

ROBERT CLACK SCHOOL

A GUIDE TO HOMEWORK & INDEPENDENT STUDY AT KS3.

At Robert Clack we think it is important for students to develop through interacting with learning outside of lesson time. Each subject will set work for pupils to complete at home but we also advise students to begin studying independently and developing a thirst for knowledge. For our students to succeed they need to understand that they need to work hard but should also understand ways to learn effectively.

This guide has been created to support you to understand the expectations from each subject and to offer some help and guidance.

For our students we consider the the purpose of homework to:

- Help pupils progress in learning
- Allow pupils to develop the practice of working on their own without the constant presence of the teacher or other pupils
- Give opportunities for long term research
- Offer pupils valuable experience of working to deadlines
- Prepare pupils with the skills of independent study required in Further Education.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD?

- You can check that homework details are filled in clearly and regularly in the planner. There is space for your signature each week.
- Help your child to organise his/her time to their best advantage.
- Ensure that there are suitable working conditions at home.
- Take a positive and active interest in your child's work at home.
- Help your child to seek out additional opportunities to learn and study outside of set tasks, such as online learning platforms and additional research.
- Purchase relevant study guides which students can work from independently.
- Look at their Google Classrooms for subjects that use this online platform.
- Encourage pupils in year 7 to use their knowledge organisers to revise for topics studied in lessons.
- Help your child to identify areas in which they struggle and complete additional work to practice this skill or understand the concept.

ONLINE HELP AND USEFUL LINKS

A number of subjects now use **Google Classroom** to set and collect homework tasks. It is also a useful place to share additional study tasks. Students have a login which allows them to access this online. An app can also be downloaded so it can be checked on a mobile phone or tablet. There are more details of this in the ICT/Computing section of this guide.

DEVELOPING LITERACY & NUMERACY SKILLS

We encourage you to promote literacy and numeracy skills with your child on a daily basis. This can be achieved through:

- Reading and discussing news stories - online and in newspapers. Discussion of ideas is important in helping students to put across their own perspectives and to argue successfully.
- Asking them to complete mathematical problems related to real life, such as calculating the cost of shopping, household measurements/estimations, money management and budgeting.
- Reading with your child on a daily basis - any texts count! It could be a recipe to a website. Also encourage them to write regularly for enjoyment.

HOW CAN ROBERT CLACK SUPPORT YOU & YOUR CHILD?

On both sites we have **supervised study areas** open until 6pm in the Information Centre. Students are able to use the library facilities and the computers too.

At lunchtimes we run a **homework club**, this is a facility where students can come each day to get help and support in completing their homework.

If you would like further help in supporting your child at home please contact us: We are more than happy to meet with you or support you in any way necessary.



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

English homework is set **twice a week**. The tasks will include aspects of the following:

1. We expect all students to read for **AT LEAST 20 minutes per day**. Students can read their school library book, newspapers/magazines and any other stretching and interesting reading materials.
2. Students will also be set regular **vocabulary to learn**. This vocabulary will help to develop the content and quality of their writing and will help them to access the unseen extracts in their exams.
3. Alongside these activities students will also be expected to complete tasks which promote effective **study skills**. These tasks will vary each week and will help students to prepare themselves and become organised and successful learners. These tasks may include the following:

- Producing effective flashcards, revision notes and posters
- Finding ways to effectively learn quotations
- Being able to create colourful and useable mind maps
- Reading extracts - skimming, scanning, retrieval...
- Planning answers, creating planning grids or information gathering tables
- Annotation and highlighting key information
- Reading sections of texts on Google Classroom
- Memorising/learning information
- Summarising
- Informative presentations and research projects
- Creating exam questions
- Correcting/editing work
- SPAG sheets to revise key topics
- Comprehension questions based on reading
- Using revision guides to make colour coded study notes
- Bringing prior knowledge or evidence to the lesson

If your child is in year 7 - 9 you can check on their reading through our online platform - Renaissance Home Connect.

<https://ukhosted11.renlearn.co.uk/1952140/HomeConnect>

If your child is in year 7 they have access to a Bedrock learning account to develop their vocabulary

If you would like to support your child's learning further the following websites are useful:

<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/english/>

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/english/>

We would also recommend the use of **CGP revision guides**.

