

ARTICLE

OUTLINE

Title	
Beating the Final Year Blues	
Byline	
<i>School counselor Lisa Yip investigates why students get the blues and what can be done to get a smile back on their faces.</i>	Use a byline to say who wrote the piece.
Introduction	
<p>We've all been there. We all know what it's like to be in the shoes of Peter Kwok (not his real name), a student who knocked on my door one day last April, with tears streaming down his cheeks. He was one of those kids who I always thought had it all 'together'. He wasn't the kind of kid who shows up for counseling. So I was surprised by his next words.</p> <p>"I just can't do it," he whimpered</p>	Begin with an introduction that will grab attention.
Main Body	
<p>For the next half an hour, he regaled me with the demands made on him: teachers' deadlines, extra work from tutorial centres, pressure from parents to push up his grades in English and Maths, applications for summer internships. The list went on, and I'm not sure I had the answers to his problems.</p> <p>But what I did tell him was this: keep focused on the future. Yes, there are lots of pressures upon students in their final year of school. But you only do your final year of school once. You never do it again. You never have to experience this level of pressure again (well, that's not always true, but it's what I told Peter). The work you're doing now is like building a deep foundation for a house: the deeper you dig now, the more toil and effort you put in, the higher you'll be able to build later. In a very real sense, the effort you expend now will determine how far you can succeed in later life. Even though it might be painful, keep it in perspective.</p> <p>But it's also necessary to say 'be realistic'. Aim high, but don't overreach yourself. You need to take an audit of where you should best spend your time. For example, if you are predicted a grade 5 in mathematics and a grade 3 in English, it is pointless to invest equal time in both. You <i>might</i> get a grade 5* in maths if you do a lot of work, but would it not be better to try and get your English to a grade 4 or 5? Imagine how disappointed you would be if you put so much effort into maths and still came out with a 5, when you could have been concentrating on boosting your English grade. In other words, plan ahead. Think what you can improve and then decide how much time you will devote to achieving that.</p> <p>Speaking of planning, it's important to set daily goals. Don't just get up in the morning, or go home in the evening, and work on whatever happens to interest you that day. No. Make a daily plan of what work to do and when to do it...<i>and stick to it</i>. Build in breaks too. Taking a break is not a sign of being lazy. Your brain needs regular breaks to digest the information you've been learning. But here's the important thing to remember: when you're working, work. And when you're taking a break, take a break. That means that when you're studying you should switch off all electronic devices and not whatsapp your best friend every thirty seconds. Really concentrate on the task on hand. And when you're taking a break, don't keep thinking about English verb conjugations or chemical formulas. Just let your brain rest. That way it'll be fresh when you hit the books again.</p>	<p>Start by describing the incident and then move on to give your main points, using <i>interesting</i> examples and clear explanations, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay focused on the future • Think of it like digging a foundation • This will help you succeed in later life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be realistic • Spend more time on weaker subjects (e.g. English) than stronger ones (e.g. maths) • This will help you bring your overall grades up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set daily goals • Make a plan and stick to it • Taking short rests will help your brain to focus.
Conclusion	
So I'm not sure whether I was able to put a smile back on Peter Kwok's face. Neither can I give you a magic formula about how to beat the study blues. But this tried and tested advice might just be able to help you achieve your goals. Why not give it a go?	End with a short, memorable conclusion