**Knightswood Secondary School**

**Senior Phase**

**Study Skills**

**Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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**Plan For Success**

Before we start thinking about how to study, we must first get everything ready for studying so that when we do sit down to do it, it is **productive**, **effective** and **efficient**.

**Do you know what to study?**

Look at your tracking reports and speak to your teachers – where should your focus be? Is there a particular part of the course that you are struggling with? Have you been absent and missed anything? It is often easy to begin studying the topics you know or enjoy, as this is you in your ‘comfort zone’, but is this the most effective way to study? Should your focus not be on the areas you understand the least?

**Where will you study?**

The exact location of where you study is not as important as how that space is set up. You could study at home, in your bedroom, in the living room, in school, at a local Library or in someone else’s house. The most important thing is that your study space is yours.

**You have a desk or table where you can lay out your resources, it’s a calm, organised environment, without noise or distraction when you can relax in peace and focus**.

You could also stay behind after school and use the library or a classroom to do your homework or studying.

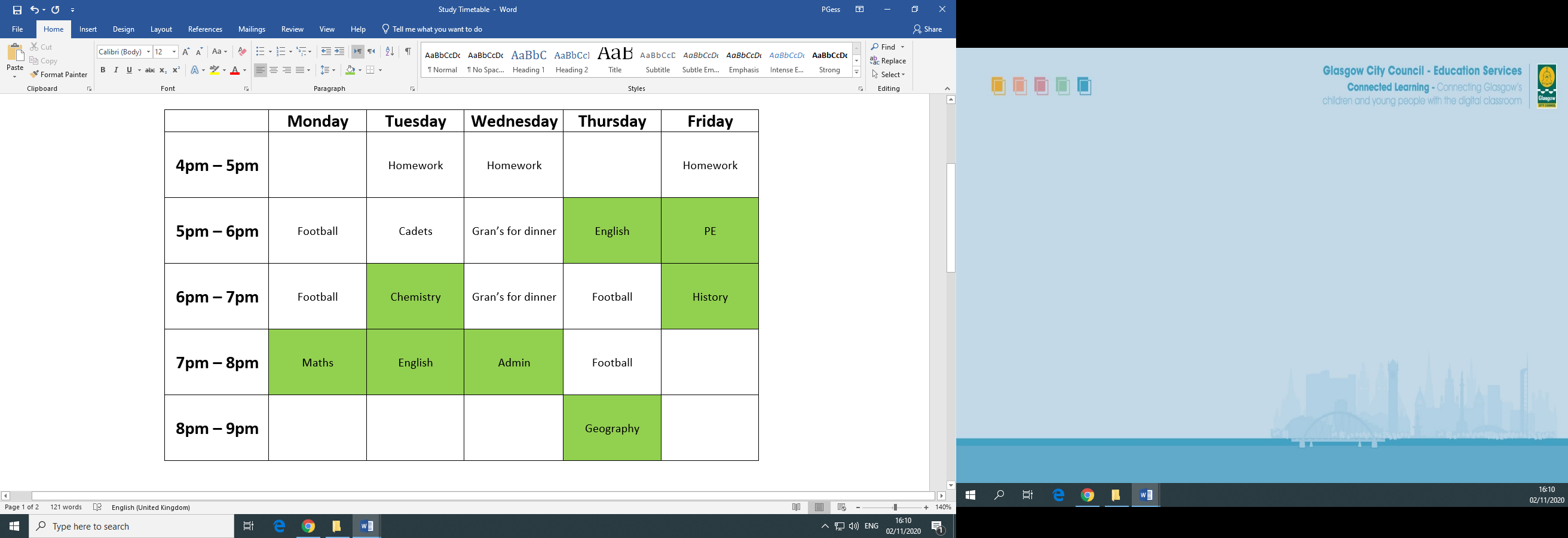
**When will you study?**

Once you have worked out what you need to study, you decide when you are going to do it. You can do this by using a Study Timetable. Below you will see an example of a Study Timetable.

**Step 1** - Fill your timetable with current engagements e.g. travelling to and from school, homework, afterschool clubs, part-time work, family engagements, etc.

**Step 2** - Fill in your timetable with the subjects you are going to study and when – **be realistic, you do need ‘some’ recreational time**

**Step 3** - Each one-hour block represents **45 minutes solid work with a 15 break**



Being realistic is key – set small, achievable goals. There is not point in saying you will study for 5 hours each night after school if you have never studied before. Start your studying off small and increase it gradually every week. Use the **SMART** criteria to help you plan your studying.

**What exactly is it you want to achieve? What is your goal? Be very clear and precise.**

**Specific**

**Set measurable targets so you can track your progress and can measure if your goal has been achieved.**

**Measurable**

**Set targets that you have the ability to reach. Unattainable targets are demotivating. Be realistic.**

**Attainable**

**Make sure your targets are relevant to your final goal.**

**Relevant**

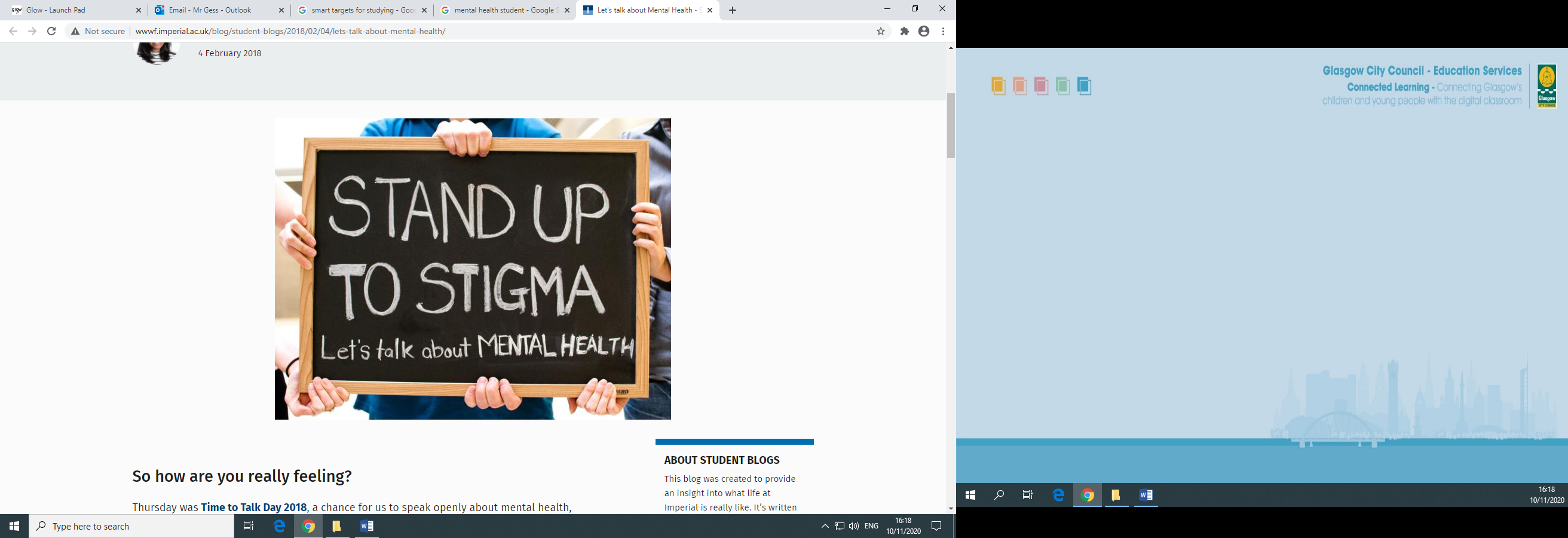
**Create a timeframe for you to achieve your goal. Set a deadline. This helps you stay focused.**

