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PROJECT
Teacher's Guide

EXTENDED PROJECT

H856
For first teaching in 2015

Guide 1
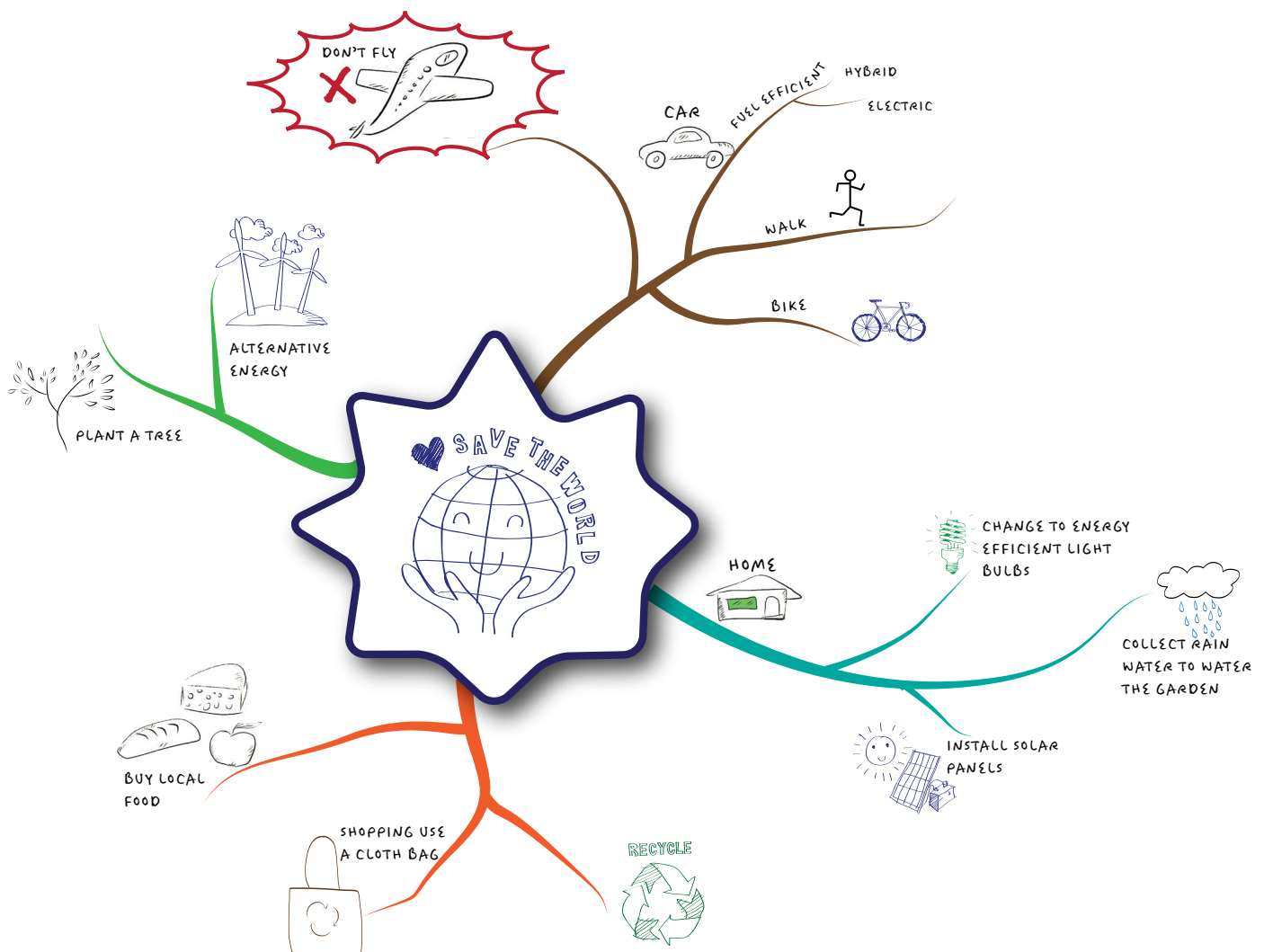# Planning

Version 2

Starting out:

This guide is designed to be used by teachers, and also shared with students studying for the Extended Project Level 3.

Choosing a topic

- Selecting the topic and planning the project thoughtfully is key to creating a successful extended project.

- The topic must be selected as independently as possible by the learner, and negotiated and checked by the teacher to ensure that the project has the potential to meet all learning outcomes.

- The project could be an extension of an A Level subject that particularly interests the learner, or a development of a personal external interest or activity.

Mindmapping:

- A possible starting point could be for students to create a personal skills audit in the form of a mind map, exploring all their academic and personal interests. This could include images as well as words. It should be kept generally to general themes (eg: film, ceramics, economics, science).

- This could then be shared with peers or a tutor, and possible ideas listed and discussed. Time should be taken to expand mind maps to cover what they are studying, personal interests, ambitions and progression choices.

- A good example of a free mind map website: https://www.text2mindmap.com/

Leave room for development:

- Researching several ideas before settling on the final idea is advisable, and where appropriate, the specifics for a final product should be kept vague, to allow for developments and learning to take place during the research and development phase of the project.

