A compiled guide of tips, motivational quotes, website recommendations and other materials to help you study more effectively and efficiently.
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RCN STUDY SMART:
SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC TIMELY

A compiled guide of tips, motivational quotes, website recommendations and other materials to help you study more effectively and efficiently.
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Dearest friend,
As you might have figured out by now, RCN life is full of exciting and attractive opportunities. The combination of achieving academic success, socialising with friends and getting the most out of the two years of UWC may seem difficult, but it is definitely possible.

In terms of doing well academically, smart studying is key. Now, this by no means refers to being naturally intelligent; Studying SMART (in a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely way) simply means learning and revising in a clear, organized and focused manner. Instead of wasting time on unproductive studying, studying smart helps you be more effective, efficient and make the best use of your time here in beautiful RCN.

In this guide, we humbly present to you advice and tips created by RCN students for RCN students. These were first published in our fortnightly newsletter, but have been compiled for you for ease of reference. Different aspects of school life and learning are covered to help you contribute and benefit from the UWC experience and the IB without exhausting yourself.

We hope you’ll enjoy reading this guide and find some relevant tips and materials that can help you improve your studies and your RCN life in general.

Please feel free to contact any one of us if you have any questions or comments! Any ideas or suggestions are greatly appreciated as well.

Warmest regards,
The RCN Study Smart CaRe 2013-2014
LEARNING WELL

BREAKING AND MAKING HABITS

Habits. We've all got them. Lots of them. We tend to label them "good" or "bad". Think about them for a few minutes. What's "good" about the habits with this label? What's "bad" about the not-so-good ones? How do they make you feel? Do they lead to better or worse academic experiences? A better or worse sense of general well-being? Where does the motivation for these habits come from? Understanding them more fully can be useful.

Habits can be changed. And you have the power to change them. Developing good habits can help us manage time, learn more effectively, live more healthily, give more generously to others and enjoy life more fully.

Read on to find out how you can get started!

Getting started:
#1 SMART Goals
Once we decide what we want to change, we can set goals for ourselves - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound (SMART) goals.
#2 Take the next step – Just do it!
It might be difficult at first. Expect that. Be ready for it. Developing new muscles, whether they be physical or mental, is rarely easy, but with practice, it gets easier.

#3 Stick to it!
3 weeks is a good time period to start with if we want to establish a habit. A month is even better. For inspiration, watch the short TED talk “Matt Cutts: Try something new for 30 days”!

#4 Don’t do it alone!
If you want to establish a new habit, telling someone about your goals is useful. Find a friend who can encourage you if your determination weakens or if you need someone to talk to when you’re struggling.

Food For Thought:

Watch your thoughts;
  They become words.
Watch your words;
  They become actions.
Watch your actions;
  They become habits.
Watch your habits;
  They become character.
Watch your character;
  It becomes your destiny.

_Lao Tzu_

"Successful people are simply those with successful habits."

- Brian Tracy
American philosopher and educator John Dewey once said, “We do not actually learn from experience as much as we learn from reflecting on experience.”

From time to time, especially after quizzes and tests, it is valuable to reflect on what you know now that you didn’t before. You don’t have to write long reflective essays, simply take a little time to think about and assess your learning and performance now and again.

How can you enhance your learning and improve future outcomes through quick and simple self-reflection? Read on!

Why reflect?
By reflecting on your successes, failures and the steps leading to these outcomes, you can understand how you best learn, what works for you, what exactly you need to work on, and thus how you can move forward. Reflection can help you make changes in your studying and answering techniques to better prepare yourself for the next exam. So take just 5 minutes to try it out!
You can reflect on your learning in each subject weekly/monthly by following these guiding questions:

Simply spend a few minutes whenever (e.g. free time between classes, on the toilet, before you sleep, etc), thinking of these questions in relation to what you learnt/studied. Even better, scribble down what comes to your mind if you can!
Online Study Tools

Technology has certainly been advancing more and more during the last decade. However, few are actually aware of the big potential it represents for students’ lives. Websites, phone apps, online organizers and others are all around the net waiting for you to make use of them. Not only can they help in storing your notes, they can help in organizing your work, appointments, or even reducing stress!

