

A Level Business Year 12 – 13

Summer Independent Learning 2026



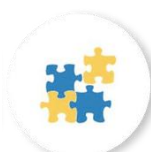
By completing these activities as part of your Summer Learning, you will gain:

- an opportunity to review your Year 1 content using retrieval practice
- further development of skills related to exam technique
- an ability to contribute in class with real world examples
- an appreciation of the fact that there will be lots of new content in Year 2
- an increased ability to hit the ground running at the start of the next academic year.

Completing this task will also help you develop the following skills:



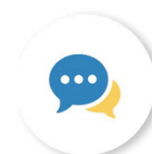
Organisation



Problem Solving



Initiative



Communication

Please make sure that you complete all of the tasks fully and electronically if possible and bring your work for submitting on Microsoft Teams to be reviewed by your teacher in your first Business Studies lesson. *[Note you can take pictures of your work and submit in one document using Microsoft Lens].*

Table of Contents

Section	Title	Page numbers
1.	Guidance and support	3
2	Pomodoro Technique	4
3.	Retrieval Practice - Introduction	5
	Retrieval Practice – Key Models	6-9
	Retrieval Practice – Free Recall	10-15
	Retrieval Practice – MCQ Blast	16-23
	Retrieval Practice – Quantitative skills	24-27
4	Application Skills	28-32
5	Analysis Skills	33-35
6	Evaluation Skills	36-39
7	Preview of Year 2 Content	40-42
8	Careers and Employability	43 -47



Guidance and support

Organise your SIL work for all your subjects using the calendar below. You can write which days you will do your work. You can then repeat this process each week by creating your own and amending the times if needs be.

Week Commencing: _____

Weekly SIL planning timetable

Weeks to go: _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 – 10:00							
10:00 – 11:00							
11:00 – 12:00							
12:00 – 13:00							
13:00 – 14:00							
14:00 – 15:00							
15:00 – 16:00							
16:00 – 17:00							
17:00 – 18:00							
18:00 – 19:00							



THE POMODORO METHOD

ABOUT

POMODORO is a productivity method created by Italian developer Francesco Cirillo.

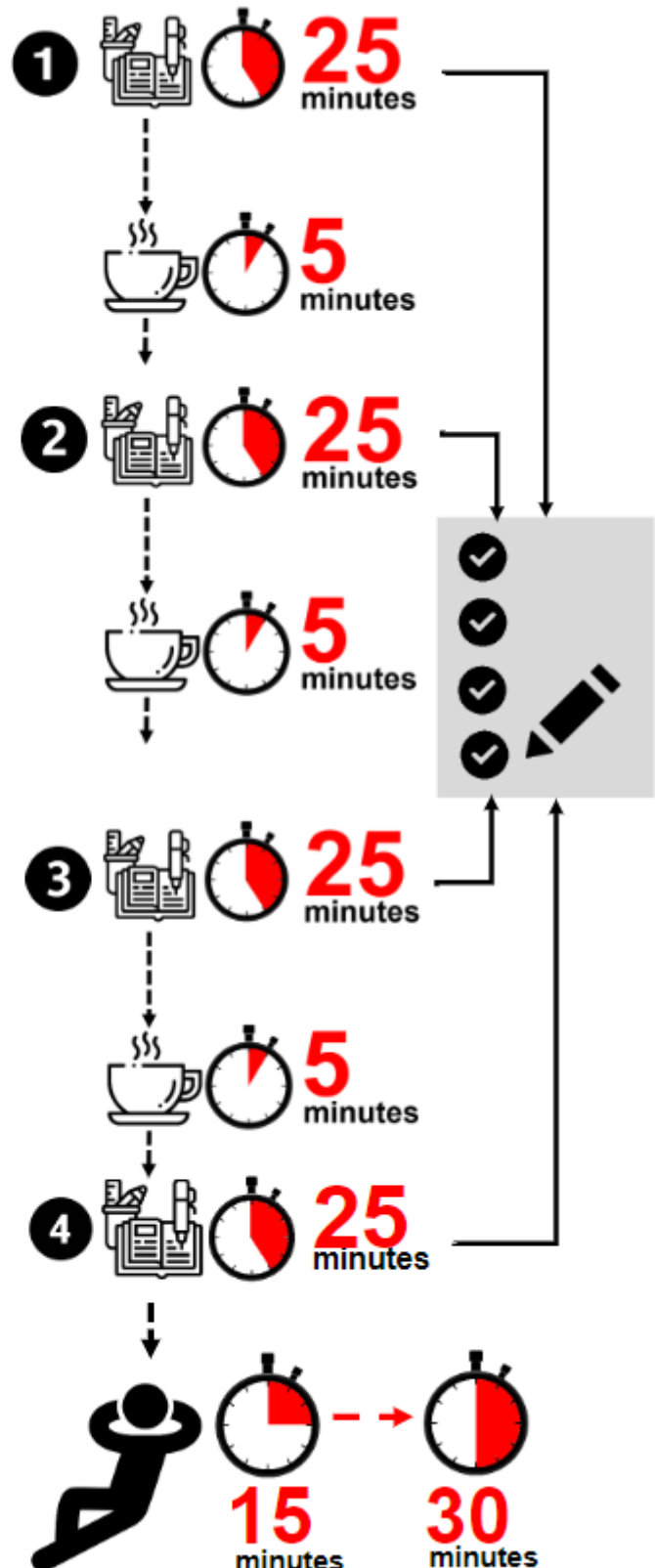
The name originates from the tomato-shaped timer that he used to track his time when he was completing assignments as a student.

