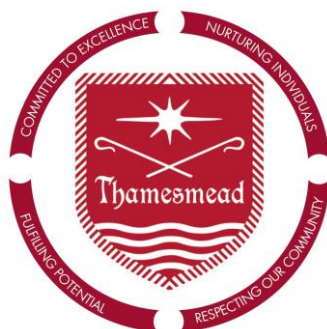
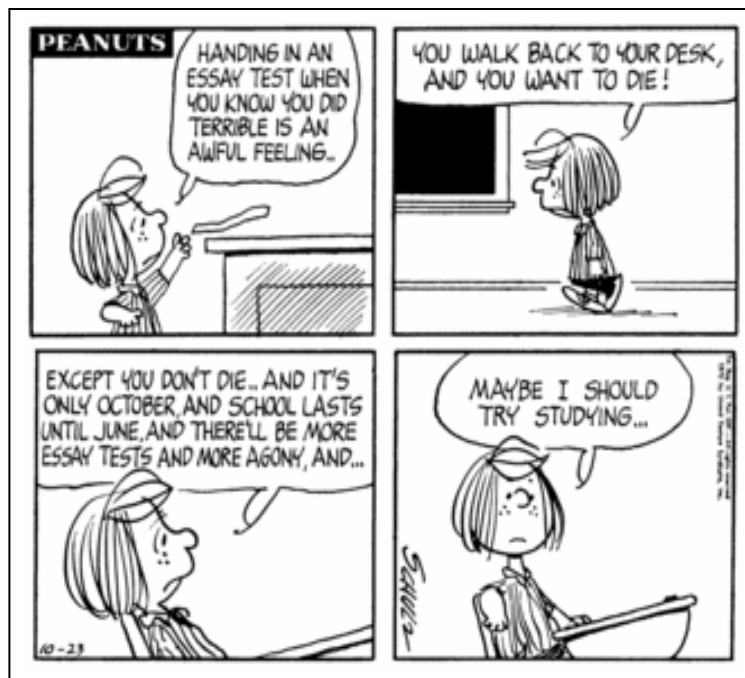


# Top Tips for Success in Year 11





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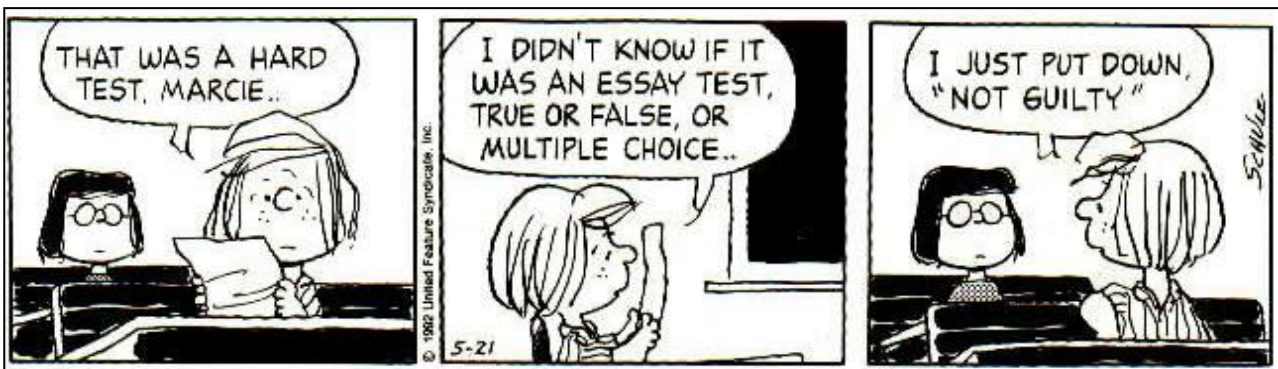
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# The importance of good attendance



# Attendance

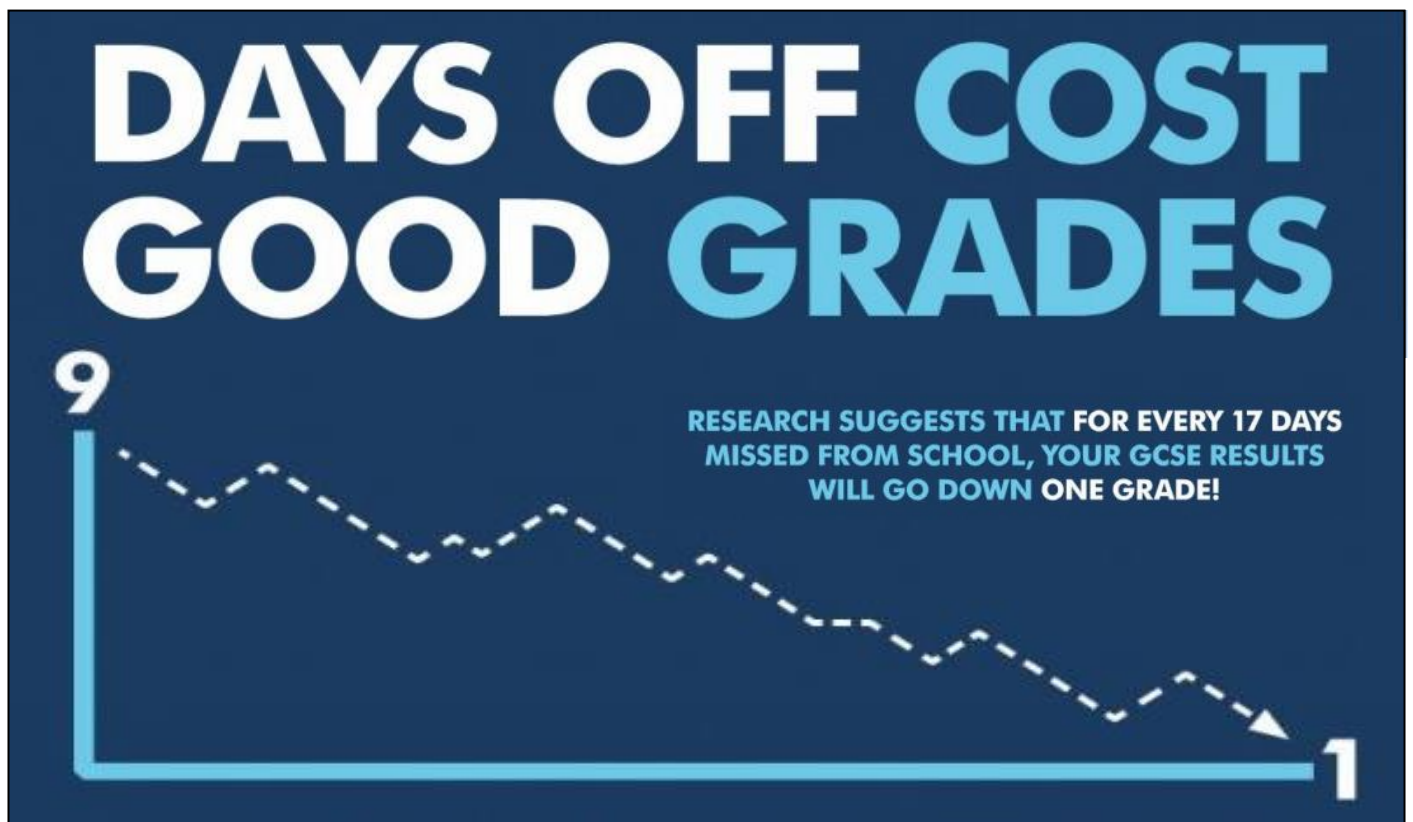
Simply put, if you're not in school, you're not learning. In Year 11 you are not in school for the full academic year, so you need to use your time as effectively as you can, and you need to try as hard as you can to be in school every single day. The table below helps to explain why;

Overall attendance	Number of days absent	Number of weeks absent	Number of lessons missed	Percentage of students that get 5+ GCSE 5-9 grades
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons	71.5%
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons	56.8%
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons	41%
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons	28.9%
75%	48 days	10 weeks	250 lessons	23.1%
70%	57 days	11½ weeks	290 lessons	17.7%
65%	67 days	13½ weeks	340 lessons	15.5%

With that knowledge, what was your attendance percentage last year? Make a note of it in the space below;

Year 7 Attendance	Year 8 Attendance	Year 9 Attendance	Year 10 Attendance

**Remember – when you are applying for your college courses or apprenticeships, your attendance will be looked at as they show how reliable and committed you are!**



# Revision tips and techniques



# Getting Started

## Effective revision

To be effective, revision must be ...

- **Active**

Always work with a pen and paper, look for key points, test yourself. Never just sit down and read for a set period. Focus on tasks, not time. If you just read notes you'll only retain about 10% of the information.

- **Organised**

Always ask yourself at the start of a study session "what do I want to have completed in this session?" Have a plan for what you want to cover this week and this month. Have an overview of the priority areas in each subject.

## Getting started on revision

### Where?

Find a fixed place to study (a particular desk/room at home, a spot in the library, etc...) that becomes firmly associated in your mind with productive work. All the equipment and materials you need should be within reach, and the room should be well lit and ventilated, but not too comfortable! Turn your room into a positive learning environment. Keep books and notes on the desk to a minimum and decorate your walls with colourful notes and key facts. Music is fine as long as it helps you to study and blocks out distracting noises. The very best sound to study to is thought to be that of Baroque composers or Mozart (your favourite songs will distract you as they'll make you want to sing along or dance). Experiments show that brains are positively stimulated and IQs boosted by such music.

### What?

Remember that it's all about being active and *focused on tasks, not time!* Know at the start of a session what you want to have completed by the end of the period. Make the tasks specific and realistic, not vague and large.

### How?

Always work with a pen and paper at the ready. Getting started is often the most difficult bit, so start by 'doing'. It usually helps to begin with a subject you like, move on to other less favoured areas, and then finish up with a favoured topic to maintain the interest.

### When?

Try to schedule your study for times when you are more mentally alert. Most people find their ability to focus deteriorates towards the end of the day. Getting revision done earlier in the day aids efficiency and also offers the reward of having time to relax after the work is done.

### Why?

Test your progress at the end of a study session. Ask yourself "what have I just learned?" Review the material covered in your revision session. Merely recognising material isn't enough - you must be able to reproduce it without the aid of the book or notes.





# What To Do and What Not To Do!

## Do ...

### Make a list of all the topics you need to revise

Each subject that you are studying can be broken down into its constituent parts, with main sections, sub-topics and supporting details (for example, in Design Technology, you study Materials, Production Processes, Health and Safety, Joining Techniques, etc ...). A very useful start is to list out all the topics on the course and use this as a 'revision checklist' for the subject. Tick topics off as you've learnt them.

### Create a realistic schedule.

Block each day into three portions (morning, afternoon, evening). Allow yourself one portion a day off and allocate subjects and topics to the remaining two. Put the schedule on display so that your family can see when you are available. It will also reassure your parents that you are in control. It will also allow you to have time off that you can plan your social life in.

### Plan ahead by working backwards

By using revision checklists in your various subjects, you should know what quantity of material has to be covered over the coming months. Start from the final date (end of May) and divide your revision up week by week, allowing some flexibility for unforeseen delays. Surprise yourself by being ready in time! Use the timetables and other sheets you have been given.

### Revise using your preferred learning style

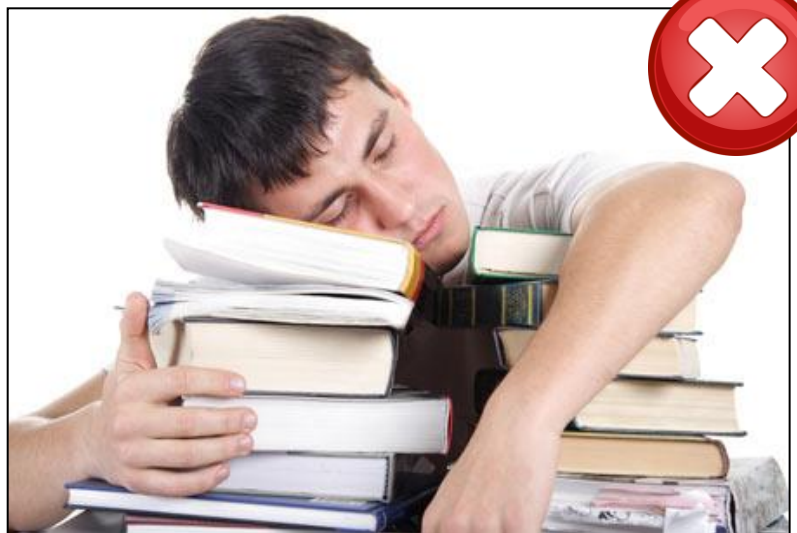
Have you tried mind maps, diagrams, colour, mnemonics, recording yourself and listening back to it, rewriting your favourite song using your revision notes for a topic as the words, walking round (great for kinaesthetic learners – try read out the positive effects of X standing on the left hand side of the room and negative effects on the right hand side). If you can't remember what your learning style is, or don't know what revision types are out there, use this booklet or some of the websites mentioned in it.

## Don't ...

### Just keep going!

The body and the mind need regular 'time-outs'. When you're tired, concentration is more difficult, you get distracted much easier and learning and memorisation is less effective. There comes a point in an evening study session when it is counter-productive to stay at the desk - nothing is going in and you are only tiring yourself further. Use breaks effectively, particularly after completing a task.

If you spend time during the day studying and it isn't *feeling* right (the information just isn't going in), persevere a little. If it's still not happening, stop the session. **If you do cancel a revision session though, remember that you have to reschedule that missed time into your planning for the next few days!**





## Further Advice

### Reading and Recall

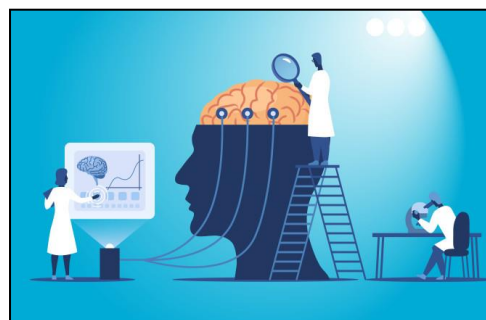
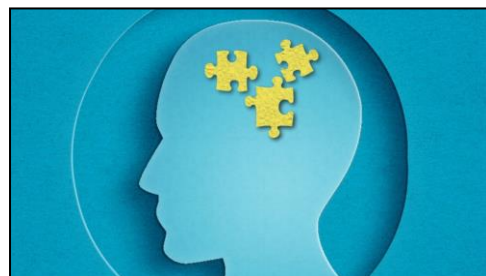
You can't just simply tell your brain to remember content. It doesn't work. Your brain will only remember what it *has* to think about. The more times you think about something the stronger the memory of it and the easier and faster you will be able to recall and use that content in an exam. Reading is easy; you've probably been reading since the age of 4. If it's easy then your brain isn't thinking hard, which means it won't be remembering. That is why you need to test yourself regularly and get other people to test you as well. Make sure the questions are challenging enough to get the maximum benefit.