So, go ahead and explore these cool study tools! If you happen to know of anymore of such study tools, please do let the Study SMART Crew know. We will do our best to share them with anyone who needs them!

Some Desktop Resources:


2. Purdue Owl: Research and Citation formats, guidelines and samples ([https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/))


4. 7 sticky notes: Desktop “post-its” ([http://www.7stickynotes.com/](http://www.7stickynotes.com/))

Some App Resources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of App</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>iOS</th>
<th>Android</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relax Life</td>
<td>Stress reliever</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brain Upgrade</td>
<td>Keep concentration + stress reliever</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Study Life</td>
<td>Online planner (subjects, exams, homework)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iStudiez Pro</td>
<td>Tasks Planner, recorder ($3)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evernote</td>
<td>Notes recorder</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simplemind</td>
<td>Create your own mind map</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropbox</td>
<td>Keep your works safe (2 GB free of payment)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

The No Excuse List: One website with links to lessons for everything!
The internet has changed the way we access information and learn. There are thousands of websites that can teach you everything you'd want to learn about for free. The No Excuse List, accessible at [http://www.noexcuselist.com](http://www.noexcuselist.com), is a curated list of web tutorials and courses in almost anything – academics, art, computer programming, cooking, eBooks, languages, music and much more! There's no longer an excuse for not being able to learn something. Visit [http://noexcuselist.com/](http://noexcuselist.com/), the best place on the web to learn anything, free.
LEARNING WELL

Effective Time Management

Do you sometimes feel like Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter book ‘The Prisoner of Azkaban’? Do you feel like you need a time machine to be able to do everything? Well, if this describes you to some degree, you are probably suffering from a time management problem.

Time management is something that some people handle better than others, but all together it is something that everyone can learn. Learning this skill will not just make your life easier here in RCN, where many of us are engaged in various activities, but it is also going to help you later in life. Poor time management can lead to stress and unnecessary feeling of anxiety, especially here at the school, where we easily take on too many tasks.

Studies show that effective time management improves psychological health. If you do not manage your time, it is inevitable that it will lead to stress. Stress can lead to headaches, disrupted sleep and even memory loss. We don’t want that, do we?
Here are four techniques to manage your time successfully:

#1 Compartmentalized studying
Most students study once or maybe twice a day with each session lasting one hour or more. However, studying in 10, 15, 20 or 25 minute sessions – short periods of time in between activities or with breaks in between – might be even more efficient. Even though there might be less study time each session, short bursts of high focus studying helps us to pay more attention and concentrate better.

In this way, you’ll be able to maintain a high intensity during each session and get more done. Also, check out the Pomodoro Technique. ‘Pomodoro’ is Italian for ‘tomato’ but is refers to using a timer, as follows:
#2 Familiarization
When it comes to the memorization process, instead of attempting to memorize a chapter in a single session, revisiting a topic over multiple sessions is more effective in cementing the information into long-term memory. This also means you spend less time studying in total!

#3 Study During Optimal Memorization Times
Our ability to memorize and concentrate is actually at its peak early in the morning and right before you go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning, you basically wake up with a clear mind, so you won’t be distracted by other memories, and any memory you make immediately before you go to sleep is typically put into your long-term memory.

Thus, review your study material right before you go to sleep and study in the morning.

#4 Don’t Keep A Strict Schedule
Having a strict schedule can be exhausting and difficult, and even be counter-intuitive in causing you to procrastinate more. Instead, follow the above tips and study for short sessions whenever you can – make it a habit.

Just start. Even if it’s five minutes, starting with your assignment or revision becomes much easier to continue later. In this way, you can keep the flexibility that UWC life requires while increasing your productivity and decreasing procrastination.