**Time-bound**

**What resources do you need to help you study?**

* A notepad
* Coloured pens
* Highlighters
* Folder
* Polly pockets
* Specialist equipment e.g. Maths – scientific calculator

**Mental Health**



**What is stress?**

The most common form of stress is a mix of **anxiety** (tension, nerves) and **depression** (feeling flat, sad). **We all have stress in our lives** and sometimes are worse than others. Stress is not actually a bad thing; it’s the body’s natural response to a threat or challenge, producing chemicals (adrenaline and cortisol) to make blood rush to your heart, brain and muscles and makes you focus on what needs to be done.

**When does it become a problem?**

* When it is constant, you don’t get a break from it, and the cortisol levels build up.
* When it is too powerful, producing ‘**panic**’ instead of ‘**action**’. When you panic you lose sight of the sensible action to take, and you make mistakes.

**Short Term Strategies**

These are useful for immediate stress relief when you need to take back control of your body to help you focus.

1. **Breathing / Relaxation Exercises**

Learn good breathing techniques – **breath in through your nose for 4 seconds, and out from your mouth for 4 seconds, repeat**.

There are also plenty of apps which are promoted by the NHS e.g.

* + **Stress & Anxiety Companion**

“Helps you handle stress and anxiety on-the-go. Using breathing exercises, relaxing music and games designed to calm the mind, the app helps you change negative thoughts to help you better cope with life's ups and downs.”

* + **Headspace**

“Headspace is your guide to mindfulness for your everyday life. Learn meditation and mindfulness skills, and choose from hundreds of guided meditations on everything from managing stress and anxiety to sleep, focus, and mind-body health.”

**Long Term Strategies**

These should be built in to your day to day routine and will help contribute to positive mental health.

1. **Exercise**

This allows your body and brain to produce ‘feel good’ chemicals that have a positive impact on your mood, memory, energy levels and sense of well-being. Try for 30 minutes of walking, jogging or circuits per day. If the weather is bad run up and down the stairs, do some sit-ups, try stretching, etc.

1. **Hobbies**

Have at least 30 minutes a day where you focus on something you enjoy e.g. drawing, talking to a friend, baking, gaming, practising your breathing and relaxation techniques – but set a timer!

1. **Reading**

Read for pleasure. This is relaxing and it takes your mind off of any worries you may have and helps you wind down, particularly before you go to sleep.

1. **Talking**

Talk to a parent, guardian, friend or trusted adult daily. Telling someone about your day, how it went, any difficulties you faced is very therapeutic and helps you ‘de-stress’. They can sometime may offer advice which helps you. Even if they don’t have specific advice, it gives them a nice opportunity to support you.

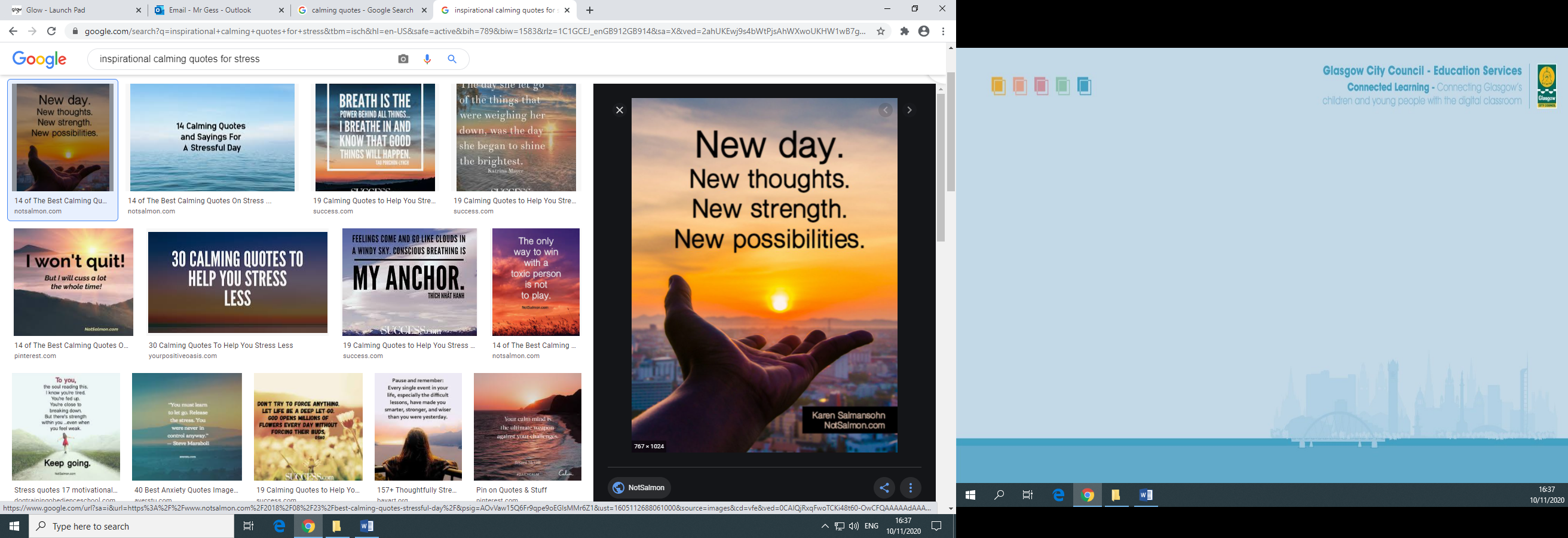
1. **Technology Free Time**

It is really important to have technology free time each day. We all use our phones and internet too much. Start setting time aside each day where you turn your phone and internet off. If you find this difficult then you are proving the point – you are reliant on the technology and that is not good for your mental health. You will be amazed at how good you feel without it!

