



Image credit: istockphoto.com/Amy Mitchell

Spalding Grammar School Sixth Form Newsletter 4 March 2021

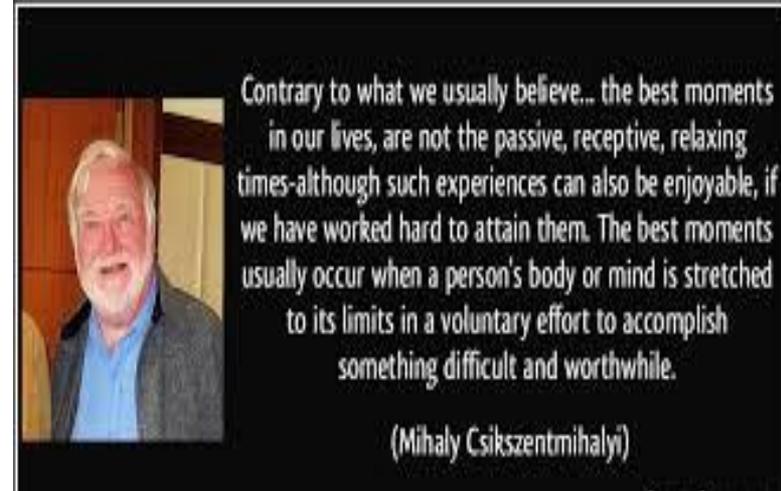
- This latest lockdown has been a very demanding period for everyone in our community, young people, parents and staff alike.
- However, there does now seem to be cautious optimism for the future, following the Prime Minister's announcement of the government's plan for the return of all pupils to schools from Monday 8th March, as part of the roadmap for leaving lockdown.
- So, it is with real joy that we have received our Year 12 and 13 students back to school this week, and they have brought the Study Centre, Coffee Lounge and Atrium back to life! Welcome back!
- Mass testing and compulsory mask wearing are the new preventative measures introduced as part of our routines in school and will be reviewed at Easter. I genuinely hope that we can pull together as a community to ensure that everything is done to keep students and staff safe over the next few weeks.
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- We remain committed to keeping classrooms ventilated (with doors and windows kept open) and to requiring students to spend break and lunchtimes outside (unless it is very rainy), so please come to school wearing sufficient layers of clothing.
- I would like to thank parents for their efforts in supporting their child with their remote learning. I know it has been quite a challenge for some but those who managed to keep on top of the learning regime for the last two months, will reap the benefit of their resilience, discipline and genuine love for learning. Your effort has been terrific. Well done!

Flow State-1

The Flow State is incredibly important for working at a high level and thus you will want to spend as much time as possible of your available work time in flow. Four main tactics can improve significantly the amount of flow you have in your work.

1) Break your work up into 45 – 60-minute chunks with 5-10-minute breaks in between chunks. Having breaks in between work, prevents burnout which can hamper your ability to enter and stay in the Flow State.

2) Learn to focus on that task for as long as possible. This takes practice. You need to start on your chosen task and keep your focus on it for as long as you can. At first, many people will have difficulty, if they're used to constantly switching between tasks. But keep trying, and keep bringing your focus back to your task. You'll get better at increasing concentration in situations that are more important than menial tasks but less urgent than fight or flight, i.e. the adrenaline response. Work organically, approaching your work from multiple angles and having fun with it does wonders in helping you enter and maintain the Flow State.



Lewis Reid, Joseph Shippen-Davies & Blake Norton

Flow State-2

3) Work on the task in a low-distraction environment. Notice the emphasis on “low” rather than “no” distraction; the key is to remove man-made distraction, including phones (if you are doing the work on your phone, make sure to turn off notifications), un-natural noises like telephones and alarms, which are piercing to the human ear; and new music! Yes, no new songs when you are fully in your flow. However, sensory deprivation in one or more of your senses makes entering the flow state harder. So, open a window to let the sounds of birds or the sound of the wind come in. Also, having a tactile toy on your desk can help you to maintain focus and prevent RSI if you are doing something repetitive like typing or writing.

4) The final tactic is the simplest: have “stakes in the problem” as we naturally want to be more involved in problems where the outcome directly affects us. The best ways to have stakes in a problem is to be passionate about it, to directly profit or gain from it immediately (e.g. cooking dinners; immediate profit is eating the dinner) or to be constantly improving on the skills required to complete the task in a satisfying and useful manner. Having stakes in the problem helps you to enjoy doing the task more which helps you enter the Flow State faster and thus spend more time working more efficiently.

