

## ONLINE TOOLS FOR STUDYING

Here is a list of tools which may be useful for independent study.

- **Tomato Timer:** Based on the Pomodoro technique (working for short, focused periods, followed by brief rest-breaks), tomato timers aim to promote productivity while maintaining mental alertness. A multitude of these apps are available – for simplicity try [Tomato Timer](#) and, for extra features, try [Pomello](#).
- **Forest:** Apps like [Forest](#) help you resist distractions from your phone while you study. Simply 'plant a seed' in the app, and watch it grow from sapling to tree – if and only if, you don't touch your phone. Yield to the temptation of using your phone and the sapling dies! Successful repetition results in a forest, which, if you are using the Forest app, can earn you points towards planting a real tree with the 'Trees for the Future Scheme'.
- **Written? Kitten! and Focus Writer:** Overcome writer's block with [Written? Kitten!](#) Write 100, 200, 500 or 1000 words and get rewarded for your efforts with a picture of a cute kitty. Alternatively, try [Focus Writer](#), which enables you to set a daily target for the number of words you write on a blank screen; you can then measure your progress against this target.
- **Online planners:** While there are no real substitutes for having a clear time-management strategy, some apps can help you manage your workload more efficiently. Try [Microsoft to-do](#), for organising tasks and managing deadlines, and [Trello](#) for monitoring your progress. Trello can be synched with [Pomello](#), enabling you to see how much time you've spent on individual tasks.
- **Turn off notifications and pop-ups:** Minimise interruption and distraction from unwanted notifications and pop-ups by disabling them on your devices – temporarily or permanently. Do this for android and iPhone via the 'Settings' function on your phone.
- **Blocking social media sites:** Manage social media sites that vie for your attention, with the help of social media blocking apps. Specific websites can be blocked at set times of day, or the entire internet switched-off while you work. See [10 best apps to help you stay focused](#) article on Zapier.com for a quick guide to help you decide on a blocking app that's right for you. If you enjoy using social media, use it as a motivational aim by saving it for a reward at the end of the day.

Adapted from University of Reading's Study Advice Team '[Studying at Home](#)' guide.