleep.*
- *Take regular breaks as part of your plan.*
- *When on planned leisure time forget work.*
- *When revising subject a do not think about subject b, c, d, e, f, g etc.*
- *Build in variety to your revision and beat boredom.*
- *Talk to people – talk to everyone. This is a natural way of relieving tension – don't bottle it all up!*



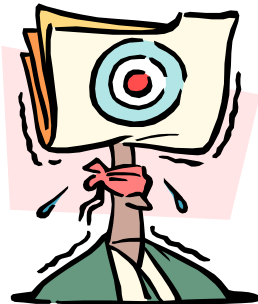
Symptoms of Stress

You will probably experience some or all of these things over the next few weeks so don't worry that there is something wrong with you but if any of these things start getting in the way of work then you should tell somebody:

Bad tempered/irritable

Persistent headaches

Persistent backache



Lack of concentration (worse than usual!)

Feelings of panic

Feelings that you can't get your breath properly

Feelings of unhappiness or despair

Feelings of pointlessness

Stomach ache

Dizziness

Stress Tip

TAKE TIME TO BREATHE - Oxygen is free, pig out

Coping with worry: Here are some ideas:

<u>Suggested Actions</u>	<u>Positive Attitudes</u>
<p><u>Share the problem.</u></p> <p><u>Be active. Do something physical.</u></p> <p><u>Be logical.</u> Make a list of possibilities, consider all the options.</p> <p><u>Relax.</u> Tighten your muscles and then drop your shoulders and let the tension go.</p> <p><u>Write about it.</u></p> <p><u>Concentrate on your breathing.</u> Try ten repetitions like this:</p> <p><i>Breathe in deeply for a slow count of four; hold the breath for a slow count of twelve; release the breath slowly for a slow count of eight.</i></p>	<p><u>Think positively</u> and don't think about the negative alternative.</p> <p><u>Control it.</u> Make yourself stop, pause, think and take a fresh look.</p> <p><u>See the funny side. Smile at everyone.</u></p> <p><u>Set some goals</u> to get through it. Break the problem down, tackle it one step at a time and keep thinking how good you will feel when the problem is behind you.</p>

Final Thoughts - Getting Things in Proportion

The worst thing that can happen to **NCEA** students is a feeling that they are alone and everything is going wrong. Forget it. There is nothing that can happen to you that has not happened to many others of the hundreds of thousands of people who have sat and survived **NCEA** exams. This is not a public execution so keep it all in perspective. In Decemnber it will all be over.

Caffeine Conscious

Fluids are important for your body but be careful you do not **overload** on **caffeine**, which can greatly exaggerate the feelings of **stress**. Too much **coffee**, tea and coke can really wind you up so be careful of this or drink **decaff**. Too much **sugar** will make you **sleepy** and make it harder to concentrate – you will find **cereals and fruit** are better snacks while you are working **than sweets**.

What this booklet might have done is to take away from you some of the most common excuses that people use for not doing very well. Falling back on failure can be quite comfortable. If you don't make an effort you can always say, at a later date, "I could have done better if I'd worked".

That, of course, is nonsense. These exams will only happen once in your life and you will achieve what you are able to achieve on the exam days. So let's put that excuse in the bin with the others:

"I am not very good at"

"I can't do"

"I have not got time to"

"I am too thick to"

"I never eat breakfast"

"I get too tired to"

"I get really stressed out by exams"

"I don't know how to do a revision timetable"

"I don't know how to revise"

"I won't get the grades I need"

