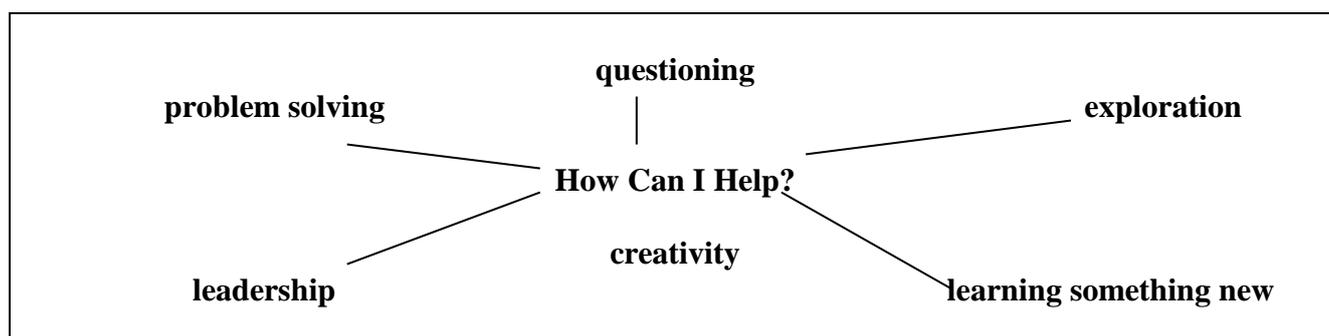


CHALLENGING KS3 PUPILS AT HOME



Suggested Activities

The following are just suggestions as to how parents might want to help to challenge pupils at home. Please do not feel that you have to do any of the following and, indeed, it would be difficult for you to do everything on this list! The best approach would be to try out some of these suggestions when suitable opportunities arise.

Art

1. Make time for a family outing to a gallery. Look at the variety of the paintings, for example in the Tate Modern. This can be linked to exploring the gallery's website beforehand.
2. Look at different kinds of art books, both 'how to' books and the history of style.
3. Collect a variety of postcards and posters of famous paintings, ask your son to memorise them and to then guess the title of each one as you show them. To make it harder, get him to justify why he thinks the painting is from that painter – discuss aspects of style.
4. Encourage him to vary his use of materials. Get him to complete a picture using colour pencils and then oil pastels – what differences does he notice? Which was easier to use? Why?

English

1. Read editorials in quality newspapers.
2. Watch television and radio programmes about current affairs and cultural issues, e.g. Newsnight, Front Row.
3. Share and discuss books with pupils. Encourage them to read more challenging books, e.g. the 'classics'.
4. Visit museums that will help pupils to understand the social, historic and cultural backgrounds of texts, e.g. Imperial War Museum if pupils are studying war literature.
5. Encourage pupils to do word puzzles, e.g. crosswords.

Geography

1. Ask your son to cut out the synoptic weather maps from a quality newspaper for a week and then explain the pattern of weather observed.
2. Look at the aerial photo of the Thames in the Eastenders title sequence. Get your son to predict how that stretch of river and surrounding land might change in the next 100 years, with reasons.
3. Take a photo of a town or countryside scene on a mobile phone/ digital camera. Using ICT, get your son to annotate geographical features, using at least 10 words of geographical terminology.
4. After a family holiday, get your son to produce a montage of the area's physical/ human geography.

History

1. Encourage viewing of history programmes/series on television. There are many good ones on terrestrial TV and satellite TV, especially the History Channel.
2. Encourage your son to find his own historical sources on a topic and analyse them for usefulness and reliability, just as in a standard test/ exam.
3. Ask your son to choose a historical character from his studies and get him to answer questions as though they are that character (ask questions about his or her activities/ views).
4. Look at a historical issue and break it down to its basic facts. Then get your son to spin the facts with suitable language and varying emphases to make the material for or against the sides in the argument.

