

# How to Assist Students at Home?

## 1. Assistive Technology

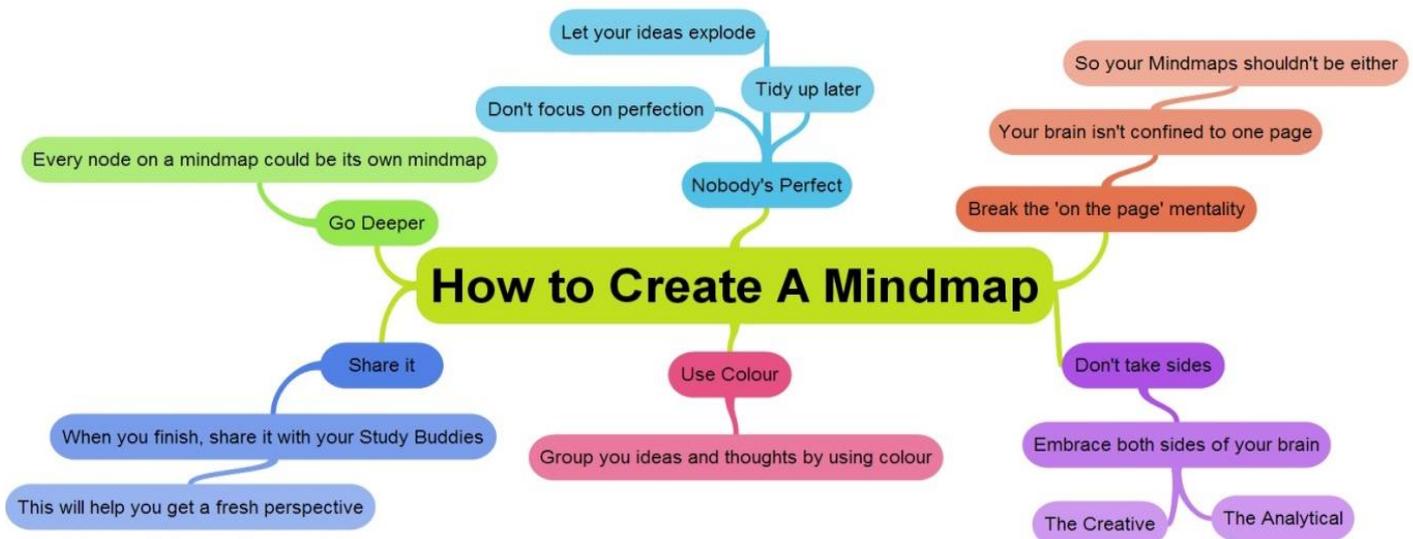
- **Electronic Graphic Organisers**

Students often have difficulty with language-based activities, so visual learning is often a strength for them.

- **X Mind Software- Free**

XMind is a mind mapping and brainstorming software. This tool can help students break down difficult, complex information into a simple mind map, which is most beneficial for visual learners to retain and study large amounts of information.

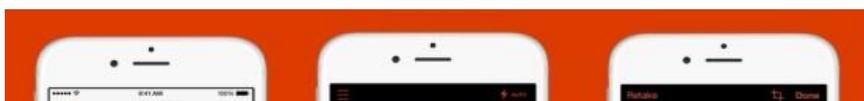
Look at UCC Assistive Technology Outreach programme on-line mindmapping tutorials.