You should always remember that **you are not alone**. Someone else has, or will be going through the exact same as you. **Everything passes**, and things that seem enormous now just won’t after a while.

If you are experiencing stress and you cannot cope, **you must speak to someone.** Speak to:

* Parent / Guardian
* Teacher / Pastoral Care
* A helpline e.g.
  + **Young Minds** – text **YM** to **856258**. This is a free service and your text will be answered by a trained specialist.
  + **Childline** – **0800 1111**. 24hrs a day, 7 days a week
  + **Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87**
  + **Samaritans** – **116 123.** 24-hour helpline offering emotional support for anyone feeling down, distressed or struggling to cope.



**Study Techniques**

Many pupils think that **studying** is something extra that you do outside of the classroom. This is not true. Teachers know the subject and know what is required to pass the exam. Listen carefully to that expert when you are in class and stay focused, while you have the chance.

**Note Taking / Rewriting Notes**

This is a crucial study skill to master as most others relate to this in some form. It is key as it:

* Forces you to read, listen and watch more carefully
* It encourages you to identify the key information
* It helps you remember important points
* It gives you a condensed resource to return to for revision purposes

Note taking helps you become **engaged in your own learning**, helping you to become an **independent learner**.

For this technique to work effectively you must:

* Select what is appropriate information to rewrite
* Think about the information when you are writing it down
* Write in your own words, don’t copy huge chunks of text from a book or internet
* Take pride in your notes, making them neat, easy to read, and well laid out
* Return to your notes and reread them as part of your revision

This technique is hard work and time consuming BUT **the rewards are great**!

Below is a passage about the Geology of Earth and other planets in our Solar System. **The content is not relevant**. Look at what is highlighted as important and then how this highlighted information has been condensed into much smaller notes which you can then study more easily.

**Diversity of Planets**

In less than 200 million years since its origin, Earth had become a fully differentiated planet. The core was still hot and mostly molten, but the mantle was fairly well solidified, and a primitive crust and continents had developed. The Oceans and atmosphere had formed, probably from substances released from the Earth’s interior, and the geologic processes that we observe today were set in motion.

But what of other planets? Did they go through the same early history? Information transmitted from our spacecraft indicates that all the terrestrial planets have undergone differentiation, but their evolutionary paths have varied.

Mercury has a thin atmosphere consisting mostly of helium. The atmospheric pressure at the surface is less than a trillionth of Earth’s atmospheric pressure. There is no surface wind or water to erode and smooth the ancient surface of this innermost planet. It looks like the Moon: intensely cratered and covered by a layer of rock debris, the fractured remnants of billions of years of meteorite impacts.

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**Diversity of Planets**

**Earth**

Core – hot and molten (liquified by heat)

Mantle – solidified (turn hard or solid)

Crust – thin and showed continents

**Terrestrial planets** are planets that are made up of silicate rocks or metals.

**Mercury**

Thin atmosphere of helium.

Pressure is one trillionth of our Earth’s.

The surface is covered in the jagged remains of meteorites as there is no wind or water to erode and smooth them

**Mind Maps**

**Higher Population**

Mind maps are diagrams which allow you to lay out lots of information on one sheet of paper, neatly and clearly, showing any relationships between that information. Above is an example of what you need to know in the Higher Geography Population unit.

For this technique to work effectively you must:

* Plan your mind map out or do multiple versions to make it neat
* Start from the centre of the page and work out
* Make it eye-catching; include colours, capitals, diagrams, pictures, etc.
* Return to your mind maps and reread them as part of your revision

**Mnemonics and Acronyms**

A mnemonic is a word, phrase, or sentence that is used to remember a number of other pieces of information. Acronyms are words made up from taking the first letter or each work from the name of an organisation or group. Both techniques are very useful when condensing notes and will also help jog your memory during as assessment or exam. You will have used these across most subjects, as demonstrated below, but **you can create your own to help you remember information.**

e.g. **Roy G. Biv** or **R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain

This helps us recall the colours of the rainbow in order; Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet.

e.g. In Maths we use ‘**BODMAS’** to help us remember the correct order when doing calculations.