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

Maths homework is set **once a week**. The tasks set are important for enhancing and developing the skills that pupils have learnt in lessons. It is vital for students to practice a range of examples of each skill very regularly in order to aid retention. Answers for homework are reviewed in lessons and students are able to reflect on their progress through completion of homework tasks.

Homework is completed on coloured A4 homework sheets and students are expected to fully complete each task set, using classwork to help them when needed. The work will have a clear success criteria with teacher comments indicating how the student can improve. If a student is finding any question or skill difficult it is expected that they will discuss with their teacher how they can improve.

We expect students to spend a **minimum of 30 minutes** a week on this task. In addition, students should also be frequently recapping the key skills learnt in lessons, and completing independent practise to increase fluency.

Each student will have a login to www.mymaths.co.uk given to them by their class teacher, which can be used to revise and practise. Students should use this regularly in their own time to develop and enhance their maths skills. They should focus on areas which they feel less confident in.

The following websites are useful for supporting student learning:

- <https://corbettmaths.com/>
- <https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zqhs34j>
- <https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/gcse.html>
- <https://www.mathsisfun.com/>

We would also recommend the use of **CGP revision guides**.

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

In order to extend students for their understanding and progress in Science, our department uses a range of activities to help students develop their understanding outside of lesson time. These will build on the skills and knowledge learnt during lesson time enabling them to become more competent scientists.

Science homework is set by each Science teacher **every two weeks** and you should spend a total of **an hour** on the work set. Tasks will include activities such as:

- Structured worksheets
- Exam paper questions
- Practice calculations
- Presentations
- Poster/Leaflet making
- Quizzes
- Making models of scientific structures
- Consolidating notes
- Crosswords and wordsearches
- Producing effective flashcards and mindmaps
- Memorising Information
- Researching scientific topics/discoveries
- Creating a presentation
- Drawing graphs
- Analysing data
- Comprehension tasks
- Tasks on Google Classroom

We recommend the following websites to support student's learning:

- BBC Bitesize - KS3 - <https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zng4d2p>
- BBC Bitesize - KS4 - Choose OCR 21st Century - <https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zrkw2hv>
- Doc Brown Revision - <http://www.docbrown.info/>
- BrainPop - <https://www.brainpop.com/science/>
- GCSE Seneca Learning - Choose OCR 21st Century Science - [SenecaLearning.com](https://www.senecalearning.com)
- Quizlet.com

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

Homework in MFL is set **once per week** and can consist of either a vocabulary learning exercise or a reading / written task to consolidate the week's learning. Learning a language is not something you can accomplish with only three 50 minute lessons per week; homework is, therefore, essential. Each homework task should take between **30 minutes** and **1 hour** per week.

Vocabulary learning

The key to becoming proficient in any language is to learn the new words. This sounds simple enough, but can be a time-consuming and demanding task. We attempt to revisit each of the new words learnt as often as possible in lessons; however, with so much content to cover, this can be difficult. We, therefore, ask students to frequently look over their vocabulary sheets and learn the new words by heart. This can be done in a variety of ways, but repetition is key - any way that the student can find to repeat the word over and over again and then test themselves on whether they have learnt that word by heart is useful. Some ideas are:

- Spend 10 minutes each day repeating each of the new words learnt that week
- Parents use the vocabulary sheets to quiz their students (i.e. 'how do you say _____ in French / Spanish?')
- Look, cover, write, check
- Flashcards - write the English word on one side and the French / Spanish word on the other
- Stick post-its with the key words on around your bedroom
- Record yourself saying the words on your phone and play it back repeatedly - this is a particularly good tactic before you go to sleep
- Play online games
- Make associations with English words (i.e. 'brun' is the colour brown when talking about hair in French à brunette is a word we use in English to describe brown hair)
- Put the key word into a full sentence to give it some context (i.e. brun (brown) à j'ai les cheveux bruns (I have brown hair))
- Write the first letter of each word and/or re-write the key words out with missing letters

Reading and Written Tasks

To be able to communicate in another language, you also need to be able to put these keywords into a context or full sentences. The reading tasks set for homework help teachers to gauge how well the students **understand** the language; the written tasks help teachers to gauge how well the students can **produce** the language. In some cases, a reading and written task may be given jointly in the hope that the reading task will aid with the written task.

