

This Spotlight looks at:

- Considerations for setting work for individuals missing an extended number of your lessons
- Ways to share your work with whole classes
- Setting work for cover lessons to ensure the biggest impact for students (and the least work for you)

Considerations for setting work for individuals missing an extended number of your lessons

- Be mindful of your own workload when setting work
- Put yourself in their shoes
- It is likely that you will need to send resources and simple instructions
- Make it time relevant
- Key focus should be on them being able to keep up with the work from class
- It should not be anything different from what you did in the lesson
- In the first instance HoY will contact you to inform you if students will be absent for an extended period of time

Sharing work with whole classes

- The way to do this is via Google Classroom or Firefly
- Examples:
 - Send attachments - PDFs, scanned documents, past papers, etc.
 - Share presentations
 - Share Google Docs and Sheets
 - Send links to useful websites and resources
 - Share videos - either on YouTube or downloaded videos
 - Set questions to which students provide responses
- Google Classroom and Firefly keep all of this centralised and searchable in a way that emails don't
- Help is available via the [Knowledge Library](#)

If you don't have the ability to do this, you will need to set up Google Classrooms for all of your classes by the end of the day on Monday

5 reasons the perfect cover lesson looks backwards: Sometimes you have to go backwards to go forwards - Mark Enser¹ explains how he came to this realisation for his cover lessons

I have found myself out of school for a few days over the last term, visiting other schools as an SLE, working on CPD or on field trips.

I worry about my classes when I am not there, like all teachers, and so have spent years trying to set cover work that means they don't fall behind – things to read, questions to answer and tasks to complete.

The problem is, I inevitably have to re-cover the material when I am back in school. This shouldn't be a

¹ <https://www.tes.com/news/5-reasons-perfect-cover-lesson-looks-backwards>

surprise.

When I am in the classroom, I don't expect them to learn simply by reading things for themselves and then answering questions. So recently I have been trying something new.

Rather than leaving cover work on a new topic, or work to just keep them busy until I return, I use the time for review.

Reviewing knowledge

Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction are increasingly being used by schools and teachers to look at what makes an effective lesson. But the final principle – "Engage students in weekly and monthly review: students need to be involved in extensive practice in order to develop well connected and automatic knowledge" – is one I think often gets overlooked.

So now, I set pupils work that involves them looking back over previous topics and asks them to answer questions based on these – and to do so from memory as far as possible.

By doing these tasks from memory they are having to retrieve what they know, thereby strengthening their ability to do so again in the future.

This ranges from shorter topic-specific questions - "How did gentrification change Shoreditch?", to more complex questions that require pupils to draw on a number of different topics - "To what extent have the changes in the UK's economy been reflected in changes in London?"

With these questions, I add an explanation of what I am looking for and break the question down slightly – just as I would in class. I have found that setting cover work in this way has had the following benefits:

- Pupils value it. They understand that this isn't just busy work designed to fill the time. As a school, we have spent time explaining to pupils the importance of ongoing revision and review throughout the year and across years and they realise that this work fits into that.
- Pupils can do it. Because the work is based on things they have learned with me, they have the knowledge with which to complete the tasks. I can leave some further instructions and guidance and scaffolding for those who need it but there hasn't been anyone who has simply downed-tools and said they can't even attempt it.
- It is easy to set and easy to cover. No more wracking my brains for how to set the next part of the course as a way that suits cover work. Instead, I can just spend a few minutes thinking of a few suitable questions.
- It is also easier for the cover teacher as it doesn't require them to answer a dozen questions about a subject they themselves may never have studied.
- You can respond to particular needs. I have been able to look at the last mock exam and use that to guide me as to the kind of questions and topics that they need to spend more time reviewing.
- Pupils are more confident. The time spent reviewing what they already know, and making links between topics, means that they are much more secure in what they know and are able to discuss what they have learnt.

Their work in class is becoming more detailed and they are starting to see how various parts of the subject join up.

Mark Enser is head of geography and research lead at Heathfield Community College. His new book *Teach Like Nobody's Watching: An essential guide to effective and efficient teaching* is out soon. He tweets @EnserMark