LUX TUITION · BLACKTOWN

The Lux Study Guide

A practical guide to high school exams.

Applicable to all subjects.

WELCOME

Smarter, not just harder.

Most students don't fall behind because they're not capable — they fall behind because nobody taught them *how* to study. They re-read notes, highlight half the page, and hope it sticks. It rarely does.

This guide collects the handful of techniques that genuinely move the needle in Years 10–12 — the same ones our tutors used to reach 95+ ATARs. It's built for the run into major exams: assessments, trials and the HSC. None of it is complicated. All of it works, as long as you actually use it. Start with one chapter, build the habit, then add the next.

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

CHAPTER 01

The weekly study timetable

A realistic, printable schedule built around school, sport and rest — not a fantasy plan you abandon by week two.

The best timetable isn't the one with the most study hours — it's the one you'll still be following in week eight. Plan for the life you actually have, then protect a small number of focused blocks.

Build it in four steps

1. **Block the fixed stuff first.** School, travel, sport, dinner, sleep. What's left is your real available study time — usually less than students assume.
2. **Pick 4–6 focused blocks per week**, 45–60 minutes each. Consistency beats marathon cram sessions every time.
3. **Assign a subject and a task to each block** — "Math: 10 past-paper questions on trig", not the vague "do some math".
4. **Leave one block free** as a buffer for the week life inevitably throws off track.

> **THE 45 / 10 RHYTHM**
>
> Work in 45-minute focused blocks with a real 10-minute break between them — get up, move, look away from screens. Two good blocks with a break beat 90 unbroken minutes of fading attention.

A sample week (Year 11)

Slot	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Daytime	*School*	*School*	*School*	*School*	*School*	Chemistry	Past paper
After school	Math	Sport	English	Science	Off	— no school —	— no school —
Evening	Recall	Math	Off	English	Off	Review	Rest

Weekdays carry one or two focused blocks around school; weekends, with no school, have room for more. Use the blank planner on the next page to build your own — a timetable is a tool, not a contract, but skipping it should be a decision, not a default.

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Your weekly study planner

HOW TO USE IT

School hours (Mon–Fri, 8 am–4 pm) are already blocked out. Pencil in a **maximum of 2 study blocks per weekday** and up to **4 blocks per day on the weekend** — each block 45–60 minutes with a real break between. Write the subject and a specific task in each slot, and leave the rest for sport, family and rest. A sustainable plan beats an ambitious one.

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
7:00							
7:30							
8:00	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL	SCHOOL		
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CHAPTER 02

Spaced retrieval & active recall

The single most effective way to remember what you study — explained simply, with a routine you can start today.

Re-reading and highlighting feel productive because they're easy. But memory is built by *retrieving* information, not reviewing it. Every time you pull an answer out of your head, you strengthen the path back to it. Make that struggle the centre of your study.

Active recall

Close the book and write down everything you can remember. Then check. The gaps you find are exactly what to study next.

Spaced repetition

Review at growing intervals — day 1, day 3, day 7, day 21. Each successful recall lets you wait longer before the next.

A simple weekly routine

1. **After each lesson**, write 3–5 questions on what you learned (not the answers).
2. **The next day**, answer them from memory before checking your notes.
3. **Re-test the ones you missed** three days later, then a week later.
4. **Anything you nail twice in a row** graduates — review it monthly, not weekly.

TRY THIS TONIGHT

Take today's hardest lesson. Without looking, write a half-page explaining it as if teaching a friend. Then open your notes and fix what you got wrong or left out. That single exercise is worth an hour of passive re-reading.

AUTOMATE THE SPACING WITH ANKI

Anki is free on desktop and Android (only the iPhone app costs anything) and it does the hardest part for you: it tracks every card and shows it to you at the exact moment you're about to forget it — so you never have to plan a review schedule yourself. Make one card per question, answer it honestly each day, and let the algorithm handle the timing. For senior students juggling every subject at once, it's the single easiest way to put this chapter into practice.

Paper flashcards work too — you just have to manage the spacing yourself. Whatever you use, the principle never changes: **test, don't review.**

CHAPTER 03

Make past papers count

How to turn practice papers into a targeted list of exactly what to fix, instead of just marking and moving on.

A past paper isn't a test — it's a diagnostic. The score barely matters. What matters is the list of *why* you dropped each mark, because that list is your study plan for the week.

The method

1. **Do it under exam conditions** — timed, no notes, no phone. Anything else trains the wrong habits.
2. **Mark honestly** against the marking guidelines, not what you "meant".
3. **Tag every lost mark** with one of three reasons (below). The pattern tells you what to fix.
4. **Redo only the questions you got wrong** — properly, until you can do them cleanly.

Tag every mistake

Knowledge gap

You didn't know the content. → Go back and learn it, then re-test with recall.

Application slip

You knew it but couldn't apply it. → Drill more questions of that exact type.

Careless error

Misread, ran out of time, dropped a unit. → A technique problem (Chapter 4), not a knowledge one.