A letter is sent home in October with a list of website links and codes for Google Classroom where students can access extra work / support. Please inform your MFL teacher should you require another copy.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

In order to extend students for their understanding and progress in history, our department have created a range of activities. These will build on the skills that are embedded into lesson time and enable students to become more independent learners.

Students will be given a **glossary of key vocabulary** for each topic every half term, which will be assessed for homework with a spelling and definition in class test. Contextual knowledge of each time period will be stretched through **reading of an article** and multiple choice Google classroom test. Students will also conduct **independent research of a key individual or event** each half term which they will create a presentation, leaflet or blog post. Finally, students will create a **mind map or timeline** at the end of each half term to consolidate their learning. Our expectation is that students will be spending **30 minutes** on their history homework each week.

History homework is set **once every two weeks**. The tasks will include aspects of the following:

Students will be set regular **vocabulary to learn**. These will come in the form of historical period glossaries. This vocabulary will help to develop their historical literacy along with improving knowledge recall and spelling for their exams.

Alongside these activities students will also be expected to complete tasks, which promote effective **study skills**. These tasks will vary each fortnight and will help students to prepare themselves and become organised and successful learners. These tasks may include the following:

- Producing effective flashcards
- Creating colourful and memorable mind maps that consolidate each topics knowledge
- Finding ways to effectively learn names, dates and events
- Reading extracts - skimming, scanning, retrieval...
- Creating planning grids or information gathering tables
- Annotation and highlighting key information
- Reading sections of texts on Google Classroom and summarising the article
- Researching a key individual or event based on the time period being studied in class
- Multiple choice Google classroom quiz on knowledge from readings or classwork
- Informative presentations
- Producing colour coded revision notes for each period studied
- Bringing prior knowledge or evidence to the lesson

These websites may be useful: <https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zk2Gn39>

<http://www.johndclare.net/index.htm>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/>

We would also recommend the use of **CGP revision guides**.

GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

Geography homework is set to allow the students to develop their independent study skills and build on the learning in class. The tasks set will be related to the topic and aim to link to the lessons and broaden students' understanding of the social, economic, environmental and political aspects of geography. Students will be set a variety of tasks to complete throughout the year that support the development of their literacy, ICT, research, revision and recall skills.

At KS3 Geography homework is **set twice each half term** and will be set on pink homework sheets or on google classroom. Students are expected to complete the homework to the best of their ability to allow them to access the learning embedded within the lesson. Homework tasks are there to encourage independent learning and develop students' curiosity.

The activities pupils will be set for independent study will include:

- Watching news clips, documentaries or videos to feedback on in class
- Reading articles from newspapers, websites or journals to feedback on in class
- Researching case studies
- Practice exam questions to help develop their written work in preparation for GCSE
- Quizzes on Quizlet or Google Classroom to assess their knowledge of what has been learnt in class
- Key words to learn
- Revision techniques such as mind maps, flashcards and workbooks

We expect pupils to spend a minimum **45 minutes** a week on their independent study homework tasks.

These websites may be useful:

BBC Bitesize - <https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zrw76sg>

S-Cool Revision - <https://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/geography>

We would also recommend the use of **CGP revision guides**.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Across all Key Stages in Religious Education independent study tasks provide an additional opportunity for pupils to explore their social, moral and spiritual education. All of the independent learning is designed to allow pupils make sustained progress in R.E. and support the development of their literacy skills. The REading Challenge is also opportunity for our pupils to explore R.E. through literature and consider how the subject works well alongside other subject areas such as, History, Geography, Science and Citizenship. **As a department we expect all pupils to complete each of the tasks set each half term to the best of their ability.**

At KS3 Religious Education independent study is set **twice a half term**.

Pupils will either be required to complete two mini-independent study tasks, these will be a variety of activities, such as practice test questions, designed to complement what pupils are learning in class, in addition to preparing them for the RE GCSE or a compulsory REading activity.

The activities pupils will be set for independent study will include:

- Reading a book and writing a book review
- Engaging with a religious text by reading, explaining and evaluating sources of Wisdom. This will help pupils to improve their exam answers by ensuring that they have more evidence to use in their extended writing. It will also aid in the development of the skills need in RE at GCSE level
- Practice exam questions
- Revision in preparation for their assessment through completing quizzes using apps such as Quizlet

We expect pupils to spend a minimum **30 minutes** a week on their RE independent study, this includes time for reading and research.