“Pomodoro” is Italian for tomato

- ✓ A simple time management and productivity technique
- ✓ Involves breaking a large task down into smaller tasks (called “pomodoros”)
- ✓ Trains the brain to focus for short periods
- ✓ Over time it can build your attention span and ability to concentrate

HOW

- Choose the task that you wish to complete
- Set a timer and work on that task for 25 minutes
- When 25 minutes have elapsed, place a tick on a sheet of paper
- Take a 5 minute break
- Repeat this process 3 times, taking a longer break (15 – 30 minutes) after your fourth session



Retrieval Practice

Why should you review Year 1 content again? How can you do it?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrDOoBuP9A8>



Watch the following YouTube video and summarise the three ways you can use retrieval practice.

Which of these techniques do you use regularly?

Briefly explain why you should use retrieval practice

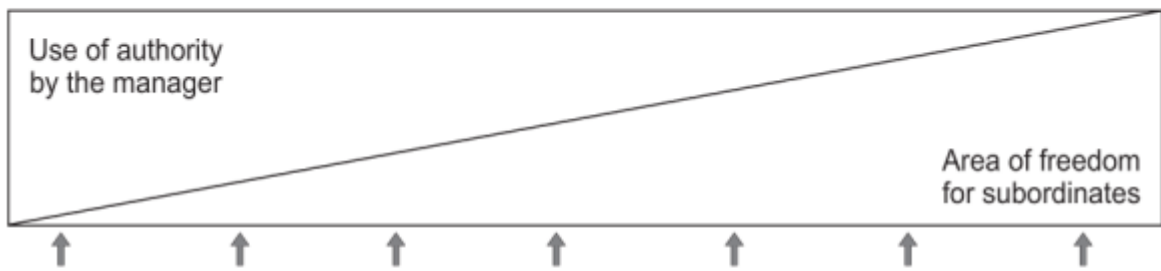
Key Theories from Year 1



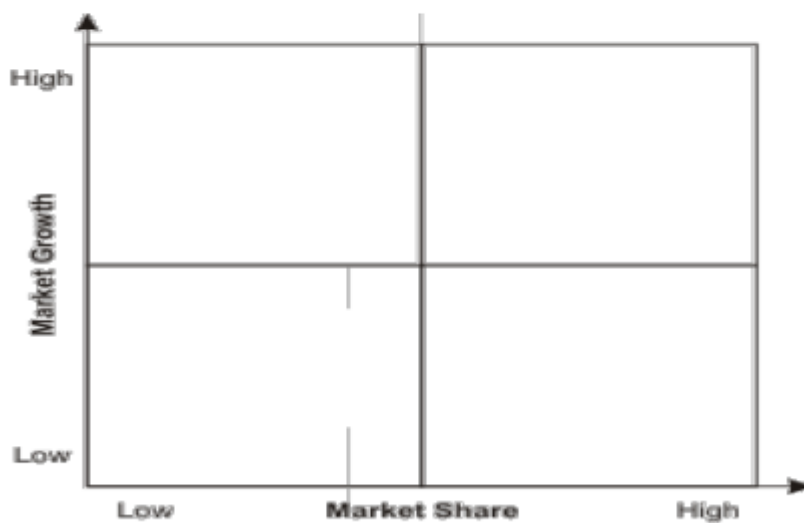
ACTIVITY

Fully label these models from Year 1. Try to do as much as you can from memory before referring to your notes.