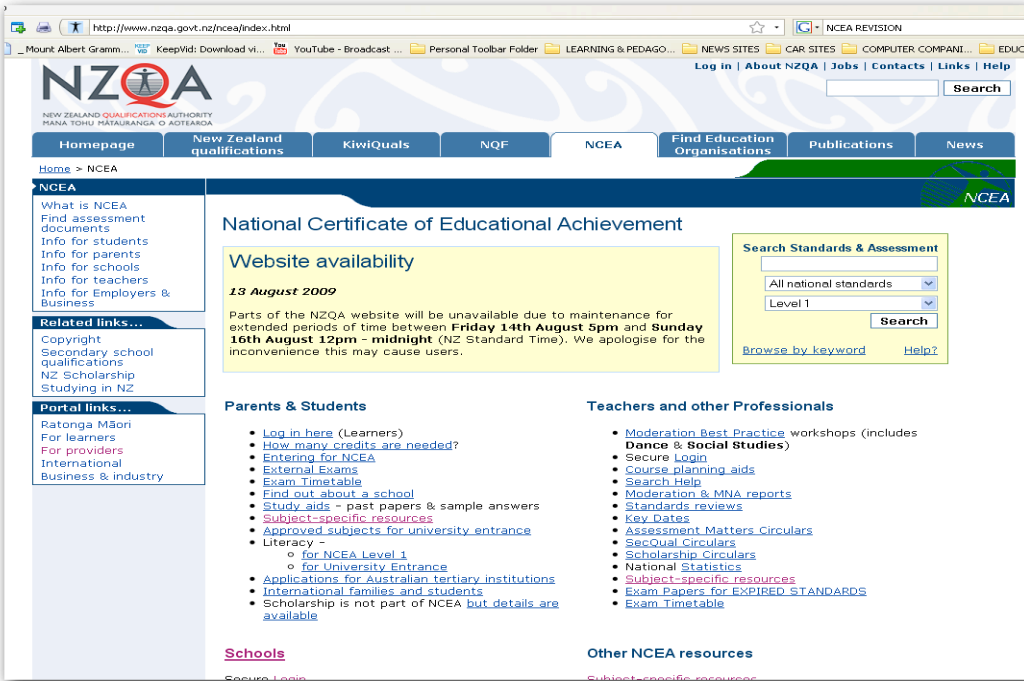
Yes you can!. Yes you will!. Good luck!

Useful Websites

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualificationsstandards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/>

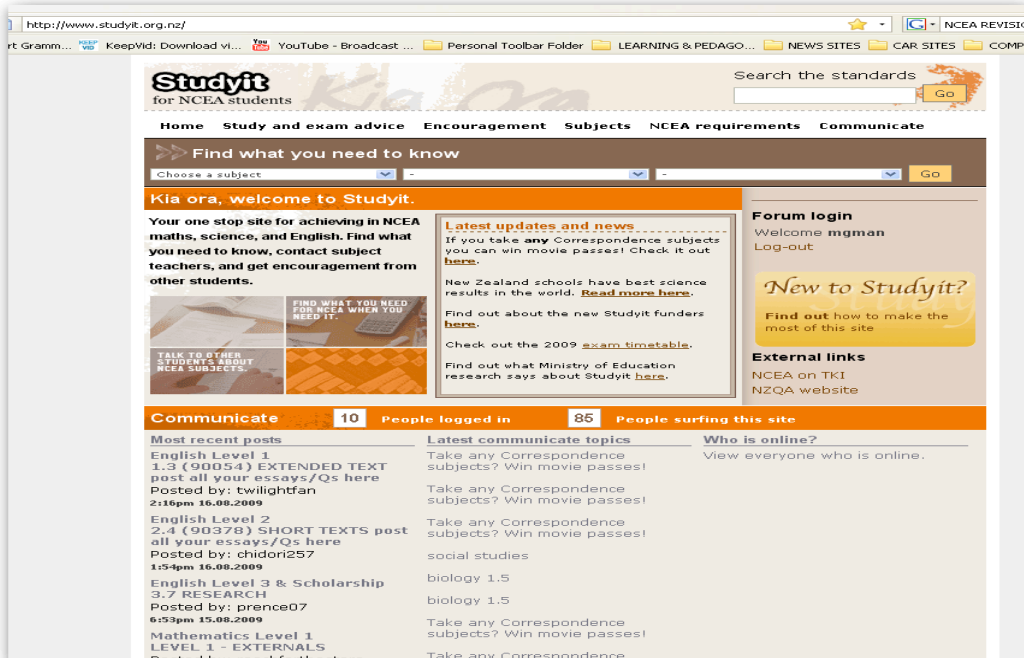
Once you get to the home page click on subject specific resources

Bookmark on your computer



www.studyit.org.nz

Hugely valuable site that is checked by several teachers. Primarily for English, Maths and Science but has other subjects as well.



