

The Swaminarayan

Education is that which liberates

Dear Parents, Guardians, Pupils and Friends,

Theme for the week

The theme for next week is “**Prepare of competition**”. I have written about it on the reverse of the newsletter.

External Examinations Begin

Everything is now ready for the start of the GCSE and A level examinations next week. We have moved all the Sixth Form examinations into the Science Block to make sure there is no disruption from activities around the school. All the GCSE examinations will take place in the Yogi Hall unless you are informed otherwise by the Examinations Officer. While S4, 5 and 6 are on study leave, there are some pupils in Senior 3 who are writing their GCSE Gujarati examination next week. They are allowed study leave on the day before each examination.

Vote of Rachna Vyas!

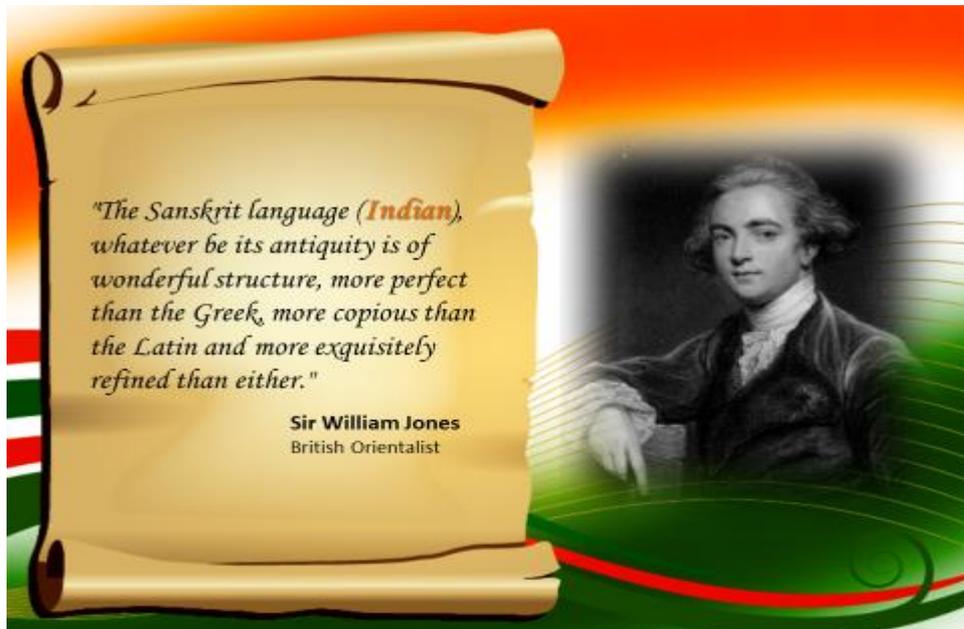
Rachna has moved from 19th to 3rd with your support...so if you haven't voted already please make sure you do...

One of our former student, Rachna Vyas, has been shortlisted in a group of 20 students for a \$10K Scholarship in USA, for which she was required to write an essay. Before she can be awarded the scholarship, however, the rules require people to vote for her. We need the entire Swaminarayan School family to vote for her so that she can win this scholarship. Below is the web link where you can vote and read her essay. May I request everyone to vote for Rachna by visiting the site at:

<http://lawpreview.barbri.com/scholarship-finalists/>

Wisdom of India 5

This week a thought from the British Orientalist, Sir William Jones, on the *Wisdom of India*, so that our children can appreciate the strong sense of who we are, where we come from and the values inherent in our culture.



Secrets of A-grade Students...

The kids at the top of the class get there by mastering a few basic techniques that others can readily learn. Here, according to education experts and students themselves both in this country and the US, are the secrets of A-grade pupils (Courtesy Reader's Digest)

1. SET PRIORITIES

Top students brook no intrusions on study time. Once the books are open, phone calls go unanswered, Television unwatched, snacks ignored. Study is business; business comes before recreation.

2. STUDY ANYWHERE - OR EVERYWHERE

Claude Olney, a university business professor in Arizona assigned to tutor underachieving college athletes, recalls a cross-country runner who exercised daily. Olney persuaded him to use the time to memorise biology terms. Another student stuck a vocabulary list on the bathroom cabinet. He learned a new word every day while brushing his teeth.

Among the students we spoke to, study times were strictly a matter of personal preference. Some of them worked late at night when the house was quiet. Others woke early. Still others studied as soon as they came home when the day's work was fresh in their minds. All agreed, however, on the need for consistency. "Whatever I was doing, I kept a slot free every day for studying", says New Jersey college student Ian McCray.

