

Humanities Home learning Options - KS3

This year we are using an option based model to structure home learning tasks for Key Stage 3 students across the three Humanities subjects. This includes Years 7 to 9 for History and Geography and Years 7 to 8 for R.S., as students begin their GCSE course in Year 9.

Students in Years 8 and 9 are already familiar with an option based approach in Geography. The same model has this year been extended to include both History and R.S.

This document aims to address questions that you may have about this approach to home learning.

What is an option based model?

Students receive a list of tasks relating to a topic studied in the classroom, typically between 12 and 15 tasks in number. Over the course of a specified number of weeks, usually three, students will be required to complete a set number of tasks. They are free to choose tasks to suit both their current level of progress, preferred learning style and targets in the subject. Each option is rated according to the potential level of challenge and this too can be used as a guide. Students hand in the required number of options by the deadline given.

Why are we using this model?

An options structure allows students to demonstrate skills and attributes that may not come to the fore in lessons and enable students to develop their independence and take greater responsibility for aspects of their learning. Tasks are relatively open-ended and give ample opportunity for creativity and originality; they also offer challenge and stretch.

How will this work?

A full lesson will be set aside for the setting of Home Learning options. Students will be carefully guided through the options and will record the task and deadline in their planner. Where the task spans three weeks students will receive reminders of the deadline.

Because of the level of planning, management and effort needed to complete the tasks successfully we are anxious to make sure that students aren't completing options for more than one humanities subject at a time. As a result I have sent separately the timetable for options over the year. Each term is split into three so it may be that a project straddles a half term break.

When students are not completing an option project in a subject they will not be set substantial home learning tasks. Shorter tasks will be set that are likely to involve prior learning in preparation for the next lesson. Feedback will either be given within the lesson when the home learning is due lesson or written in exercise books, depending on the task.

How is the work assessed?

When the options are handed in students will complete a reflection task which gives them the opportunity to evaluate the work that they have completed. A sample self-evaluation sheet is included below. Their work is also likely to be peer assessed and written feedback will be given by the teacher indicating what went well and how the work could be even better.

The way in which students tackle their home learning options will be taken into account in the awarding of their attitude to learning grades (OGCU) at the end of each half term.

What support is available to students?

Teachers can be found in the Geography, History and R.S. offices to address any issues arising from home learning out of lesson time. Many students also make use of the excellent Learning Resource Centre to work on home learning after school. In addition, Learning Support runs a Home Learning Club on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday after school for small groups of students. Should you feel that your child would benefit from this support and doesn't currently receive it please contact them.

How can you help?

Unlike tasks based on learning solely within a lesson, home learning options are designed to be understood by anyone. It should, therefore be possible for you as a parent/carer to support your child in tackling the options successfully. I have included a guide below; in case you would like to consider this in more detail.

Alison Smith
Faculty leader – Humanities
07.11.13.

Note: Please find the sample self-evaluation sheet and guide for parents/carers below.

Name _____ Unit title _____

Humanities Home Learning Options: Self-evaluation

Brief description of the options you chose and the ways you presented your work:

Statements	Red	Amber	Green
<i>I completed at least 3 options</i>			
<i>I followed the instructions for each option carefully</i>			
<i>The options I chose allowed me to practice a range of skills</i>			
<i>I managed my time well and completed each option to the best of my ability</i>			
<i>I chose options that challenged me and gave me the chance to learn a lot</i>			
<i>My work is well organised and easy for others to access (titles, headings, labels)</i>			
<i>My written work is clear and accurate (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, grammar)</i>			
<i>My sketches, maps and diagrams are clear and well labelled</i>			
<i>I used a range of resources/sources of information</i>			
<i>Other people could learn a lot about the topic from my work</i>			
<i>I made effective use of ICT</i>			
<i>I included a bibliography/list of sources</i>			
<i>My work was creative/original</i>			
<i>I enjoyed completing the options I chose</i>			

Specific strengths of my work:

Things that I would do differently next time / areas for improvement:

Things I may need additional help or guidance with:

My main target for the next home learning options project:

Home Learning - How to Support Your Child

Forward

Families play a vital role in educating children. What families do is more important to pupil success than whether they are rich or poor, whether their parents went into higher education or not, or whether their children are starting in Year 7 or approaching their GCSEs.

Harrogate Grammar School promotes and encourages parental involvement and participation in the social, emotional and academic growth of pupils.

The value of home learning extends beyond school. Good assignments completed successfully can help children develop good habits and attitudes. Home learning can encourage a lifelong love of learning.

Home learning can help parents learn about their children's education and offers the opportunity for parents to help their children to learn.

We hope that this guide will lead all of you facing the challenges of raising children, one step closer to success. Indeed, family involvement in education is crucial if we want our children to succeed in school and through life.