<http://www.magsmaths.com/>

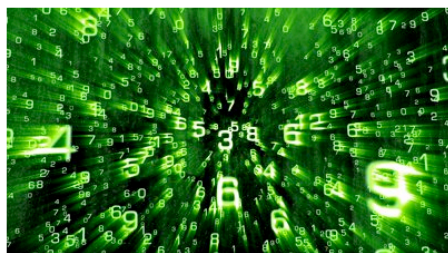
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MAGSMATHS

Search



Welcome to MAGSMATHS.com

This site is another great resource from the Mount Albert Grammar School Maths Department designed to help you, our young and bright MAGS students, reach your potential in the exciting fields of Mathematics and Statistics.



BYOD

MAGSMATHS includes a BYOD section



Tons of Resources

Navigate your way to



Datasets for Statistics

The Year-13-Statistics section boasts statistical

www.ncearevision.co.nz

This site has been set up by Pearson Education to support their line of Revision books and CDs. It has some very useful resources in it eg diagnostic tests, exemplar answers, links to NCEA sites

18.

NCEA Revision				
Introduction	Links	Tutors	Contact us	Acknowledgments

Please read the "Introduction" page if you have not done so recently or if you don't know how to find the sample examination papers and assessment schedules on the NZQA web site.

For the new Level 1 and 2 Mathematics achievement standards, select "Mathematics and Statistics".

If a selection bar doesn't work, reset it by clicking on "Select a subject" in the first menu.

Diagnostic tests and excellence practice questions

Select a subject - - Go

Hints and model answers to external examination papers *

Select a subject - - - - - Go

For hints and model answers to 2011 Level 1 Mathematics and Statistics and Science sample exams, select "Sample" as the year.

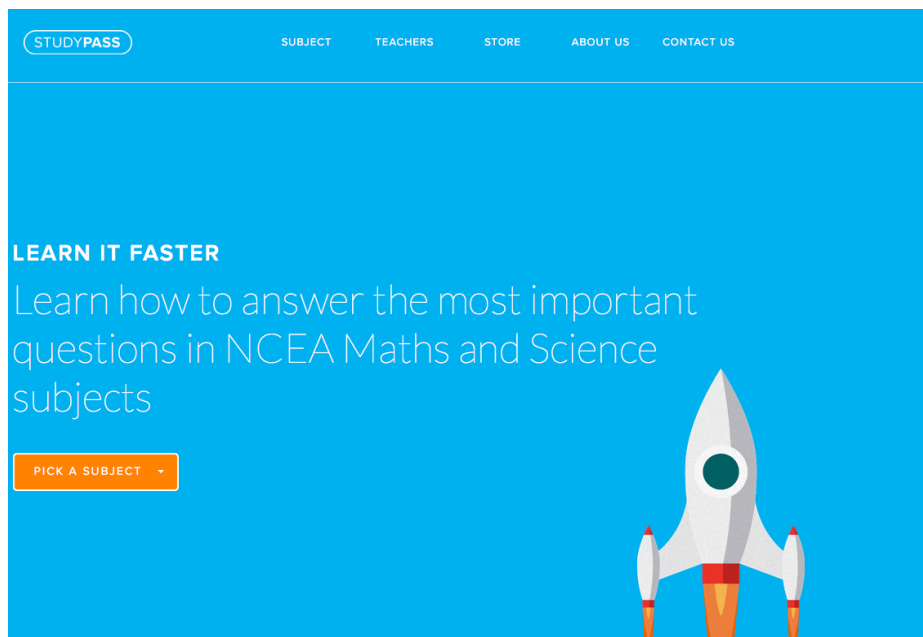
Documents on the NZQA web site *

Select a subject - - - Go

* This selection bar and the link to documents on the NZQA web site in the middle selection bar are provided for your convenience with permission from the NZQA. When you use them, you will be taken out of this site and into the relevant page of the NZQA web site. Unless otherwise stated, all documents found there are owned by the NZQA.