### Interleaving

In an exam you don't usually know the order of topics or questions you will get, so when you test yourself you should interleave the questions, which means mix them up. This will make it harder because your brain needs to jump from one topic to another. Harder is better, it means you will remember more content. Mixing the questions will keep your brain on its toes!

### Spacing

The most effective way to remember large volumes of content is to space out your revision and recall activities. Three 20 minute sessions spaced over a week is more effective than an hour on one day.



## Top Ten Revision Tips

1. Short bursts of revision (30-40 minutes) are most effective. Your concentration lapses after about an hour and you need to take a short break (5-10 minutes).
2. Find a quiet place to revise - your bedroom, school, the library - and refuse to be interrupted or distracted.
3. Make sure you don't just revise the subjects and topics you like. Work on your weaker ones as well.
4. Make your own revision notes because you will remember what you have written down more easily. Stick key notes to cupboards or doors so you see them everyday.
5. Rewrite the key points of your revision notes; read them out loud to yourself. We remember more than twice as much of what we say aloud than of what we merely read.
6. Use different techniques. Make your own learning maps, use post-it notes to write key words on, create flash cards. Record your notes and listen to them back on your Walkman. Ask friends and family to test you. Use highlighter pens to mark important points. Chant or make up a rap song.
7. Practise on past exam papers or revision tests available on the internet. Initially do one section at a time and progress to doing an entire paper against the clock.
8. You will need help at some stage. Ask parents, older brothers and sisters, teachers or friends. If there is a teacher with whom you get on well at school ask for their email address so you can clarify points you are unsure of whilst on study leave. Use websites specifically designed for revision.
9. **Don't get stressed out!** Eat properly and get lots of sleep!
10. **Believe in yourself and be positive.** If you think you can succeed you will; if you convince yourself that you will fail, that's what will probably happen.

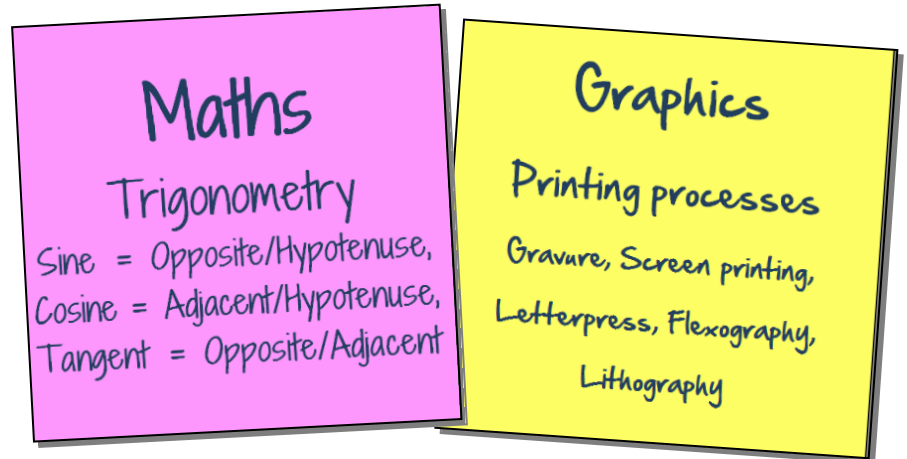
# Revision Skills and Techniques

Below are some examples of different techniques that might help you when it comes to revision. Some of the strategies you may already know, but others you may not have thought of.

## Post-It notes

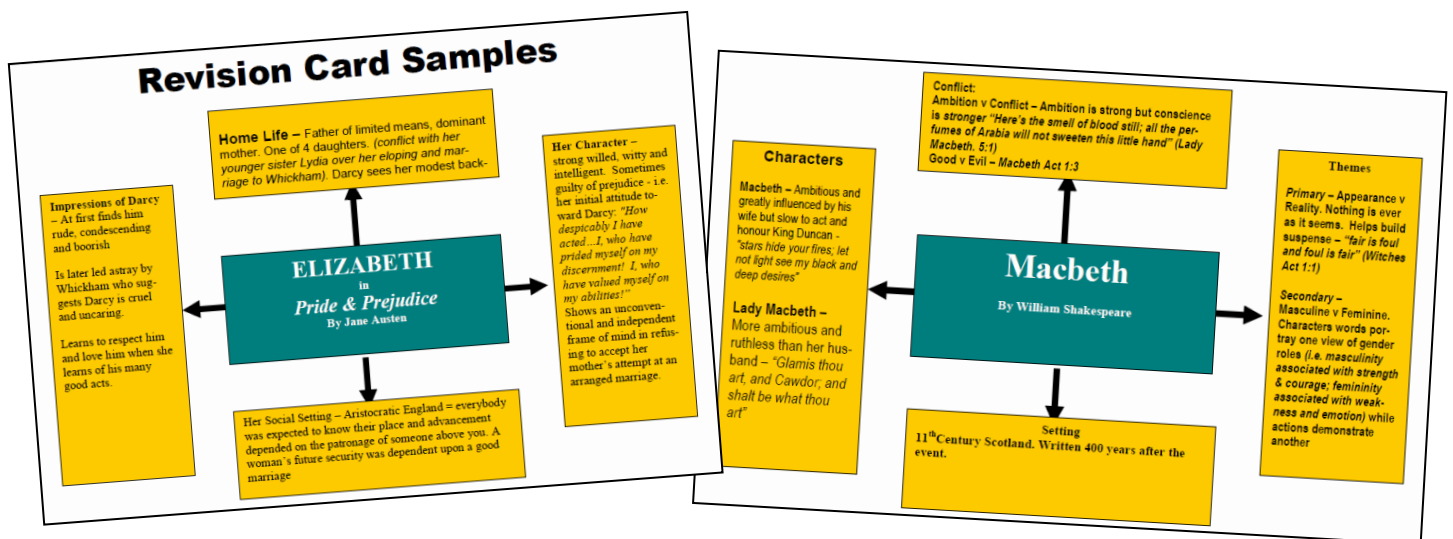
Write key words or sentences on Post-It notes and put these up around your house. You could put them on your bedroom wall, in the bathroom, on the fridge, and other places where you may spend some time. Alternatively, write your notes on the Post-Its and then make columns with them on the wall – things you're confident about understanding, things you need to read through again, and topics that you still don't understand.

The key to using Post-It notes to help with revision is to not write too much detail on them. They should be there to jog your memory, not necessarily to learn from. They will be in places that you will glance at, like the fridge door, so don't write detailed notes.



## Cue cards/Flash cards

You could write paragraphs based on your notes/class work onto flash cards. Every now and then, rather than revising from your books, use these. By reading shorter versions of the theory, you'll remember the subject matter quickly. You could then ask friends or relatives to test you on the content of the cards. Write questions on one side and answers on the other. Then get your family to test you. Merely creating the cards will help your recall. You can also use them to test yourself when faced with 'dead' time at bus stops or waiting for someone.



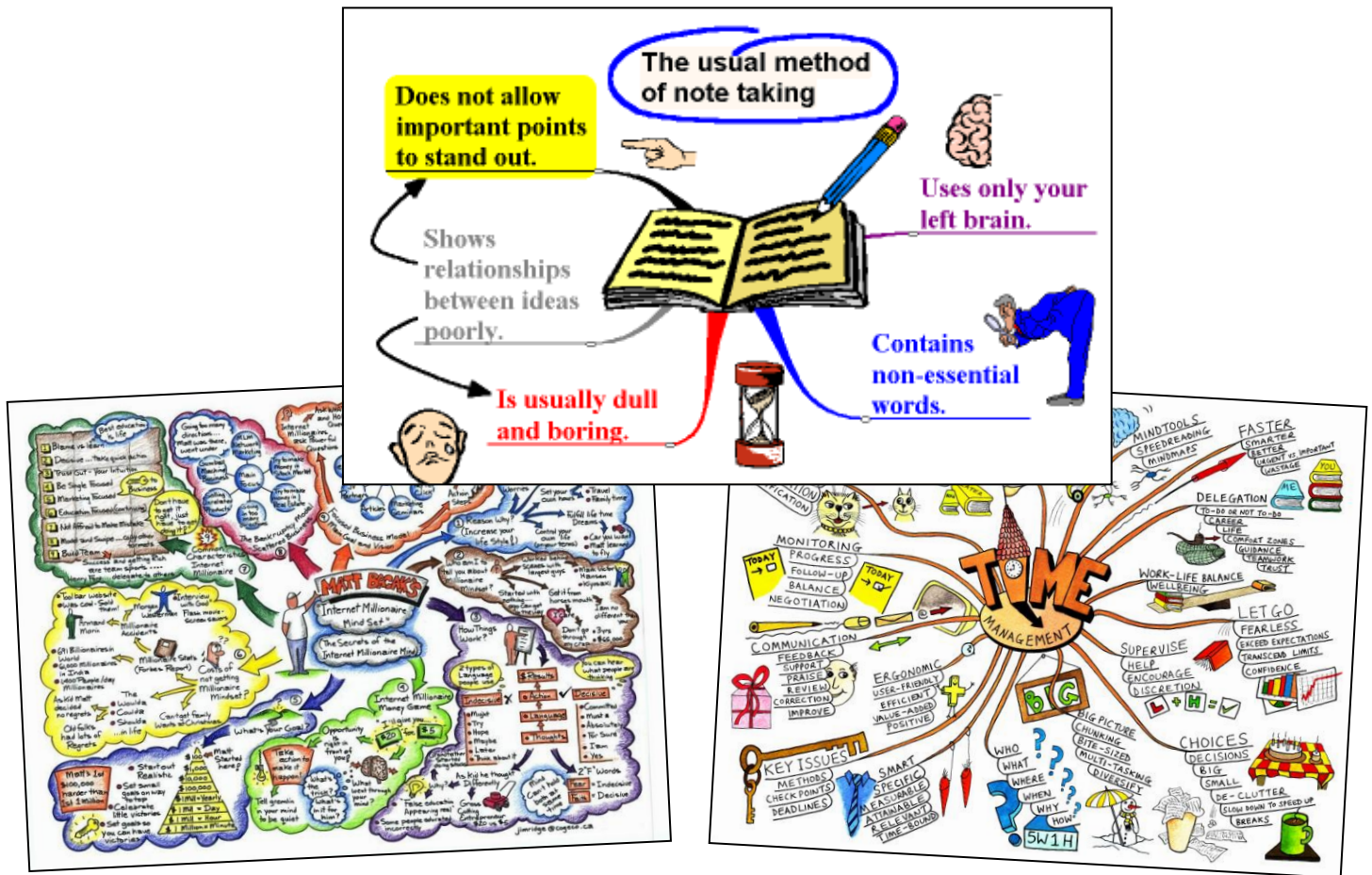
## Mind maps

Make mind maps or association maps rather than taking linear notes. Mapping your notes by radiating key words out in a pattern of links from a central point will make best use of your memory. If you use colour and images on the maps, you'll be harnessing the power of both sides of your brain - creative and logical.

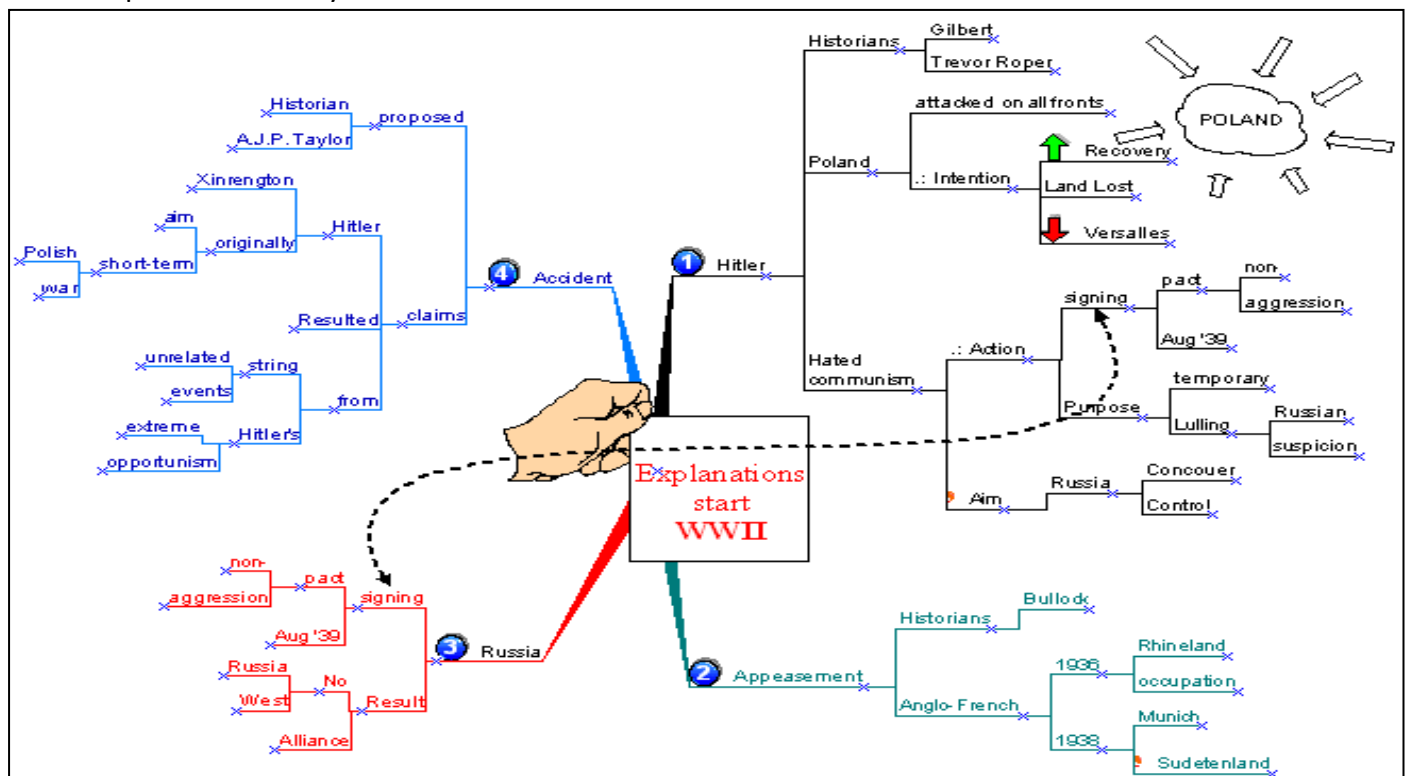
### How to mind map:

1. Start with the theme in the middle of the page.
2. Then develop your main idea.
3. Each branch must relate to the branch before it.
4. Use only key words and images.
5. Key words must be written along the branches.

