

The Parent's Independent Thinking Toolkit

Five small habits to help your teenager think for themselves.

Your teenager does not need another past paper. They need to trust their own thinking. Try these five small habits at home this week.

1

Ask what they have tried before you help.

"What have you tried so far?" keeps you in the coaching seat and your child in the thinking seat. They stop waiting for the answer to arrive from you.

2

Use the ten-minute rule.

When they hit a wall, they try alone for ten minutes before asking anyone. Ten minutes of productive struggle is exactly what unfamiliar exam questions test.

3

Praise the method, not the mark.

Say "I like how you worked that out," even when the answer is wrong. A wrong answer with sound reasoning becomes a lesson. A right answer copied from a friend teaches nothing.

4

Keep the model answer closed until they attempt it.

Let them produce a first version before comparing it to the mark scheme. The gap between their attempt and the answer is where the real learning actually happens.

5

Ask them to teach you one idea a week.

Explaining out loud exposes gaps far better than silently rereading notes. You do not need to understand the subject, only look genuinely curious.