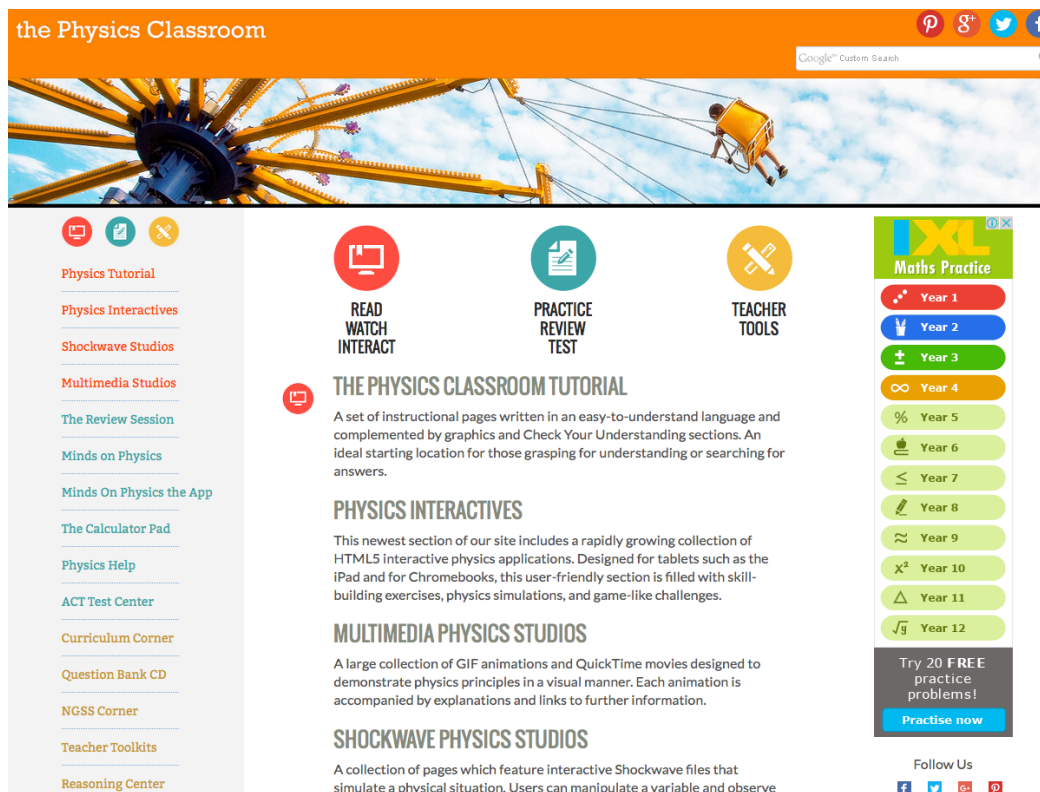
www.studypass.co.nz

This company sell revision books but have some useful material online as well.



www.physicsclassroom.com

This site targets Physics specifically



Subject association websites

Google the subject eg History teachers association, , Geography Teachers ,

OVERSEAS SITES

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

BBC website useful revision for all subjects

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/revision

BBC website, good general advice and useful resources

www.revisiontime.co.uk

An excellent site, with lots of top hints

www.projectgcse.co.uk

Good revision site with questions and notes

www.kevinsplayroom.co.uk

Good revision site for most subjects

www.littleheath.org.uk

Look at subject pages