6. Printing your key words makes them more memorable.
7. Use highlighters and coloured markers to colour code branches.
8. Make things stand out on the page so they stand out in your mind. You should use a different colour for each main branch and all its sub-branches).
9. Brainstorm ideas. Be creative.
10. Design images you can relate to which will help you remember key information.

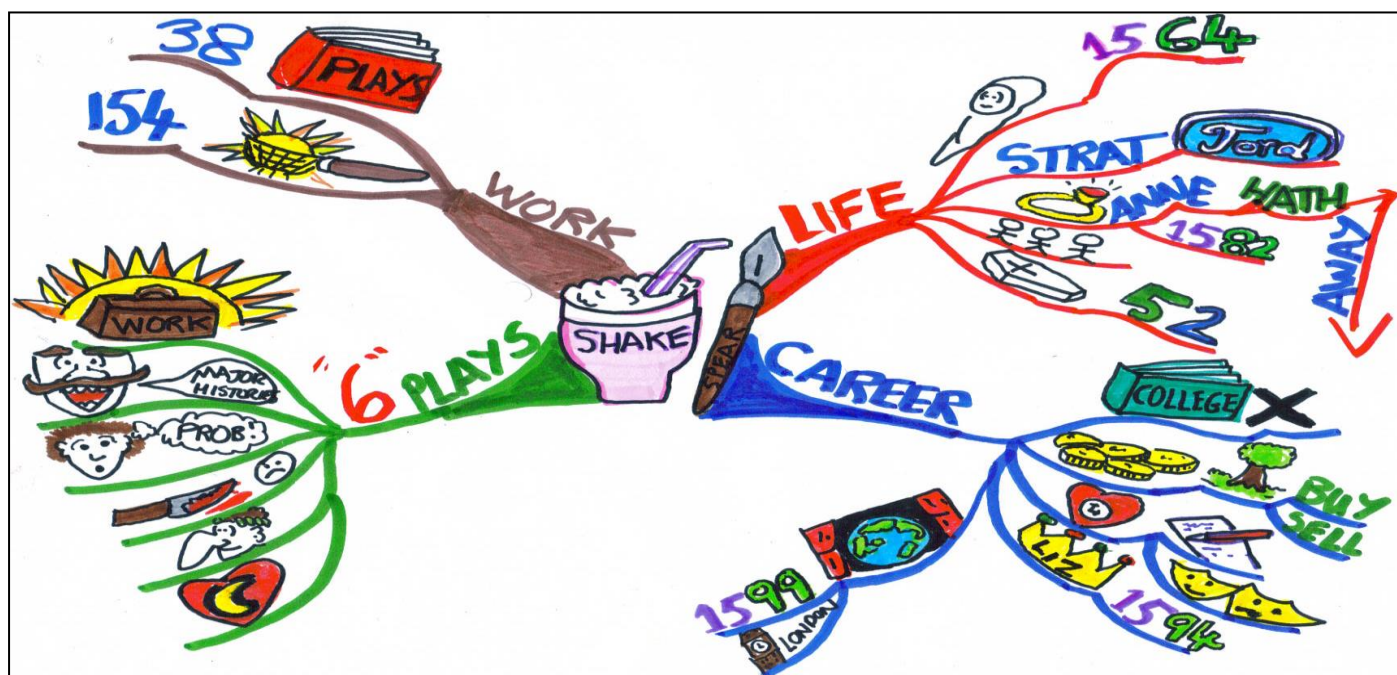


Mind maps can be mostly text ...





Or they can include more images (which are much easier to remember). Look at this one summarising William Shakespeare's life..... (again – much better in colour!)



## Highlight keywords

Highlighter pens can be really helpful when you revise, and as noted above (in the 'Notes' section), you can block out key pieces of information. Highlighting key words is also useful, particularly if you then post them around your room to help you learn them.

When you are reading through your notes, you should only highlight the words, sentences or phrases which are important. The reason why you're highlighting them is so that you can find them easily and then read them again at a later date without having to read the entire page again.

Some people re-write the sections that they've highlighted onto cue cards or separate sheets to revise from. You may want to try this too.



## Notes

As with mind maps, many of you will know how to go about writing notes. Essentially, notes are the key pieces of information that you need from what you've written or learnt in a lesson. To generate your own notes, you may find it easier to read your class work (or sections from your reference book), highlight the important parts, and then write only the highlighted parts on a separate sheet. What you'll be left with is a concise set of information.

## Record yourself

Record yourself saying key words, reading from flash cards, reading flow charts, etc... You can use your phone or tablet and play these back, a bit like a podcast. Your teachers could do it, but you'll learn better if you make the effort. More effort, more learning!

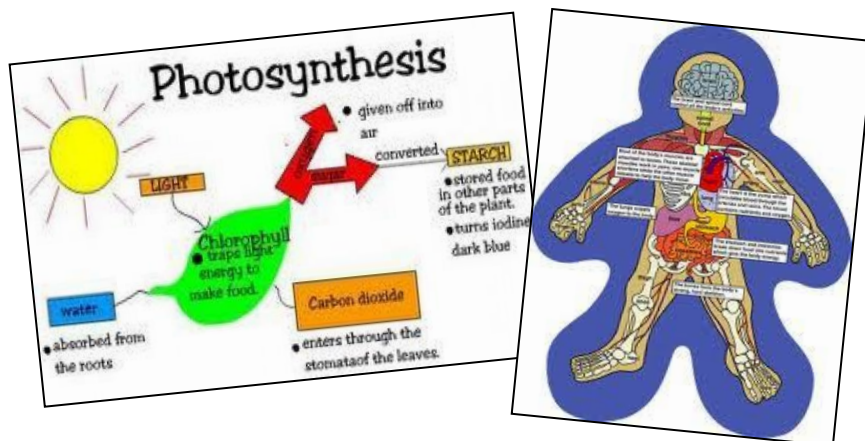
By recording your notes you can revise on the move. You could listen to the recording as you complete a paper-round, or on your way to work. If you find that going to the gym is something that you enjoy doing, you could try listening to the recording as you complete a workout. Obviously it's important to have a break from revision as well, particularly when you want some 'down time', but this is always an option. Alternatively, you could listen to the recording as you re-read your notes.



## Diagrams

Producing diagrams and large A3 sized charts of your notes can help. Pin them up in your room and on the fridge.

Diagrams can be used to help reinforce notes. Visual learners may find it easier to revise from images rather than words, so think about ways in which you can represent certain topics in image form. Sometimes, copying diagrams from books can help to remember key facts as well, so this could be another approach that you could take.



## Teach your parents

Explaining a topic to a parent (or friend) is a really good way to learn. If you have to explain the work to someone else and then answer their questions you will improve your own understanding. To take it to the next level you could encourage them to make notes based on what you say. Have you taught them correctly? Have you got your facts right?

## Reading

Read intelligently. Spend five minutes flipping through a book or your notes, looking at headings and summaries. Then attempt to mind map what you have spotted and what you can remember.

## Physical Learning

Use the environment

### Use a different room for each subject.

- Notice aspects of the environment such as the light or feel of the room - how do you feel in that place?
- Attach your notes to the furniture. Notice their location.
- Associate a different location with each subject. Associate furniture, windows, plants and ornaments with particular topics.

### Using the parts of your body

Parts of your body are especially helpful as triggers to memory, as your body will be there in the exam room! For example, each hand could represent an essay plan – each finger one major topic; each segment of each finger a principal reference you would use. The fingernails could represent counterarguments; the knuckles could be associated with relevant quotations.

### Use motor memory

- Study on the move. If you exercise, associate each movement with something you wish to remember. To refresh the memory, go through the exercise in your mind.
- Writing, drawing and speaking also use motor memory: the fine-muscle sequence is recorded by the brain.

## Condense

Fitting notes onto one side of paper makes them easier to stomach, so rewrite and cut down as you go.

## Test

See what you can remember without notes, but avoid testing yourself on subjects that you know already. Why not ask someone else to test you?

## Time

Do past exam papers against the clock; it's an excellent way of getting up to speed and of checking where there are gaps in your knowledge.

# Reading More Efficiently

Most students, when faced with a textbook or chapter to study, will start at the beginning, read through at the same pace until the end, then stop and put the book away. This *passive* approach is inefficient as it can take longer and leave you bogged down in detail, with no overall grasp of the subject matter. By adopting a more *active* approach to reading, you can begin to read better and faster within a very short space of time. The **PQ2R** method has proved to be most successful here. See below to find out more;

## **P = Preview**

Begin your reading with a quick skim (2-3 minutes) of the text, trying to get an overview of the chapter or text. Look for section headings, illustrative charts and diagrams, signposts or key words. Don't start highlighting text at this point.

## **Q = Question**

This is the key to active learning. Look for answers to the basic questions of "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "Why?" and "When?" Identify the main theme or learning point of the particular text.

## **R = Read**

Now read the chapter carefully, with these questions in mind. Your mind will be actively looking for answers as you read. Work with a pen and paper, make brief summary notes, look for 'topic sentences' that summarise the most important point in a paragraph or section and highlight them, if necessary. Vary your reading speed - move quickly over lighter, less important material and slow down when you come to a difficult section.

## **R = Review**

Always check your understanding of the material by reviewing and testing your recall before putting the text away. Look at the notes you have taken and check that they answer your initial questions. Summarise your findings from this study session.

## **Making Your Notes Useful**

The purpose of making summary notes on a topic or section is to aid your overall understanding of material, to help you distinguish between what is really important information (*depth*) and what is merely supporting *detail*. Good summary notes make remembering information quicker and easier.

## **Sort out your filing system**

If you haven't already done so, get your subject folders and notes organised immediately. Invest in some ring binders, dividers, plastic pockets, etc. Have a separate folder for each subject (a permanent reference point) and then keep a 'current folder' for managing notes in progress.

## **Less is always more**

When writing notes, remember they should contain a summary, not an extensive repetition of what is in the textbook. Don't crowd the page. Stick to main headings and sub-headings. Use abbreviations where appropriate. Try to reduce what you need to know on the topic down to one A4 sheet. Once you have an overview, it is easier to fill out the detail.

## **Make your notes visual**

Ensure your notes have a memorable appearance so that you can recall them easily. Use illustrations, diagrams, graphs, colours, and boxes ('a picture is worth a thousand words'). Arrange the material in a logical hierarchy (title, sub-point, explanation, example). Ideally, you should be able to close your eyes in an exam and visualise a particular page of notes.

## **Beware of transcribing and highlighting!**

Merely re-writing the text from the book into your notes doesn't mean you remember it. Try to put things in your own words and devise your own examples - this will make the material more meaningful. Only use the highlighter pen AFTER you have previewed and questioned a text, thus ensuring you identify the most important material and you avoid the creation of a fluorescent textbook!

## **'Save' your notes carefully**

Practice following the logic of your computer files when storing information. Think - "Where does this material best fit (subject, section, topic, sub-topic, etc.)?" In this way, you will ensure that it is efficiently processed and easily retrieved both physically (during revision) and mentally (when you need it in an exam).



# Improving Memory

We often blame our memory for poor academic performance ("I'm no good at remembering names/dates/rules/verbs/characteristics") when really we should be addressing our faulty input and storage system.

There is a big difference between short-term and long-term memory. If you study a topic one night and can remember most of it the next morning, don't be fooled into thinking that you will be able to remember it accurately in two months' time.

If the goal is to improve your long-term memory, then the key to success is based on the efficiency of input (the 'mental filing system' we employ). Reducing the burden on the limited short-term memory, and channelling information into long-term storage, is based on the creation of patterns and the avoidance of randomness.

## 'Chunking'

As the average person can only hold seven 'items' in short-term memory, grouping items together into 'chunks' can increase capacity. This is generally used for remembering numbers (think of how you remember phone numbers by grouping the seven digits into 2 or 3 chunks) but can be applied to other listings in various subjects.

