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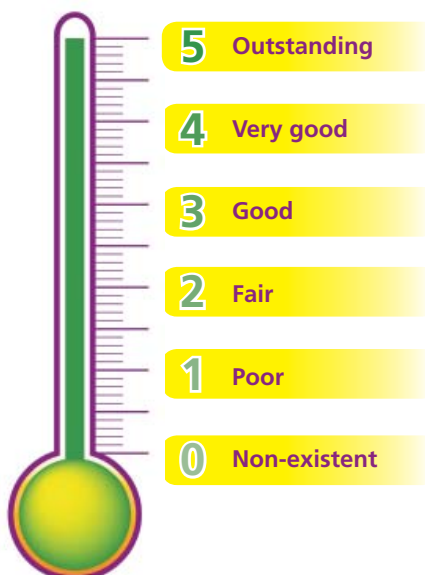
School year in review – room for improvement?

So how successful was the school year for you? Were you happy with your results in assignments and exams? Was it better than the year before? Do you think you will go well next year?

If you sometimes dislike school, or are too busy to organise your study area, to develop good time management techniques or to revise your notes, you can still perform reasonably well in assignments and exams. But imagine how much more successful you could be with a more positive attitude and a study program that runs like a well-oiled machine.

To rate your performance during the past year, give yourself a score out of five for each of these ten key areas that contribute to your success as a student.

Use this scale:



G oal setting (focussing on what you want to achieve each day, each week, each term)	—
O rganisation (system that helps you keep track of everything)	—
T ime management (time shared across subjects, work completed on time)	—
C oncentration (in class, using the available time to learn as much as possible)	—
H omework (completing tasks set by teachers, including assignments)	—
A ttitude (staying positive even when disappointed or bored)	—
R evision (reviewing each subject in an effort to memorise it)	—
E xercise (keeping fit through sport, gym, swimming, walking)	—
D iet (healthy, balanced, not too many refined foods and sugars)	—
S leep and rest (not too much, not too little)	—
TOTAL	—

Now add up your ten scores. If your total score is 35 or more, congratulations! You are probably already achieving great success as a student. Perhaps there are one or more areas with a low score that you can try to improve. If your total score is between 25 and 35, you should be pleased that some areas are going well. You need to make a resolution to improve in the other areas. If your total score is less than 25, you have a fair way to go to become a successful student. But the fact you have taken the time to do this check-up suggests you are ready to move to the next level. (GOTCHA REDS is an acrostic using the first letter of the ten key areas. It can help you to remember them.)

The older you are as a student, the more likely you are to have accumulated a pile of useless notes and some bad study habits. You may also have developed some negative attitudes towards your own ability as a learner, towards certain subjects or teachers, or towards school itself. After evaluating your performance, take some time to make a few changes to ensure an even more productive year ahead..

To be a successful student, you need a well-organised study space, whether it is in your bedroom or another part of your home. You might be able to use this checklist to make a few improvements:

Checklist

- fresh air to prevent drowsiness
- room lighting
- desk lighting to reduce eyestrain
- supportive chair to improve concentration – do not try to work on the bed or floor
- clear work space – do not use the top of your desk for storage or filing unless it is a big desk
- quiet – music, if used, should help you to relax and concentrate
- file for each subject
- storage for textbooks
- storage for current project/assignment material
- throw out old notes and workbooks that are no longer needed
- school timetable on wall or in diary to assist packing of school bag each day
- year planner on wall to show dates for excursions, assignments and exams
- weekly study planner on desk or pin board to keep a balance between homework, assignments and revision
- “to do” list on desk to help prioritise tasks
- display area for charts, memory aids, goals
- clock

Most of these ideas are simple to implement. Take advantage of your New Year enthusiasm to try a few. Best wishes for your best school year ever!