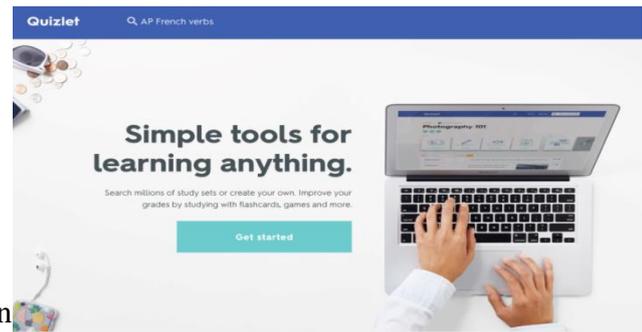
The Immersive Reader is a feature in Office Lens that helps users to easily scan and read content on their iPhone. The features in immersive reader include:

- **Read aloud**—Reads text out loud with simultaneous highlighting that improves decoding, fluency and comprehension while sustaining focus and attention.
- **Font size**—Allows the user to increase or decrease the size of fonts.
- **Wide text spacing**—Optimizes font spacing in a narrow column view to improve reading fluency for users who suffer from “visual crowding” issues.
- **Back five words and forward one page**—Allows the user to move backwards and forwards in the content.
- **Speaking rate**—Allows user to control the speed of the voice reading back the words.

The following link is a tutorial for learning tools in Office Lens: <https://blogs.office.com/en-us/2016/11/10/immersive-reader-and-frame-guide-come-to-office-lens-offering-built-in-accessibility/>



- Quizlet- [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)

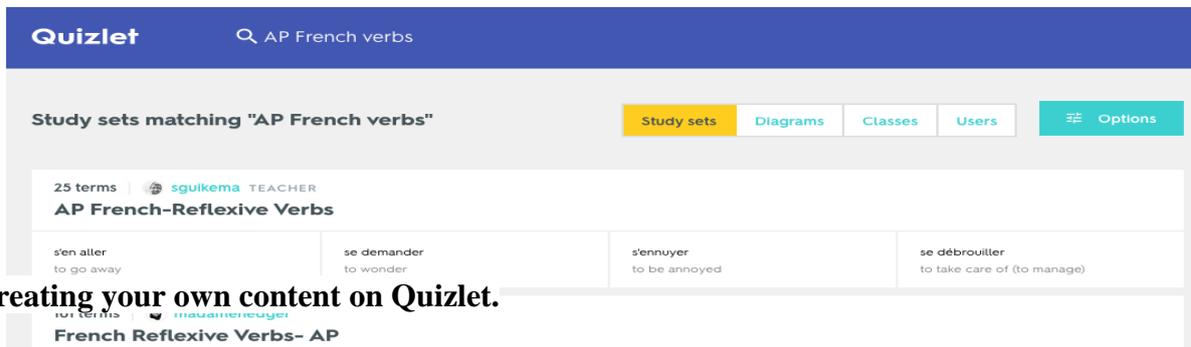


Quizlet helps students learn through flashcards, games and generated flashcards sets in a vast range of subjects. Quizlet is a place where everyone can share knowledge in any subject, at any level and gain confidence as a learner. It has an interactive option where the students work in small teams to learn a Quizlet study set.

### Getting started on Quizlet

The best way to get started on Quizlet as a student is to search for sets made by other Quizlet users. Students and teachers create new study sets all the time, so it's quite likely that you'll be able to find what you're looking for.

To find study sets, select the **magnifying glass** icon at the top of any page on Quizlet. Then, type in your subject or the name of the exam you're studying for and press **Enter** to see a list of results.



### Creating your own content on Quizlet.

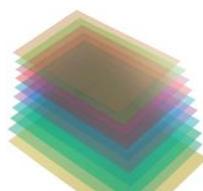
If you're looking to study something very specific, or would like to share content you create with a group of classmates or students, you may want to create your own sets rather than study those made by others. In order to create sets, you'll first need to sign up for an account.

You can create sets with text, add images (users with free Quizlet accounts can add images from our gallery; upgraded users can choose from our gallery or upload their own) or create a diagram set.

## 2. Websites with useful resources

A large amount of resources can be purchased from these sites to assist your child's individual needs.