## Repetition

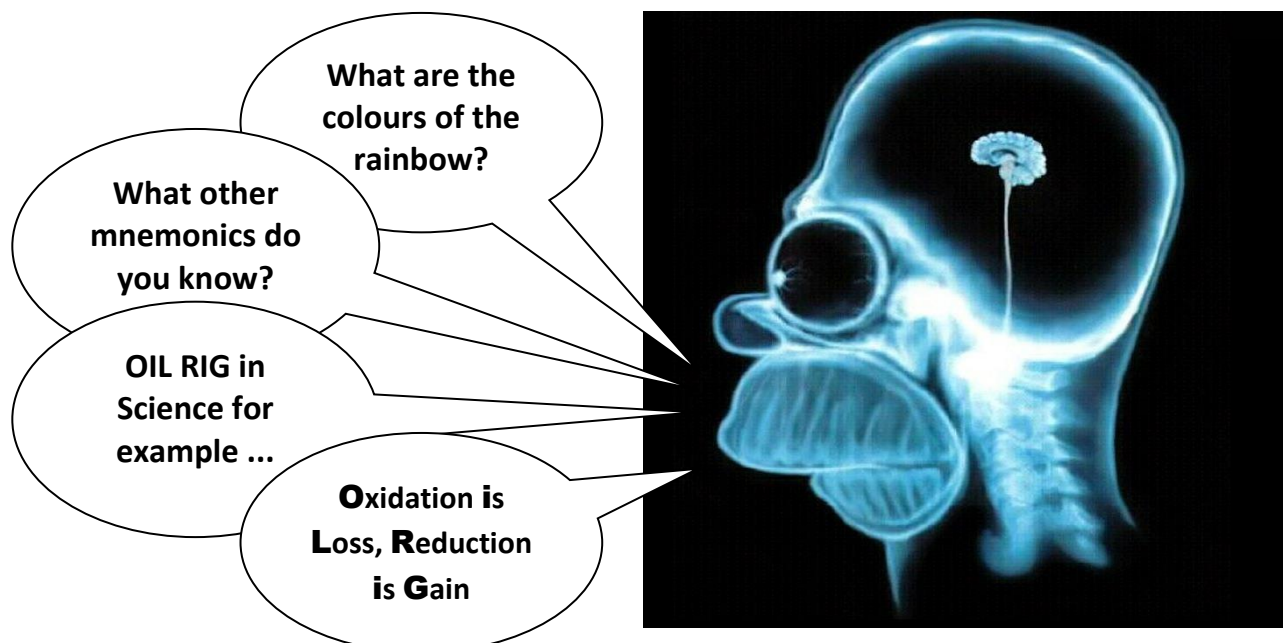
Studies indicate that 66% of material is forgotten within seven days if it is not reviewed or recited again, and 88% is gone after six weeks. Don't make life harder for yourself - build in a brief daily and weekly review of material covered. It will save you having to re-learn material from scratch!

## Application and association

The best way to channel material to long-term memory is to organise it into meaningful associations. Link it to existing information and topics and create vivid personal examples which act as 'mental hooks' or 'cues' for recalling material in the future. Thus, new items are put in context. If you learn a new formula/verb/rule, try to put it into practice immediately with a relevant example.

## Use of mnemonics

These are various word games which can act as memory aids and which allow personalisation and creativity. Think of *stalagtites* (come down from the ceiling) and *stalagmites* (go up from the ground); the colours of the rainbow - **Roy G. Biv** ('**R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain' to remember red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet); the seven characteristics of living organisms - **Mr. Grief** (**M**ovement, **R**eproduction, **G**rowth, **R**espiration, **I**rritability, **E**xcretion, **F**eeding). You can devise many more of these to aid your personalised recall of items in your subjects.



# Review

Looking over a topic every now and then will help to keep it in the memory, taking away the need to cram before exams.

Make a summary of the work and look over it ten minutes later, the next day, the next week and then the next month for a few minutes each time. This reinforces the knowledge learned.

Understanding increases as time spent studying passes. However, the ability to recall things being memorised becomes progressively less efficient as time passes in a study session.

**20 minutes is needed for the mind to get into the rhythm of and flow of the material. Any more than 40 minutes spent memorising means that memory declines to a point where it is no longer valuable.**

The answer in revision lessons therefore is to do 30 minutes with a 5-minute stretch break and then review the topic.

## **After a one hour memorising session:**

*10 minutes later revise the topic for 10 minutes*

*1 day later revise the topic for 5 minutes*

*1 week later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes*

*1 month later revise the topic for 2-5 minutes*

*Before exams revise the topic as required*

**Each time knowledge is reinforced it enters deeper into the long-term memory and becomes more stable.**

# Practising Output

To prepare for an exam, **you must practice doing what the exam requires you to do; giving out information, not taking it in!** This applies to regular class tests as well as the final exams.

Prior to your summer exams, you will probably have had the benefit of many class tests and some modular exams where the GCSE conditions are simulated for your benefit – you can learn a lot by reflecting honestly on your performance in these tests. You also have the benefit of a wealth of freely available information about the exams. Past exam papers, marking schemes, study guides and examiners reports are all there to be used.

## **Make use of past papers**

These should be your constant companion in all revision tasks. For each topic you revise, consult the past questions on this subject and then attempt answers to them. Check your answers, fill in the 'knowledge gaps' where necessary, and file away the correct 'model answer' in your notes for future reference. You will also start to notice any trends in the questions asked.

## **Follow the marks**

Marking schemes are an invaluable aid to exam preparation. You can see how the marks are allocated for each question on the paper and what quantity or style of answer is required in each case. This knowledge will greatly inform your revision work and helps to remove the mystique of the exam.

## **Try a dress rehearsal**

Each exam paper contains its own particular structure and challenge, with varying emphasis on answering style and depth. While much of your ongoing revision will be based on individual topics and questions, it is a very useful exercise to tackle an exam paper in its totality (at least once before the summer). It forces you to consider your strategy – the questions you will want to attempt or avoid, the issues of timing, the number of points you will need to make in each part of a question. Having performed this exercise a couple of times, your confidence levels rise as you fix on your strategy for the exam and realise that there can't be any major surprises for you in June.

# General Rules for Revising for Exams

## Plan ahead

Think about what you need to do between now and the exams. Work out a revision timetable, ask your tutor for help with this. Start early – do not try to cram two years worth of work into two weeks. **Make sure you know when your exams are (date and time).**

## Make notes

Do not try to revise from two years worth of notes. Make a summary of each section and learn the key words.

## Variety

Tackle several subjects each day. This will help break up the time. Avoid working on one topic for a whole day. It is better to revisit topics two or three times over a period of several days

## Eating

Start with breakfast. It sounds obvious but your brain needs fuel in order to function properly. Give yourself regular breaks and have snacks (for example, a banana) to provide a source of energy.

## Breaks

Each person is able to concentrate for different lengths of time. Try to take a few minutes break every 30 minutes to keep your mind fresh and to reflect on the things you have been revising. Technically, you can only accurately revise for your age in minutes, before you start to lose focus. For example, if you are 15, you can do 15 minutes effective revision before you start to lose focus.

## Past papers

Complete past papers, trying to get them done in the exact time given on the front of the test. By doing this you will be able to identify areas of weakness. If you start these whilst still at school, you can also ask your teachers for help. You want to avoid revising areas you know well – challenge yourself with the harder sections!

## Sleep

It can be difficult to sleep before examinations but it will be a lot easier if you know you have fully prepared and are not feeling tired as soon as you sit down in the hot exam hall.

## Healthy Body, Healthy Mind

Eating a variety of healthy foods doesn't just give your body a boost, it also benefits your brain cells. Skipping meals may well give you extra cramming time, but it can also leave you hungry and unable to concentrate. So, eat regularly and sensibly. Think wholemeal sandwiches and fruit, rather than cakes and biscuits!

### Brain Fuel

- Bread, pasta, cereals and potatoes are filling and packed with starchy carbohydrates, which release energy slowly, meaning you can keep going for longer.
- Fruit and vegetables give you essential vitamins and minerals. Aim for at least five portions a day.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydrated brains don't think clearly and water is healthier than sweet, fizzy drinks.
- Meat, fish, pulses, milk and dairy foods are good sources of protein. Moderate amounts are essential for a healthy diet.
- Make sure you eat breakfast on the day of an exam.
- If you're not getting enough iron then you'll damage your ability to concentrate for long periods of time and your energy levels will begin to drop. If hour long sessions of revision are proving too much, try eating more red meat, eggs and leafy green vegetables like spinach.

### Exercise

Staying in your room can seem like the best option when revision time is short. But a bit of the great outdoors can blow the cobwebs away and help you relax. If you can't get out, try at least to get up and out of your chair for a stretch and a wander. Better still, go for a swim or put those footie boots on and give your mind and body a workout.



# Making Revision Fun

Revision doesn't have to be boring and mean long hours sat in front endless revision guides, books or notes. Here are a few suggestions to make revision fun.

## Draw

Drawing funny pictures or cartoon sequences that help you to remember a certain chain of events works well in things like Science experiments. Any revision that requires you to put things into an order of some kind can be drawn.

## Text

How many text messages do you send a day or week? Make a plan with your friends to add a fact to the end of every text message you send to build up your knowledge and add to your revision efforts.

Alternatively, text yourself the key points in each subject – you can then look at them on your way into school.

## Games

Making a popular game into a revision aid is fun. Even making the game makes you revise your work. Trivial Pursuit, Blockbusters and Battleships work really well. You can learn with a group of friends and have fun doing it.

## Sing

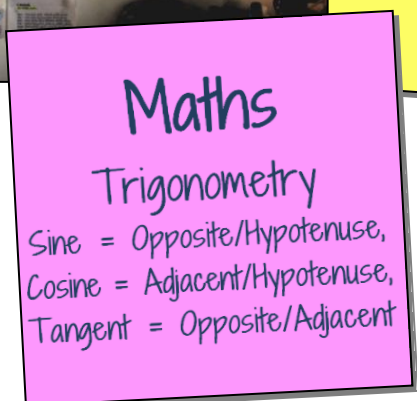
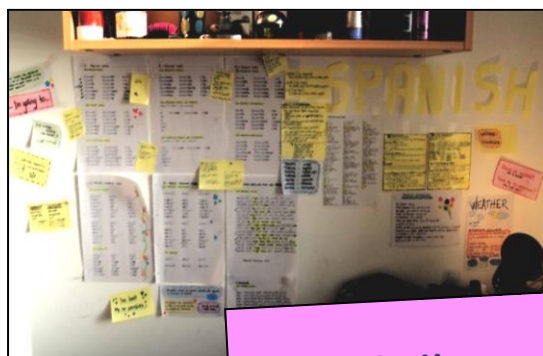
How often does a song get into your head and you end up singing it all day? Why not find some of your favourites tunes and change the words to fit in with a revision topic? The song will help your brain to trigger the information.

## Decorate your room

Make your revision space into a revision centre. Lots of bright coloured posters, 'Post-It' notes and diagrams to hang around your room make you visit the information at regular intervals. Putting 'Post-It' notes on the inside of cupboard doors you use regularly or in places around the house you use often will keep your brain active.

## Study with a friend

Studying with friends is a great way to revise. You can help each other learn things that you find hard to remember or just don't know! You could organise to go to each other's house once a week or over the weekend and have sessions on each subject. Your friends may be able to explain things to you in a way you understand better.



# Developing a Revision Programme

In order to revise effectively, you want to spend time revising each subject. You should also try to do this several times within your programme, so that you are not only revising for a subject once before the exam. Below are some pointers to help you come up with a successful revision programme ...

1. Start in good time (don't leave your revision until the last minute).
2. Spread out the range of subjects you are going to be revising so that all are covered several times in a rolling programme.
3. Revise in half hour slots (certainly no longer than one hour slots). Nothing extra is likely to sink in if one subject is revised for longer.
4. Have regular, short breaks. Remember the rule about your age and the amount of time you can effectively revise for before your mind starts wandering. Short breaks are just that though – certainly no more than five minutes.
5. When revising during the evenings after school, plan to look at only one or two subjects. **Leave some time for relaxation.**
6. Allow some days off, but not in the few weeks just before your exams.
7. Plan to revise specific topics or aspects of a subject – for example, not just Science, but human systems, or waves, or electricity ...
8. Highlight examination dates and times.

## How to revise

Not everyone works in the same way, so you may want to use some of these strategies mentioned previously, or those below to help you see with method works best for you ...

1. Don't revise with the TV or radio on. Having music in the background sometimes helps.
2. Read through a topic and then make brief notes on cards which can be used for further revision later.
3. Instead of writing notes in words, draw a picture.
4. Re-draw diagrams and check how well they match the detail of the original.
5. Use flow charts to sequence events or activities. Use linking words between boxes to illustrate the nature of the sequence.
6. Use colours to highlight key words (but be aware that this can be messy unless the colours are used sparingly). This technique is very effective with magazine or newspaper articles where certain categories of words are to be highlighted.
7. Work with a partner to help and test each other on, for example, explaining the meaning of key words (and spelling them correctly), rearranging chemical equations, performing calculations, recalling facts and dates, etc ...
8. Work in small groups to discuss an issue, topic or some evidence and collectively produce a brief summary or a conclusion.
9. Design a revision timetable and stick to it.
10. Make notes or design questions for yourself so that you can test yourself on what you have revised.
11. You may wish to revise with a friend using a question and answer technique.
12. Make sure that, before you start your revision, you have everything that you will need, so that you don't have to keep stopping to get things.

## How long should I revise for?

A 30 minutes revision session is about the maximum you should attempt in one go. After 30 minutes your brain will stop retaining information. This means that you could complete two periods of revision with a short break. At the end of each revision session you should write down a few questions about the topic you have been revising and then start the next session (after a break) by trying to answer those questions.

You should be able to manage about 4 sessions of 30 minutes per day when you're at school if you want to really succeed in your examinations.

Always have a break from revision after a 30 minute session. You may like to do 30 minutes, then have a snack, and then start the next 30 minutes.

Remember, the more revision you do (within reason), the better your grades will be.



## Where should I revise?

As with most things to do with revision, this can vary depending on the person. Some people prefer to revise on their own, and in silence, whilst others need background noise. You may find that you don't want to revise on your own as you may get easily distracted – some people actually like to revise in front of their parents/carers as they have someone keeping an eye on them. Regardless of which location you choose to use, follow these simple steps;

1. You should find a quiet place that is free from distractions.
2. Do not sit in the front room with your family with a TV blaring out – it will distract you. Sat in your bedroom, with good lighting and the door shut may be the best place.
3. Some people find listening to music can help; however, you must be careful here. If you play music with words that you know you will find yourself singing along to the music and this will distract you. Classical or chill-out music is the best, as it will help you relax and focus.
4. Make sure that you have everything you need – pens, pencils, note pad, drink, etc ...
5. You could also use the LRC at school or a local library to revise.

## Planning a revision timetable

The best way to plan out a revision timetable is as follows ...

1. Write out all of the subjects for which you have an examination.
2. Put them into two lists;
  - a. *Subjects you like and/or are good at (maybe those that you find easy)*
  - b. *Subjects that you don't like and/or are not good at (those that are harder)*
3. You can then start to transfer the topics into your revision timetable. You should try to go for a 2:1 ratio – for every 30 minute revision session that you do for one of your good subjects, you should do two 30 minute sessions for subjects that you are not so good at;

Good Subjects	Bad Subjects
Design Technology	Science
English	Maths

	30 minute session		30 minute session		30 minute session		30 minute session
MONDAY (after school)	Maths	BREAK	English	BREAK	Maths	BREAK	Science
TUESDAY (after school)	Design Technology		Science				

Alternatively, break down each topic within the different subjects ...