Prioritize what is most important and learn to say ‘No’
RCN is the right place to get busy with different activities, events and social evenings, BUT you have to recognize and decided what is important in any given moment.

"People often complain about lack of time when the lack of direction is the real problem."
Zig Ziglar
What does prioritizing mean according at RCN? Let’s say you’ve been invited for a movie which is going to last for 2 hours and 30 minutes and you have a deadline for two lab reports and a written task. Which should you choose? You have to give up one task for another but in this case, you need to prioritise your deadlines and your important work. The feeling of satisfaction that you will have while watching the movie with all your work done is much better than thinking of your deadlines all the way.

You can also use this matrix to decide what to prioritise:

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<th>High</th>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urgent</td>
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<td>Urgent</td>
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<td>not</td>
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<td>important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do it now</td>
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<td>Decide when to do it</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>not important</td>
<td></td>
<td>Important not urgent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delegate it</td>
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<td>Decide when to do it</td>
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<td>not important</td>
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**Rewards**

No one does anything without motivation and the best way to keep yourself motivated is to set rewards that you give yourself after each task is accomplished.

The mind is a funny thing and associating school work with something positive will help the brain remember.
LEARNING WELL

Tips from YOU!

We sent out survey to RCN students to find out what has worked for them! Here are some of the responses:

What is your best study tip?

- Write down things you need to do and prioritize after what is most important on that day.

- Just start!

- Don't mindlessly adapt other people’s techniques; find what works best for you.

- Make notes with small handwriting, just the main concepts (as few words as possible) onto as few sheets of paper as possible. Revise these notes regularly, look after them carefully, add to them where necessary.

- Make a schedule, a good one is a program called Wunderlist which syncs with the notes in your phone and the computer. It helps with managing to-dos. And setting personal deadlines to myself to finish work before the real deadline.

- Google calendars can help you structure your day to the last minute

- Have your desktop tidy up so you don't get distracted
• Take the time to read the content slowly for the first time. The first time is the most important as you are absorbing unseen information and it is vital that the first impression it makes on your brain is the correct one.

• Be organized and have will power. Every time you feel like procrastinating think about the repercussions of it and the importance of what you do for your future :)

• I mostly tell myself, “I am going to do it anyway, so why shouldn't I just do it now?”

• Do first the easiest things you have to study then proceed on to the harder ones

• No matter what, NO Facebook or Youtube.

• Always keep revising what you have studied and it stays longer.

• Make your own study questions.

• Life is about experiencing, and doing your best. Study what you can, but don't forget to live and experience life!

• Summarise chapters by hand-written notes: Helps the knowledge sink in!

• Fulfil targets for set amount of time, then do something for pure pleasure (e.g. socializing)

• Sleep early and revise before classes start

• Set time limit for every task

• Try to make mind map, with the title of the chapter in the middle followed by subtopics which you will discuss into small boxes after

• Keep your writing careful and systematic. Listen to music without lyrics (house, minimal, techno etc). Sleep enough - you will have enough mental energy to study. Do sport - when your body is tired, your mind is relaxed. Eat enough proteins, carbohydrates, and vitamins - your body will have energy to use for working. Fresh air - your brain needs it!
• Take notes during class, from the books and other sources. Then rewrite them according to the IB syllabus. Do past papers. Try to engage your curiosity, there is most likely something very interesting related to the very boring topic.

• Flashcards <3 <3 <3 <3 <3 Use them with others, not just alone! And the IB syllabus guide. Tells you EXACTLY what you need to know in a subject.

• COLOURFUL studying with pens and sticky notes. Also the use of e-sticky notes and reminders on your devices

• If you don't understand, ask for help. It's better to be seen as stupid than to be stupid.

How do you relax and calm your mind?