- [www.specialdirect.com](http://www.specialdirect.com)





Coloured Eye Level Reading Ruler

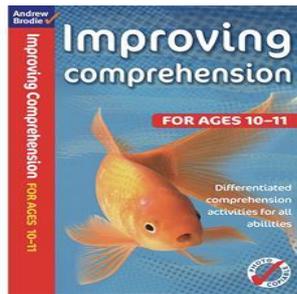
Assorted A4 Coloured Overlays

Move Easy Handwriting Pens

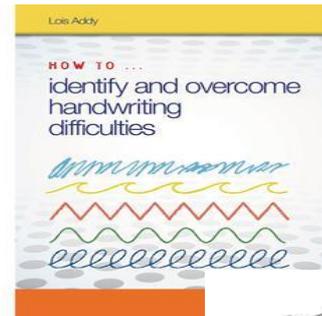
- [www.ldalearning.com](http://www.ldalearning.com)

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### 3. How to help my child organise homework?

#### Organising Homework

- Negotiate a *homework timetable* that takes into *account any* commitments. Once agreed, put it up in the *study area* and expect t to. The website [www.studentenrichment.ie](http://www.studentenrichment.ie) has templates for timetables and goal setting.
- *No distractions* such as television or mobile phone.
- Homework should be done at a *desk/table*, with good light.
- Ensure there is plenty of space with shelves to *organise books and files*.
- Organise all *necessary equipment* that's help with multisensory learning such as pens, pencils, crayons, staplers, punches, highlighters, plastic wallets, index cards, etc.
- Show the student how to *colour code their timetable* with different colours for different subjects.
- *Colour coded files/copies*, e.g. red for English, yellow for Maths etc. This could be with a tag or colour stripe. Use the same colour for the subject that they have used on the colour coded timetable.
- *Calendar or planner* on the wall with key dates marked in such as deadlines for assignments, exams, projects, as well as sports and other commitments



- An *organised workspace* helps them find the materials they need for homework easily and independently. Storing materials in different sections is helpful. For example, all writing tools should be located together.
- Keep *reference materials*, including calculators, dictionaries and atlases, near your child's homework workspace.
- Encourage them to use a *brightly coloured folder* for each subject to keep a relevant materials for each subject together and this helps to bring school books, copies etc. to and from school, so those items don't get lost/forgotten.

#### 4. How to help my child organise & prioritise tasks?

- Help your child prioritise homework tasks based on *due dates* (this can be written next to each homework task in their homework journal), *difficulty level* or the *level of stress* they have about the tasks.
- Encourage them to *list the steps* needed to complete long-term projects.
- Help them *sequence tasks logically*. For instance, before looking up vocabulary words in the dictionary, they could alphabetise the list first.



#### Prioritising Materials

- Teach students to review homework and gather all necessary materials **before they start** working so that all equipment is collected before they start.
- Teach students to **pack their schoolbag every night** once they are finished homework and use their timetable as a checklist to ensure they have packed all necessary materials.

#### Technological Organisational Tips:

- Saving information on file-sharing software like **Dropbox** can be easily accessed anywhere there's an internet connection.
- Smartphone apps that serve as **digital sticky notes** or bulletin boards.

#### 5. Tips to help with reading



- Reading is a key skill at second level. Parents can foster this skill by ensuring the student reads for about **20 minutes every day**. Paired reading may help or reading books with an appropriate reading level.
- Reading should **continue through summer**, otherwise reading may regress.
- **Listen to tapes of books** on long car journeys so they are not missing out on the stories their peers are accessing through reading.
- **Dyslexia Action has published a book Dive in** – a book guide for the reluctant and dyslexic readers which gives guidance on books that might engage the reluctant reader as well as a guide for parents called Reading hints and tips for parents of reluctant and struggling readers.

Website: [www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk](http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk)

## 6. Tips for helping learning



- **Be in the background when homework is done** and to help sort any difficulties out. This should be done in a quiet area.
- Help them develop **memory strategies**. Students must make the material ‘their own’ to get it into long term memory. Receiving information in one channel such as language and expressing it in another such as a mindmap helps information transfer from working to long-term memory. Possible learning activities include talking, listening, debating, answering questions, drawing timelines or mind-maps, visualising, creating mnemonics or making up cards with key facts.
- If there are difficulties, **don’t do the homework** for the student. Teachers need to be aware if students cannot cope.
- If teenagers are not feeling confident, they may be **defensive and reluctant to accept help**. Ask them for their ideas on how you can help. **Possible strategies to help** include:
  - **Test new vocabulary** which has been learnt.
  - **Listen** to the student explain a new topic.
  - **Ask questions** based on the textbook or revision book.

