

5 hours in... Geography

Research shows that the most successful students (i.e., those that make the most progress and get the highest grades) are doing between 20 and 25 hours of independent study per week by the end of Year 13. That may seem a lot, but it's something that you would build up to over the course of your A-Levels. In Year 12, we're talking something more like 15 hours per week. This equates to roughly 5 hours of independent study per A-Level per subject.

Remember that your independent study is divided into three types – Consolidation, Reactive and Proactive.

Consolidation

The evening following a Geography lesson, you should spend 12-15 minutes (24-30 minutes for a double) rereading your notes, writing the summary section at the bottom of your Cornell notes and making relevant flashcards e.g., for equations, definitions, facts you need to recall etc.

Reactive

This is your 'homework'. Usually this will be making notes for the next lesson or completing an essay/essay plan. It can also involve completing your booklet of practice questions and finishing off any notes from the lesson. If you find you finish your reactive work quickly, spend more time on your proactive work.

Proactive

This is the section that will broaden and deepen your overall understanding of the subject you are studying. It will not necessarily involve work that has been set by your teacher, but instead it is about you doing the extra practice questions, reading articles, watching videos, etc which may contain some of the following:

- Use your student handbook as a guide for proactive tasks to complete.
- Complete a set of practice past paper questions – papers that are available on the Edexcel website.
- Use websites (e.g tutor2u) to complete and add to class notes.
- Use the specification checklist to evaluate your understanding.
- Answer questions in your Practice Questions Booklet.
- Practice exam questions from your Psychology textbook or workbook.
- "Read, Cover, Write and Check" sections of Knowledge organisers.
- Complete essay plans.
- Practice writing timed essays.

Useful links

- Free podcasts, video lectures, and reading recommendations
- A whole range of resources from leading universities (Oxford, Yale) iTunes U app
- YouTube as its own educational channel — EDU
- www-staircase12.org - A website put together by University College, Oxford (our link college at Oxford) Contains interviews and book reviews from current students
- Radio 4 – archive of material – Week in Westminster, Thinking Allowed. A History of the World, In Our Time

- TED – Watch talks from experts in a variety of fields
- MOOCs – Massive open online courses - These online courses provide videos, reading lists and activities — you often don't need to formally complete the course
- FutureLearn — www.futurelearn.com
- EdX—www.edx.org
- Coursera — www.coursera.org
- Royal Society of Chemistry — www.rsc.org
- The Historical Association of RSC — www.history.org.uk
- Read newspapers

Useful books

- Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World (2004) by Richard Heinberg.
- The Grapes of Wrath (1939) by John Steinbeck.
- The Great Thirst — Californians and Water (1992) by Norris Hundley.
- Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet (2008) by Mark Lynas.
- The Global casino (4th edition 2008) by Nick Middleton.