	30 minute session		30 minute session		30 minute session		30 minute session
MONDAY (after school)	DT - Materials	BREAK	DT - Production processes	BREAK	Maths	BREAK	Maths
TUESDAY (after school)	Maths		Maths		Science		Science

4. Make sure when you plan your timetable that you are realistic. If you know that you have after school commitments on a particular day then do not plan 4 revision sessions. If you know that you want to watch 'Eastenders', plan your revision around that! Remember to avoid revising for hours without a break - you need some down time, even if it's only a couple of minutes per hour.
5. Display your timetable at home and maybe have another copy to carry around with you. You could even programme it onto your phone and have alerts for when you need to break (although be warned, phones can be dangerous as they offer quite a distraction!).
6. Stick to your timetable!



## Choosing a revision timetable

There are a number of different styles of revision timetable that you can use, and as with the revision techniques, different formats will suit different people. Take a look at the examples below to see which would work best for you;

**Revision Techniques at Thamesmead**  
Writing A Revision Template: Option 1

**Revision Timetable (Daily Planner Format)**  
Before you start to produce your revision timetable, it is important to think about what you need to revise in each subject, and which subjects you need to spend more time revising. Complete the sheet below to help you out;

Day and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Timing	Topic	Which specific pieces of work?	Complete?
5:00-5:15			
5:20-5:35			
5:40-5:55			
6:00-6:15			
6:20-6:35			
6:40-6:55			
7:00-7:15			
7:20-7:35			
7:40-7:55			
8:00-8:15			
8:20-8:35			
8:40-8:55			

This timetable should be used when planning what revision you hope to achieve every day. Remember, breaking revision up into bitesize chunks is the most efficient way to cover everything you need to. You should also record breaks in this timetable.

You could use this style of revision timetable to help you plan what you want to achieve every day. Simply make a note of what you want to cover, and anything you do not get done gets added to the plan for the next day.

**Revision Techniques at Thamesmead**  
Writing A Revision Template: Option 2

**Revision Timetable (Daily Worklist Format)**  
Before you start to produce your revision timetable, it is important to think about what you need to revise in each subject, and which subjects you need to spend more time revising. Complete the sheet below to help you out;

Day and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work carried forward from yesterday

PRIORITY TOPICS			
Subject	Topic	Which specific pieces of work?	Complete?
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Day's new topics to work on

PRIORITY TOPICS			
Subject	Topic	Which specific pieces of work?	Complete?
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

**Revision Techniques at Thamesmead**  
Writing A Revision Template: Option 3

**Revision Timetable (General Format/Weekly Planner Format)**  
Before you start to produce your revision timetable, it is important to think about what you need to revise for in each subject, and which subjects you need to spend more time revising. Complete the sheet below to help you out;

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
(Write down the day)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)

This timetable format should be used to help you plan the work you want to cover on a week-to-week basis. Make a note of what you want to cover every day ...

**Revision Techniques at Thamesmead**  
Writing A Revision Template: Option 4

**Revision Timetable (Weekly planner format for when you are on holidays or study leave)**  
When you are away from school due to a holiday or study leave, you will find that you have plenty of time that you can fill. Use the table below to plan what work you can revise, and when. Be sure to balance the subjects out, and if you've planned to have a break or go out, write that down too. By writing everything down, you'll have an overview of what needs to be completed and when (and you can also see if you've covered all lessons);

WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY:

Timing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)
09:00-09:55							
10:00-10:55							
11:00-11:55							
12:00-12:55							
1:00-1:55							
2:00-2:55							
3:00-3:55							
4:00-4:55							
5:00-5:55							
6:00-6:55							
7:00-7:55							
8:00-8:55							

Similar to the timetable opposite, this version can be used when planning the revision you want to complete when you have time to yourself (such as weekends or holidays).

**Revision Techniques at Thamesmead**  
Writing A Revision Template: Option 5

**Revision Timetable (Weekly planner format for when you are on holidays or study leave)**  
When you are away from school due to a holiday or study leave, you will find that you have plenty of time that you can fill. Use the table below to plan what work you can revise, and when. Be sure to balance the subjects out, and if you've planned to have a break or go out, write that down too. By writing everything down, you'll have an overview of what needs to be completed and when (and you can also see if you've covered all lessons);

WEEK BEGINNING MONDAY:

Timing	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)	(Write down what subject/topic you'll be revising)
09:00-09:55							
10:00-10:55							
11:00-11:55							
12:00-12:55							
1:00-1:55							
2:00-2:55							
3:00-3:55							
4:00-4:55							
5:00-5:55							
6:00-6:55							
7:00-7:55							
8:00-8:55							

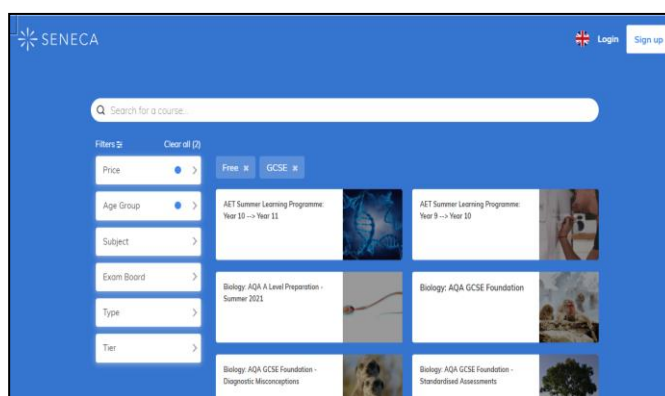
This style of timetable can be useful when planning out exactly what subjects you should focus on throughout the week. Assign each subject a colour, and colour in the timetable depending upon which subjects you will focus on. By doing this, you can check to see if you are spending the right amount of time on each subject.

# Online Revision Support

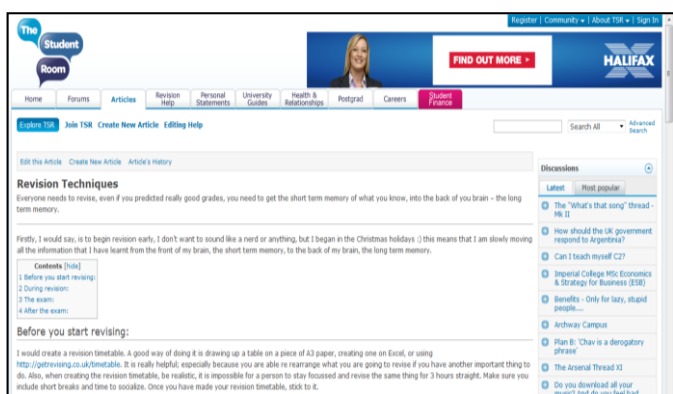
As well as advice that you can receive from your tutor, teachers, parents/carers or friends, there are also a number of incredibly useful resources on the internet. Simply by typing in 'revision techniques' to a search engine, you can find a number of different websites. To save some time for you though, some of the better examples can be seen below;



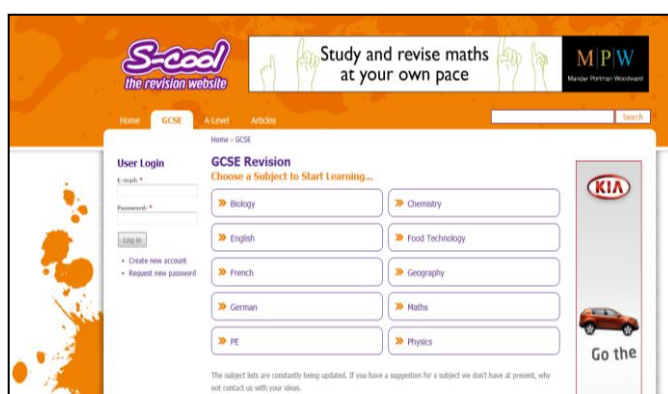
[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/)



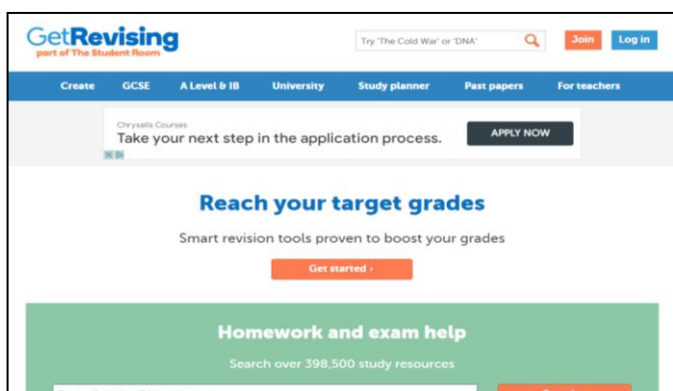
<https://app.senecalearning.com/courses?Price=Free>



[www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Revision Techniques](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Revision_Techniques)



[www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse](http://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse)



<https://getrevising.co.uk/resources/level/gcse>



<https://www.gcsepod.com/students/>

There are many other websites out there that you might find useful. Sometimes completing your own research will take you to a site that will work better for you. If you do find an alternative revision website, make a note of it in the space below;

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# Dealing With Distractions

So how do you react if you are having one of those days where the revision isn't happening and the information isn't staying in your brain...?

## "I just start daydreaming"

Become an active learner. Always work with a pen and paper. Focus on a specific task, not a specified time for your study.

## "I can't focus because I'm anxious about the exams"

Try to limit yourself to your immediate concerns, the things you have some control over (preparation for the upcoming revision test) rather than the things you cannot determine (like what questions the examiners will choose for this year's English Lit paper.)

## "I often fall asleep when I'm supposed to be studying"

Try to get to bed on time over the coming weeks. A tired brain is very unproductive. Get some genuine rest at the weekend. Be sure to get regular exercise, even just a walk around the block at night to clear your head.

## "I'm constantly interrupted by other people"

Study in the location most likely to offer peace and quiet. Ask for consideration from family members over the final run up to exams. Never have a TV, phone, computer game, or music system within arm's reach while you are trying to work. Make a rule of not taking phone calls within certain defined periods.

## "I keep thinking of other things while I'm studying"

Divide the study session into smaller, short-range goals which demand your full attention e.g. vocabulary or poetry test. Keep a 'reminder pad' beside you, a little notebook to jot down something that strikes you (someone to call, a job to do, etc.) and deal with it after the study period. Having made a note of it, you can more easily re-focus on your work.

# Stress Management

## Learn to relax

Take mini breaks throughout the day. Work on relaxation techniques, such as taking slow deep breaths.

## Time

Recognise that you can only do so much in a given time. **Try to pace, not race.**

## Talk

Talking and meeting with friends and occasionally sharing deep feelings and thoughts can be helpful in reducing stress.

## Get organised

Have a realistic daily schedule including revision, sleep, eating, relationships and recreation.

## Exercise

Physical activity provides relief from stress. The brain uses 20% of oxygen in the blood so you need to think about your posture and exercise to make sure your body gets enough. 30 minutes of sport or a short walk will do the trick.

## Sleep

Don't become overtired by forcing yourself to work late. Your brain needs time to sort out the information it has come across during the day. Your ideal sleep time is about 8 hours a night.

## Make a list

Make a list of the things that are worrying you and the possible things that could happen – then your brain will stop bringing them forward all the time.

## Be healthy

Watch your eating habits. Make sure you eat sensibly and have a balanced diet. Avoid too much chocolate, cola, caffeine and foods with lots of additives. Drink lots of water.

## Be positive

Talk positively to yourself! Don't pay attention to that internal voice saying you can't do it; tell yourself you can do it and you will do it.

## Stay calm

Make sure you are in a calm, positive mood before you start studying.

# Understanding The Terms

It is important to understand the key words used by examiners. Listed below are a number of key words and phrases which are often used on exam papers.

<b>Account for</b>	Explain the causes of
<b>Analyse</b>	Divide into parts and describe each part
<b>Comment on</b>	Explain why something is important
<b>Compare</b>	Are the things very alike (similar) or are there important differences? Which do you think is best? Why?
<b>Concise</b>	Short and brief
<b>Contrast</b>	Look for differences
<b>Criticise</b>	Use evidence to support your opinion on the value or merit of theories, facts or views of others
<b>Define</b>	Give the meaning of
<b>Describe</b>	Write in details
<b>Differentiate</b>	Explain the difference
<b>Discuss</b>	Write about the important aspects of the topic; are there two sides to the question? Consider the arguments for and against. Then give your opinion.
<b>Distinguish</b>	Explain the difference
<b>Evaluate</b>	Judge the importance or success
<b>Explain</b>	Make clear (clearly explain)
<b>Factors</b>	The facts or circumstances that contribute to a result
<b>Give an account of</b>	Describe
<b>Illustrate</b>	Give examples or diagrams which make the point clear and prove your answer is correct
<b>Indicate</b>	Show and demonstrate
<b>In relation to</b>	Refer to a specific aspect of something
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain the meaning in your own words; for example you may be asked to interpret a graph
<b>In the context of</b>	In a particular setting; referring to
<b>Justify</b>	Give reasons to support an argument or action
<b>Outline</b>	Choose the most important aspects of a topic. Ignore the minor detail
<b>Relate</b>	Show the connection between things
<b>Role</b>	A function of something, which part something plays and how it works
<b>State</b>	Write briefly the main points
<b>Summarise</b>	Bring together the main points
<b>Trace</b>	Show how something has developed from beginning to end.

# Guidance for your subjects



Top tips for...

# English (AQA)

*English is an examination only subject.*

## Tips for success in your English exams

### Language Paper

- Plan and practise persuasive and descriptive writing.
- Practise questions in timed conditions.
- Read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts.

### Literature Paper

- Create quotation banks, character profiles and plot guides for the texts/poems.
- Create in-depth plans for past paper questions.
- Time yourself writing up responses to questions.

### General Tips

- Pre-read and annotate questions carefully. Try to identify what you can link to them.
- Read any extracts and annotate them. Look for devices, interesting words, structural devices, etc...
- Skim, scan and zoom in on information.
- Expand your vocabulary – look up any words that you are unfamiliar with.
- Expand your general knowledge and develop links to context for literature.
- Use cross-curricular knowledge from other subjects (for example, facts and dates from History).
- Ensure that you are revising steadily – don't leave it all until the last minute.

