THE JOURNEY OF YOURS

THE SELF-DIRECTED ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDY PLAN

NAME:

CLASS:

NUMBER:

YEAR:

Ying Wa College

English Department

The Self-Directed English Language Study Plan

At the beginning of this school year, what are your goals for your study in Ying Wa? How are you going to achieve your goals? It is now time for you to pave the road to your English learning journey ahead!

In order to strengthen your ownership of learning, it is important that you develop your *self-directed learning* competence. Follow the five steps highlighted below:

Steps in self-directed learning	What you should do
1. Goal setting	Identify your own learning goals & learning activities
2. Self-planning	Regulate and plan for the detailed decisions and arrangements about your own learning (e.g. planning and creating an outline of schedule)
3. Self-monitoring	Self-manage your own time, monitor your own pocket of learning strategies, and adjust your own learning pathway continuously on the way
4. Self-evaluation	Become aware of the assessment criteria (either set by the homework or by yourself) and critically evaluate your work according to set criteria
5. Revision	Revise your work based on the feedback from your teacher or peers at various stages, reflect on your own learning and apply what you have learnt to new contexts (e.g. in the next textbook unit / before the next test)

The steps form a cycle of action that should repeat to sustain changes and improvements.

## Step 0: Understand your strengths and weaknesses

Before you can set your goals, you should reflect on your strengths and weaknesses. Think about your learning of English. What are you good at? What have you achieved already? What do you need to work further on?

You may conduct a self-analysis using the skill-energy diagram shown below:

High Skill	I am good at this but don't really like doing it.	I am good at this and love doing it.
Low Skill	I am not so good at this and don't like doing it.	I am not so good at this but love trying and learning about it.
	Low Energy	**High Energy**

High Skill – Low Energy (upper left)	High Skill – High Energy (upper right)
• It is something you are not interested in doing but you have the skill to perform well. • You should find a way to motivate yourself and stay focused when doing it. • *e.g. You do not like learning vocabulary but you can remember new words very easily.*	• It is something you are able to achieve and you enjoy doing. • You should keep doing it regularly but you may spare more time on other aspects. • *e.g. You enjoy listening to English and you are able to understand even fast speakers.*
Low Skill – Low Energy (lower left)	Low Skill – High Energy (lower right)
• It is something you find difficult and not fun to do. • If it is something that is actually helpful to your learning, you should push yourself to try it and give more effort on it. • *e.g. You do not like to write in English and you seldom know what to write when you are given a composition task.*	• It is something you are not good at but eager to try. • You should develop better strategies to achieve it. • *e.g. You like reading English articles about different topics but you are a slow reader.*

⬤ Task: Reflect on your English learning experience and fill in the following skill-energy diagram.

High skill - low energy	High skill - high energy
Low skill - low energy	Low skill - high energy
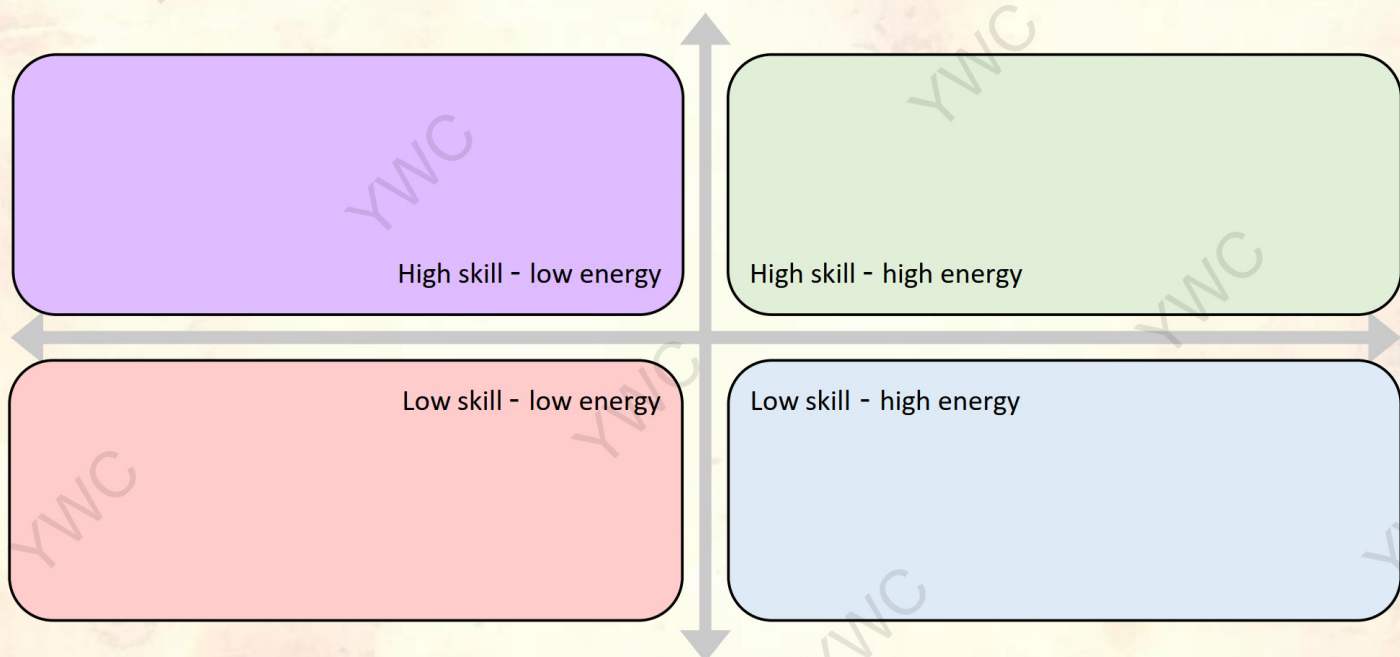
Step 1: Set your SMART goals