Aims

Home learning can help children:

- Review and reflect on what they have learned
- Practice new skills
- Take responsibility for their learning and understand the importance of time management
- Become independent learners by learning to use various resources, libraries, reference books, the Internet, other people
- Explore subjects more fully that time allows in the classroom

Study smarter

Notes of caution:

1. There is no right or wrong way to study. Each child is an individual and each will find something a little different that works. If you are lucky, you may find that all your children will take the same approach to study, but often this is not the case. The trick is to work out what works best for each child and to stick to it.
2. Keep in mind that the object of teaching your child how to study is just that. You are not trying to get them great marks, although hopefully that will follow. You want them to take responsibility for getting assignments done. This is a gradual process and you can expect some hurdles along the way. Work out a home learning plan together and get them to take more and more of the responsibility for carrying it out as time goes on.

The following tips are aimed at providing parents/carers with ways of developing good study habits.

Do I help?

Important facts:

- Children need support and encouragement. Praise good work habits, effort and sticking at the task. Where you spot that improvement is needed use expressions like, 'Have another go at that one', 'Think again', 'Are you sure?' rather than scolding. It makes a better experience for both of you and your child will feel really good when they spot the mistake and correct it themselves.
- If your child's work is more yours than theirs, the teacher will not give feedback or set targets that match the needs of your child. This can hinder progress. Where you do give help, write this at the end of the piece of work, this will help the teacher to give more meaningful feedback.

Some strategies you could try:

- Look through assignments with your child. See what resources and equipment are needed, it is better to wait until they have everything they need rather than to make do.
- For longer projects help your child to break the task into steps and plan when each step will be tackled. Talk about the length of time needed and what will be needed at each stage. Over time your child should take more responsibility for this.
- Ask your child to talk through what they are planning to do, how and why. This will give you the chance to comment on the process of learning and you may see an opportunity to discuss possible challenges.
- If you are asked to help, be positive and encouraging.
- If you do suggest a possible improvement make sure that you have made at least two positive comments first.
- Where things don't turn out as planned focus on the learning that has taken place along the way rather than on the final product. After all mistakes provide a great opportunity for learning! Where children are able to reflect honestly on their learning they are more likely to avoid making similar mistakes in the future.
- If you don't know how to do something, be honest and encourage your child to seek help from their teacher well before the deadline.

When?

Some important facts:

- Children may need a break and a run around when they get home from school. They may be hungry and need to eat before they can concentrate.
- Children may not concentrate if they feel that they are being deprived of something such as a favourite television programme or a game of football with friends.
- Children may have had a difficult day and may need the chance to chat about this first.

Some strategies you could try:

- You could get together with the parents of your child's best friends and agree a time for study that everyone sticks to.
- Avoid time that clash with favourite programmes or clubs.
- Make sure your child has a break but don't start to study too late in the evening.
- Agree a time with your child. Talk through the pro and cons of different options and involve your child in the decision making.

Where?

The important facts:

- Children need a defined space, away from other children. They should have enough space to lay out all the things they need to use. If you have more than one child needing to study they may be able to share a space, if they are likely to argue or annoy each other they should work separately.
- Children need the fewest possible distractions. Television screens draw a child's attention. Some children concentrate best with quiet; others may feel calmer with quiet music without lyrics. Interruptions should be kept to a minimum.

Some strategies you could try:

- Allocate a table in the kitchen or dining room for study at times when you don't need it.
- Provide a table in your child's bedroom.
- Keep younger children away from those who are studying. Let your child see that s/he has status and that their study is important and you respect their need for peace and quiet.
- If they have to work in the same room as a television, turn it off or turn the volume down.

Top Ten Tips

1. Show that you think education and home learning are important. Ask your child 'What have you learnt today at school?'
2. Set a regular time.
3. Provide a place to study.
4. Remove distractions.
5. Provide supplies and resources.
6. Show an interest.
7. Look over completed assignments.
8. Help your child get organised.
9. Find out how your child learns best.
10. Give praise - for effort and endeavour as much as for the final product.

HUMANITIES HOME LEARNING TIMETABLE

	Subject	Autumn Term			Spring Term			Summer Term		
Year 7	Geography	WDYTYA			WDIAROM				Water World	
	History			Norman Conquest			Medieval London/Bagdad			The Aztecs
	RS		Pagan Peoples			Varnashrama-dharma		Chinese Whispers		
Year 8	Geography			Powerful Planet			You're Nicked			Adventurous Places
	History		Slavery		Industrial Revolution			British Empire		
	RS	Where did it all begin?				Dateline Jesusalem			In the name of Allah?	
Year 9	Geography		Penguins and Polar Bears		Fantastic Places			Running Out		
	History	Civil Rights in the Twentieth Century				First World War			Second World War	
	RS	Weekly home learning tasks including preparation activities for lessons and GCSE exam questions			Weekly home learning tasks including preparation activities for lessons and GCSE exam questions			Weekly home learning tasks including preparation activities for lessons and GCSE exam questions		