



**Heathfield**  
Community College and Sixth Form

# **Staying motivated: Avoiding distraction and procrastination**

# Distraction

The challenge of staying focused during revision sessions is real. The constant buzz of a smartphone or a rolling repeat of streamed programmes can significantly cut into study time.



# Procrastination

Procrastination (noun). The action of delaying or postponing something.

**tomorrow**

(*noun*)

a mystical land where 99% of all human productivity, motivation and achievement is stored

Procrastination is the act of delaying something that we have decided to do. It is often reported by students themselves as one of the key barriers to successful study.

Procrastination can happen when we find ourselves faced with tasks that are difficult or emotionally demanding, such as those which are difficult, unstructured, and lacking in personal meaning or intrinsic reward. Independent study, revision, and project-based tasks often tick all these boxes.

# Procrastination & Distraction

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These can happen for a variety of reasons but right now, they will only prevent you from reaching your goals.



# Understanding distractions

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**Understanding Digital Distractions:** compulsive phone checking, endless social media scrolling, binge-watching, aimless surfing.....

**Recognise the Impact:** Disrupts focus and hinders deep learning. Multitasking with digital devices can lead to less efficient studying and lower retention.

Each distraction forces your brain to work harder to regain concentration, which can *reduce the effectiveness* of your study session and *tire you more quickly*.

# Avoiding Procrastination

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There are suggestions that can help to avoid the pain of procrastination by having some strategies ready to deploy such as:

- **Rapid breakdown:** Taking 1 minute to break the task down into bitesize (cognitively manageable) chunks and making the first step or two super easy.
- **Quick start:** Making sure there are no distractions around (phone, TV etc.) and then committing to doing just 30 seconds (often we'll keep going).
- **Process goals:** In some situations (e.g. adolescent exams), it can often be more powerful to focus on studying for on a set amount of time rather than on the completion of specific topics.
- **Paper tracking:** Creating a simple chunk/time checklist on a piece of paper or sticky note, putting it in a prominent place, and ticking items off as you go.
- **Study buddying:** Having another person start and study with you, either in person or remotely.

# Tips on avoiding distractions

- **Create a Routine:** *consistent study routine where phone usage is minimised. Set a time when you will check and don't feel you are missing out. Over time, this will become a habit*
- **Use Tech Wisely:** *Apps that limit phone usage or block social media during study hours (Freedom). Disconnect. Silent Notifications. Active encouragement (e.g Flora or even Timelapse)*
- **Inform Your People:** *Let friends and family know about your schedule. They can help by limiting non-urgent communication during these hours.*
- **Reward:** *indulgence time planned in*

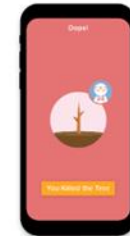


Grow trees to stay calm and focused.

Have trouble putting down your phone? Flora blocks distracting apps, such as Facebook, Instagram or games. In a pleasant way to help you focus on what's more important in real life.



1. Select a focus duration, and then press Start to grow a tree.



2. If you leave the app for social media or games, the tree will die.



3. Discover new trees by completing focus sessions and tasks.

Double efficiency with friends.

# Avoiding Distraction in the Exam



- **Sleep and Eat:** *try and get a good nights sleep the night before, your brain needs to be restored and a healthy breakfast (avoid sugary cereals or pastries which will lead to an energy crash later in the morning)*
- **Get comfortable:** *Go to the toilet before the exam. Once seated make sure your clothing is not restrictive and you are comfortable, check your equipment is laid out and what you need.*
- **Breathe:** *Don't manically flick through the paper. Pause, breathe and spend time looking at the paper and noticing different questions/the instructions given whilst concentrating on breathing.*
- **Plan:** *Work out the order you want to answer the questions, usually in number order. Divide the time to be spent on the question thinking about the number of marks. If you get distracted easily break the plan into smaller chunks and check each one off to stay focused.*
- **Focus:** *Make an effort to concentrate on one question at a time, read the question properly and spend time understanding it. Plan longer answers before starting them. If you're really having trouble understanding or approaching a question, it's okay to skip it and come back to it later. Sometimes, other questions in the test can jog your memory.*
- **Breaks:** *You can take a minute between sections to refocus, take deep breathes, go again fresh.*
- **Refocus:** *If you start to lose focus or panic at some point try some simple calming strategies: Focus your eyes on one point and your breath, think through a 5,4,3,2,1, regulation strategy.*