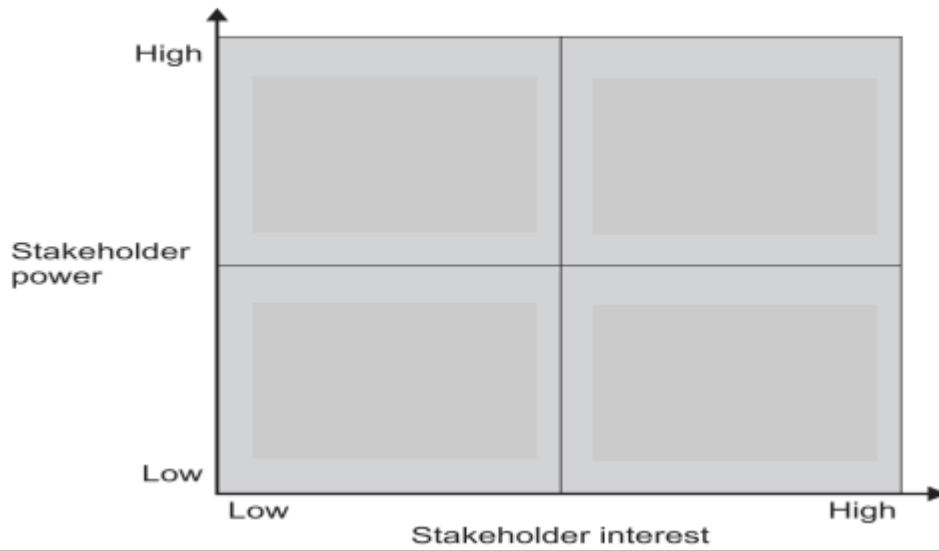
Tannenbaum Schmidt Continuum



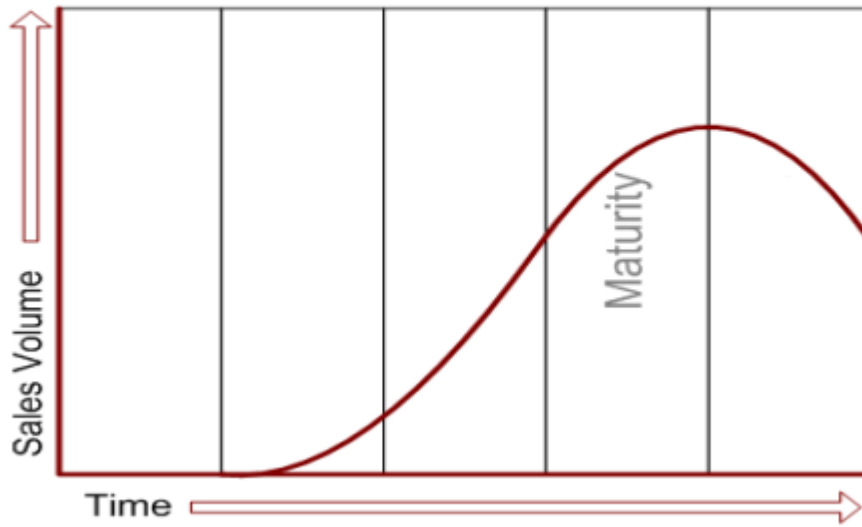
Boston Matrix



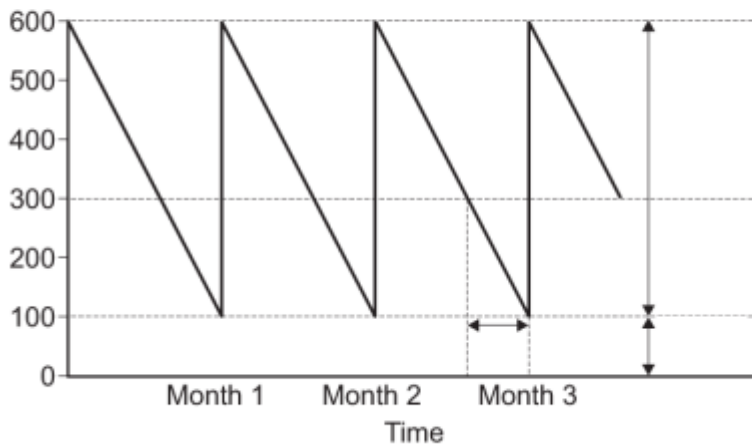
Stakeholder Mapping



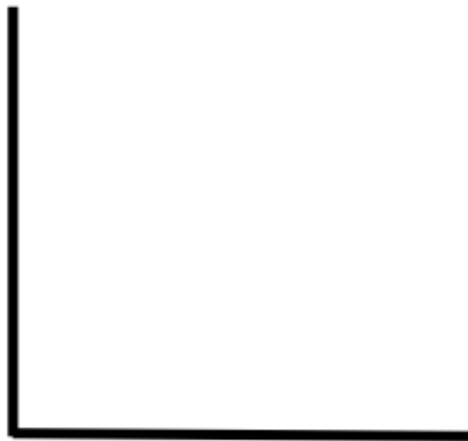
Product Life Cycle



Inventory Control Charts



Break-Even Charts





ACTIVITY

Free Recall (continued)

Now provide a more detailed explanation of the following theories from your own memory. Summarise the theories and explain why they are useful to businesses. Only once you have 'struggled hard' to recall the key information should you then use your notes from this year to complete the tables.

Theory	Description
Scientific decision making	
Decision trees	

Market mapping	
Price and income elasticity of demand	






Segmentation, targeting and positioning	
Extended Marketing Mix – 7P's	

Taylor	
Herzberg	

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	

Complete the following Tutor2u quizzes and record your scores here. Use your planner to break this down into bite-size chunks. Do not try and complete all of the MCQs at once!

Marketing Quizzes

Test Topic	Test score	Reflections on your knowledge of this topic. i.e further work to be done
<p>The Boston Matrix</p> 		
<p>Extended marketing mix (7P's)</p> 		
<p>Income Elasticity of Demand</p> 		
<p>Marketing Maths</p> 		
<p>Marketing Research</p> 		
<p>Marketing Objectives</p>		



Distribution Decisions



Product Life Cycle



Pricing Decisions



Price Elasticity of Demand



Promotion Decisions



Product Decisions











Segmentation, Targeting and

Positioning











Finance Quizzes