**B** – Brackets

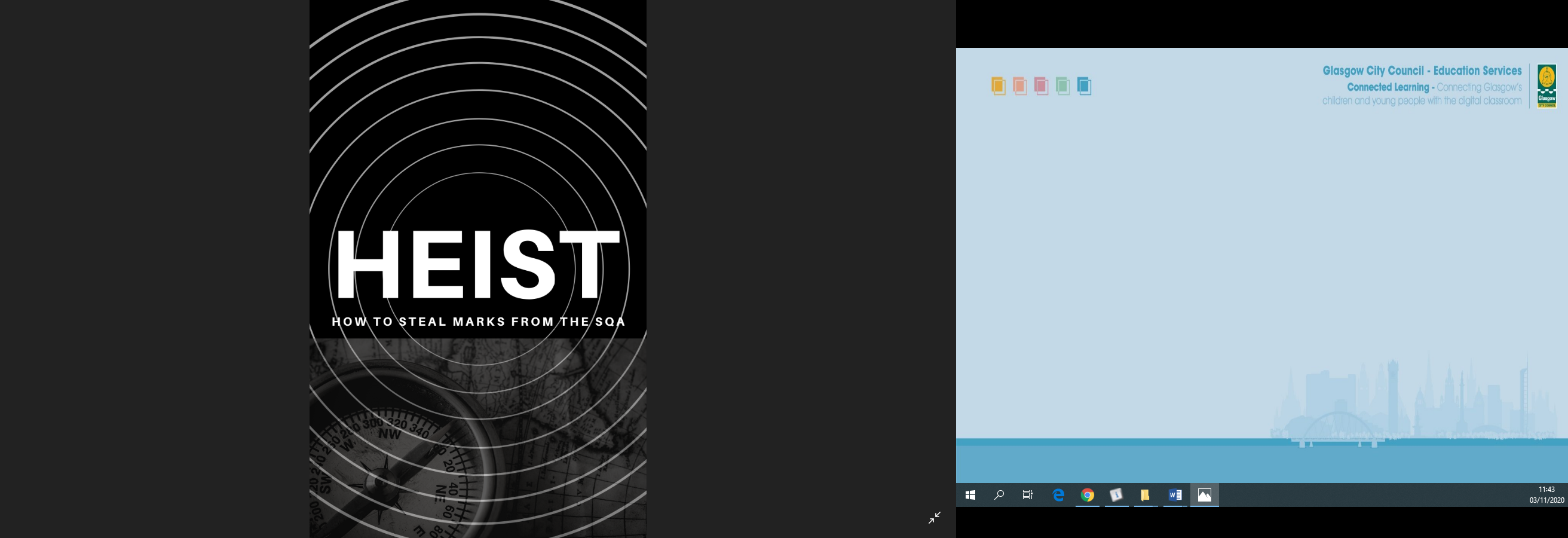
**O** – Order

**D** - Division

**M** - Multiplication

**A** – Addition

**S** – Subtraction



In Higher Geography, the acronym ‘**HEIST’** is used to help the structure the answer to the Geographical Skills question. The pupils who came up with this chose ‘HEIST’ because they were ‘stealing marks from the SQA’.

**H** – Housing

**E** – Environment

**I** – Industry

**S** – Site

**T** – Transport

e.g. In National 5 History when studying the Treaty of Versailles, you use ‘**BRAT’** to help you remember the main clauses.

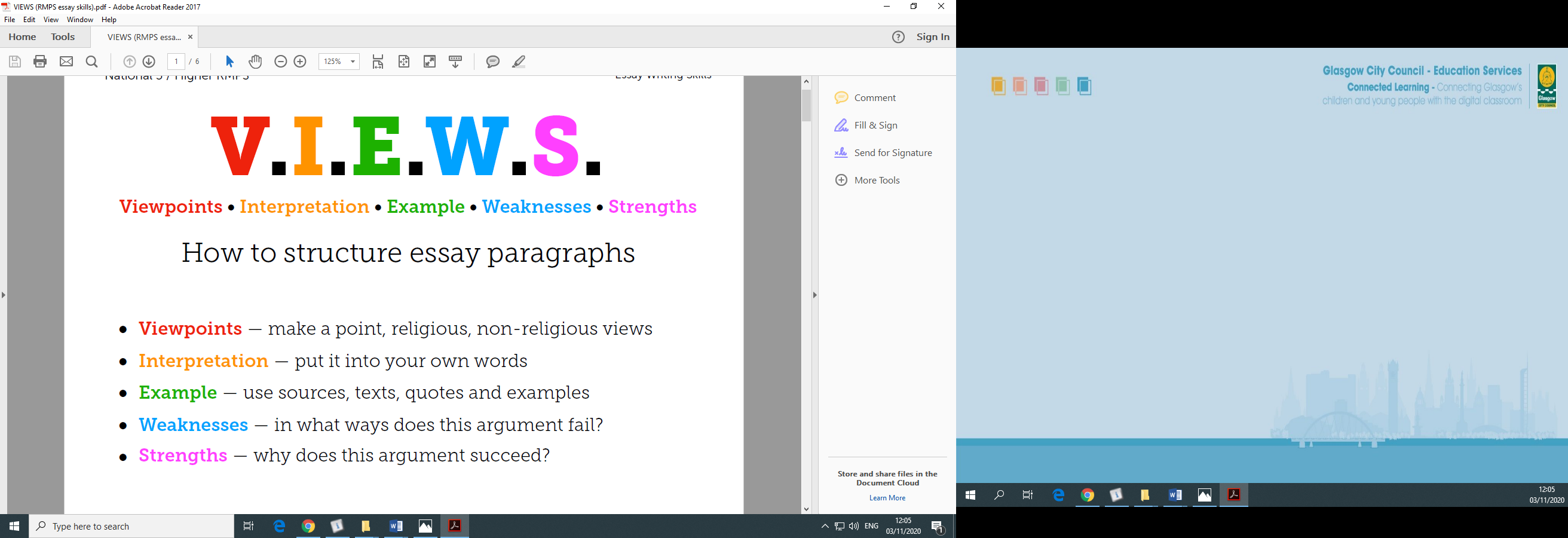
**B –** Blame

**R –** Reparations

**A –** Army

**T –** Territory

e.g.



In Higher RMPS you use ‘**VIEWS’** to structure your essay paragraphs.

e.g. In English, when you are structuring an essay you can use.