A well-set goal boosts your chance of being successful. Now that you have identified what your areas of achievement and improvement, follow the five steps in the SMART framework to set your goals.

S: Specific

Start at the beginning with what you hope to achieve. Giving yourself a goal to "be better" or something equally vague won't cut it – you need to have a specific destination in mind if you ever hope to know when you've gotten there.

Bad example: To be a better student

Good example: To improve on my English writing skills

M: Measurable

A measurable goal lets you track your progress over time instead of simply hoping for the best. If you don't put a hard number to your goal, it can be easy to tell yourself that you've "made it" without putting in the work it really takes to achieve it.

Bad example: To get better results

Good example: To score at least 70% in Paper 1 by the end of the year

A: Attainable/Achievable

As you set goals for yourself, make sure they are not too far out of your reach. This is a delicate balancing act: your goals should stretch your abilities and make you feel the effort you're putting into them, but they shouldn't be so outlandish that there's no chance of seeing them come true.

Bad example: To recite the whole dictionary in two months

Good example: To learn at least ten vocabulary items each week

Specific — **S**

Measurable — **M**

Achieveable — **A**

Relevant — **R**

Time-bound — **T**

R: Relevant/Realistic

This element of goal-setting focuses on making sure that each individual goal will help your overall plans. Having your goals pull you in too many different directions may mean that you won't develop forward momentum toward your larger work or life goals. It's also important to be realistic; dreaming big is one thing, but it can sometimes be taken too far.

Bad example: To become the subject leader of all subjects, the Class Committee Chairperson and the first in the whole form in academic ranking.

Good example: To become the English subject leader so I can become more dedicated to my revision in English.

T: Timely/Trackable

The final piece of a SMART goal lets you effectively track your progress rather than just hoping you arrive with no clear indicators. Give yourself a set timeframe – this can always be changed as your goals evolve, but deadlines are an important motivator.

Bad example: To read more English newspapers.

Good example: To read three English newspaper articles every week for a school term.

These are the common mistakes to goal setting:	Tips on setting better goals:
☹ Too vague	✓ Add a timeline to achieve the goal
☹ No time limit to achieve it	✓ Adjust the scale of achievement
☹ Having no passion/interest in it	✓ Add in rewards at key milestones
☹ Unclear when the goal is/will be achieved	✓ Prioritise goals that can be reached more easily and quickly
☹ Easy loss of interest because it takes too long	✓ Challenge yourself but do not make it impossible to reach
☹ A goal that parents/teachers want instead of what you want as a learner	

⦾ Task: Set a goal for your English learning this year. Then ask a friend to evaluate and complete the radar diagram using the five SMART criteria to show the power level of this goal. Write an improved goal for yourself afterwards.