- **Help with the planning** of an essay.
- Show them how to make **clear concise notes** with bullet points, colour, numbering of points and headings. Then make sure the notes are filed.
- **Get tapes of texts for English**, so that they can hear and read the text at the same time. The educational publishers make digital copies of textbooks available.
- **Revision books** can help by giving access to keypoints for learning. There are also websites that have on-line tutorials and revision notes available in different subjects.

## 7. Tips for developing self esteem

Self-esteem means young people feel competent and when faced with new challenges, they feel that they can achieve. It is fostered by taking interest in their activities and giving genuine praise for achievement.

- Encourage them to **partake in activities that will yield success** which might be in sports, drama, music, art, scouts, or voluntary work.
- Spend family time together where they **contribute and communicate**. Conversations over meals or on outings can promote social skills and verbal expression. Watch TV programmes, films or the news together and give them an opportunity to express their opinions. Board or interactive games will help develop communication skills, problem solving and decision making.
- Ask them to contribute to **decisions** about planning holidays or home decoration.
- **Be open** about the fact the student has learning difficulties. Reassure them that they can talk to you and you will listen and try to help.



## 8. How to help your child self-monitor their schoolwork?

- **Reading Comprehension**
  - Encourage your child to read single sentences or small chunks of text, and then check for understanding.
  - Teach your child think carefully about the text by discussing the characters, language use and connections between themes and details.
- **Writing**
  - Help your child review assignments and the outcomes of those assignments to track progress.



- Help them review their most common errors and create a personalised list of errors to watch out for.
- Suggest that they use different coloured pens when shifting from the role of writer to that of self-editor.
- Encourage them to check sentence structure and grammar by reading aloud or using text-to-speech technology.

- **Maths**

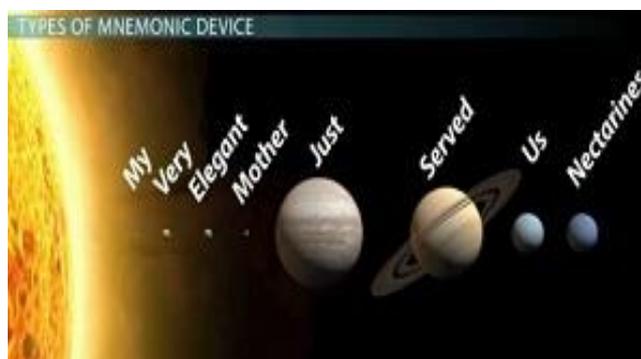
- Show your child how to check work for accuracy by checking against an estimate, using the reverse operation, using a calculator, etc.
- Help them create a personalised checklist by identifying past errors on tests or quizzes. For example: Have I checked the signs? Am I answering the question being asked? Have I solved all parts of the problem?

- **Homework**

- Help to establish a routine to pack necessary books and folders in their schoolbag when leaving school or when leaving home in the morning.
- Encourage them to give finished homework a “once over” to learn the habit of self-checking.
- Keep a clock nearby so they can monitor the time spent on each assignment.

- **Studying and Test-Taking**

- Review study routines to help them set up a study schedule before exams—one with breaks built in for exercise and enjoyment.
- Encourage them to create a list of “don’t forget” items, acronyms or reminders to review before tests.
- Show your child how to use two- or three-column notes to study and check for understanding of major themes. For example: one column for main ideas/terms, one for details and another for memory aids.
  - Use mnemonic devices to help them to remember important sequences or events.



**Children and teens who develop the ability to self-monitor and self-check can become independent, efficient and successful students.**