**Introduction**: **T** – Title

**A** – Author

**R** – Reference to question

**T** – Techniques used

**Main body of essay:** **P** – Point

**E** – Evidence

**A** – Analysis

**E** – Evaluation

**Conclusion:**  **T** – Title

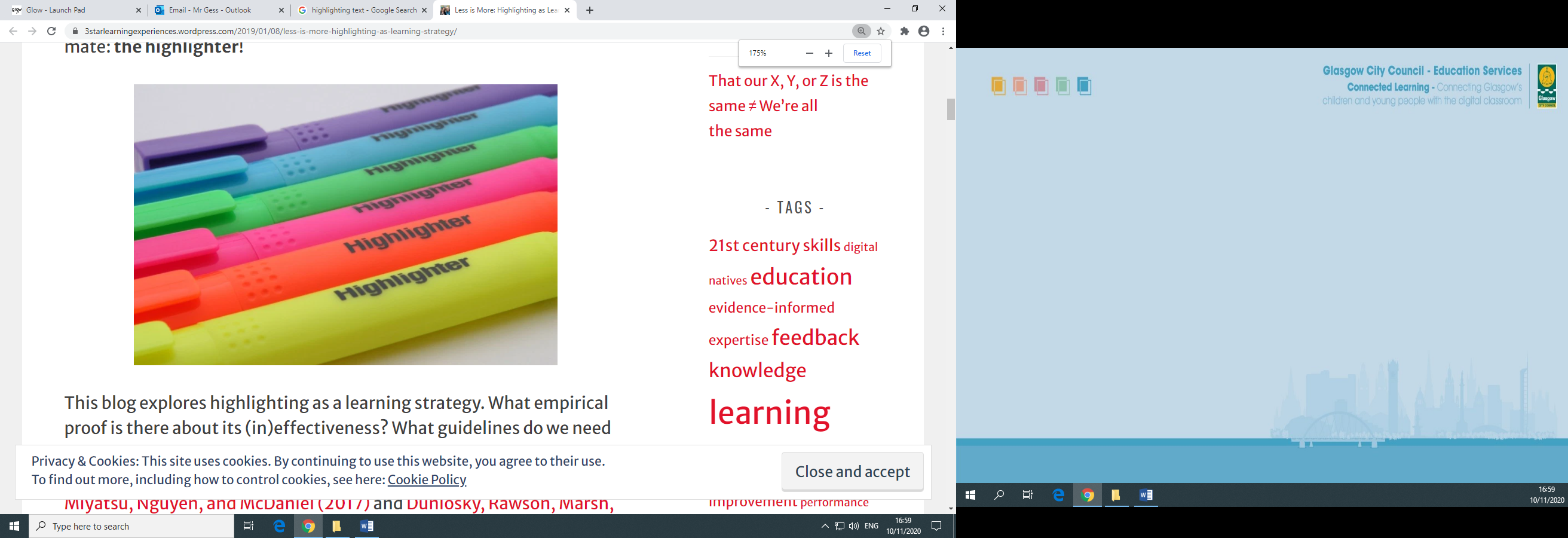
**A** – Author

**R** – reference to question

**T** – Techniques used

**Y** – Your opinion

**Highlighting**



Be very careful with this technique!

Reading through lengthy notes and thinking about what you should highlight is not effective studying. Your brain is not recording the important information as it is too busy working out ‘what is important information’. You can use highlighters effectively for:

1. **Highlighting Key Information and then Summarising**

This links very closely to the first technique in this booklet, ‘Rewriting and Note Taking’. As you read through your notes you can use a highlighter to mark the important information e.g. key words, terminology, definitions, dates, quotes, etc. Once you have done this then you are able to go back and easily rewrite summarised notes or use the highlighted sections to make flashcards.

1. **Categorising Information and Planning**

e.g. when analysing a poem for English you could use one colour to highlight metaphors, another or similes, another for onomatopoeia. This then means when you come to write your essay you have everything colour coordinated.

e.g. In Geography, you could split up your ‘Causes of Climate Change’ notes into ‘Physical’ and ‘Human’ by using two different colours

1. **Adding Emphasis in Revision Notes and Flashcards**

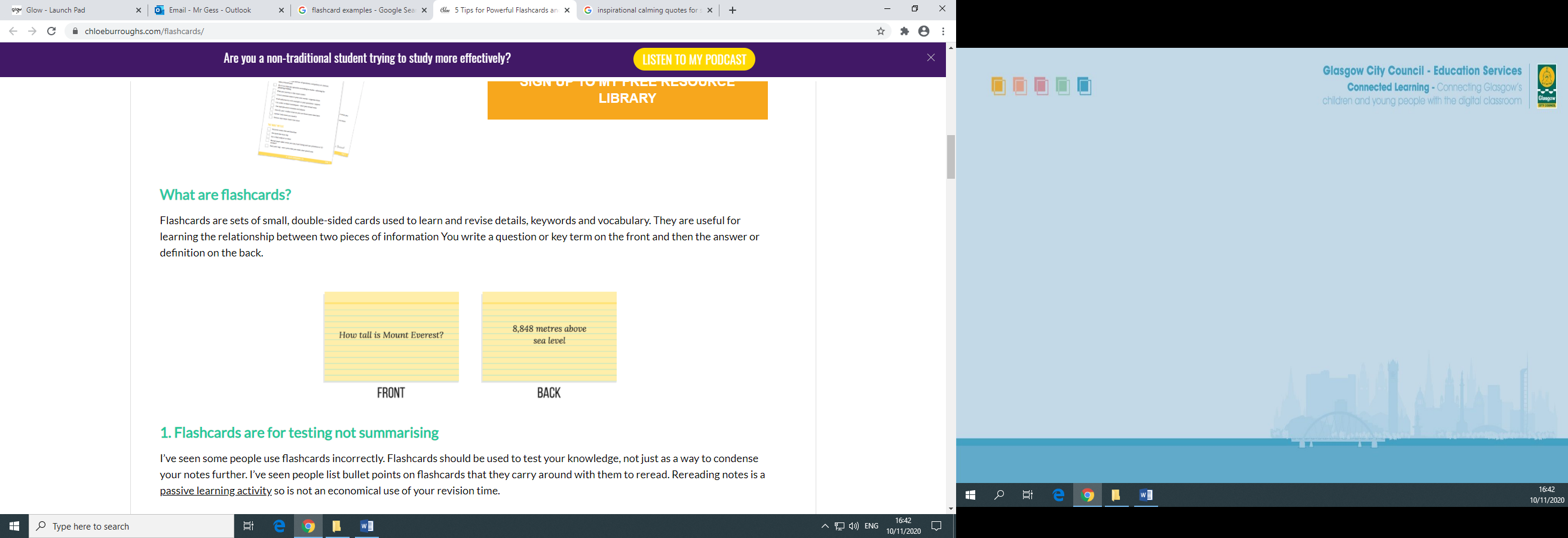
When you are creating your notes or flashcards, you can use highlighters to:

- emphasise key words

- use certain colours for certain subjects e.g. Chemistry is always purple

- have key words in one colour and descriptions in another

**Flash Cards**

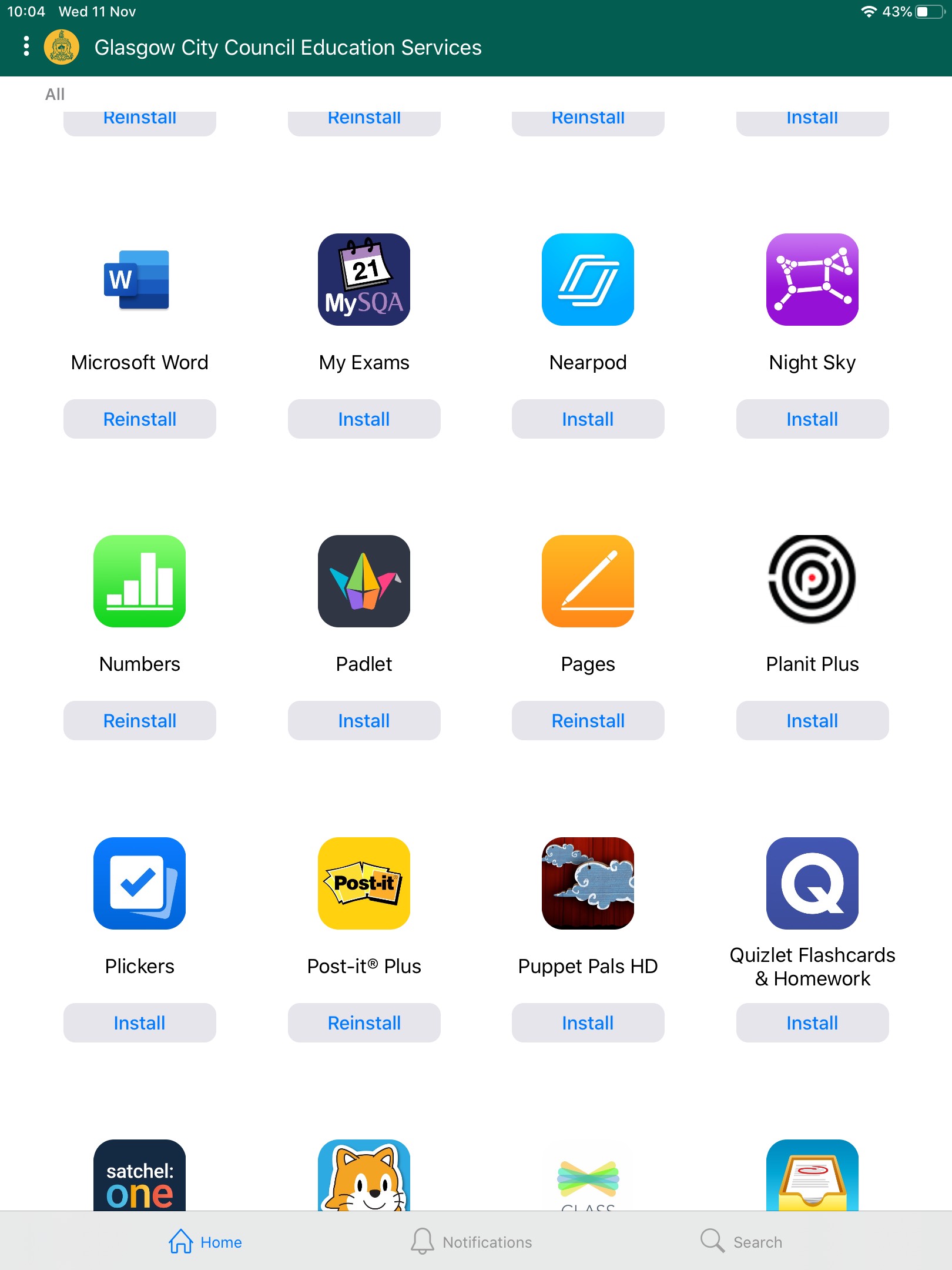


Flashcards are small portable cards which are hand for helping you study on the move. They can be used in two main ways:

1. You can write a word on the front and the definition on the back
2. You can write a question on the front and the answer on the back.

Once you have created them, you follow these steps to study:

1. Read the front, then read the back
2. Read the front, then read in your head or aloud the answer that is on the back, then check what is on the back
3. Have a parent, sibling or friend read the front of the card to you, then you tell the them answer that is on the back. They can then tell you if you are right or not.

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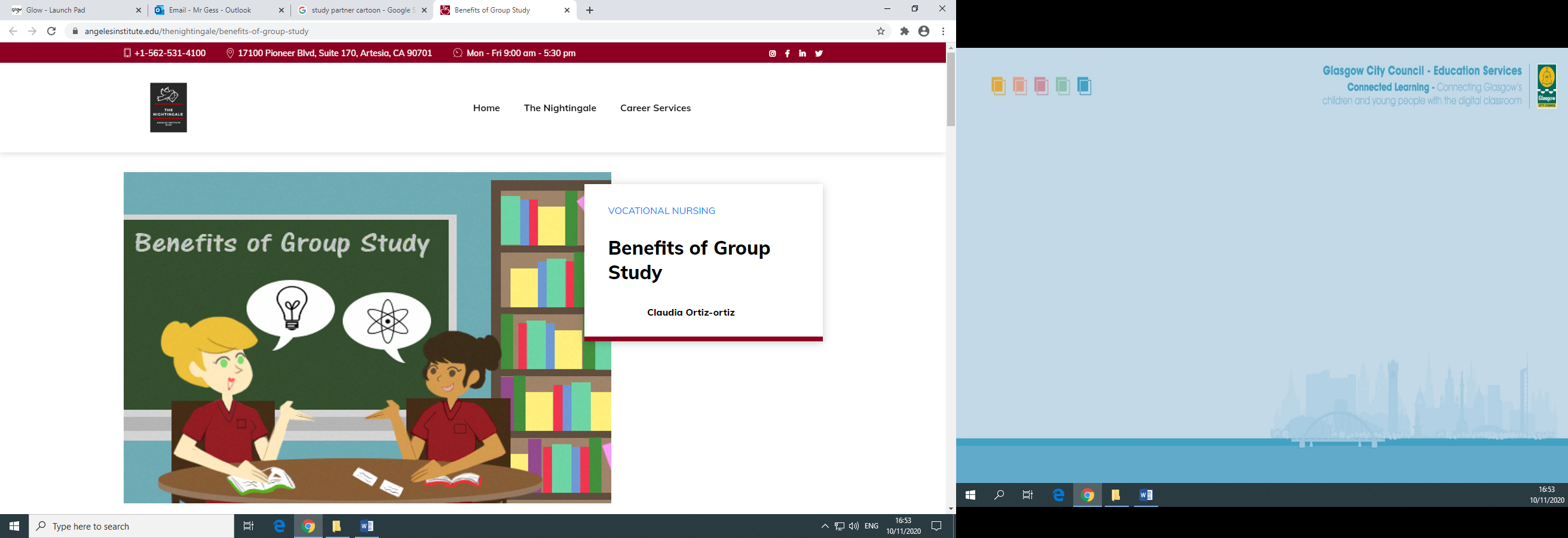
**Have you tried the Post-It app on your iPad?**

This can be used to digitally record, store and organise the flashcards you have created. You simply use the app to take a picture of your flashcards. This will help if they get damaged or lost.