• Daily meditation, mindfulness, exercise, and be in the nature.
• Drink water
• Watch short comedies, such as Big Bang Theory
• Take a long walk
• Deep breathing
• Play piano in between you studies
• Go and work out or talk with roommates
• Pray, drink water, jog, take a shower ...
• I focus on my art. It is also homework but it doesn’t feel like this at all and it relaxes me a lot.
• I nap for 20 minutes
• Be active; Get up every 30 minutes to stretch and clear your mind for a second.
• Drink tea when you're studying
• To do something for pleasure - go chat with friend, write, play music or read
• Create your own goals and work for them – Don't stress when you don't meet the goals someone else has made.
• Understand that no matter what, it's gonna be fine.
• Turn on your favorite song or a few, then close your eyes and listen to it for awhile
• Read a good book that is not in your curriculum.
• Classical piano music
• Clean your table, make it as ergonomic as you can. (Personally, it calms me down)
• Yoga break
• Go to the silent house
• Dance
• Go out of your study area

NO ONE CAN
MAKE YOU FEEL INFERIOR
WITHOUT
YOUR CONSENT.

You are confident.
"It's impossible," you might think. "Studying is and will forever remain boring." If this is how you think about studying, it will probably be a suffering to you. So first of all, cheer up and change your attitude!

Of course you cannot love everything the IB requires you to learn. But as you have chosen your subjects yourself, there must be something in them that you find interesting. Identify those things, focus on them and it will most likely change your studying experience into something fully doable, perhaps even enjoyable.

There are many ways in which you can become more efficient in your studying – and have more fun. Here are some:

**Study together.** As long as it does not turn into a gossip session, helping and motivating each other is highly recommended!

**Snacking.** A cup of tea, some fruit or maybe some nuts is great when your motivation starts declining. Set small targets (e.g. reading 10 pages) and have a snack when they are reached.
Where and when. Weekend morning in Kantina, on a pillow on your floor in the afternoon, at midnight in an empty classroom . . . find the time and place for studying that is perfect for you!

Music can block out more distracting sounds, such as conversations, get you inspired or just something to make the studying enjoyable.

Distracted by lyrics? Not if you don’t understand them. Check these out!
Ishq Wala Love (Hindi)
Milos Kardaglic (Instrumental, Chinese)
Hakan Hellstrom (Swedish)

Make your notes colourful and pretty! It really helps make studying not only easier but more enjoyable as well.

THE ONLY WAY
TO DO
GREAT WORK
IS
TO LOVE
WHAT YOU DO
Avoiding Stress and Staying Positive

Finding the balance between studying, EACs, sleep, socializing, exercising and alone time often feels impossible at RCN. You can however, actually achieve a sense of balance with the right mindset. A good way to start a more balanced lifestyle is to implement more positive energy and HAPPINESS into your daily life. It is also important to know what your right amount of stress is. A bit of stress can actually boost your general performance, but too much will make you feel sad and out of balance. Therefore don't worry, be happy …

Music can help us feel happier or help us to achieve a state of relaxation. Check out these two albums:
1. When You're Smiling by Juice Music
2. Sit Back, Listen and Relax by Relaxing Music
Also, check out Happify at www.happify.com. Happiness is both a skill you can control and a habit you can develop. Happify, is an awesome webapp that trains you to live a happier, less stressful, and more fulfilling life. Happify’s activities and games are based on scientific research that suggests there are five essential skills for happiness: savoring, thanking, aspiring, giving, and empathizing.

Appreciate. ‘Keep a little book where you write one thing that made you happy every night before you go to sleep, it can be as simple as "the sun was shining today" :-\)’ -- ‘Best happiness tip’ from a positive RCN student

Are you feeling down and would like to do something about it, but don't know how to start?
Try putting your pencil between your teeth. It will activate the same muscles as when you smile. This will send signals to your brain to release endorphins (happy hormones) which in turn will brighten your mood. It actually works!
Good sleep is so essential to a good life here at RCN. In this chapter, we’re going to be covering the challenge of sleep (or lack of!) in RCN, why it’s important, and what we can do about it.

