

Strategies to consider to keep up with study and maximise learning

1. Start by building knowledge structure *"Map the knowledge (go beyond "memorise")."*

Create chapter-level outlines (not just sentence summaries, don't limit yourself to paragraphs, as you need to **build connections**)

- **identify chapter-level or week-level learning objectives**
- Sketch out a **hierarchical structure**:

Topic → Subtopics → Supporting Studies and controversial topics (including a list of key references/studies)

Key concepts (how are they connected?)

Historical sequence of concepts / theories / events

- Use **mind maps**, **flowcharts**, or **nested bullet points** to visualize how concepts interrelate
- Journal articles: often you don't have to study all sections: identify the purpose of the assignment and be strategic

Focus on relationships and frameworks

- Map out **theories**, **competing/alternative/complementary explanations**, and **historical development**
- Compare frameworks side-by-side (e.g., Cognitive vs. Behaviorist)

2. Continue with active summarising and rephrasing

"Digest the content in your own words to deepen understanding"

After outlining in diagrams:

- Rephrase core ideas in **your own words**
- Make **bullet-point summaries** that follow the structural map you built earlier
- Use analogies or visual metaphors where helpful

► **Highlight strategically**, for instance **Yellow** = Key concepts and definitions, **Pink** = Important researchers and theories, **Blue** = Supporting evidence, examples, or critical points

Use **sticky notes or digital tags** to mark controversial or unclear ideas for further review

3. Consolidate with self-testing and deepening understanding

"Testing is learning. Question what you read"

Create **questions** from:

- Your own summaries
- Contradictory theories or alternative explanations

- Unresolved debates in the literature

Use **study groups** (or AI) to:

- Generate questions
- Discuss hypothetical scenarios

Ask questions on the **module forum**

4. Time management and planning *“A realistic plan beats last-minute stress”*

Semester planning

- Use **term calendars**, **assignment deadlines**, and **reminder apps** (e.g., Outlook, Google Calendar, some people use TickTick etc.)
- Allocate **fixed weekly slots** for lectures, readings, writing, and review

Daily planning

- Write your **to-do list the evening before** → reduces mental clutter before sleep and gives structure to the next day

Include:

- Core study goals
- Remove distractions
- 1-2 flexible or “buffer” tasks
- Rest breaks and reward time (dopamine boosts!)

Add buffers Include **contingency time** for illness, emotional setbacks, unexpected life events

Tip: 10-15% of your weekly study time should be flexible

5. Environment and support

“Environment shapes habit. Protect your focus.”

Minimise distractions

- Study in **media-free sessions** (use “Focus Mode” apps like Forest or Pomodoro timers), if there are tangential thoughts write them on paper to pay attention later, instead of interrupting your study
- Use **real books or printed PDFs** when possible to reduce screen fatigue and increase multimodal experience/consolidation
- Some people study better outside home, with less distractions

Use the library strategically

- **Silent study rooms** for deep focus
- **Discussion rooms** for group work or concept exchanges

Use writing support workshops and academic labs available in your library

Studiosity for written assignment feedback <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/academic-skills/studiosity/>

Other academic skills library session <https://qmul.libcal.com/calendar/asc?cid=8153&t=g&d=0000-00-00&cal=8153&inc=0>

Other library support for academic skills <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/library/academic-skills/>