Test Topic	Test Score	Reflections on your knowledge of this topic. i.e further work to be done
Break-even basics 		
Budgets and Budgeting 		
Business costs 		
Cash flow management 		
Contribution 		
Setting Financial Objectives		







		
<p>Sources of Finance</p> 		
<p>Variance Analysis</p> 		


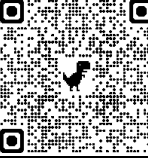



Operations Quizzes

Test Topic	Test score	Reflections on your knowledge of this topic. i.e further work to be done
<p>Capacity management</p> 		
<p>Inventory Management</p> 		
<p>Lean Production</p>		

		
<p>Operational Objectives</p> 		
<p>Unit costs and productivity</p> 		
<p>Quality Management</p> 		
<p>Inventory Management</p> 		
<p>Supply Chains</p> 		

Test Topic	Test score	Reflections on your knowledge of this topic. i.e further work to be done
Analysing HR Performance 		
Employer & Employee relations 		
Human Resource Planning 		
Labour Productivity 		
Leadership & Management Styles 		
Motivation (Financial Methods) 		
Motivation (Non-Financial)		

		
<p>Motivation (Theory)</p> 		
<p>Organisational Structure</p> 		
<p>Recruitment</p> 		
<p>Setting HRM Objectives</p> 		
<p>Training</p> 		

Test Topic	Test score	Reflections on your knowledge of this topic. i.e further work to be done
Business Objectives 		
Decision Making (Introduction) 		
Different forms of business 		
External Environment (Introduction) 		
Stakeholders 		

Quantitative skills

At least 10 per cent of the marks in your final A Level Business papers will come from quantitative skills, so it is important to keep practicing them and to make sure that you feel confident with different types of calculations. Make sure that you review the formulas you need regularly.



