

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to our second Learning Newsletter of the academic year. These newsletters look to help you to implement tried and tested learning strategies at home, in order to benefit your child and further enhance their educational experiences in the long term.

JUSTIFY IT!

Justifying choices, decisions and opinions is a key component of many subjects and a skill pupils need to develop in order to fully access marks for many exam questions. A simple example could be Technology - pupils need to justify their choice of materials and might have to explain that they've chosen to use acrylic because they're designing a child's toy and the smooth surface will be safer for children to touch.

Some subjects use acronyms and strategies to help pupils justify their reasons for doing things. The simplest is to get them to answer the question, "So what?" when they have made a statement in their work. Another is to have them add and complete the following after a statement "This shows..., this suggests...,this implies...".

HIGHLIGHT THE ISSUE

Pupils sometimes have difficulty interpreting what a question is asking them for? We sometimes get them to identify command words and highlight them so that they can really decide what the response should be. Command words are things such as:

Command Word	Meaning
account for	explain (reason)
analyse	examine closely; examine in parts; show how the parts contribute to the whole
assess	decide the value of; judge; measure the importance of
compare	discuss two or more things in terms of their similarities and differences
critically evaluate	weigh arguments for and against something; assess all evidence; decide which opinions, theories, models or items are preferable.
describe	give a detailed account of the features of something without interpreting the information
discuss	present and give a judgement on the value of arguments for and against; consider all angles
evaluate	judge; criticise in terms of impact/significance, and investigate the implications

Each subject uses command words and will have subject specific examples of what is meant by each one.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

there
their
they're
NOT THE SAME

there in or to a particular place	their possessive form of 'they'	they're shortened form of 'they are'
Just stay there and don't move!	Their house is very near.	They're here till tomorrow.
Look at that woman over there .	Children are playing with their toys.	They're worried about these results.
Can I drive there and back in a day?	They washed their hands and faces.	They're going to the party.

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Issue Focus: Justifying decisions

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if you wish to discuss anything
covered in this newsletter