## Useful websites for English revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: English Language

BBC GCSE Bitesize: English Literature

[https://projectgcse.co.uk/english\\_language](https://projectgcse.co.uk/english_language)

[https://projectgcse.co.uk/english\\_literature](https://projectgcse.co.uk/english_literature)

<http://www.englishbiz.co.uk/>

Top tips for...

# Maths (Edexcel)

*Your final grade will be determined by three exams; one non-calculator papers and two calculator papers. The marks for all three papers get added together and then your final grade is decided using grade boundaries. This is the same for both Foundation and Higher papers.*

## Tips for success in your Maths exams

- Always, always, show all workings! Even if your final answer is correct, you will only get one mark for it whereas the question might be a four marker.
- Use Hegarty to its full extent. You will receive PLCs (Personalised Learning Checklists) for every exam, with topics and Hegarty clips to focus on.
- Try to get 70% or more for every Hegarty quiz.
- Bring a calculator to every Maths lesson. This ensures that you get used to your own calculator and know how it works.



## Useful websites for Maths revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Maths

<https://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/gcse.html>

<https://hegartymaths.com/>

<https://corbettmaths.com/>

<https://www.skool.co.uk/category/maths/>

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/maths>

Top tips for...

# Biology (AQA)

*Biology is an examination only subject. You will sit two papers. The examinations sat by Combined Science students are shorter than those sat by Triple Science students.*

## Tips for success in your Biology exams

- Ensure that you have a revision guide. Make sure that you use it.
- Practice lots of GCSE exam questions. If you can't answer a question it is really important that you try even harder.
- Lines of best fit can sometimes be a curve.
- When answering data questions, read the numbers off the graphs really carefully.
- Make sure your book is up-to-date and that all work is complete. Check with your friends to see if they have work that you are missing. Complete all the work you are given from now on, and take part in revision activities.
- Read through your notes after each lesson. This only takes a few minutes but will help you to remember what you did in the lessons and why you did it.
- Make a list of the key words and definitions. Use the glossaries at the end of each chapter to help you. Highlight these words in your notes so they stand out. Produce a diagram to link related words together (for example; cloning > genes > chromosomes > nucleus > unfertilised egg > small electric pulse > dividing > mitosis > ball of cells > embryo). Do this for several words to make word clusters.
- For controversial topics (stem cells, cloning, selective breeding, etc...) make a table to compare the points of view **for** and **against**.
- For processes, like cloning, make a flow chart to show what happens. Use colour and/or draw diagrams. Tell the story. Use connectives ('first', 'then', 'however', 'so', 'because', 'if', 'consequently' and 'finally') to link ideas and give reasons for what happens.

## Useful websites for Biology revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Biology

<https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision/biology>

<https://www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/biology>

<https://www.skool.co.uk/category/biology/>

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/biology>

Top tips for...

# Chemistry (AQA)

*Chemistry is an examination only subject. You will sit two papers. The examinations sat by Combined Science students are shorter than those sat by Triple Science students.*

## Tips success in your Chemistry exams

- Ensure that you have a revision guide. Make sure that you use it.
- Practice lots of GCSE exam questions.
- If you can't answer a question it is really important that you try even harder.
- Lines of best fit can sometimes be a curve.
- When answering data questions, read the numbers off the graphs really carefully.

## Useful websites for Chemistry revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Chemistry

<https://www.gcscience.com/>

<https://www.chemguide.co.uk/>

<https://www.skool.co.uk/category/chemistry/>

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/chemistry>

Top tips for...

# Physics (AQA)

*Physics is an examination only subject. You will sit two papers. The examinations sat by Combined Science students are shorter than those sat by Triple Science students.*

## Tips for success in your Physics exams

- Ensure that you have a revision guide. Make sure that you use it.
- Practice lots of GCSE exam questions.
- If you can't answer a question it is really important that you try even harder.
- Lines of best fit can sometimes be a curve.
- When answering data questions, read the numbers off the graphs really carefully.

## Useful websites for Physics revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Physics

<https://www.gcscience.com/>

<https://www.gcsephysicsonline.com/>

<https://www.skool.co.uk/category/physics/>

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/physics>

Top tips for...

# Art and Design (Edexcel)

*40% of the total mark based on a final exam and 60% is based on an NEA (Non-Examined Assessment).  
The NEA deadline is Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.*

## Tips for success in your Art and Design lessons

- Keep up-to-date with mini deadline each week.
- Regularly attend catch-up sessions in the Art department after school.
- Keep a 'Pinterest' board to collect images, website links and ideas that will inspire you.
- Take photos (and organise a folder on your phone) of things that interest you and could influence your creative thinking.

- Don't throw anything away-it might come in handy for something else.
- Develop your ideas by exploring a range of media.
- Look at a range of Artists to inspire you. Don't be afraid to discover one for yourself.

## Useful websites for Art and Design revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Art and Design

<https://www.studentartguide.com/>

Top tips for...

# BTEC Sport (Edexcel)

*Your final grade is determined by four components/units, all worth 25% of your final grade. Unit 1: Fitness, Sport and Exercise is an external assessment (an online exam). Unit 2: Practical Performance in Sport is an internal, written assessment. Unit 3: Training for Personal Fitness is another written, internal assessment, and Unit 4: The Mind and Sport Performance is another internal, written assessment.*

## Tips for success in your BTEC Sport and Fitness exams

- Complete all written assessments to the best standard possible, and make sure that you meet all of the deadlines set by Mr Cowley.
- Utilise both class time and when at home to complete all written assessments and revision.
- Check our 'BTEC Sport' Teams page regularly for updates about assignments, exam/revision.
- Make sure you answer all questions on the online exam.
- Utilise the revision resources (printed), and the accessibility to 'TheEverLearner' for revision purposes.
- Maintain a revision timetable leading up to the online exam.
- Work with your parents/carers to practice remembering key terms and retrieving information.
- Familiarise yourself with how you are assessed:

### **Unit 1 – Fitness, Sport and Exercise**

*Online Exam (60 minutes)*

### **Unit 2 – Practical Performance in Sport**

*Internal Assessment (Written Assessment)*

*Combined with some practical recording*

*Completed in Year 10 with Mr Bate (some touch up may be required)*

### **Unit 3 – Training for Personal Fitness**

*Internal Assessment (Written Assessment)*

*Combined with some recording of student completing training programme*

### **Unit 4 – The Mind and Sports Performance**

*Internal Assessment (Written Assessment)*

*Completed in Year 10 by Mr Cowley (some touch up may be required)*

## Useful websites for BTEC Sport and Fitness revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Health and Fitness

<https://theeverlearner.com/>

Top tips for...

# Business and Enterprise (NCFE)

*40% of the total mark based on a final exam and 60% based on an NEA (Non-Examined Assessment). The deadline for the NEA is 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023.*

## Tips for success in your Business and Enterprise exams

- Make useable notes and **use them**. But don't copy directly, rewrite notes and make sure you process and understand them.
- Make sure you learn the business key terms using 'Quizlet', 'Mr Hart's Website' or by creating your own flash cards.
- Complete past papers in exam conditions, then spend time marking them properly – add answers to flashcards, notes etc.
- Use sample portfolios to help with writing the synoptic project.
- Practice extended response questions. When you do this, explain any key terms given in the question, and give your advice (justify/back this up with evidence from your research and check that this makes good business sense).
- Check to see how many marks are available for a question straight away.
- Underline/highlight the key details in the question/scenario.
- If you can't do a question, leave it, and come back to it if you have time.
- Before you start the exam, flick through to see if there are any questions you might find tricky.
- If you have crammed something, write it down somewhere before you forget.

## Useful websites for Business and Enterprise revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Business

<https://mrhart.business/old/exam-keywords-list/https://www.gcsebusiness.com/>

Past papers:

<https://www.qualhub.co.uk/qualification-search/qualification-detail/ncfe-level-12-technical-award-in-business-and-enterprise-4594#SupportMaterials>

Sample portfolios:

<https://www.qualhub.co.uk/media/20895/603-2955-5-l2-distinction-sample-portfolio-version-30.pdf>

Top tips for...

# Computing (Edexcel)

*Your final mark is awarded based on two exams; 50% of the total mark is based on Paper 1 (Theory), and 50% is based on Paper 2 (an on-screen Python exam).*

## Tips for success in your Computing exams

- Target revising the topics you find **difficult**. You could find the relevant '[Craig and Dave video](#)' and make a concept map based on that topic (rewatch the videos if necessary) or use another resource such as the textbook. Convert some of your notes to flashcards.
- Practice all Python coding techniques (use the website <https://www.w3schools.com/python/> to help you).
- Start revising as soon as you can. Revise effectively (no music, tidy table, revise what you don't know).
- Practice exam questions and try to complete as many past papers as you can. Complete both the timed assessments under exam conditions (in silence, no distractions, no textbook or notes).
- Space out your revision. Make sure you have short breaks in between topics when you revise.
- Regularly use the revision workbook for Edexcel GCSE Computer Science that contains practice exam style questions for paper 1 (theory) and paper 2 (on screen python exam). Use the [python reference guide](#) for Paper 2. Self-assess using the mark-scheme. Be strict with yourself. Mark corrections to your work.

## Useful websites for Computing revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Computing

<https://isaacomputerscience.org>

<https://www.computerscience.gcse.guru/>

Top tips for...

# Design Technology (AQA)

50% of the total mark is based on a final exam and 50% is based on an NEA (Non-Examined Assessment).

The NEA deadline is 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

## Tips for success in your Design Technology exam

- Always make sure you **read the question** properly.
- Examiners will often ask questions that you answer by drawing **annotated sketches**. Remember, you have to **add notes** to go with your sketches, so don't just label the sketches, or you'll miss out on some marks.
- It's a good idea to **underline** the important bits of the question. Then you can keep checking to make sure you're not going off track and waffling about stuff that's not going to get you any marks.
- Pay attention to the **number of marks** a question is worth – if it's worth three marks, give three good points. And try to **fill** most of the space available for the answer. If there are three lines and you've only filled one, you probably haven't written enough.
- Always use the right **technical words** – words like 'criteria' and 'components' make examiners happy.
- Make your answers as specific as possible. If you're asked to suggest a technique, don't just write printing – give a specific method of printing (for example, Flexography).
- Come properly equipped. You will need: a pencil, pen, sharpener, ruler, rubber, coloured pencils.

## Useful websites for Design Technology revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Design and Technology

<https://www.technologystudent.com/>

Top tips for...

# Drama (OCR)

*The final grade is determined based on three components. Component 1: 'Devising Drama' makes up 30% of the final mark and involves you completing a written portfolio. Component 2: 'Presenting and Performing Texts' is worth 30% and involves a performance and written portfolio. Component 3: 'Performance and Response' is worth 40% of the final mark and involves students completing a 1 hour and 45 minute long written examination.*

## Tips for success in your Drama exams

- Read the questions carefully.
- Ensure that you read the extract carefully and understand it.
- Use drama terminology throughout your answers.
- Explain the impact on the audience (and the effects it would create).
- Revisit the structure required for each question.
- Ensure that you attend rehearsals.
- Learn your lines carefully.

## Useful websites for Drama revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Drama

Top tips for...

# Food and Nutrition (AQA)

50% of the total mark is based on a final theory exam and 50% is based on an NEA (Non-Examined Assessment).

## Tips for success in your Food and Nutrition coursework and exams

- Attend after-school revision and coursework club on Thursdays for advice and support in completing the NEA.
- Always, make sure you read the question properly.
- It's a good idea to underline or highlight the important bits of the question.
- Pay attention to the number of marks a question is worth – if it's worth three marks, give three good points.
- Always use the correct terminology in your answers, go over keywords from your handbook before the exam.
- Familiarise yourself with how you are marked;

### Theory exam

*The duration of the exam is 1 hr and 45 minutes, and it will cover the following areas:*

- Food, nutrition and health
- Food science
- Food safety
- Food choice
- Food provenance

### Non-examination assessments (NEA)

*NEA 1: Food Investigation (2000-word report). This makes up 15% of your final GCSE mark.*

*NEA 2: Food Preparation assessment with portfolio. This makes up 35% of your final GCSE mark.*

## Useful websites for Food and Nutrition revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Food Preparation and Nutrition

[https://projectgcse.co.uk/food\\_technology](https://projectgcse.co.uk/food_technology)

Seneca:

<https://app.senecalearning.com/classroom/course/d59d0e60-4fa8-11e8-bbba-738ab127bed6>

Subject content:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-8585/subject-content>

Subject specific vocabulary:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition/teach/subject-specific-vocabulary>

Assessment resources:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/food/gcse/food-preparation-and-nutrition-8585/assessment-resources>

Top tips for...

# French (AQA)

100% of the total mark based on final exams: 25% allocated to each of the four skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.



## Tips for success in your French exams

### Reading and Listening

- Pre-read the questions carefully.
- Skim and scan the texts for key words, negatives and tenses.
- Look at the amount of marks allocated per question to ensure that you have included enough detail.
- Does the question ask you to answer in French or in English? No marks are given for correct responses in the wrong language.
- Do not leave answers blank – most especially multiple choice answers.

### Writing

- Ensure that you write a brief plan.
- Check that you have answered all aspects of the question.
- Check that you have included a range of tenses/avoided repetition/shown off topic-related vocabulary/shown off good opinions and reasons.
- Remember, for **foundation** writing to respond to only one of the 40 word and one of the 90 word questions, and for **higher** to respond to only one of the 90 word and one of the 150 word questions.
- Do not forget the translation sentences on the **foundation** paper, or the translation paragraph at the end of the **higher** paper.
- Once you have completed your extended written pieces, proof-read for spellings, tenses, adjectival agreements. If you have any time left ask 'how can I make it better?'.

### Speaking

- Practice the photocard phrases. How can you use the language you know to describe a photo you are given?
- General conversation questions - can you practice with a partner to see if you can show off your knowledge and keep talking for 20 seconds in response to questions on the topics you have covered? Try to avoid repetition and show off a range of vocabulary and tenses.