To promote literacy in R.E. pupils will also be given a REading list that complements each area of study. This list will contain books that will allow pupils to explore religious and moral issues in greater depth. They may also write book reviews on Google Classroom or complete an Accelerated Reader Quiz in the Information Centre.

The RE Department has a policy whereby all KS3 independent study is set using Google Classroom, all pupils have access to this facility through ICT and can access this at home, either using a computer, tablet or smartphone.

ART DEPARTMENT

Homework tasks for years 7 and 8 are provided in list form in the back of their sketchbooks for reference for both students and teachers. Year 9s complete a mock GCSE and so homework tasks are not departmentally standardized, rather each teacher uses professional judgement to set tasks appropriate to their class' stage in the GCSE. For all years homework is set **every two weeks**, though the time expected to be spent on each task increases from **30 minutes** in year 7, 45 minutes in year 8, and finally **1 hour** year 9. All tasks unless otherwise specified are to be completed in the student's workbooks and returned for the next lesson. Failure to complete work or have a sketchbook in lesson results in detentions. Homework completion in a practical lesson such as Art is a very important aspect of learning for 3 main reasons:

- Firstly, it increases the amount of sketchbook work by about one third.
- Secondly, it makes students work out how to do things on their own in an individual way.
- Thirdly, it allows students to practice skills/ extend those skills.

Finally, it is important to do the things which teachers ask students to do. They are members of a very well qualified team. Following their advice is a guarantee of progress.

There is detailed marking at least once every half term with grades, effort/targets/detailed written comments. We use criteria set by the KS3 syllabus to inform this.

Regular marking is done at least once every fortnight and follows the departments set criteria detailed below:

Pupils' progress tracked and checked throughout against their own personal targets. Students are provided with either:

AT At target

OT Over target

BT Below target

In addition written feedback consisting of a comment related to what has been done well and a comment related to steps students should take to improve their work/skill next time are provided.

Some useful links for parents and students are:

<http://www.tate.org.uk>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239062/SEC_ONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Art_and_design.pdf

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The Music curriculum is divided into a mixture of half termly and full termly units. Homework is set **once per unit**. Students are asked to complete a written response to each practical skill being studied, each task should take students a minimum of **30 minutes**. This homework assesses the students' ability to use key musical terms correctly as well as developing their literacy skills and deepening their understanding of practical tasks performed in lessons.

Students are expected to complete all homework set to the best of their ability using full sentences, punctuation and grammar, then respond to feedback once the homework has been marked in order to correct mistakes or to complete extension tasks.

In addition to this there are various listening and research activities set for homework, where students must research a specific genre of music.

Research topics may include: Film Composers, Music in Film, Music of the World, Famous Songwriters or The Blues.

Although students are not given practical homework, students are encouraged, and sometimes required to attend at least one music club throughout the week. The clubs which all students may attend are:

- Keyboard Club and Music Production Club
- Ukulele and Guitar Club
- Boys' Choir
- Girls' Choir

These clubs give students a chance to engage with practical work outside of lesson time and they prepare students more for practical lessons. The club they should attend depends on what unit of study they are doing at the time.

Students who play either a wind or string instrument who receive lessons via the Community Music School **must** attend one of the following: Wind Band or String Band.

Students who receive lessons, own an instrument, or have an interest in singing, are expected join a club as well as practice at least **10 minutes every evening**.

Those who do not have access to an instrument can use the following resources to help develop their practical ability outside of school:

Garage band: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/garageband/id408709785?mt=8> Students will use this app throughout year 7, 8 and 9. This can be downloaded for Apple Mac, iPhone or iPad.

Virtual Piano: <https://virtualpiano.net/> This website is particularly helpful for year 7 students, in order to help familiarise themselves with the layout of the piano.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Homework tasks are provided to the year 7, 8 & 9s by every teacher while the topic of the homework is an agreed list by the department the teachers do make adjustments to the content or expectations placed on their individual groups to ensure everyone is properly challenged.

Each year group will be set homework **every 2 weeks** with increasing expectations of minimum quality from year 7 to 9. Students should spend **at least 30 minutes** on each piece of Design and Technology homework.