Your goal: _____

_____

Comments from _____ :

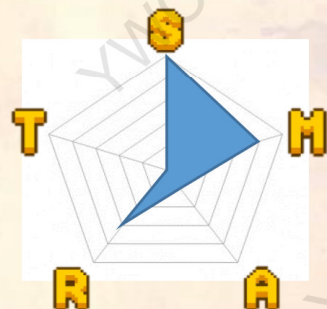| S	
M	
A	
R	
T	
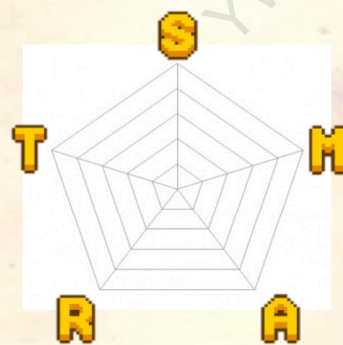
Improved goal: _____

Example: To get 88 marks in about 30% of quizzes (given that his usual score is 12)

Comments from John:

S	Specific score indicated (Very good)
M	A rough amount of tasks involved (Good)
A	Probably unreasonable improvement from 12 to 88 marks (Poor)
R	Quizzes are relevant to studying, but which subject? (Ok)
T	No definite time indicated (Dissatisfactory)

Improved goal: To get 50 marks in two English quizzes in each school term.

Step 2a: Devising and prioritising strategies

The problem-solution framework

Now that you have set your own self-directed learning goal, it is time to create a plan that facilitate your accomplishment. The problem-solution framework may help you better devise your action plan:

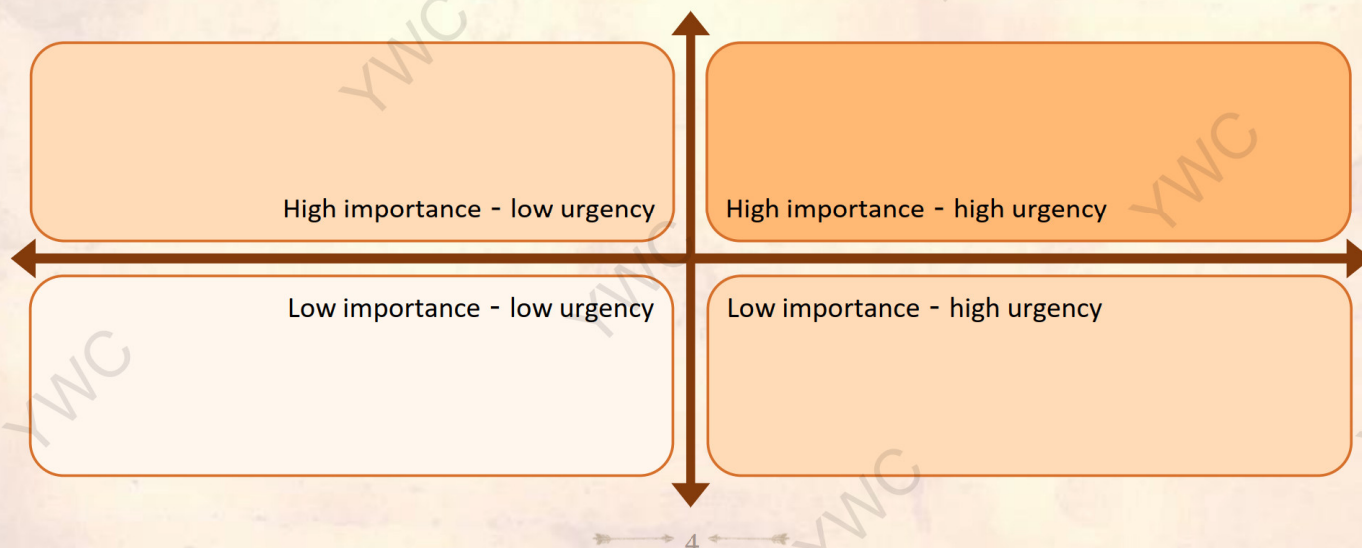| Problem	Solution	Result
Clearly define the problem you are facing	Identify possible solutions for the problem	Set criteria for success and failure
e.g. I do not know enough English words, so I often get a low mark in my English writing.	*e.g. I should learn five words every day by reading books.*	*e.g. I should be able to use ten new vocabulary items in each English writing assignment.*
1.		
2.		
3.		

🪙 Task: Complete at least three rows of the problem-solution-result table above based on your needs.