Computing/ICT

1. Get your son to use a spreadsheet to manage home finance and costing out a holiday.
2. Encourage him to make his own revision podcasts which he could then upload onto his own web page. Can he share his work with others?

Mathematics

1. Encourage pupils to do puzzles, especially Sudoku and number wands.

Modern Foreign Languages

1. Ask him to explain in detail what they have learnt during the lesson on a particular day. Can he now tell you that in the foreign language?
2. Test vocabulary regularly, not only saying out loud and in spelling tests but also use the words in sentences. Can you change the tense?
3. Encourage your son to record words and sentences onto tape. Can you improve his pronunciation?
4. Buy magazines when abroad. This will encourage him to read in the language he is learning.

Music

1. Listen to a wide range of music: Popular, dance, classical, film & TV, folk, jazz, and music from other countries. Every time you listen to a piece, work out:
 - The purpose of the music (why it was written)
 - How the composer has written the music to fit the purpose (in terms of tempo, rhythm, instrumentation etc).
2. Although not all pupils have keyboards/ instruments at home, pulse and rhythm exercises can always be practiced by clapping.

PE

1. Eat a healthy diet, e.g. good carbohydrates.
2. Avoid training clashes with other activities; use diary to ensure better organisation.
3. Manage time efficiently, e.g. academic work and sport.

Science

1. Test your son on terms in their glossary and his understanding of such terms.
2. Read quality science newspapers.
3. Explore the popular science section of a bookshop.
4. Make selective use of the Internet.
5. Watch scientific programmes on mainstream TV or the Discovery Channel.

Design and Technology

1. Watch technically-based TV programmes such as the “How it is made” series.
2. Take notice of work being done at home, e.g. building flat-pack furniture.
3. Look more closely at everyday objects to see what they are made from and how they are put together. Evaluate their appearance, ergonomics, materials and effectiveness.

Religious Studies

1. Encourage your son to watch the news at least twice a week and to note any ethical cases/issues. Also get your son to watch any advertised programmes which deal with ethical issues in the syllabus. BBC2 and Channel 4 often have relevant programmes.
2. Discuss world events and ethical issues around the kitchen table. Each person should say what reason or evidence persuades them of their view.
3. Pupils should be encouraged to read a newspaper or relevant magazine article which deals with ethical or religious issues.
4. When on holiday encourage your son to visit the local religious buildings with you to remind him of some of the things he has learnt. Ask him to explain the various things, pictures, sculptures he sees.

General

1. Read articles in a quality newspaper whenever possible.
2. Get your son to represent his notes in a different form, e.g. bullet points on global warming in science could be transferred into the script for a documentary on the topic.

3. When playing family games such as *Trivial Pursuit*, get your son to make up a new set of cards (questions) to play with according to the categories.
4. Play educational games and attempt brainteasers and puzzles, e.g. the crossword. Every Monday lunch-time in E6 pupils can play games such as Scrabble, Upwords, Dingbats, Rummikub and Wordrop for fun but also as a way of challenging their minds. Soon we hope to add games and puzzles such as Sudoku, Mastermind Braintwisters, Codebreakers and Scrabble in foreign language to the activities available.
5. Encourage independent project work. Provide opportunities to explore his passion. This could be via the web, pointing him in the direction of some research in the library or through getting him to present his ideas on the topic to you at a family dinner.
6. Introduce him to something new. By learning something new together you are encouraging him to see learning as a lifelong activity and not just a school based activity. This will also help broaden horizons.
7. Put him into a problem solving situation. It may be that you outline a problem you have encountered in work and ask him what his approach to it would be and whether he sees any solutions. An easier exercise might be to get him to direct an alternative route through traffic and putting obstacles in the way of the destination (this gets him to rethink his strategy).
8. Give him a leadership role in a family outing, e.g. organising the day trip, feeding the family on a tight budget.
9. Ask him to set himself a challenge which could be attempted over a number of weeks. Ask him how he is getting on with his challenge and upon completion acknowledge the effort with a reward (this encourages ownership of his learning).
10. Ask him to investigate the family tree. This not only gets him to understand his roots and build a sense of family/belonging but it also develops research skills and questioning through the nature of investigation.
11. To encourage watching of more ‘high-brow’ documentaries and educational programmes, ask him to watch three in the week (either record the programmes or set them if you have a television that will repeat programmes) and get him to recommend one for the whole family to watch. Make him justify why the watching of this particular programme is important. Get him to analyse the issues or themes. If he has a brother or sister, they may take turns at this activity. You could also get them to ask each other questions about the documentary, the person who chose it going away and researching the answers on the Internet.
12. If you have time to eat breakfast together at the weekend, ask him to discuss an editorial he has read in the papers that week (making this a routine will improve his reading skills and will start to become second nature where he will automatically read the editorials in a newspaper rather than just reading the sport pages).
13. Give your son chances to be frustrated, to need to work hard and to take extra time to figure something out. This is LEARNING and should be a positive experience.