The completion of homework tasks is expected for the reasons below:

- To further pupils knowledge about various aspects of design technology such as:
- Significant figures (Famous inventors or designers)
- Properties of the various materials they will be using.
- Function and parts of the tools and machinery they will be using
- Expected standards of safety
- Further research or development for their design and practical work

Pupils can also be asked to carry out progress reviews on their own work or peer marking on others to develop their own critical thinking and habit of reviewing their work to determine improvements they can make.

Pupils' target will be on the front of their folders and they will be provided with their grade throughout the year to compare and track their own progress.

Some useful links for parents and students are:

<https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zybc87h>

Focusing on Product Design with video clips

<https://www.bbc.com/education/subjects/zg9d7ty>

Relates more to Materials and Components as well as production

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

Technology student focuses on a lot of different aspects of technology and design

ICT/COMPUTING DEPARTMENT

Computing homework is set on Google Classroom **every week**. These tasks are short reinforcement tasks which should take a minimum of **15 minutes** per week. Each task is related to specific lesson content. Tasks are set to extend pupil's knowledge. We aim to teach all practical content in class. When practical tasks are set for homework, they will not be challenging, but focus on pupils' analytical and evaluative skills.

Because not all pupils have access to computers at home, pupils are able to complete their homework at lunch time in Homework Club, ICT club, or the Information Centre at lunch time or after school. Most homework will require online resources, so there is no need to purchase additional software. We use a range of online software which can be accessed from home.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom is an online learning platform used by teachers to assign work and resources to pupils. All COMPUTING and Computer Science work is set using Google Classroom as well as a range of other subjects. Pupils can access it in school or from home.

Teachers will often set classwork and homework to be completed on Google Classroom. Pupils can notify teachers that they have complete work by pressing the **Hand In** button

Google Classroom can be accessed by going to <https://classroom.google.com>

There are also an app available on the App Store and Google Play Store.

Google Drive

Google Drive is an online cloud storage system. Pupils can use it to upload files and then work on them later. This avoids the need for USB sticks.

Google Drive also provides software for creating files. Google Docs, (the Google equivalent of Microsoft Word) Google Sheets (the Google equivalent of Microsoft Excel) and Google Slides (the Google equivalent of Microsoft PowerPoint). This means that work can be completed without the need to purchase any additional software.

Google Drive can be accessed by going to <https://drive.google.com>

Google Email Address

All pupils are given a Google Apps email address, in order to access a wide range of Google Applications. Pupil's email addresses will consist of their school username followed by **@robertclack.co.uk**. Therefore Jonathan Smith, with the school username 17JSmith, would have the email address **17JSmith@RobertClack.co.uk**

FOOD STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Homework is set **every two weeks**, and may be in the form of bringing in practical requirements, or completing written tasks.

Students in years 7, 8 and 9 will **generally cook every other week** provided there have been no changes to the normal school timetable.

So homework may be to bring fresh ingredients like meat, fish, fruits or vegetables. **Sometimes** they have to prepare these at home by cutting them up to save time depending on the recipe.

On **alternate weeks** students may also have written tasks to complete as homework. These could be in the form of :

- Hygiene and safety worksheets
- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Food diaries
- Research- fruits, vegetables, animal farming, life stages, healthy eating, foods from around the world, Moral and Ethical issues about food.
- Worksheets relating to the current topic
- Multicultural foods
- Research a celebrity chef

Useful websites to support your child's learning include:

<http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/>

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/>

<https://www.grainchain.com/>

<https://www.egginfo.co.uk/>

<https://www.milk.co.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

<http://meatandeducation.redmeatinfo.com/>

<http://www.seafish.org/eating-seafood/schools-and-education>

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Specific homework tasks are not set in PE lessons. However, we feel it is essential for students to exercise regularly and live a healthy lifestyle. We promote this through our Physical Education and Games curriculum.

Alongside all that is offered in lessons we are fortunate enough to offer a very wide range of extra curricular sporting opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Students are able to participate in a range of sports clubs and activities and your support in encouraging them to participate is vital.

Some of the activities include:

- Football
- Rugby
- Netball
- Cricket
- Rounders
- Athletics
- Middle and long distance running
- High jump
- Dance

If you would like any further information on health, nutrition and physical activity you might like to access the following websites:

<https://www.sportengland.org/research/benefits-of-sport/health-and-benefits-of-sport/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/feb/06/pe-and-sport-student-health-wellbeing>

<http://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/>