



A Newsletter for Grade 8 Students Level 2, Sample 1


Tips for SURVIVAL in High School



By:





Learning Strategies	Personal Management Skills
<p>What is a learning strategy? Well, a learning strategy is a technique that helps you improve your learning. I have chosen two of, what I believe are the most important strategies. The first one is to simply re-read your notes within 48 hours of copying them down. This helps you remember the information and it makes it easier when you are studying. I found that this was very effective in mathematics and science. Another important technique is called active listening. While you listen to the teacher you should be paraphrasing what they are saying. Make eye contact and make sure to ask questions. You will find that you will understand and remember more. You can also keep jot-notes of what the teacher is saying.</p>	<p>In high school you will have to be responsible for yourself. Most beginning grade 9 students have difficulty adapting to this new environment and are too used to having someone look out for them. That is why personal management skills are so important.</p> <p>The personal management skill that I believe is the most important is time management. I have had personal experience with this, which I will talk about later. Time management is important because if you do not effectively manage your time you will soon fall behind in your classes and could end up failing. You should use the planner that the school provides for you. You should also set goals. Setting goals is very important because you will be able to achieve so much more if you have a plan. Goals with a reward help inspire you to work harder at your assignments. You should decide on a mark that you want to get in a certain subject and set out to get it. Trust me it will be worth all the hard work.</p>



My Personal Message

When I entered grade nine at the start of September I was sure that I could achieve all the goals that I had set for myself. I did at the beginning but after several months my marks began to fall. The reason? Poor time management. I stopped using my planner to record my homework and started forgetting about the day-to-day work. I would rather sit down and watch T.V. rather than do my math homework. My math mark fell as a result and I did not understand what I was doing. I left projects to the last minute and became all too familiar with rushing at the last moment to get it done. By January I was totally lost. I did not study for my exams until a week before I had to write them. When I sat down to write the math exam, my combination of not doing the homework and not studying took its toll on me. I failed the exam. This forced my math mark down to a D. I still did not do anything about it. I have decided to take action however. I have got myself a new planner and I keep track of my work and the do dates. I have begun studying for my second math exam a month in advance and I am raising my marks. So, take my warning and do not fall into the trap that I did.

Teacher’s Notes

Knowledge/Understanding

- The student demonstrates some clarity in defining learning strategies (e.g., “Well, a learning strategy is a technique that helps you improve your learning”).
- The student demonstrates some understanding of personal management skills, although the link between the definition of the skills and the explanation of their importance is only somewhat clear (e.g., “In high school you will have to be responsible for yourself ... That is why personal management skills are so important”).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student frames the analysis of a personal barrier as a narrative and suggests solutions with some effectiveness.
- The student shows some evidence of applying an inquiry process (e.g., identifies a personal barrier, records possible solutions, and comes to a conclusion: “I have decided to take action however”).

Communication

- The student communicates information, ideas, and experiences with some clarity (e.g., “Another important technique is called active listening ... paraphrasing what they are saying”).
- The student demonstrates some sense of reaching the audience by relating personal experiences and attempts to influence the audience (e.g., “So, take my warning and do not fall into the trap that I did”).
- The layout is somewhat effective, but visually the piece is crowded.

Application

- The student transfers ideas and strategies to the newsletter context with some effectiveness (e.g., gives readers a sense of sharing information on a personal level in order to help them next year).
- The student uses technology with some appropriateness (e.g., boxes, coloured graphics, different fonts).

Comments/Next Steps

- The student needs to blend personal knowledge and knowledge of the course expectations to develop clarity of understanding and to explain learning strategies and personal management skills more effectively.
- The student should review the task expectations regarding a variety of forms of writing (e.g., might consider using bullets and lists).
- The student needs to review the design of a newsletter in order to avoid crowding all of the messages onto one page.

A Newsletter for Grade 8 Students Level 2, Sample 2

A

The Dawn of a New School Year


June 2000

Newsletter #1


Welcome to Secondary School!

Moving into secondary school is an exciting and challenging time in your life. It is vitally important that in grade 9 you begin using strategies and skills that will make your years in secondary school successful!