“Water can creep or flow or drip or crash, be water my friend” This famous quote was said by Bruce Lee when describing the Flow State. Bruce Lee was one of the best martial artists of his time and he describes the flow state as being able to morph, change and adapt to any situation. This can be applied to anything that you put your mind to. The key to unlocking the Flow State is to find an equilibrium between your skill and capability at a task and the challenge of the task. This is one of the reasons why being in the flow state is such an efficient mindset to use as not only are you completing work quickly, but you are also working to the best of your ability. The Flow State is a mindset then that acts as a really supportive reason to continue to challenge yourself and always push yourself a little bit further as doing tasks that are too easy or simple will only result in boredom but doing tasks too difficult will result in frustration and anger. This concept of small baby steps forward can be applied to anything you do, hobbies social activities and of course schoolwork to improve and work in a quick and efficient way.

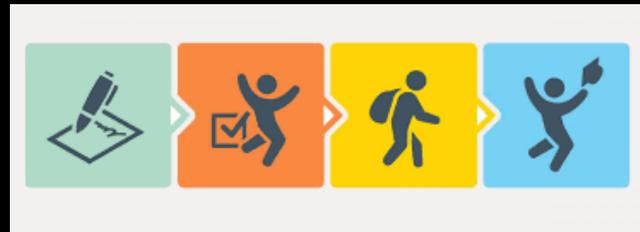


Going to University: Making your Firm and Insurance choices on UCAS

- The deadline for choosing your firm and insurance acceptance on UCAS is 10th June
- Your 'firm' acceptance is your first choice. This means that if you meet the requirements of their offer on results day, you will definitely be going there.
- Your 'insurance' acceptance is your backup. The requirements for this option must be lower than your firm choice. If you do not meet the entry requirements for your firm, but you do meet the requirements for your insurance, then you will be going to your insurance university.
- This is a big decision. You're choosing a place and a course that you will be studying for the next 3 or more years – it's a big commitment. It's also a financial commitment as you will be paying for your course (usually funded through student finance). Think carefully and ask for advice!

For more information look here on the UCAS website:

- <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/replying-your-ucas-undergraduate-offers>
- This decision is irreversible, so discarded courses at this stage cannot be retrieved
- Once you choose your firm acceptance, you can make decisions on the accommodation. For advice, follow: <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/undergraduate-accommodation>
- It is also time to apply for Students Finance. Start getting information at <https://www.ucas.com/money>





“Screen-Free Challenge” by Raees Malik

- **Planning ahead**
Most of my daily activities rely on devices and so I thought to myself that I needed to devise ways to make some of them really easy to complete, without too much suffering, so to speak, in order to succeed. Praying is an example of an activity that I had to be creative about....I could have used the old-fashioned way and just base the timing on the sun at 6.16am, but I'm terrible at waking up early and without the alarm from my phone, I did not stand a chance! Recruiting my dad as a human alarm clock was the only way out!

00:00 - All I can say, is that I am glad I just played the whole of Kid A by Radiohead (good album too). But then I feel terrible, as I realise that there would be no more music for me for the next 24 hours... I cannot access any of my music nor can I access the internet like: at all. Frustrated that I am doing the challenge but... oh well, I guess it's not the end of the world. It's half-term, I am going to sleep plenty, sleep and sleep.



6:45 - Now woken up and washed up, prayer completed....I go back to sleep. Yeah, why not? I had less work to do as there is no school and, besides, the multiple late nights of doing homework and writing notes and preparing flashcards and completing exam questions....you get the idea? I get a pass this time: I deserve it....right?



12:00 - So yeah, I sleep a lot more than I should. Well, we did agree that I deserve it, didn't we? And, besides, what else can I really do? Since there is no need to do work (right? You following? IT'S HALF-TERM!!!) I decide to go for a run, as I've been cooped up inside forever, and the snow is melting away quickly. A run it is!

13:45 - Second prayer of the day done, all kitted out, I just run and run, and...something is not quite right: it's the issue of no music! No rhythm nor inspirational lyrics, pumping my blood up. It must have been the most boring run in the history of mankind. Back inside I go and start thinking of something else to do.....more than ten hours to go!!!!

- If running is going to be boring, why not try and use the other equipment and rotate over? mmmmm, that way I have some interest (though the bed starts looking appealing again, sigh!), as well as some rhythm to help me.

15:10 - All considered, so far, things have been pretty decent, I am surviving. I have finally done something for myself and also I am able to quickly get the third prayer of the day done. I am jealous of my brother being able to talk to his friends whilst he plays Minecraft on his laptop. Well, the world is an unfair place to be and we were born to suffer, I guess.