Formula Review: Give the formulas for the following key concepts

Market Share=

Market Growth=

Sales Growth=

Profit =

Profit (using contribution) =

Total Revenue =

Total costs =

Contribution per unit =

Total contribution =

Breakeven occurs when

Breakeven output (units) =

Margin of Safety =

Total variable costs =

Added value =

Labour Turnover (%) =

Labour Productivity (Output per employee) =

Labour Absenteeism (%) =

Capacity Utilisation (%) =

Unit Costs (average costs) =

Labour cost per unit =

Price Elasticity of Demand (PED) =

Market capitalisation of a business =

In a decision tree, Net gain =

Expected value of a decision with two possible outcomes =

Re-order quantity =

Re-order level =

Variance =

Employee retention rate (%) =

Employee costs as a percentage of turnover =



Which techniques could you use to try and remember these formulas and those in Year 2? List some ideas here:

ACTIVITY

Complete the following calculations based on past paper questions. Remember to fully show your workings

Question from Paper 1 November 2021

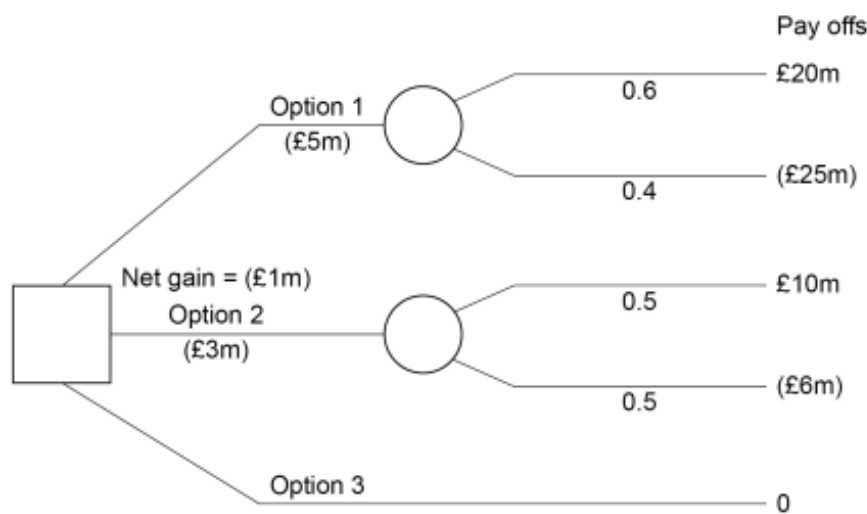
Figure 3 shows a decision tree with three options:

Option 1 is a new promotional campaign.

Option 2 is a modified product.

Option 3 is to do nothing.

Figure 3 Decision tree



Referring to Figure 3, calculate the expected value and the net gain of Option 1. Show your working.

[3 marks]

Expected value = _____

Net gain = _____

Working

Using these calculations and the other data in Figure 3, state which one of the three options the business should choose.

[1 mark]

Questions from Paper 1 Summer 2020

The table below shows a company's budgeted income and expenditure for 2019.

Income	£80 million
Expenditure	£70 million

At the end of the year the actual income and expenditure are as follows:

- income is 5% below the budgeted figure
- expenditure is 10% higher than the budgeted figure.

Calculate the profit variance and state whether it is adverse or favourable.

[4 marks]

The data below relates to a factory.

- Capacity = 180 units per day
- Number of employees = 16
- Wages per day = £60 per employee
- Selling price of product = £15 per unit
- Capacity utilisation of factory = 80%

Assuming that all output is sold, calculate the factory's employee costs as a percentage of turnover.

[4 marks]

Exam Skills: Application

In your Business Studies course, it is very important to develop the ability to show application skills, by applying your Business knowledge to different businesses. This will help you provide examples and context for your essays.