## Useful websites for French revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: French

<https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision/french>

[www.pearsonactivelearn.com](http://www.pearsonactivelearn.com)

[www.lepointdufle.net](http://www.lepointdufle.net)

[www.thisislanguange.com](http://www.thisislanguange.com)

Top tips for...

## Geography (AQA)

*Your final GCSE grade is based entirely on final examinations. Paper 1 is worth 35%, Paper 2 is worth 35%, and Paper 3 is worth 30% of the final mark.*

## Tips for success in your Geography exams

- Read the questions carefully and highlight the command words.
- Take detailed feedback notes and annotate all exam papers.
- Use the time that you have – do not sit there passively.
- Watch clips on GCSE Pod in order to reinforce your understanding.
- Use your white practice exam books in order to practice answering timed questions.

## Useful websites for Geography revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Geography

[www.gcsepod.com](http://www.gcsepod.com)

[www.timeforgeography.co.uk](http://www.timeforgeography.co.uk)

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/geography>

Top tips for ...

# Health and Social Care (OCR)

*Your final mark is based on a written examination and three internal assessments.*

## Tips for success in your Health and Social Care exams

- Read the questions carefully.
- Look at the amount of marks that are allocated per question to ensure that you have included enough detail.
- Do not leave answers blank
- Make sure that you use your blue handbook to practice exam style questions.
- Familiarise yourself with how you are marked;

### Unit R021

*External assessment: 1 hour written exam focusing on essential values of care for use with individuals in care settings. 60 marks are given in the exams, which take place in January 2023 and June 2023.*

### Unit R022

*Internal assessment: Communicating and working with individuals in health, social care and early years setting. This assessment is worth 60 marks.*

### Unit R023

*Internal assessment: Understanding body systems and disorders. This assessment is worth 60 marks.*

### Unit R029

*Internal assessment: Understanding the nutrients needed for good health. This assessment is worth 60 marks.*

## Useful websites for Health and Social Care revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Health and Social Care

Top tips for ...

# History (EDUQAS)

*History is an examination only subject. 50% of your final grade is based on Component 1 (two hour long exams focusing on 'The Elizabethan Age' and 'Germany in Transition'), and 50% of your grade is based on Component 2 (a 45 minute exam focusing on 'Development of the USA' and an hour and 15 minute long exam focusing on 'Changes in Crime and Punishment').*

## Tips for success in your History exams

- Memorise the 'How to Answer' exam guidance to ensure you are fulfilling the requirements of each question.
- Revise content through testing yourself as opposed to simply reading over the information.
- Practice using past papers for exam timing. These are available on the Eduqas website.

## Useful websites for History revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: History

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/history>

Top tips for...

# Music (EDUQAS)

*Your final grade is determined by three components; Performing (30% of your final grade), Composing (30% of your final grade), and Appraising Music (the remaining 40% of the mark).*

## Tips for success in your Music exams

- Practice your instrument or singing daily.
- Enjoy listening to and playing music.
- Listen critically – analyse what you hear using the elements of music ('MAD T SHIRT').
- Always use a pencil for notation.
- Practice sight reading/sight singing – you will be amazed by how much progress you make if you practice little and often.
- Use an ear training app to train your ear – practice recognising intervals and chords.
- Have fun!
- Familiarise yourself with how you are marked;

**Component 1 - 30%: Performing** (combined time of at least 4 minutes)

*1 x Solo performance*

*1 x Ensemble performance (at least 1 minute in length)*

**Component 2 - 30%: Composing** (combined time of at least 3 minutes)

*1 x Free choice composition*

*1 x Composition to a set brief*

**Component 3 - 40%: Appraising Music**

*1 x Written Paper (1 hour 15 mins written paper based on music excerpts and set works)*

*8 questions worth 12 marks each.*

*Set Work 1 (Question 1) - Badinerie by J.S. Bach*

*Set Work 2 (Question 7) - Africa by Toto*

*Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 will all be unfamiliar listening and will contain short answer questions, musical dictation, and one longer answer (10-mark) question.*

## Useful websites for Music revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Music

<https://projectgcse.co.uk/music>

<https://www.focusonsound.com/>

<https://www.teoria.com/>

<https://www.musictheory.net/>

Top tips for...

# GCSE PE (Edexcel)

*Your final grade is determined by three components; two final exams (Component 1 Fitness and Body Systems, 36%) and (Component 2 Health and Performance, 24%), 10% controlled assessment (PEP Coursework), and practical assessments (3 sports, 10% each sport, 30% in total).*

## Tips for success in your GCSE PE exams

- Practice your main sport(s) regularly, ideal if you participate for an external team to school.
- Watch and become familiar of different sports/sporting activities, to help with application of knowledge and your explanation in your written examinations.

- Utilise the revision resources that are available;

#### **BBC Bitesize**

*Revision cards*

#### **The EverLearner**

- Videos for each topic
- Practice and Exam Questions
- Learning checkpoints
- Learner percentage, is worked out by current progress from last 12 questions.

#### **SENECA**

#### **Brainscape (online revision cards)**

*log into their app on your phone*

- Use past papers to practice exam technique, and become familiar with the command word terminology.
- Familiarise yourself with how you are assessed:

#### **Component 1 – Fitness and Body Systems (36%)**

*Written exam: 1 hour and 45 minutes*

*Units: Applied Anatomy and Physiology, Movement Analysis, and*

#### **Component 2 – Health and Performance (24%)**

*Written exam: 1 hour and 15 minutes*

#### **Component 3 – Practical Performance (30%)**

*Top 3 sports are assessed*

*One team, one individual, and the third can be either team or individual*

*These are selected by the class teacher, in collaboration with the student (your top 3 marks are put forward).*

#### **Component 4 – NEA PEP Coursework (10%)**

*Analysis of performance of an activity within the PE Specification*

*Includes: Planning, performing and evaluating a Personal Exercise Programme*

## **Useful websites for GCSE PE**

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Physical Education

<https://theeverlearner.com/>

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

<https://www.brainscape.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zxbg39q>

*Top tips for ...*

## **Spanish (AQA)**

*100% of the total mark based on final exams: 25% allocated to each of the four skills of Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing.*

### **Tips for success in your Spanish exams**

#### **Reading and Listening**

- Pre-read the questions carefully.
- Skim and scan the texts for key words, negatives and tenses.
- Look at the amount of marks allocated per question to ensure that you have included enough detail.
- Does the question ask you to answer in Spanish or in English? No marks are given for correct responses in the wrong language.
- Do not leave answers blank – most especially multiple choice answers.

#### **Writing**

- Ensure that you write a brief plan.

- Check that you have answered all aspects of the question.
- Check that you have included a range of tenses/avoided repetition/shown off topic-related vocabulary/shown off good opinions and reasons.
- Remember, for **foundation** writing to respond to only one of the 40 word and one of the 90 word questions, and for **higher** to respond to only one of the 90 word and one of the 150 word questions.
- Do not forget the translation sentences on the **foundation** paper, or the translation paragraph at the end of the **higher** paper.
- Once you have completed your extended written pieces, proof-read for spellings, tenses, adjectival agreements. If you have any time left ask 'how can I make it better?'.

## Speaking

- Practice the photocard phrases. How can you use the language you know to describe a photo you are given?
- General conversation questions - can you practice with a partner to see if you can show off your knowledge and keep talking for 20 seconds in response to questions on the topics you have covered? Try to avoid repetition and show off a range of vocabulary and tenses.

## Useful websites for Spanish revision

BBC GCSE Bitesize: Spanish

<https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision/spanish>

[www.memrise.com](http://www.memrise.com)

[www.pearsonactivelearn.com](http://www.pearsonactivelearn.com)

[www.thisislanguages.com](http://www.thisislanguages.com)



# Tips for the exams themselves



# What To Do When You Are Sat In The Exam Hall

## General Rules for What to Do When You're in the Hall

### Stay calm!

Exams are stressful things. You will be prepared. You will have revised. You will have prepared in the best way that you can as you wouldn't want to sabotage yourself. As a result, think about the positives. Once you have completed the exam, that'll be one to cross off the list. If you find yourself getting stressed, close your eyes, breathe in through your nose, and out slowly through your mouth as if you are blowing out candles.

### Make sure you know what you need to do

Read the questions carefully. Once you have read a question, read it again in order to ensure that you've understood it.

### Highlight the key instructions

Use a highlighter pen to identify the important parts of the question. Circling the key points with your pen will also work.

### Look at where the marks are

Look at the number of marks available for each section. If the question is worth one mark, don't spend 10 minutes on it. If however you have spent five minutes on a twenty mark question, you will almost certainly have missed something.

### Timing is key

Plan your time carefully so that you can attempt all of the questions. Follow the advice above to help you time your answers.

### Give the examiner all the information they need, even if it is not obvious in your answer

Annotate (label) diagrams if and where appropriate.

### Make it easy for the examiner

Try to ensure that your answers are neatly presented, and make sure it is clear where your answer is in the exam paper. The people marking your exam will be marking 100s of papers so they will not look for information if it is not obvious.

### Literacy is key!

Remember to use punctuation in your written answers. Check your spelling – particularly of the key words. You may lose marks for poor grammar and spelling, particularly on the key words.

### Check, and check again

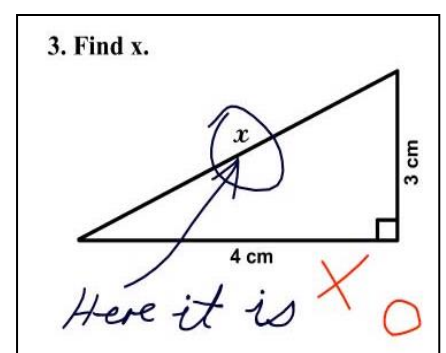
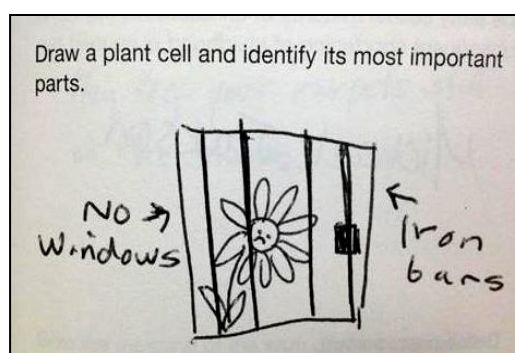
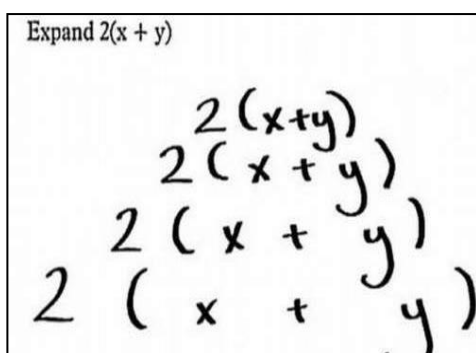
Proof-read your answers and make corrections where necessary.

### Give it a shot

Attempt all questions, even if you have to guess some of the answers. Don't leave blank spaces.

### Follow the rules and take it seriously

You can be banned from exams if you fail to do this. Do not make the same mistakes as the students below!



# The Examiner's View

The job of examiners is to give you marks, not to take them away, but they are powerless to help you if you fall into the most common traps. These are the **biggest pitfalls** they have identified:

## Not reading the paper correctly

Examiners say that this is one of the most regular and fatal errors. They call it the '*triggered answer*'. You have your pre-prepared answer ready but you don't look at the exact terms of the question and therefore supply the wrong information in your answer.

## Not finishing the paper

Mis-managing your time within the exam can easily cost you a full grade. The biggest exam 'crime' is to leave suitable questions unanswered. Therefore, if you find yourself stuck for time as you struggle through your third answer out of five, do not spend your remaining time extending and perfecting that answer. Instead, move on to questions four and five, even if your attempt is sketched or in point form. If you have answered only three questions instead of five, the highest mark you can get is 60%.

## Ignoring the marking scheme

You must take the marking scheme into account when you allocate time to each question or part of a question. If the marks allotted to a question clearly indicate that a few paragraphs are sufficient, do not write an essay on the subject. Avoid the temptation of writing everything you know about a topic – just give the appropriate amount of information. In most cases, you can go with the logic that a mark is given per sentence expected in the answer (1 mark = a one sentence answer, 2 marks = two sentences, etc...). This is not an exact science, but usually works. If you have spent 20 minutes on a 2 mark answer, you are wasting time, but likewise, if you spent 5 minutes on a 20 mark answer, you may very well have missed key pieces of information.

## Repetition

Make the point once. There are no extra marks for restating facts, even if you phrase them differently. Examiners say repetition is a very common mistake. It is also a time-waster and an irritant.

## Missing part of a question

Sometimes, part of a question can be carried onto the next page and, in the pressure of the moment, you don't see it. As a consequence you might fail to do a compulsory part of a question or miss out on the chance to take an option that would have suited you better. Always take time to familiarise yourself with the whole paper before you start answering it.

## Irrelevant quotations

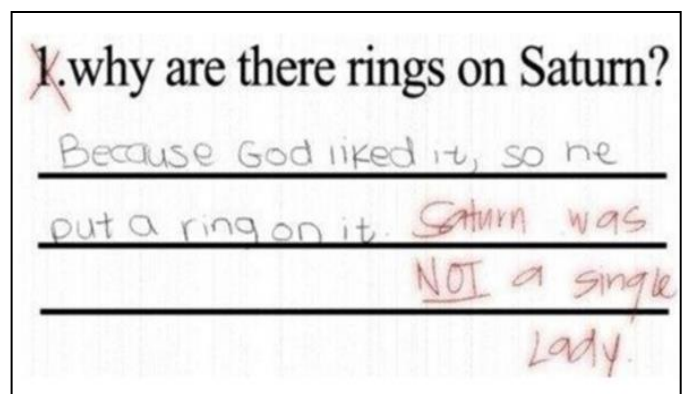
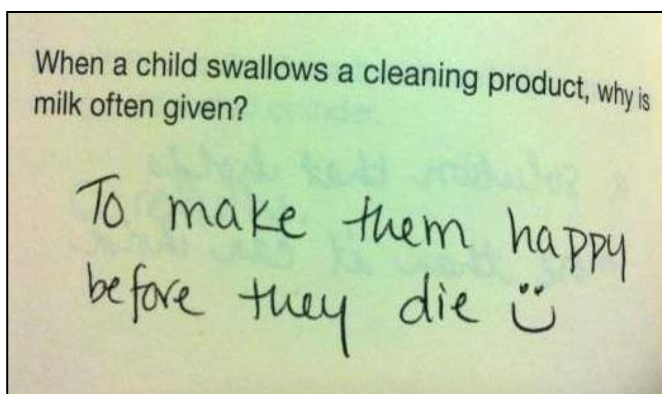
In literary subjects, don't use irrelevant quotations as it only irritates the examiner.