Learning Strategies

 **#1 Be Present**


Attending class everyday is very important to your success. Keeping your notes current for study purposes and being an active listener is only possible when you regularly attend class. Emphasis is also placed on daily performance as part of your final evaluation. At the beginning of the year choose a dependable buddy who will inform you of any missed notes and assignments in case of an unavoidable absence. Being present insures your notes are always complete and up-to-date for best studying results.

 **#2 Be an Active Listener**

Not only attending class but being an active listener is important to your success. Active listening means you must be able to paraphrase in your own words what the teacher or your classmate has said. If you do not understand what has been said, ask for clarification or make use of the resource help that is always available. Active listening guarantees that you will at all times comprehend what is being taught.




“If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two mouths and one ear.”
MARK TWAIN




B

Personal Management Skills

 **#1 Be Prepared**

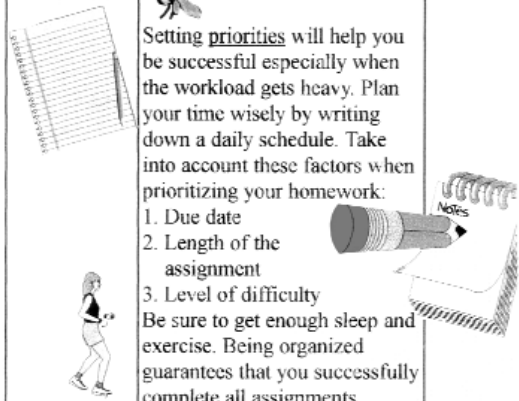
Being prepared for class each day is a must! This includes reviewing notes from the previous class, completing homework assignments and having all necessary supplies with you. If you have any questions concerning class expectations, be sure to ask for clarification immediately! Being prepared each day will allow you to always stay on top of your school work.

 **#2 Be Organized**

Setting priorities will help you be successful especially when the workload gets heavy. Plan your time wisely by writing down a daily schedule. Take into account these factors when prioritizing your homework:

1. Due date
2. Length of the assignment
3. Level of difficulty

Be sure to get enough sleep and exercise. Being organized guarantees that you successfully complete all assignments.



Personal Message

Upon entering grade 9, I was somewhat apprehensive, but I have found the whole experience very enjoyable. I have met some great new friends and wonderful teachers. In order to make my first year successful, I have had to sharpen my organizational skills. No longer do I have one teacher that spreads out the work load or daily reminds me what homework I have for that evening. I often find myself burdened with a number of assignments and tests. It is then that I am especially glad I have attended all of my classes and have actively listened. In order to successfully get through these times, I must carefully schedule my study times and take advantage of the resource centre. Knowing I have put forth my best effort in these busy times, allows me to be successful.

“If you can conceive it and believe it you can achieve it.”
NAPOLEON HILL

Teacher's Notes

Knowledge/Understanding

- The student demonstrates some understanding of learning strategies by explaining their significance and use (e.g., by saying in the welcome message that they will “make your years in secondary school successful!”) but only implies a definition of learning strategies.
- The student demonstrates some understanding of personal management skills through somewhat clear and complete responses but does not define those skills (e.g., explains their use only in “#1 Be Prepared” and “#2 Be Organized”).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student identifies and analyses a personal barrier (lack of organizational skills) with some effectiveness but leaves the reader to search for the information in the personal message.
- The student is somewhat effective in showing some application of the inquiry process (e.g., shows a lack of clarity in writing about the attempt to overcome the barrier).

Communication

- The student communicates information, ideas, and experiences with some clarity but presents information as a list of things to do with no explanation of reasoning (e.g., in the “#1 Be Present” section).
- The student demonstrates some sense of the audience in the welcome paragraph.
- The layout is somewhat effective (e.g., the use of boxed information, an appropriate font size, colour graphics, underlined titles), but the information communicated is only somewhat clear and complete (e.g., in the section “#1 Be Present”).

Application

- The student transfers ideas and strategies to the newspaper context with some effectiveness.
- The student's writing includes mostly factual information and little personal information.
- The student uses some effective writing applications (e.g., the narrative, the list).

Comments/Next Steps

- The student needs to review the task expectations (e.g., the expectation about defining personal management skills).
- The student should review the inquiry process model in order to make a logical presentation of information about overcoming a personal barrier.