The Sleep Situation at RCN:
We sent out a survey to find out about the sleep habits of RCN students. Exactly 100 students responded. Here are the results:

**DO YOU FEEL YOU GET ENOUGH SLEEP HERE AT RCN?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5—Always</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4—Often</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3—Sometimes</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2—Rarely</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1—Never</td>
<td>5%</td>
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As shown, the majority of responding RCN students (63%) only manage to have sufficient sleep sometimes, or even less frequently.

**HOW MANY HOURS OF SLEEP DO YOU GET ON AVERAGE A NIGHT?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7 hours</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 hours</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 hours</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 hours+</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Evidently, 40% of students are getting less than 6 hours of sleep a night.
The main reasons for not enough sleep are socializing (70%) and studying (64%). It’s interesting to note that 92% of students recognize the importance of sleep, despite the tendency for sleep deprivation. Also, some respondents indicated that “stargazing” and “too much excitement about UWC” prevented them from going to bed at a healthy time, with another student even remarking that “The only time we have the opportunity to reflect upon our lives is when our lifeless bodies finally hit the bed.”

What does the nurse say?
RCN Study Smart thought that it would be interesting to interview Nurse Lena on this problem since she has a connection with every student medically and naturally she is also the one person everyone goes to with their problems. Here’s what she said:

“Sleeping is and has been the biggest health related problem in this school always.”

“There are various reasons behind this: Bad time managing, stress, postponed school work, naturally bad sleeping habits, inconsideration in the room, having guests after quite time as an example. Bad eating habits contribute to this also.”

“Time management is the key when it comes to school work and socialising. Being considerate towards roommates is also important. Do not bring guests after quite time and be quiet in the room during quite time if roommates wish so.”
But is sleep even that important?
Yes! Here’s why:

#1 Sleep is essential for memory:
One study (Ellenbogen, 2006) was performed where participants were asked to remember some specified words (very school-like, isn't it? 😊). Half of the group then slept for 7-10 hours, while the other half didn't sleep.

The results showed a significant difference: 76% of those who slept remembered the words correctly, while only 32% of those who didn't sleep remembered. Which time of the day the learning took place, did not affect the result.

#2 Sleep loss dumbs you down
Sleep plays a critical role in thinking and learning. Lack of sleep hurts these cognitive processes in many ways.

#3 Lack of sleep is depressing
Over time, lack of sleep and sleep disorders can contribute to the symptoms of depression.

#4 Sleep loss impairs judgment (especially about sleep!)
Lack of sleep can affect our interpretation of events. This hurts our ability to make sound judgments because we may not assess situations accurately and act on them wisely. “Studies show that over time, people who are getting six hours of sleep, instead of seven or eight, begin to feel that they’ve adapted to that sleep deprivation — they’ve gotten used to it [when they haven’t actually],” Gehrman says.
Featuring Ulrika and Elizabete: Our resident sleep experts
We wanted to know how some of our friends here managed to maintain a healthy sleep schedule, and were referred to Ulrika and Elizabete. Here’s what they said about their thoughts and experience on how they remain committed to having good sleep:

ULRIKA
"Well, first of all it's really about giving in to what my body and mind tells me."
"Since I don't sleep after class but get things done, at 11 I don't have to feel bad about going to sleep."
"When I feel rested I also feel more efficient, I can process information better, I remember things better and no - I don't need sugar to give me energy."

ELIZABETE
"I know that if I'll get 8 hours of sleep, I'll be able to enjoy the rest 16 hours of day much more."
"To get enough sleep is not only about going to sleep at 22:00, if I plan my day I can be socially active, study and get enough sleep."
"For example, I study from 14:00-17:30, then I eat dinner and afterwards I can be socially active until 22:00, when I go to sleep."
Quality of Sleep, Not Only Quantity

It’s not only the amount of sleep we have. Many of us find it difficult to wake up in the morning also because of poor, low-quality sleep. If you always feel unrested in the morning no matter how much sleep you get, these tips are for you!

These tips are simple, practical and sometimes surprising. We categorized them into three sections: things one can before going to bed, during the night and next morning.