ACTIVITY

Choose TWO companies from the list below to research and become an 'expert' on over the next year. Choose your two companies carefully, and try and choose them from a *range of industries*.

ALDI	MATALAN	PURE GYM	DAVID LLOYD LEISURE	HALFORDS	BOOTS
LOCAL CAFE	CENTER PARCS	PRIMARK	TRAVEL AGENT	AMAZON	NISSAN
IKEA	CARAVAN AND MOTORHOME DEALER	CAR SHOWROOM	DESIGNER CLOTHES STORE	LOAKE SHOES	SHOE ZONE
SPORTS DIRECT	WATERSTONES	LOCAL NEWSAGENT	MCDONALDS	RYANAIR	SKY
UNILEVER	APPLE	TAYLOR WIMPEY	MARKS AND SPENCER	HOME BARGAINS	WAITROSE
HAIRDRESSERS	BRITISH AIRWAYS	B&Q	LOCAL PHARMACY	STARBUCKS	ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Company choice 1:

Company choice 2:

SCORE is a technique which you can use to identify key elements of context and help you write more contextualized responses. Picking out the SCORE elements of a particular business can allow you to write more applied answers, for example, rather than just saying that a business operates in a highly competitive market, pick out the specific competitors of the business.

S	Size & Sector	e.g. Revenues, Profits, Manufacturer, Service
C	Costs, Customers & Competitive Environment	e.g. Fixed, Variable, Customer Groups, Market, Competitors
O	Ownership & Objectives	e.g. Private, Public, Profit, Sales Maximisation
R	Resources	e.g. Finance, IP, People, Products, Services
E	External Environment	e.g. Legislation, Economy, Technology

ACTIVITY

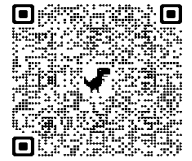
Make a list of useful websites which you used to get information about the SCORE factors above. (A few examples are listed to start you off). These links may be useful to refer to later in the course.

Example company chosen: Nissan

- Revenues Source: Statista: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/490931/tesco-group-finance-revenue-united-kingdom-uk/>
- External Environment Source: <https://pestleanalysis.com/nissan-pestle-analysis/>
- Competitors Source: <https://www.owler.com/company/nissan-global>

ACTIVITY

Now summarise your key findings for each company in the SCORE sheet below. More information about what to include in each section is here:



Company 1:

SCORE

S	Size & Sector	
C	Costs, Customers and Competitive Environment	
O	Ownership & Objectives	
R	Resources	
E	External Environment	



Company 2:

SCORE

S	Size & Sector	
C	Costs, Customers and Competitive Environment	
O	Ownership & Objectives	
R	Resources	
E	External Environment	



Exam Skills: Analysis

What is Analysis? Analysis is all about developing reasons, causes, consequences and effects. You need to ensure that in your paragraphs you develop **logical chains of reasoning** showing cause(s) and effect(s). This will allow you to write well developed arguments.

Another simple technique to help you write fully developed lines of analysis and well developed arguments is HOW and WHY.



Look at these sample student answers and make some comments about how well they have analysed the question. Explain what went well(WWW) and would would be even better (EBI):

Exam Question: Analyse how its marketing decisions might have helped Halfords to achieve its high market share in the bicycle and bicycle accessories markets.
[9 marks]

Student A Response:

Market share is the portion of the market controlled by a particular product or company, in this case Halfords has nearly 25% of the sale of bicycles in the UK which could be by volume or value. The marketing decisions made by Halfords may have helped it gains such high market share. Place – being 20 minutes drive from 90% of the UK's population is very convenient as it means they cover much of the UK market. Also, physical environment – the fact that they have a good online presence as well as local stores means that they can cover pretty much the whole of the UK market. Price – the fact that Halfords have a reputation for competitive pricing means it will appeal to a larger group of people. Product – the fact that Halfords offer a wide range of products means that they cater for the needs of a large segment of the market. Process – the fact that Halfords offer a fitting service differentiates them from their competitors, which helps improve market share.

What went well:

Even better if:

Student B Response:

Market share is the percentage of sales a business has in the whole market and Halfords is a leading retailer with a large market share in the bicycle market (25%).