## Rough work

Include your rough work with your exam script – you might get some credit for formulae or calculations contained therein.

## Don't irritate the examiner by looking as though you've not taken the exam seriously!

Answer all questions and be sensible in your answers ...



# Performing On The Day

## Get a good night's sleep

While the temptation is to stay up half the night 'cramming' in more facts and figures, the evidence suggests this approach is counter-productive. In the context of a two-year course, an extra night's studying can make very little difference to your knowledge. However, having a mind that is refreshed, alert, and ready to respond to circumstances will obviously be better.

## Arrive in plenty of time

To perform well on the day, you need to be relaxed and to feel in control of the situation. This is difficult to achieve if you have missed breakfast and are stuck on a bus in traffic or standing on a train for 45 minutes as the exam time approaches. You will need about 15 minutes 'quiet time' to mentally rehearse your exam and run through your 'game plan' for the final time.

## Have your equipment ready

Each exam has its own requirements. Apart from properly functioning pens, pencils, rulers, etc, you may need a calculator for the Maths or Science exam. Drawing pencils may be required for diagrams in some subjects. A lot of nervous energy can be expended on last-minute hassle if these items aren't checked in advance.

## Think positive

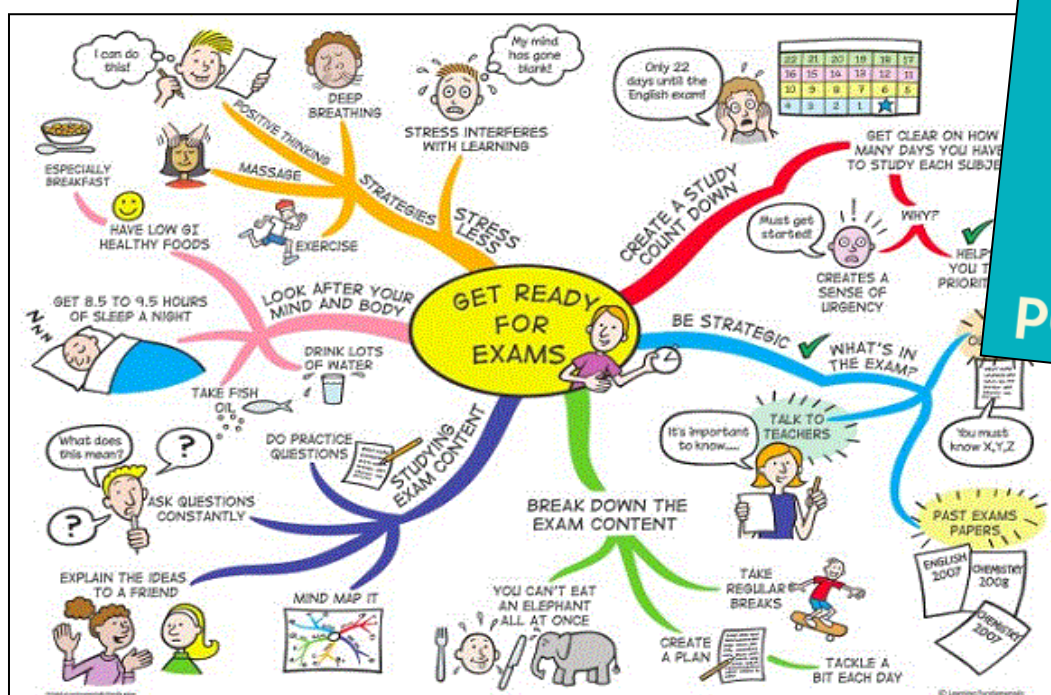
On the day of the exam, remind yourself of the good things (the material you know well, the revision you have completed, all of the past exam questions done, the good grades achieved) rather than dwelling on areas of weakness. Having that self-belief will give you the confidence to trust your judgement within the exam hall and 'hit the target'.

## Maintain your focus

There can be a lot of tension, drama, and hysteria in the air on the days of an exam. You want to keep the balance between maintaining your focus and interacting normally with your friends and classmates. Try finding a quiet spot to 'warm-up' before each exam and 'warm-down' afterwards. Surround yourself with people who are likely to add to the calm rather than add to the clamour.

## Beware of post-exam analysis

The more you participate in the exam post-mortem, the more confused and disheartened you are likely to become. You can't change what has happened, you can only focus on the present and this will need your full attention.



# Top Tips On Exam Strategy

Success in exams involves two ingredients - having a thorough knowledge of the subject matter AND making the most of your knowledge in the exam through effective answering technique. Two students with identical knowledge and ability levels can sit the same exam and their final grades can differ by as much as 25%. The difference is down to having an effective strategy and exam technique. Here are four golden rules to apply to all your GCSE papers;

## 1. Allow time to read the paper carefully

The importance of reading the paper carefully and choosing your questions wisely cannot be emphasised enough at this stage. The natural inclination is always to start writing immediately and launch into a favoured topic. Resist the urge. Take your time. Be smart and size-up the paper before answering.

## 2. Stick to your game plan

An overall strategy should have emerged from your revision and exam preparation in each subject. This covers the areas you will tackle, the topics you will avoid if they appear on the paper, the sequence in which you will tackle the various sections, the style of answering you will employ in each subject, the amount of time you will allocate to answering each section. In some cases, this plan will work like a dream but there will always be surprises to deal with in some papers. Don't get flustered. Stick to your game plan, trust your judgement, and move on.

## 3. Sweep up any mistakes

In the pressure of the exam hall, it is easy to make simple mistakes. These will sometimes have the potential to lose you a lot of valuable marks. Mis-reading the instruction on a question can make an entire answer invalid. You might have known the correct answer, but you didn't put it down. A simple miscalculation can lose you valuable time as you try to figure out the error. Be disciplined with your time. Always leave a few minutes at the end to check your work. Simply changing a definition/calculation at this stage could be the difference between a good and an average grade.

## 4. Attempt all questions

It is amazing how many exam scripts are handed in unfinished. Every year, capable students who just didn't get time to finish the paper lose easy marks. Don't fall into this trap. Work on the basis that you will get an answer written for the required number of questions. Remember that it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the final 5%. You can always polish an answer further but, if there is no attempt made at part of a question, the examiner can't give you any marks. BUT if the instructions on the front of the paper tell you to answer a certain number of questions, stick to this - don't answer too many!

# Answering Exam Questions

1. Scan **all** the questions.
2. Mark all the questions you can answer.
3. Read these questions carefully.
4. Choose the correct number of questions in each section.
5. Decide on an order: **best answers first**.
6. Divide up your time, allowing more time for the questions with the most marks.
7. Underline the key words in the question.
8. Plan your answer.
9. Stick to the point of the question.
10. Write your answer.
11. Use the plan at every stage – e.g. every paragraph.
12. Check your answer against the plan. Look out for mistakes.
13. If you have time, re-read the questions and your answers and make any necessary corrections.



# Key Exam Skills



Exam papers are designed to test certain skills, and every mark awarded is given for the demonstration of a skill.



## Skills Tested by Exams



### Knowledge

How well you know the meaning of the theories, concepts and ideas you have studied as part of your course.



### Application

How well you can use the information provided to explain benefits and problems, or make calculations etc in a given context.



### Analysis

How well you can develop ideas, apply theory, consider implications and make links between issues. You will need to identify and discuss in detail the likely causes and consequences that are relevant to the issues under discussion.



### Evaluation

How well you can judge the overall importance or significance of different outcomes in a given situation. The ability to evaluate recognises that there is rarely one obvious or 'right' answer. The key to demonstrating this skill is the ability to identify and consider the pros and cons of each potential solution, and then make a judgement supported by the weight of evidence considered.

## Key Exam Command Words

Knowledge	Application	Analysis	Evaluation
Define	Calculate	Analyse	Evaluate
Describe	Using examples	Explain why	Assess
State	Demonstrate	Examine the reasons	Discuss
Name	Apply	Outline the	To what extent

# Final Thoughts

The following pages feature 'flash cards' which might help you when it comes to revision and exam technique. Take a look at them to get last minute ideas ...

# Exam Do's and Don'ts

## DO...



Organise your notes on the course carefully – this will help you to revise constructively before the exam.



Read the questions carefully – if you don't understand what the question is about, you can hardly expect to give a relevant answer.



Plan your answers before you start writing – understanding what the paper expects will speed up your response and help to keep you calm.



Ensure that you answer the question that has been set – one of the most common mistakes is to misinterpret the question, so take time to read it carefully.



Focus on what you know, rather than what you don't – examiners want to reward your understanding, not penalise your lack of understanding, so focus on applying your knowledge of the subject effectively.

## DON'T...



Answer the question you want to be set – rather than the one that actually is! Too many students enter the exam hall armed with prepared answers and then ignore the examiner's real questions.



Write general answers that don't use material covered in the course – use the theories, concepts and key terms that relate to the course you have studied.



Use your time badly – examiners can only award the marks set by the paper, so a detailed first answer to a question worth 3 marks cannot compensate for a poor answer to a later question requiring a more detailed answer worth 15 marks.



Pack your answers full of irrelevant facts and figures – modern exams are about understanding, not memory. It's not so much about what you know, but how you use it!



Present your answers poorly – illegible handwriting, poor structure and lots of spelling and grammar mistakes can make it difficult for examiners to understand the meaning of the answer.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR MIND GOES BLANK



Try to relax – you may be too tense!



Keep writing – note down anything that springs to mind, preferably about the subject – you can always cross it out if you want!



Ask yourself some basic questions about the subject content – this will help you to focus.



Move on to the next question – you will probably have time to revisit the question again before the end.



# Preparation: The Weeks Before

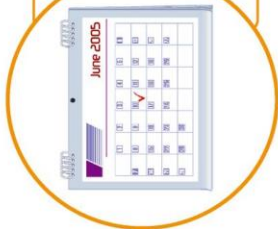


Exams are designed to check your understanding of the content of the courses you have been following. They require a lot of energy and focus, so you need to put some thought into planning and preparing for them.

## Six Top Actions for the Weeks Before

1. Draw up a **revision timetable** so that you can prioritise subjects and organise your time effectively and refer to it regularly. Highlight any important appointments and basic information about your exams, such as the date and the time (a.m. or p.m.).
2. Familiarise yourself with the **general exam details** – facing them for the first time in the exam itself will increase stress levels. In addition to your name, you will usually be required to give your candidate number, the centre number of your school or college and a reference number for the exam you are completing, so learn these in advance.
3. Plan your **approach** to the exam paper – Knowing the number of questions you need to answer, the marks allocated for each question and the overall length of the exam will allow you to work out how much time you should spend on each question in advance – vital if you are to manage your time effectively.
4. Continue to **practice active revision** – as is the case with most things, practice makes perfect. Summarise notes into revision cards, colour code them by topic, recite them aloud or listen to them on tape.
5. Find out if your school/college intends to hold any **'mock'** exams and attend them – even if you don't feel totally prepared, they will give you a feel of the exam. If you don't have access to this, organise your own, either by yourself or with friends. Pick an old exam paper or invent your own and have a go at writing the answers in a set time limit, working under **exam conditions**, in order to improve your writing speed.
6. Stay sane – make sure that you continue to make time to **relax, exercise** and get plenty of **sleep**. Working round the clock will only make you even more anxious – you need to remain calm and focused. Avoid anyone who undermines your self-confidence, i.e. those who are overly-confident in their ability or prone to panic.

# Preparation: The Day Before



One of the side-effects of the build-up to exams is that our perception of them starts to become warped – it's make or break time, the point of no return! You need to keep any anxieties in proportion and, if all else fails, remind yourself that everyone, including the examiner, wants you to pass!

## What To Do on the Day Before

1. **Prepare what you will need** for the exam – make sure that you have the right equipment – pens, pencils, ruler, calculator, water and a snack, as well as your candidate number the exam time and venue.
2. Make sure you have **planned your journey** properly – i.e. have you allowed plenty of time to reach the venue (including the possibility of delays), have you organised cover for domestic or employment responsibilities, have you planned for emergencies?
3. Maintain a **positive frame of mind** – try to see your exams as a challenge rather than a burden and focus on what you hope to achieve.
4. Use **relaxation techniques** to deal with moments of excess stress (see the STOP exercise below). If this doesn't work, look for help.
5. **Be kind to yourself** – despite the temptation, staying up through the night to review notes is unlikely to be effective. Allow plenty of time for sleep and relaxation, make sure your diet contains lots of slow-releasing carbohydrates (such as cereals and pasta) to maintain stamina and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.

### The STOP Technique



- Close your eyes
- Breathe deeply and slowly
- Repeat STOP to yourself quietly until you begin to feel calm

### ...and finally...

A planned approach to exams will help you to conserve your energy by using your time effectively.

Most students feel unprepared and confused about certain areas of their subjects – you don't have to understand everything fully to get a good grade.

This is not the time to worry about what you haven't done or learned during the course – focus on how to make the best use of what you have done.



# Sitting Exams Successfully

It may be hard to believe, but there are some advantages to doing exams! For instance, you will not be expected to produce the same level of detail or write out lists of references or bibliographies, and examiners are generally more sympathetic to untidy handwriting or spelling mistakes.

## Things to Do As Soon As You Sit Down

- ✓ Check you have the correct paper – mistakes do happen!
- ✓ Provide the necessary details by filling in the booklet as required.
- ✓ Read through the instructions slowly and read through at least one more time to check understanding.
- ✓ Write down the amount of time you plan to spend on each question, either on the question paper or your answer booklet. This will be based on the marks allocated for each question and the overall length of the exam, allowing time to read through questions at the start and check answers at the end, and should be calculated in advance.



## When the Exam Starts

- ