

Tips for weak students: the diagnostic, the twelve methods, and a four-week plan

Step 1: find the gap (ten minutes)

If the subject is	Ask	If it fails, the gap is
Maths, any grade from 6	$2/3 + 3/4$; $-3 - (-5)$; 7×8 ; solve $3x - 7 = 11$; 15% of 80	Fractions, negatives, facts, equations, percent: teach that first
Science, or any subject with text	Read a grade-level page aloud for one minute; count words correct; ask what it was about	Under 90% accuracy or no retell: a reading problem, not a science problem
English	Write five sentences about yesterday	Sentence structure, spelling, or vocabulary: whichever is visible
'Knows it the night before, gone by the test'	How did you study? (re-reading, highlighting?)	Method, not ability: retrieval practice and spacing

The twelve methods

- [] Find the gap, teach the gap (not the current chapter)
- [] Twenty minutes a day, every day; never two hours once
- [] Retrieval practice: book closed, write what you remember
- [] Three worked examples before any problem
- [] One subject, one topic, for a fortnight
- [] Error notebook: every mistake with the correct working beside it
- [] Teach it back aloud in full sentences
- [] Two old-topic problems in every session
- [] Read twenty minutes a day
- [] Sleep: 9 to 10 hours under 13, 8 to 10 for a teenager
- [] Ask the question in the first minute
- [] One adult who finds the gap and watches the working, for a term

The five that do not work

Longer hours and more homework; punishment or comparison; re-reading and highlighting; praise for being clever rather than for what was done; a new class that teaches the current chapter faster.

The four-week plan and the daily log

Week	Do
1	Diagnostic; choose one gap; 20 min a day on it with worked examples; start the error notebook and daily reading; fix sleep
2	Same gap with retrieval: five questions from memory at the start of each session; teach it back on day 7
3	The current school topic, now that its prerequisite is in place; two old-topic problems per session; review the notebook
4	Mixed practice under light time pressure; a test-style set; review the notebook; choose the next gap

Daily log: tick the 20 minutes, the reading, the sleep

Day	Topic	20 min	Read	Sleep	Mistakes noted
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					
28					

After four weeks of genuine daily work with no movement: ask the school for an evaluation, not a harder timetable.

From

sciencewithshobha.com/blog/tips-for-weak-students-how-to-improve-academic-performance-twelve-things-that-work-and-a-four-week-plan/