By Halfords increasing the range of bicycles they sell this gives them a competitive advantage against other stores such as Sports Direct. As they have added on extra 83 types of bikes and a wider range of bicycle accessories this means people who are going to buy bicycles are more likely to go to Halfords as they have one of the best ranges of produce. This therefore means their market share will increase as more people will be shopping at Halfords instead of their competitors.

By introducing a fitting service this gives Halfords a unique selling point to stand out against other competitors like Argos as none of the other stores do that. This also increases their reputation as Halfords invested in a training programme so their staff will fit a product to high quality meaning they attract more customers at the expense of other competition in the market. Therefore meaning their market share will be high as more people are going to them and might not even think about going anywhere else because they see Halfords as the one-stop shop for everything to do with bicycles.

What went well:

Even better if:



Now write your own response to the same question on the next page.

Exam Skills: Evaluation

What is evaluation? It involves making effective judgements and recommendations. You need to ensure that your answers are well supported, fully address the question, are built on prior analysis and that they show balance (from both sides). Judgements and recommendations should **not** simply be a repeat of previous arguments.

Using the acronym AJIM can help you to develop your evaluation:

- A** **ANSWER THE QUESTION** using your judgement or recommendation
- J** **JUSTIFY** your judgement or recommendation
- I** **IT DEPENDS ON.** What might your judgement or recommendation depend on?
- M** What was the **MOST IMPORTANT** reason that led you to your judgement or recommendation?

ACTIVITY

On the following page, a student has written as answer to the following question:

How important do you think the brand is likely to be to the success of Dough-nuts? Justify your answer.

[16 marks]

You need to use different coloured highlighters to highlight where in the text the student has:

1. Answered the question set.
2. Justified their overall conclusion.
3. Explained what their judgement depends on
4. Explained what the most important reason was which led to the overall judgement or recommendation.

Student Response:

A brand is a recognisable part of the marketing mix that customers can identify with and develop a loyalty towards when considering future purchases. As Dough-nuts has the largest market share in the UK café and baked goods market, the brand has probably developed into an important factor in the success of the company. However it will not be the only factor to consider. The chief executive has said that they continue to face a challenging environment with increasing competition from Greggs and Dunkin' Donuts. As the price elasticity is 1.2, then they will need to be price competitive as any reduction in price by the competition may result in customers switching from Dough-nuts UK to a cheaper alternative despite the power of their own brand. This ensures that price has an important part to play in the success of Dough-nuts UK.

Partnering with other relevant businesses such as Disney will also be important. This suggests that the brand name of another business will also be an important part of attracting the target market, and whilst this is within branding it shows that wider promotional opportunities will also play their part in the success of Dough-nuts UK.

One aspect of this industry that will be very important to customers is the quality of the service that they receive. The Dough-nuts staff are trained to be efficient in kitchens designed to be fast food outlets. They are motivated and appear to be efficient in what they do. This will attract customers who buy from fast food outlets because they are fast. This element of the marketing mix is product and a key part of the success of the business. Even so, with all these factors in place, the whole industry has become the target of criticism as it is claimed that Dough-nuts products may be linked to obesity problems in the UK. Dough-nuts worldwide reputation may help to deal with these comments and it is worth noting that the comments will be made about the whole industry, but as market leader, Dough-nuts will perhaps be the focus of the health campaigners' comments. So their brand may become a negative factor in their future success unless they can develop their product range to take into account the concerns of those customers who are influenced by the healthy eating issues associated with fast food.

It is therefore a combination of several things, mainly identifiable within the marketing mix along with the brand that have contributed to the success of Dough-nuts UK and helped to create the brand, but the brand name and logo will have become increasingly important over time as the business has become established.

ACTIVITY

How would you improve this student answer?

ACTIVITY

Plan your own response to this question and then write your own AJIM paragraphs.

How important do you think the brand is likely to be to the success of Dough-nuts? Justify your answer.

[16 marks]

Essay Plan:

Preview of Year 2 Content

In Year 2 you will be introduced to a lot more Business theories. It is important to develop the skill of reading around a topic and making sure that you understand it fully.

A technique which can help you when reading to understand is using Cornell Notes.