BEFORE GOING TO BED

#1 Avoid caffeine before going to bed.
Caffeine is known for having a bad effect on sleep and consuming it may result in difficulties in falling sleep. Therefore avoid coffee, tea and energy drinks before going to sleep.

#2 Meditate, pray, or calm down before going to sleep
Calming down helps generally and lowers stress level resulting better sleep.

#3 Don’t eat heavily just before going to sleep
Going to sleep right after eating lead to discomfort therefore the best is to avoid eating much before sleeping.

#4 Sleep in cycles of 1.5 hours (90 minutes)
According to this Lifehacker article, we have a number of sleep cycles a night, with each sleep cycle being 90 minutes on average. It’s better to wake up at the end of sleep cycle, instead of disrupting your sleep in the middle of it. So, time your bedtime so your wake up at the end of a sleep cycle, for example for 7.5 hours (1.5 hours x 5 sleep cycles), or if you absolutely have to, for 6h or 4.5h.
DURING THE NIGHT
#5 Make sure that the room is not too hot for sleeping
Turn down the heater before you sleep if it starts to get too warm!

#6 Keep the room quiet
Although you might not realize it, noises during sleep do disturb the quality of sleep.

#7 Keep your sleep habits consistent
Waking up and going to sleep at different times makes the body and the mind tired. If possible make a sleeping rhythm and stick to it.

IN THE MORNING
#8 Turn your light on when you wake up!
Our bodies need light to trigger hormones to wake us up. Since we do not have so much sun in the mornings during winter, we can use instead the light we have in our bed.

#9 Take a deep breath
Wake up gently. Relax and take a deep breath before you leave the bed to feel more ready for the day and be mindful.

#10 Exercise/stretch
After lying down for such a long time it is good to wake up and exercise little bit. If running in the morning is not your thing, even a little bit of stretching is very good.

Sleep Shaming
Sleep – We worship it but at the same time we see it as a shameful action. Isn’t it strange we glorify staying up until 4 am and sleeping 3 hours, instead of being impressed by the people who go to bed early and sleep 8 hours?
Sleep shaming is truly an issue here at RCN. Try to remember that everyone is different and that we all need different things.

Sleep deprivation is not a badge of honour. Remember this, both for your sake but also for others. There is nothing shameful about being well-rested.

Rise and shine!
Here are some things you can look forward to in the morning:
1. Go for a morning walk and enjoy the beautiful nature!
2. Listen to your favorite songs in the morning! Gentle, relaxing music helps you wake up fully feeling refreshed.
3. Take a nice, warm shower.
4. Look forward to a delicious breakfast – the most important meal of the day!
5. Lastly, smile! You help brighten other people’s morning as well.

What about napping?
It seems that napping for short periods (less than 40 minutes) in the afternoon can really be beneficial! Do keep in mind though that long naps too late in the day can have some negative effects on sleep later at night.

Benefits:
- Naps can restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness 100%.
• Naps can increase alertness in the period directly following the nap and may extend alertness a few hours later in the day.

• Napping has psychological benefits. A nap can be a pleasant luxury, a mini-vacation. It can provide an easy way to get some relaxation and rejuvenation.

Negative effects:
• Naps can leave people with sleep inertia, especially when they last more than 10-20 minutes. Sleep inertia is defined as the feeling of grogginess and disorientation that can come with awakening from a deep sleep. While this state usually only lasts for a few minutes to a half-hour, it can be detrimental to those who must perform immediately after waking from a napping period.

• Napping can also have a negative effect on other sleeping periods. A long nap or a nap taken too late in the day may adversely affect the length and quality of nighttime sleep. If you have trouble sleeping at night, a nap will only amplify problems.

**Do you dare challenge a friend?**
The Sleeping Challenge involves pairs of friends challenging one another to keep a good sleep routine of sleeping by 23:00 (11pm) every night, for one whole month.

You can be creative in how you want to accomplish this. Offer a reward (a cake? a massage? a dinner? J) to your friend if he/she fulfills the challenge!

Hesitate no more! Go and choose a friend and start the challenge from today.

Ps. It is hard to follow the challenge but it is not impossible.
Writing essays is part and parcel of the IB, and will continue to be a useful skill in university as well. Essays such as the EE often involve the processes of finding a topic, making an outline, writing a draft and rewriting. This might seem daunting, but don’t worry – it’s absolutely doable, especially if you divide it into doable parts. Don’t say “I will write in my E.E tonight”, but rather “today I will make the outline” or “write the conclusion”.

But how do we start?

1. **The criteria.** Make sure you know these very well – it will help you. Discuss them with your supervisor or friends if unclear.
2. **Main ideas.** Identifying your main ideas and writing them down might help you to write an outline.
3. **Just write.** If you can’t find the outline because you don’t know what to include. Start writing paragraphs about ideas, quotes or findings that interest you. After a while some structure might emerge.
4. **Early deadline.** Set an early deadline for yourself. Then you are more likely to feel comfortable with writing which makes it more enjoyable.

Why is the EE such a valuable experience?

**Clarity:** After this you will notice how your essays become more coherent and focused.

**Planning:** The process of planning the E.E might be a bit troublesome, but you will figure out what a good academic essay has to include.

**Time management:** Experience on working with a deadline gives time management skills.

**Confidence:** Finalizing the E.E. will give you greater confidence with IA’s and other essays.
Summer is a time for you to have a well-deserved break, but it might also be a good time to get as many things as you can done before the new term begins. Thus, we have included a checklist for before and during the holidays to ensure we all achieve what we want to do during the summer without any regrets. So read on to find out more about how to make the best out of the summer!

Some advice from ‘Wise Second Years’ 😊

#1 Reflect
Now that the term is coming to a close, it’s useful to look back and discover what worked for you and what didn’t, so that the new term ahead after summer will go smoother for you.

#2 Take one thing at a time
Instead of ‘all or nothing’, ‘something’ really counts too! Small steps make big progress without sacrificing much time for enjoying yourself.
#3 Have a plan and set targets
Schedule time for work, but also be kind to yourself and let yourself recharge and reconnect with friends and family. Remember though, to be specific in what exactly you want to get done – break them down into manageable tasks to accomplish.

#4 START!
Setting things in motion, no matter how little, will go a long way in helping you get back on track after the holidays.

The Summer Checklist

**Before the Holiday**
- □ Clarify with teachers their expectations for you and your areas for improvement
- □ Communicate with your teachers on your progress so far in the subject and various assignments – Be honest! This will allow them to help you so much better.
- □ Make a list of the different tasks you need to get done – EE, IAs, presentations, etc. Be specific and clear on the aspects you want to work on during the holiday.
- □ Talk to Second Years to get advice for your subjects and feedback on your work

**During the Holiday**
- □ Brainstorm, research and collect data for your assignments
- □ Start writing the introduction and main body of your EE
- □ Update your CAS diary reflections (Tip: Look at the guiding questions on the W4 to help you!)
- □ Prepare study materials and stationary for the year ahead, like planners and schedules, to bring for the new term
- □ Get back into good eating, sleeping and exercising habits!
- □ HAVE FUN AND RELAX!

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!
UWC Red Cross Nordic Learning Support Policy

Introduction:

Most students who are offered a place at UWC RCN have been strong, successful* students in their previous schools. When they come to UWC Red Cross Nordic, adjustment to new ways of studying and learning, managing time and using a new language in the classroom can be challenging. Support is provided for students who need it through a variety of means. All members of the Education Staff assume responsibility for supporting the learning of students. Teachers are sensitive to the learning difficulties of students they teach and endeavour to adjust their teaching so that all students have full access to the curriculum.