The urgency-importance matrix

A common issue you may face is how to prioritise your action in order to tackle the list of problems you have identified. A helpful strategy is to analyse the urgency and importance of the task:

	Urgency: Urgent tasks require immediate attention —we should stop what we are currently doing and work on them first *e.g. Which of the following is more urgent?* *Improving final exam results versus Doing revision for the coming quiz*
	Importance: Important tasks lead us towards our overall mission or goals and these key actions often require planning, organisation and initiative *e.g. Which of the following is more important?* *Reading a diverse range of English books versus Visiting more restaurants to explore words about food*

🪙 Task: Fill in the following urgency-importance diagram based on your situation.

High importance - low urgency

High importance - high urgency

Low importance - low urgency

Low importance - high urgency

Steps 2b: Creating your Self-Directed English Language Study Plan

It is time to put everything you have brainstormed above onto an organised study plan for your actual action. Look at p.6 and 7 for the study plan sample and template respectively. Begin with your main, overall goals, and then move on to smaller and more specific objectives in the sections as follows:

1. My overall goal in English language learning in my life
    - What do you hope to achieve using English in your school life and your career? (Try to think about your ambition you had since young—no dreams are too big!)
2. My English learning goal(s) in secondary school
    - In order to reach your lifetime goal, what do you aim at in English learning before your graduation?
3. My English learning goal(s) for this school year
    - In this school year, what do you hope to achieve in your English learning so that you may reach your larger goal(s) in your secondary school life?
4. Specific timebound action plan (Timeframe-action-effectiveness table)
    - What are some smaller steps you can take over the duration of this school year to reach your goals? (e.g. What can you do in September to October vs November to December?)
    - Set a specific timeframe to your action so that you know when you should be taking what action.

Steps 3 & 4: Monitoring and evaluating your study plan

At the end of every timeframe you set, *monitor* your progress by recording your extent and speed of attainment of targets you have set (e.g. target=finish three books per week; progress=finished nine books in the past month).

Evaluate your progress by asking yourself these questions:

- What are the most important results I obtained during the last timeframe?
- Did I deviate from the plan for the previous timeframe? If so, why?
- What are my most important goals for the next timeframe?
- What do I have to do to meet these goals?
- What can I do to overcome any hurdles on the way?

Step 5: Revising your study plan

Based on the results of your evaluation, may any necessary modifications to your study plan so as to help you reach your goal.

The following examples show some potential changes to your plan:

- e.g. You aimed at learning 20 words every day, but you only learnt five words every day in the past month.
    - Revision: Change the goal to learning ten words every day + Update your action to be investing more time on reading and jotting the words you come across onto a notebook
- e.g. Your goal was to get a pass in every dictation, but you could get 70 marks in the past dictation.
    - Revision: Increase your target score to 65 for the dictation next month

Remember to always refer to your study plan over the year and reflect on your progress continuously.

<p align="center">Your journey begins…</p>

A sample study plan

My overall goal in English language learning

to work in public relations in an international law firm

⬇

My English learning goal(s) in secondary school

1. *to be able to write press releases in the role of a company employee for a range of corporate communication contexts*

2. *to be able to remember and apply 90% of vocabulary items in the Academic Word List before the DSE*

⬇

My English learning goal(s) for this school year

1. *to read two workplace-related English books every week*

2. *to get at least 70% of marks in every Paper 3B assignment and exam*

3. *to be able to speak for two minutes on any popular culture topic without using a note card*

Timeframe	Action	Effectiveness
September to October	*Note down five key strategies about effective communication in workplace situations*	*Copied six such strategies onto Google Sheet;* *Applied two during the first Paper 3B task*
November to December	*Note down five key strategies about effective communication in workplace situations;* *Read three newspaper articles every day and write a 300-word reflection on every article*	*Jotted seven such strategies onto Google Sheet + elaborated on real-life scenarios;* *Read two newspaper articles every day during weekends only;* *Did not complete any reflection*
January to February	*Note down ~~five~~ six key strategies about effective communication in workplace situations;* *Read three newspaper articles every ~~day~~ weekend and write a ~~200~~ 300-word reflection on one article every month*	*(in progress)*

My Self-Directed English Study Plan

My overall goal in English language learning

⬇

My English learning goal(s) in secondary school

1.	2.

⬇

My English learning goal(s) for this school year

1.	2.	3.

Timeframe	Action	Effectiveness