Useful Books:

The Gifted Kids’ Survival Guide by Judy Galbraith. ISBN: 1575420538

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick Up for Your Gifted Child by Sally Yahnke Walker.

Encourage your child to adopt the growth mindset. The more you use your brain and go over material the more effectively it learns.

- Encourage students to take the more challenging options in life.
- When they fail help them to see this as a good thing as it helps them learn how to do something better next time. Mistakes are good.
- Help your child understand that the greater effort they put in will help them to make progress and what seems hard now will get easier with effort.
- Discuss the feedback teachers give your child – how will it help them make the next step in their learning?

<p>Bloom's Higher Order Questioning: Lowest = Knowledge</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge: arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce state. 2. Comprehension: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate, 3. Application: apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write. 4. Analysis: analyze, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test. 5. Synthesis: arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write. 6. Evaluation: appraise, argue, assess, compare, defend, estimate, judge, rate, value, evaluate. <p>Highest = Evaluation</p>	<p>An Example: Football</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the offside rule? 2. Explain the difference between the defending styles of Ashley Cole and Sol Campbell. 3. Consider the way Stephen Gerrard tackled Ashley Cole, if you were the coach what set of instructions would you give? 4. Analyse the turning point in the game. Why did it occur? 5. If you were planning a defensive game, which formation would have the best result? 6. Assess the contribution of Ashley Cole to the team's performance.
<p>Hints for Questioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your son open ended questions rather than closed ones. An open ended question does not have a single 'right' answer, for instance, "What was interesting in your day?" instead of "Did you have a good day?" • When questioning about homework, ask your son to explain his thinking, why he has come to certain conclusions. By getting him to justify and evaluate you are encouraging the higher order skills, e.g. using the question 'how effective is...?' • Make him hypothesise. Ask him questions such as 'What if...?' For example, "What if Mozart had lived until the age of 80?", "What if Hitler had won the Second World War?", "What if the oceans were not salty?" • Get them to justify their opinions, for example "Which entrepreneur do you admire the most and why?" 	

Some Dos and Don'ts:

- **Do show an interest in his learning by asking questions.**
- **Don't allow you son to think that they 'are no good at.....' We improve our abilities with constant effort.**
- **Do demonstrate to your son how to prioritise, schedule and let go. Your son may get more done, wear more hats, than most other people. Sometimes he may get over involved and can't decide how to lower his stress and commitments. Help him to learn that some goals are necessary 'hoops'.**
- **Don't discourage questions.**
- **Do encourage and praise your son's effort in his homework and class book more than his attainment.**
- **Don't over schedule your son; that is not the same as providing challenge.**
- **Do encourage your son to make mistakes and try things out. We learn by making mistakes and taking on new challenges.**
- **Don't hold your son up as an example for siblings or others to emulate. Comparisons might make your son tone down abilities so as not to feel freakish or disliked.**