You can also use this app to help you revise. You can write on post-its of different colours and sizes, and then organize them into different subjects and topics.

**Download it and give it a go!**

**Study Buddy**



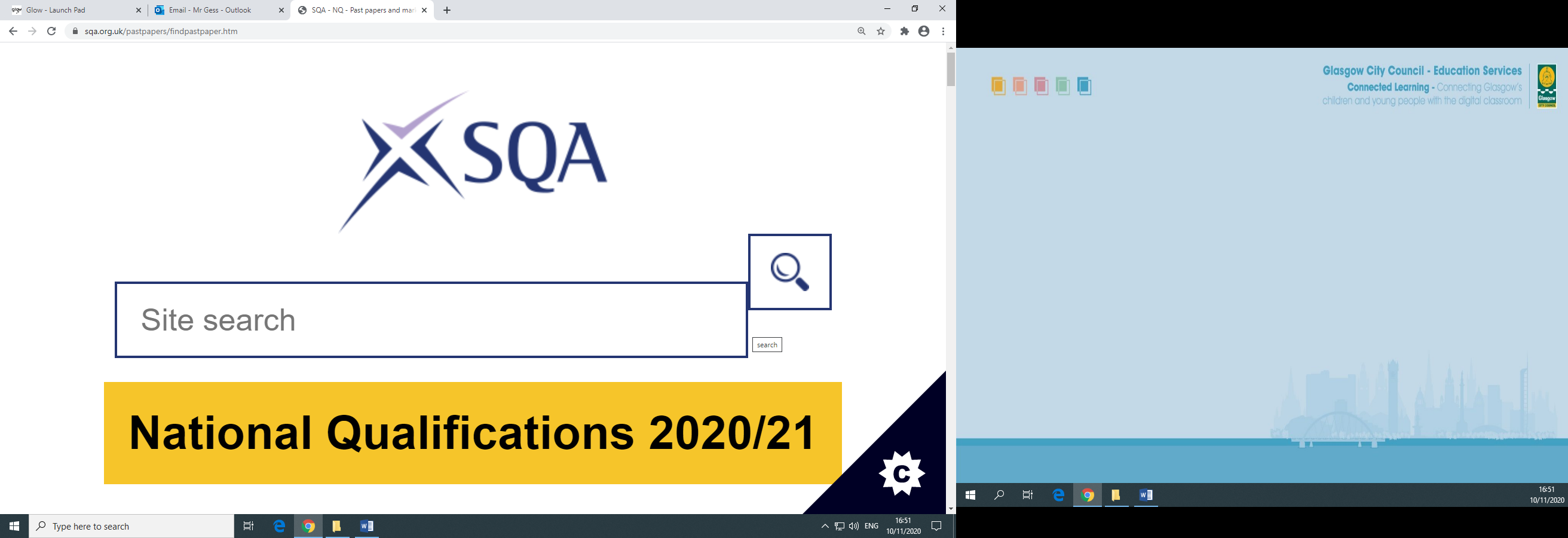
Study with friends to discuss topics which will help deepen your understanding of areas that you may not have fully understood.

For this technique to work effectively you must:

* Be mature
* Recognise when you are going off topic and get back on track
* Keep the group to 2 or 3 people maximum

**Why not prepare a quiz on flashcards before you meet your study buddy?**

**Past Paper Questions**



You can get access to **Past Papers** and **Marking Schemes** for free on the SQA website:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers/findpastpaper.htm>

Try as many past papers and revision questions as possible so that you are aware of the standard of the exam and the style of questions.

There are multiple ways to use Past Papers to help you revise. Depending on your experience and ability, you can choose from the list below:

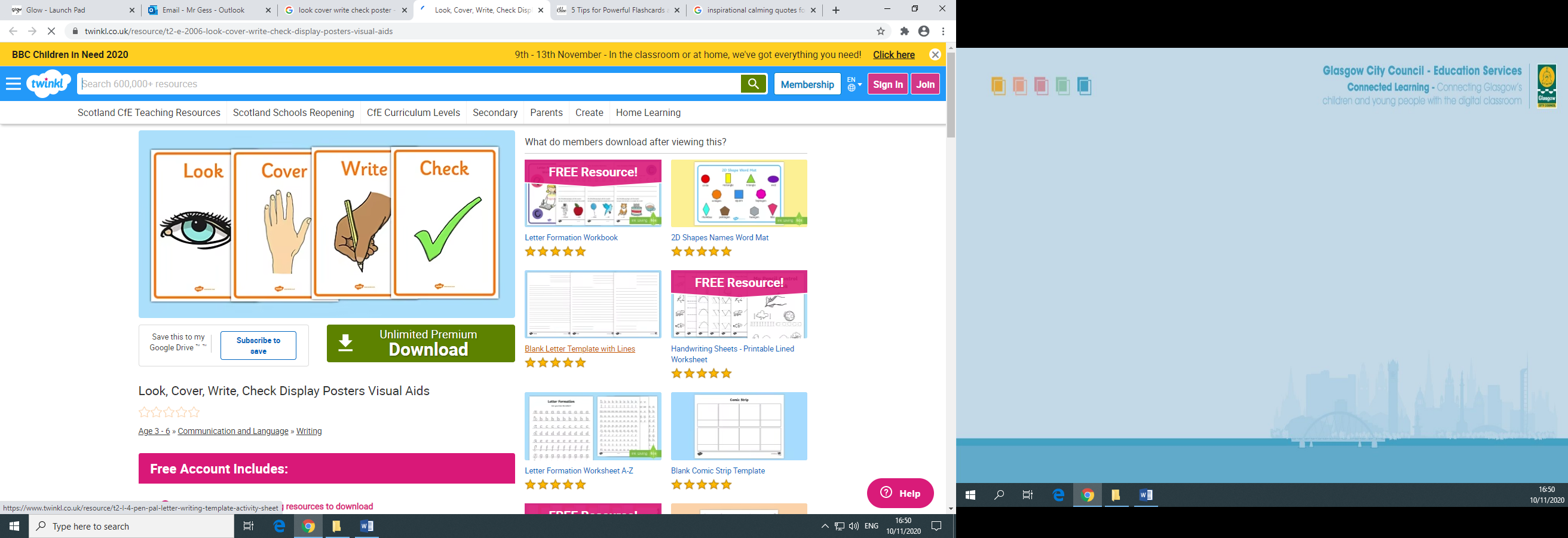
1. Answer past paper questions one by one using your notes
2. Answer past paper questions one by one without notes
3. Attempt single past paper questions under timed conditions
4. Attempt full past papers under timed conditions

**By the time you are a few weeks away from your exam you should be on step 4.**

You can also use a colour coded system when answering past papers. **Use one colour to write what you know from memory, switch to the second colour to write the answers you had to look back in your notes for.**

**Marking schemes** contain the answers to past paper questions. These are designed for markers and teachers so are in note form, and not full answers. Speak to your teachers and ask if they can go over them in class with you so you learn how to use them effectively.

