

Creating a Study Plan for the Junior Cycle



You will be covering a lot of subjects in your Junior Cycle (JC), so it is a good idea to make a plan.

1. Prioritise your subjects

List all of the subjects that you need to cover for your exams. Once you have done this, it can be helpful to prioritise your list. Ranking each subject in order of importance will help you to decide how much time to devote to each one.

2. Create a list of smaller topics or tasks in each subject

Try to put together a list of topics or tasks under each subject you need to cover for the JC. For example, a task for English could be learning different quotes, or in Maths it could be practising quadratic equations. Breaking each subject out into smaller, more manageable tasks can help you to feel less overwhelmed about the JC. It can also be useful when you are putting tasks into your timetable template.

In your exam, your examiner will be looking to see if you have gained specific knowledge or skills that you are able to display. Having a clear idea of what the examiner will be looking for can help you to study more effectively and better manage your time.

3. Use a study template

Creating or using a template to form your study plan can be helpful. You may find it easier to create a **weekly study plan and update it at the end of each week**. You could also have monthly study plans for different subjects so you have a clear list of the different topics to be covered under each of them.

4. Add in stuff you enjoy

It can be helpful to start by adding in the fun stuff, the things you enjoy or look forward to during the week. This could be adding in regular breaks each day, a time to connect with friends, or even deciding the best time to study your favourite subject. You may also prefer to keep your study timetable just for your study and exam tasks, and that's okay too. Do what works best for you. Building your study around things you enjoy during the week can help you to support your wellbeing.

5. Creating time slots

There is a lot of research to suggest that 25 minutes is the average time most people can stay focused and concentrated while studying. For some people, it may be a little more or a little less. It can be a good idea to break up your day into 25 minute slots and decide how long each task you have scheduled for the day might take. Some may take just one 25 minute slot, others may take two or three with short 5 minute breaks in between each slot.

The break part is essential to allow your mind to process information and store it in long term memory. Also, in terms of motivation, setting a timer and not being distracted for 20/25 minutes is far more doable than a longer time period. Ticking tasks off your list after every block of time can help you to feel a greater sense of achievement.

6. Schedule breaks in your study timetable

Make sure to schedule regular, short breaks. If your time slots are 25 minutes, taking a 5 minute break after each slot is a good idea. Make sure you get up from your study space and move around during this time so you do feel like you've had a break from whatever task you are working on. It is important to have one longer lunch break in the middle of the day and one 15-20 minute break where you feel you may need it most.

7. Focus on tasks, not time

When filling in your timetable, use the list of tasks you divided out from each subject. Instead of putting just 'English' in as a time slot, be specific. Giving yourself a specific task to do in English will give you more direction. For example, your task may be to learn 10 quotes for your poetry section.

8. What tasks should I do first

Think about which tasks to put earlier in the day. It can be helpful to put the more difficult tasks at the start of the day. This is when we tend to have more energy and be more focused. Putting the easier or shorter tasks towards the end of the day can be a good idea.

9. Review and reflect

Remember, your timetable can be changed. It's important to review and reflect on it each day or even weekly. If there is something that is not working for you or you think there is something you could add in that would work better, know that you can change it. The more you are able to reflect and adapt your timetable to suit your needs, the more efficient it will be.

10. Stick with it

It's okay if things don't always go exactly to plan. This does not mean you have failed. Don't let it put you off from sticking with your study timetable and finding the balance that suits you. You can always start again tomorrow.