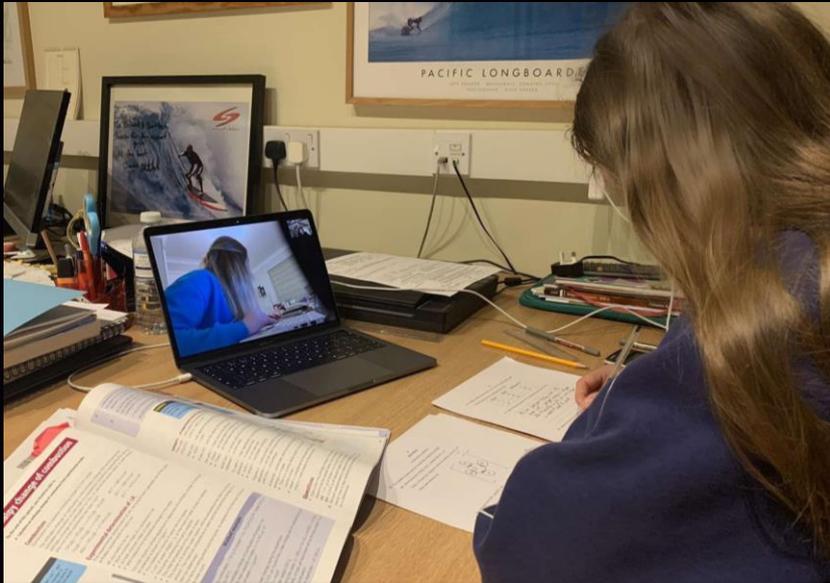


17:45 - So now I am very bored. Like, really, really bored. Usually, I would be preoccupied with homework or talking to my friends online. What to do? I decide to read though some of the old Diary of a Wimpy Kid books until I got bored again.

- (just putting this out: anyone who didn't read those books has not lived)

19:25 - All the prayers for the day done, and yeah, guess what? there really isn't much eventful stuff happening afterwards. I guess it goes to show how much I use my phone, every day; every hour of the day....

22:50 - That's it, I cannot take it anymore, I am getting ready for bed and just hope the challenge is over soon, so that I can actually be able to go onto YouTube or talk to someone. ANYBODY OUT THERE????? I'll take a nap....zzzzzzzzzzzzzz!



Studying together in lockdown

Throughout this lockdown, we decided to be more proactive in our approach to revision and have worked together to do more productive revision as previously we spent long hours revising using ineffective revision techniques and we were not progressing as we would have liked. Our results were not reflective of the time and effort we put into revision. We realised we were not revising effectively and knew something had to change, so we came together to discuss our shared issues and decided we would work together to aid our progress. To do this we have a call every week to discuss work we have individually completed for that week and then work together to complete past papers. From completing these we found the most effective way to complete past papers was to work through them alone under timed conditions and then go through the paper together, discussing any further questions we may have from completing the paper. Doing this with someone on the phone imitates exam conditions, so we are less likely to become distracted. Working together to prepare for assessments and sharing our personal revision strategies has been very effective and we have both seen improvements to our results. We also have other discussions about relevant topics linking to our subjects which complements our learning that we do in class. Working together in this way has been very effective for us both and may be something that could help others also.



Calypso Priestly & Liberty Foden



Virtual Work Ex

- **With the Easter holidays round the corner, it's a perfect time for students to start to think about Work Experience. As it is currently very difficult to find placements, do not miss out on the 130 virtual WEX opportunities in the Unifrog Special Opportunities tool. Here's how to find them:**
- **1. On the Special Opportunities tool, students first select which country they're from.**
- **2. The tool then asks which country they're interested in searching opportunities from. To find all the virtual WEX opportunities, select 'Online/ Worldwide'.**
- **3. Students then select up to 10 subject areas they're interested in which takes them through to the longlist.**
- **4. From here, students pick their top placements to create a shortlist of up to 10 opportunities. The shortlist gives information about what to expect from the placement and how to apply for it.**

> [Log in to Unifrog](#)



Welcome to the Sixth Form Gallery



Winner
Hannah Wilkins

'Please find attached the photo of myself, Cole, Harrison, Tom, Elias and Nic playing bingo over a video call! We were later joined by Maddie, Sam Rees and Nathan. We listened to Maddie play her guitar and then started singing and dancing to the music we had playing through the Discord bot. It was the highlight of our week'.



Honourable mention
Amelia Billimore

'This is a photo of Pixie, I spent half term cat sitting her whilst my brother moved back in so she wasn't in the way'.



'I thought I'd show you what my half term has consisted of, training my very smiley new puppy'!

Honourable mention
Poppy Gill

'I was mainly tidying up in the half term... thought I would use the time to tidy up my folders'.

Honourable mention
Muzzammil Jivraj



As usual a great response from the Sixth Form students. Hannah's image only just beats the non humans How do you want your image reproduced? Key ring, coaster or mouse mat, Hannah? For the next newsletter our theme will be 'my folder is better than your folder'?