3. GET ORGANISED

At school, Ian did athletics, played rugby and was in the band and orchestra. "I was so busy, I couldn't waste time looking for a pencil or missing paper. I kept everything just where I could get my hands on it", he says.

Paul Melendres, a student in New Mexico, maintains two folders - one for the day's assignments, another for homework completed and marked. High-achieving pupil Traci Tsuchiguchi has another system. She immediately files the day's school work in colour-coded folders by subject so they'll be available for review at exam time.

Even pupils who don't have a private study area remain organised. A rucksack or drawer keeps essentials together and cuts down on time-wasting searches.

4. LEARN HOW TO READ

"I used to wade through heaps of irrelevant material," remembers Amanda Parr. "But then I got used to reading quickly; if the first sentence of a paragraph wasn't relevant, I'd move on to the next paragraph."

"The best course I ever took", says Oklahoma student Christopher Campbell, "was speed-reading. I not only increased my words per minute but also learned to look at a book's table of contents, graphs and pictures first. Then, when I began to read, I had a sense of the material, and I retained a lot more."

In his book *Getting Straight As*, Gordon Green says the secret of good reading is to be “an active reader - one who continually asks questions that lead to a full understanding of the author’s message”.

5. SCHEDULE YOUR TIME

When a teacher set a long essay, Alex Rodgers would spend a couple of days reading round the subject and making notes, then he’d do a rough draft and write up the essay. He would aim to finish a couple of days before the assignment was due in so that if it took longer than anticipated, he’d still make the deadline.

When preparing for examinations, both Alex and Amanda handled revision in manageable blocks. “Give yourself about eight weeks,” recommends Amanda. “Set a small amount each day. If you just sit down to a huge file, you’ll never get through it.”

Of course, even the best students procrastinate occasionally. But when that happens, they face up to it. “Sometimes it comes down to late nights,” admits Christi Anderson, a pupil from South Dakota. “Still, if you want good grades, you have to make the deadline.”

6. TAKE GOOD NOTES

“Before writing anything, I divide my page into two columns,” says Amanda. “The left section is about a third of the page wide; the right, two-thirds. I write my notes in the wider column, and jot down the significance of each point on the left. During revision, this is very useful because you can see immediately why the material is relevant, rather than being daunted by great chunks of information.”

Just before the end-of-lesson bell rings, most pupils close their books, put away papers, talk to friends and get ready to leave. Christi Anderson uses those few minutes to write a two or three sentence summary of the lesson’s principal points, which she scans before the next day’s class.

7. CLEAN UP YOUR ACT

Neat papers are likely to get higher marks than sloppy ones. “The student who hands in a tidy essay,” says Professor Olney, “is on the way to an A grade.”

8. SPEAK UP

“If you ask questions, you know immediately whether you have grasped the point or not,” states Alex Rodgers. Being sure that you understand everything throughout the year makes preparing for exams easier, he says. Class participation goes beyond merely asking questions, though. It’s a matter of showing intellectual curiosity.

In a lecture on economics, for example, Paul Melendres asked how the Chinese economy could be both socialist and market-driven, without incurring some of the problems that befell the former Soviet Union. “I don’t want to memorise information or tests only,” he says. “Better grades come from better understanding.”

Prepare for competition

Think

The minute you walk onto a football pitch you are in competition with the opposition. When you are on the athletic track, on the badminton or tennis court, in the classroom, or when writing examinations, you are always competing. Competition is part of life and the sooner you get used to it the better prepared you will be to face it.

Feel

When you grow older and apply for a course at college or university, you will be in competition with the other applicants and only the best candidates will get through. When you apply for a job, you will not be the only applicant, and the quality of your application will decide whether you are selected for interview. Even at the interview you will be questioned and compared with the other candidates.

Yet you can prepare for the competition. The team that wins will be the team that is most prepared, best trained and knows the strengths and weaknesses of both each other and the opposition. The candidate who gets the job will be the person who is most knowledgeable about the job and has researched the company thoroughly. Their application will be carefully written and they will put on a polished performance at the interview.

Do

Preparation is the key to overcoming adversity and winning. If you want to be a great sportsperson you must train hard and work with the best coaches. If you want to achieve success in your education, study hard and seek help from your teachers, and if you want to go to the best universities make sure you get the best grades and understand what the entry requirements are. If you want to work for the best company, make sure you research them thoroughly and prepare well for the interview. People fail because they don't prepare; preparation will increase your chances of success tenfold.

Yours sincerely,

Nilesh Manani