ACTIVITY

Watch the video below on using Cornell notes. Write a summary below explaining how using Cornell notes can help you to study more effectively.



Cornell notes will now be used to help you preview two key theories which you will study next term.

ACTIVITY

Watch the two YouTube videos on Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard and Elkington's Triple Bottom Line. Whilst watching, complete the Cornell notes Template.

Careers and Employability

Lifestyle Envy vs Job Envy

We were once working with a student who'd always admitted to us he never really knew what career he wanted. Not having any particular ambitions, he went off to university to study a subject he enjoyed. Then, two years later, he came back and told us he knew *exactly what he wanted to do with his life*. The realisation, he explained, had come in just one conversation.

We were shocked and fascinated. *What could have happened in a single conversation that suddenly made his ambitions so clear?*

He described the moment. He'd been talking to a classmate at uni, and she had told him she'd just got a summer job. And the more she described this job, the more envious he felt. By the end he was

– to use his words – “insanely jealous.” That was when he knew. He wanted that job too. He'd accidentally stumbled across the career he needed to pursue.

So... what kind of lucky break would make you envious?

Try this thought experiment. In it you have to imagine a friend telling you about a new opportunity they're about to take up. They're excited, and they're describing to you what it is they're about to begin doing. And the more you listen, the more you become “insanely jealous.”

Here's the crucial bit; it doesn't need to be a super-specific job; you can keep it pretty general. We don't need the whole picture to make total sense, so don't limit your thinking or stop because it doesn't sound realistic... just record exactly the kinds of things that would get the envy flowing.

Record your thoughts in the box below and use the ideas on the right if you need them:

	<p>Think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Working hoursWorking conditionsThe typical working dayThe place of work
--	--

The kinds of tasks and responsibilities

The rewards on offer

The further opportunities

The status

Now consider all the things that have made you envious, and separate them into two groups. Group one we'll call 'lifestyle envy' – these are all the things *outside of the job itself*; the amount of time off, the pay, the holidays. The other we'll call 'job envy' – all the things that have made you envious about *doing the work itself*.

Lifestyle Envy	Job Envy

If you find you have the lifestyle column full and the job column empty – don't worry, this happens to us all sometimes; we can all get confused between lifestyle and job. We've seen students pursue a job or career because of the lifestyle they imagine it will give them, not because of the work itself...

- ...like the student who applies to be a lawyer because they've seen legal dramas on TV and the after-work parties look glamorous and attractive...
- ...or the student who wants to become an archaeologist because they imagine the travelling will be exciting, but haven't thought about the hours of back-breaking digging in the hot sun...
- ...or the student applying to be a teacher because "the holidays are great."

These decisions often don't make for a happy work-life. To be truly content, it has to be *the work itself* that is meaningful and important to you. So if you've nothing in the Job Envy column have a go at the activity again, this time focussing on what kind of work would make you envious. Keep it broad and general if it helps.

What themes are important?

Ignore the left-hand column and have a look at the patterns you can see emerging in the right hand column. What qualities do you want in a job? Try turning it into a short paragraph of just a few sentences. If you don't know how to begin try starting with, "I'd like a job that allows me to..." And remember – focus on the nature of the work itself, not the lifestyle elements around it!

Goals and Objectives

Please answer all the following questions on personal goals and objectives briefly, but as honestly as you can:

What does success look like for you?

What is most important you get right this year?

What obstacles do you think you may have to overcome to succeed at school?

What career / job are you currently considering? Why?

What would be important to you in a job? Describe a good day at work.

Do you have a workspace in which to do your work?

Describe the last time you set yourself a piece of work.

Have you ever worked hard before? How would you define it?

How will you use a week's study periods? Where will you be and what will you be doing?

How many hours do you think you should be studying? What should you be doing?

When working, how do you know you've done enough? What amount of effort deserves a reward?

How will you organise your subject notes?

If you could change one aspect of the way you organise yourself, what would it be?

Suggest one object, thing or action that would improve your organisation.

How comfortable is the process of revision for you?

What do you do with your homework or test scores when you get a low grade?

What is revision? What revision techniques do you prefer to use?

What's the hardest test question you expect to face? What are you doing about it?

How often will you test yourself?