KEEP AN ERROR LOG

One page per subject. Every mistake gets a line: the question, the reason tag, and the fix. Before your next exam you re-read this log instead of the whole textbook — it's a personalised list of your weak spots and nothing else.

Two papers worked through this way teach you more than ten papers marked and filed away. Quality of review beats quantity of attempts.

CHAPTER 04

Exam-day technique

Reading time, mark allocation and the habits that stop students dropping easy marks under pressure.

Plenty of marks are lost by students who knew the content perfectly well. Exam technique is a skill you can practise — and it's often the fastest way to lift a result.

Use reading time properly

- [ ] Scan the whole paper first — know what's coming and where the marks are.
- [ ] Find the questions you're most confident on and plan to start there.
- [ ] Flag the long-response or high-mark questions so you can budget time for them.

Spend time where the marks are

Roughly **one minute per mark** is a safe starting budget. A 1-mark question doesn't deserve five minutes of agonising; a 6-mark response does deserve a quick plan before you write. When a question stalls you, mark it and move on — a fresh look later is worth more than a stubborn five minutes now.

> READ THE VERB
>
> NESA questions live and die by the directive verb. **Identify** wants a name; **describe** wants features; **explain** wants cause and effect; **evaluate** and **assess** want a judgement with reasons. Answering "describe" when it says "explain" caps your marks no matter how much you write.

Protect the easy marks

- Show working in math and science — method marks survive a wrong final answer.
- Carry units and significant figures through every step.
- Leave 5 minutes at the end to check you answered every part of every question.
- Never leave a multiple-choice or short answer blank — an attempt can score; a blank never does.

CHAPTER 05

NESA subject checklists

Know exactly what's examinable for English, Math and the HSC sciences, so nothing slips through the cracks.

You can't revise what you can't see. Always work from the current NESA syllabus and official past papers at **educationstandards.nsw.edu.au** — textbook chapter titles are a guide, but the syllabus dot-points are what's actually examined.

English

Know your prescribed texts cold. For each text, lock in **2–3 key themes** with **4–6 quotes per theme**, the technique in each quote, and how form shapes meaning. Then practise linking it all back to the module's framing question.

Mathematics

Work topic by topic from the syllabus. For each, hold one worked example and three practice questions. Master the formulae you're *not* given on the reference sheet.

Sciences (Chemistry / Physics / Biology)

Map every inquiry question to its content dot-points, memorise definitions precisely, and know your prescribed practicals. Then **work through the past papers for each year, starting with the most recent** and moving backwards — recent papers best reflect how the current syllabus is examined.

Turn the syllabus into a RAG tracker

RAG-rate means scoring each dot-point Red Amber Green by how confident you are: **Green** = you could teach it, **Amber** = shaky, **Red** = don't know it yet. Study your reds and ambers first, stop re-reading the greens, and re-rate every fortnight.

Sample — HSC Chemistry, Module 5 (Equilibrium & Acid Reactions)	Rating
Conduct practical investigations to analyse the reversibility of chemical reactions (e.g. hydrated ⇌ anhydrous cobalt(II) chloride)	Green
Model static and dynamic equilibrium and analyse the differences between open and closed systems	Amber
Investigate the relationship between collision theory and reaction rate in order to analyse chemical equilibrium reactions	Red

CHAPTER 06

Focus & motivation

Simple systems to beat procrastination and study consistently — the part most guides leave out.

Motivation is unreliable — it shows up after you start, not before. The students who do well don't feel like studying more than anyone else; they've just built systems that make starting easy and quitting hard.

Make starting easy

1. **Shrink the first step.** "Open the book and do one question" is a task your brain won't argue with. Momentum does the rest.
2. **Use the 45/10 rhythm** from Chapter 1 — a fixed finish line makes focus easier to sustain.
3. **Same time, same place.** A consistent study spot becomes a cue your brain associates with work.

Make distraction hard

- Phone in another room — not face-down on the desk. Out of sight genuinely beats willpower.
- One tab, one task. Close everything not tied to the current block.
- Keep a "later" notepad — when a distracting thought pops up, write it down and return to work.

> **TRACK THE STREAK, NOT THE MOOD**
>
> Mark an X on a calendar for every day you do your blocks. After a week you won't want to break the chain. Aim for consistency, not perfection — a missed day is normal; two in a row is the thing to avoid.

And rest properly. Sleep is when memory consolidates — a tired brain studying at 11pm learns less than a rested one studying for half the time. Protecting your sleep *is* studying.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Your first week with the Lux method.

1. **Build your timetable** (Ch.1) — 4–6 realistic blocks, one buffer.
2. **Switch to recall** (Ch.2) — write questions after every lesson, test the next day.
3. **Do one past paper properly** (Ch.3) — tag every mistake, start your error log.
4. **RAG-rate one subject's syllabus** (Ch.5) — study the reds first.
5. **Pick one focus habit** (Ch.6) — phone in another room is the highest-impact place to start.