* “Successful” according to the norms and standards of their previous education system

Aims:

UWC RCN seeks to promote a whole College approach through which all staff are aware and informed of the needs of all students with learning support needs within our particular residential and academic context. Our practices are designed to detect the presence of specific learning difficulties and to enable students with learning support needs to access the IB curriculum and public examinations. We aim to help students improve academic skills and learning strategies, take responsibility for their own learning and develop systems of personal management to better enable their studies. We actively encourage students to reflect on their evolving learning profiles. The UWC RCN Learning Support Policy is in accordance with the College’s Academic Practice Policy, which is designed to stimulate, challenge and support all students.

Current Practice:

Students with identified learning issues / diagnosed conditions / other concerns which may affect learning are asked to bring these to the attention of the Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) during the Introduction Week Administration Rotation, when each student meets with the LSC.

The College endeavours to provide laptops (sometimes second-hand) for students who need them and cannot afford to buy them.

Every term there is a Binary Feedback meeting in which students of concern are discussed, information is shared, and action plans are formulated. This meeting is followed up by a meeting of the AST (Academic Support Team) to ensure that plans are adjusted if necessary and appropriate action is taken. A confidential list of students of concern and actions taken is shared and updated by the AST.
Learning Support is offered through **classroom teachers**, who are available to discuss individual issues and who identify those who are struggling in their subjects and take steps to support them.

**Advisors** are often among the first to be approached if teachers or other members of staff have concerns about a student’s academic progress or if students raise concerns themselves. Advisors are available to support and guide their advisees throughout their learning journey.

Learning is affected by lifestyle choices and life experiences. **House Mentors** support students in their residential life, promoting wellbeing and encouraging healthy choices. This often has a significant effect on the students’ learning.

**Peer Tutors** are identified through conversations between students and subject teachers, who then advertise the availability of tutors in their subjects. In the spring term, Peer Tutors receive general training on the principles of tutoring, effective listening skills, and other relevant matters. The Learning Support Coordinator is available to discuss any aspect of peer tutoring with those who take on this Campus Responsibility.

During the first term, first year students all participate in a **Study Skills Day**, discussing effective learning strategies and practices (what strategies support learning and what makes it difficult to learn at RCN), generating ideas and producing RCN-relevant materials which are posted around campus.

Students likely to benefit from extra English support are identified as soon as they are accepted by the College and invited to attend the 3-week pre-term **Summer Course**. This gives them an opportunity to adjust to their new environment, develop friendships, and grow accustomed to using English as their new medium of communication.

Students whose learning is affected by their lack of experience in English are enrolled in **Extra English** lessons instead of Norwegian Communication lessons during their first term at the College.

The **Learning Support Coordinator** is available to meet with individual students to discuss their issues. The LSC works closely with staff and students to promote effective learning and to help enable students to make the most of their learning opportunities.

The **Study Smart Campus Responsibility (CaRe)** student group works with the LSC to produce fortnightly online newsletters on particular themes/topics related to learning.

**Lanterna Education** visits the College every year to give study skills presentations to first and second years, focusing on the different needs of the two year groups.

**Books and other materials** related to aspects of learning are available for staff and students through the Learning Support Coordinator and the **Learning Support folder** in Academic - Subject pages on w4.
**Teacher training** courses such as LILAC (Language in Learning across the Curriculum) and regular Talking about Teaching sessions provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and develop skills when working with diverse student backgrounds and needs.

**FK (Norwegian Peace Corps) volunteers** are used to supervise study halls and provide support through, for example, Extra English lessons.

**The CAT (Cognitive Abilities Test)** is administered to all new students soon after their arrival at the College and again in their second year, enabling us to acknowledge and appreciate “value added”. This test assesses reasoning/thinking abilities in key areas that support educational development and academic attainment.

Students may be eligible for extra time, laptop use or other provisions in IB exams. UWC RCN follows IB procedures in the event that a student requires **adaptations or special arrangements for IB assessments**.

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Learning Support Coordinator  
August 2014  
To be reviewed on an annual basis
We sincerely hope this little guide made lovingly for you was helpful.

If you have any questions or require assistance, please feel free to approach Angie or any member of the RCN Study SMART crew.

Take care, and all the best!