How can you get yourself motivated to do your work for school?

There is no one approach that will work for everyone. You have to try different things and see what works for you. Here are some ideas you can try.

1. **FOCUS ON THE FUTURE**
   What do you want to do when you finish school? What courses or careers are you interested in? Having a goal in mind can give you the incentive you need to ensure you get the marks that will be necessary. If you don’t know what you want to do, then focus on aiming for the best marks you can give yourself as much choice as possible. If the end of school seems too far away, perhaps focus on improving your results in the future.

2. **CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES**
   Some people are motivated by gaining pleasure while others are motivated by avoiding pain. If you are one of the latter, and are trying to get yourself to do some work, think about all the negative consequences that could occur if you do not do the work. Parents getting angry, getting in trouble at school, teachers not happy, bad marks, failing a subject... sometimes thinking about what could happen if you do not do the work is enough to get you started. There is also another consequence to consider, if the work is not done, the next lot of work could be even more difficult if earlier concepts are not understood.

3. **WORK WITH OTHERS**
   Working with friends might be just what you need to get yourself going. But choose wisely, you need to make sure you are working with people who will actually work, not with people who will just talk or muck around. It doesn’t have to necessarily be a friend either, you might work well with a parent, or sibling, or neighbour for example.

4. **SEEK HELP**
   If the reason you are not motivated is that you don’t know how to study, or how to do the work, then seek help. Even if it is just that you are not sure what is required or you don’t understand the assignment. Find someone who can assist you to make the task more achievable. Friends, family, teachers, tutors...there are lots of options.

5. **CREATE POSITIVE WORKING CONDITIONS**
   Set up your space to minimise distractions. Create a space that is conducive to doing work, rather than enticing you to leisure activities. You might need to tell your family when you are about to do work that requires you to concentrate so they do not disturb you.

6. **FIND MOTIVATING WORDS AND POSTERS**
   Place these around your room or the space where you do your work. Write positive statements on a card and read them regularly or write them on a sign and put them up where you will see them. You could try things like ‘I have the motivation to do my work when I need to do it’. You could also write positive statements on a card and review these, things like “I can make myself work when I need to”.

7. **BECOME AWARE OF NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**
   Start to listen to the thoughts in your head, if you are constantly telling yourself things like “I’m never motivated” or “I will never get this work done” then you need to replace these thoughts with more positive ones like: “I can just do 30 minutes today to get it started”.

8. **CHUNK DOWN THE TASK**
   If the work seems overwhelming, break it down into small manageable steps, stop worrying about the massive task ahead and instead just do one bit, then the next bit, then the next bit. And eventually it will become manageable. I use this all the time for my uni work, if I thought about how much I had to do I would never start. So instead I just do one step, then once that one is done, then and only then do I worry about the next step.

9. **JUST DO ONE LITTLE BIT TO START**
   Sometimes the hardest part is just starting the work, so try doing just one tiny little step, just one piece. If you have ever had the experience where you stressed and agonised over starting a piece of work, then when you finally started it wasn’t nearly as bad as you expected, remind yourself of this. Often we waste more time worrying about not doing the work than the time it would take to do the work!

10. **VISUALISE YOURSELF DOING THE WORK**
    Make a movie in your mind, see yourself doing the work you need to do, completing the task and feeling good about having completed the task.

11. **FIND OUT WHEN YOU WORK BEST**
    Some people work better in the morning, some people in the afternoon, and some before or after dinner. Do the work you find most difficult when you are most alert.

12. **REWARD YOURSELF**
    Set yourself small achievable tasks (or break large tasks into smaller pieces), set a date or time for when you would like to complete these tasks and plan a reward for yourself when you achieve these tasks. It is like training a pet dog! The pattern of working then experiencing a reward sets up a pattern in the brain and over time it becomes easier to make yourself do a task as you know there is a reward at the end of it. Your reward might be watching a favourite TV show, or ringing a friend, your parents might also have ideas for things you can use as incentives.

13. **CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES**
    Don’t just focus on the completion of the task, celebrate your successes along the way. A success may be learning how to research or completing a first draft or solving a difficult problem. Recognise your strength in other areas too, not everyone is naturally academic, or finds school easy. Many students have other skills that may not be recognised or given an opportunity in an academic setting - be proud of these. At school, aim for your own personal best, avoid comparisons with other students and instead just try to improve on your own performance.

14. **TRY TO ENJOY YOUR LEARNING**
    Look for ways to make what you are learning enjoyable. This can be challenging at times, but for some students even just incorporating the use of technology, music, art, drama, film etc. can be enough to get them motivated to do their work.