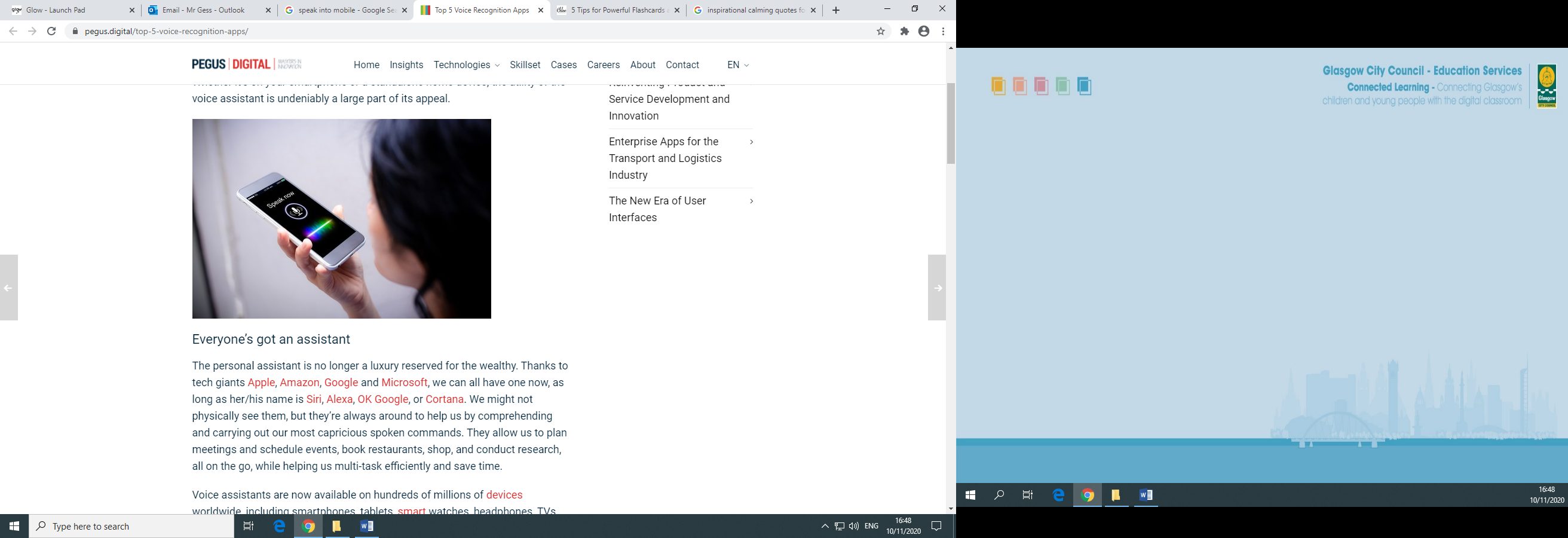
**Look, Cover, Write, Check**



When you are revising over your class notes, mind maps, or condensed notes it is beneficial to test yourself. This trains your brain in recall. Use the following steps:

1. **LOOK** – look at your notes (one A4 sheet maximum). Read over them. It can help to read aloud rather than in to yourself.
2. **COVER** – cover up the information you have just read, or turn the sheet over.
3. **WRITE** – write on a fresh piece of paper what you have just read. Once you think you have done as much as you can remember, take a deep breath and try to visualise what your notes looked like – what part of the page were things written on? What colour was it written in? What diagrams were there? Then add anything to your notes that you now recall. When you are sure you cannot remember anything else move on to step 4.
4. **CHECK** – turn your notes back over and compare them to what you have just written. Is there any information missing? If so, look at that information again before beginning this technique again.

**Recording Yourself**



If you are really struggling to memorise a particular section of work, it can be beneficial to use your phone to record yourself you reading over your notes. You can continually play this back to yourself and repeat the words. This is like learning a song, the more you hear it, the more likely it is that you will learn the words. Many actors use this technique to learn their lines.

For this technique to work effectively you must:

* Only use it for small sections of work
* Not spend hours recording yourself – this is not effective use of your time
* Listen to it repeatedly e.g. when walking to school, when on the bus, when tidying up etc.

**Effective Study skills** **- How can I help?**

**A guide for parents and carers**

Below are a few resources that could help your child to study:

Help your child to complete the study timetable. All timetables should be made with the idea that they can be revised. A good time table keeps you from wandering off course. A good timetable, if properly managed, assigns time where time is needed, but you've got to want to do it!

Help your child by creating a positive study environment, where they have the time and the space they need to be effective learners.

Last but not least, ensure your child attends any supported study offered and keeps up to date with homework tasks.

Core Apps and Useful Websites

BBC Bitesize – Subjects are Listed by Level being studied. Pupils can access materials by topic and test themselves on topics as an aid to revision.

National Parent Forum Scotland – Nationals in a Nutshell – Website has really useful information for both pupils and parents.

SQA Website – Pupils can download an Interactive Study Plan, as well as create a Timetable to revise for final exams.

Bright Red Digital Study is an online resource to support you with your studies. You have to register with an e-mail account. We recommend you use your school e-mail and then set a password. You will find access to revision and quizzes for all subjects.

Scholar – Offers online tutor sessions for revision as well as providing pupils with course materials created by experienced teachers and lecturers.

Keep in touch!

Look out for regular updates on the school website to support your child during senior phase:

**http://www.knightswood-sec.glasgow.sch.uk/**

**Twitter**

Follow us on Twitter **@KnightswoodSec**