



Christ Church Grammar School

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA





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Studying the Humanities: sorting the wheat from the chaff



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- **Two parts to success in the Humanities:**
 - 1) Learning the content
 - 2) Learning the skills – essay writing and document study skills
- I am going to focus primarily on the first point today – without knowing your content, even the best essay writing skills won't help you!
- Just a few quick tips on writing essays first...



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–Have powerful introductions

- There are many reasons....aaaaaargh
- Herodotus says that Xerxes invaded Greece for revenge. However, a careful reading of the source material indicates that there were also other influential factors at play.

–Have strong conclusions

- In conclusion, the Persian invasions failed for a combination of reasons..... aaaaaargh
- In conclusion, Xerxes clearly did invade Greece for revenge on the upstart cities of Sparta and Athens, however it is also clear that the conquest of Europe and the glory that would bring was also in the forefront of his mind.

–Have a logical structure

- Make a clear pointed structure that has sufficient content with a definite argument supported by that content and appropriate examples

–Have a legible script and.....



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pppst.com

- **Just time to give you one essay writing tip which just happens to be the single most important thing to remember when writing an essay:**



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**READ THE
QUESTION AND
ANSWER THE
QUESTION**



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- To answer the question you need to have the learnt the information that you need.
- So how do I separate the information I need from the rest of the 'nice to know' or the 'don't need to know'?





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Reading skills are crucial

- **Work on your speed – the more you read the better you will get...**
- **Minimise distractions – You cannot listen to music and read for understanding.....No you cant!**
- **Leave your phone in a different room**
- **Lying down on the couch or at your desk? Why do men wear ties? Go to work!**
- **Good lighting**
- **Regular Breaks – When you are working you are working, when you are on a break you are on a break.**



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- **Having said all that – In the Humanities, reading without any notetaking is not a good use of your time.**
 - You remember approximately 10 percent of what you read.
 - You remember approximately 20 percent of what you hear.
 - You remember approximately 30 percent of what you see.
 - You remember approximately 90 percent of what you do.(i.e actively notetake)



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So how do I get a better result than just
reading?by.....

ACTIVE NOTETAKING – ie You must use your
pen or digital equivalent!



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- **THE CRUCIAL POINT OF
SUCCESSFUL NOTETAKING
IS.....Any guesses???**



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KYF!



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- **KNOW YOUR FOCUS!**
- **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO LEARN!**
- **By doing this you will be able to see what is wheat and what is chaff.**
- **A good teacher will ensure that you know this. But if you are not clear – go and check, BE PROACTIVE. The process of checking will help you!**
 - Use the Syllabus
 - Use checklists – make one if you don't have one
 - Make a bullet point list of what you are trying to find out
 - Make focus questions.
- **USE YOUR HUMANITIES TEACHERS!**
- **EXAMPLE.....**



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- **Athens status after the Persian Wars:**
- overview of the Battle of Marathon and its consequences
- rise of Themistocles and Aristides and the creation of the Athenian fleet
- Hellenic League
- consequences of the battles of Thermopylae, Artemisium, Salamis and Plataea
-
- **Creation of the Delian League:**
- actions of Pausanias, Ionians and Athenians
- aims, organisation and structure of the Delian League
- reasons for Athenian leadership of the Delian League:
- oath, leaders, structure, composition of fleet, collection of tribute
-
- **Reasons for change of *hegemon* in the conflict against Persia:**
- Thucydides' explanation for Athenian leadership of the Delian League
- internal division in Sparta
- role of Sparta in the change of *hegemon*
- role of allies in the change of *hegemon*
- role of Athens in the change of *hegemon*
- varying interpretations of the change in *hegemon*



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Notetaking techniques.

(By hand or digital – it's the same practice)

- **NEVER** in full sentences. Textbooks / articles have to make their information readable as a whole – your notes don't need to be. Filter out extraneous information, distil the information in light of what you have worked out you need to know
- Keep a separate page(s) of well organised QUOTES.
- If you are being digital – NEVER cut and paste.
- Use your own words.
- Use abbreviations eg. (JC) (P) – be consistent though.
- Use diagrams. Use Tables. Use underlining. Use highlighting of your own notes.



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Notetaking techniques.

(By hand or digital – it's the same practice)

- **Make connections with arrows.**
- **Use underlining.**
- **Make important info summaries as you go.**
- **Avoid repeating identical information.**
- **Note the source of material - you may need to refer back to it to check information.**
- **Make sure its legible enough for you to read it again and again BUT don't waste time on making it pretty.**



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SOSE 2 - Notes p 62-65

"New Ways of Thinking, writing and
expressing"

Renaissance

- P62. (Ren)
- great artistic and literary achievements, and philosophy
 - changes in thought made these possible.
 - Humanism - educational system learning about the classical past
 - Greek / Latin / Grammar / History
 - Poetry / Moral Philosophy.
 - Humanist scholars had a feeling for literature history + politics - curious about the word and esp about Human beings

P63.

- Humankind as the central point of study.
- less connected with God, more connected with Man.
- Still definitely Christians however.
- Writers + Thinkers - Dante, Machiavelli, Boccaccio, (Decameron)

~~P64~~

P63/64

- offshoot of Humanism → Christian Humanism

(Erasmus, St Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus)

↓
In praise of
Folly

↓
Utopia

→ Christian Humanism - bring the new learning into study of Theology.

- Theology / Scholasticism too rigid - unquestionable truths as taught by church now questioned - Luther / Calvin.
- Move away from deep symbolism of Bible toward plain meanings.

P65

- Revolution in Art
 - New + vibrant style of Art.
 - Wealth allowed it - Medici / Bruni / Alberti etc



Example:

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- PG3/64



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Revision and review is then crucial.

- **You can then apply your own revision and review techniques**
- **Summarising / Palm Cards / Mnemonics / testing / back of the toilet door / study groups / explaining to your mother / recording your notes – two benefits /**
- **Unfortunately I don't have time to go through this in detail today. I am sure you have been given plenty of tips in this area before.**



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- Learning takes time. Very few people have photographic memories. Learning requires repetition-meaningful repetition. This is why active study techniques are so vitally important.
- The more times around the learning circuit, the longer lasting the impression.
- Eg: Breakfast.



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Studying smart - summary

- ⦿ Do all readings and notetake smart. Use abbreviations, tables, arrows, coloured pens, underlining and emphasis.
- ⦿ Know what you are trying to understand!
- ⦿ Re-read your notes on completion and again within a day.
- ⦿ Be brutally honest with your understanding - DO I REALLY UNDERSTAND THIS?, if not go back and redo it or read a complementary reference.
- ⦿ cross check on points of fact that you cannot recall - places, dates etc.



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Studying smart - summary

- ⦿ Bring questions to class on points where you need clarification.
- ⦿ Work with your mates and discuss issues with each other, justify your opinions to each other, but don't waste time
- ⦿ Remember who the competition is - Swotting girls! - The ATAR is a ranking competition!
- ⦿ To really push your marks up, consider a range of views, always relate your conclusions / points to the sources
- ⦿ Write practice essays



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Good luck with your studies – feel free to come and talk to me anytime in the Wolsey office if you have any questions.