Final outcomes:

- The final outcome does not have to be decided at this stage. Cross-disciplinary outcomes should be considered: e.g. a illustrated children's book about an historical event.

- Ideally the final outcome will be determined by the research, as a possible solution will suggest itself through the type of research material used.

Possible outcomes:

Many different approaches to the final outcome can be taken:

Some examples are:

- Artefact/Design: a sculpture, costumes for a play, design for a stage set or vehicle

- Report: documenting a business venture or science experiment

- Performance: concert/debate/sport/event

- Dissertation: critical analysis of the work of a film director or historical figure.

Group work:

Group projects can offer an exciting opportunity for students to work collaboratively utilising their individual skills, strengths and knowledge.

If group work is involved, each learner should have a specific role in the group with their own aims and objectives, which feed into the group's aims. This will enable each member of the group to have the opportunity to reach the highest grades and to satisfy other aspects of the assessment to the best of their ability. The teacher should at this point address the issue of whether and how each project can be accurately assessed in relation to the specified criteria.

Negotiation:

Each learner should arrange a meeting with their teacher for an individual interview to establish what type of topic would suit them and to agree the topic that they want to pursue. The teacher should ensure that topic areas will enable learners to access the highest bands of assessment in terms of meeting the Assessment Outcomes.

Going out of comfort zones:

If a subject is chosen that overlaps with subjects already studied, the student should consider how they are going out of their comfort zone and learning new skills during the EPQ.

Develop new skills:

Some of the most interesting projects produced, enable students to develop new skills as well as extending existing ones. They could produce a 'practical' outcome from their interest in 'academic' subjects e.g.: film, app, website or animation or magazine based on their area of interest.

Level of quality:

The quality of the final outcome should not be compared to that of somebody studying a Level 3 qualification. E.g. a student illustrating a book for the first time would not be expected to reach the same standard as somebody studying art A level'.

However, the level of skills demonstrated during the project e.g. research, evaluation, project management etc. must be at Level 3.

TOOLS EFFICIENCY GOALS PRODUCTIVITY SCHEDULING PROJECT EXERCISING SCOPE SPECIFIC TIME MANAGE PROCESS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PLANNING ACTIVITIES CONSCIOUS ACCOMPLISHING SKILLS TECHNIQUES METHOD CONTROL EFFECTIVENESS TASKS PRIORITIES

Project planning:

Setting aims and objectives

Initial planning may include more than one idea if the student is not sure of which project would be most successful. The reflective journal should contain notes setting out clear aims – general themes and the form that the outcome might take.

Written proposal:

Students should use the first part of the Project Progression Record to record their project's theme and to write a rationale explaining what they hope to gain from completing their project. A verification of topic form should also be completed explaining the aims and outcomes of the project proposed. The language and vocational language should be clear to a non-specialist, but it may be necessary for the student to discuss their proposal with specialist staff to determine if it is a suitable topic for the project.

Time will be taken in the taught skills sessions to expand and explain the process of writing a suitable project proposal, and past examples may be shown to illustrate this.

It is really beneficial to students if they are able to set themselves some clear objectives at the beginning of the project. Although these might change and develop, it enables the student to evaluate against their initial intentions and document how these have developed during the project.

Planning the project:

Once the title and aims and objectives have been decided, students can break down their over-arching tasks into smaller, interim targets, and to see how and when these need to take place.

Identifying skills and resources needed:

As the plan is produced, it should become clear what specialist skills are going to be developed over the course of the project (eg: illustration skills, analysing data, academic writing etc.)

Students should highlight these in their plan, and consider how they are going to develop these skills. This could include using on-line guides or books or they might want to approach teachers with specialist knowledge, or contact external experts. They might also attend external workshops and events to broaden their knowledge base.

Other skills that may need to be taught:

- ICT skills to help support, analyse and present the project.

- How to make notes to document meetings, events or rehearsals.

- Practical skills and health and safety eg: good workshop or laboratory working practices.

- Ethical and professional guidelines for undertaking surveys or research as well as safeguarding considerations when working with members of the public and other institutions.

- Risk assessments for events, performances, experiments or practical work.

- The expected format of an academic research report.

- Evaluation of research sources

- Harvard referencing

Timeline and time planning:

A detailed time plan will enable the student to create a successful project. Although the timescales and exact activities may change over time, this can be documented in the journal, in response to reflection and evaluation of progress.

Teachers, to enable students to develop project management skills for their project, will deliver time management and target setting sessions.

Making the time plan very specific from the start will help the student to show that they have managed the project well. It is tempting to be vague when writing a time plan, but more successful projects tend to have precise time lines, even if these are changed as the project progresses.

Evaluation of objectives:

Objectives could be numbered so that they can be referred to in evaluations written throughout the project in the reflective journal.

New objectives can be added to the timeline as required during the project.

Summary of Guide One

- Complete a personal skills audit

- Mind map ideas

- Discuss with tutor

- Fill out project proposal form including aims and objectives

- Write a time plan

- Identify skills that are needed for the project

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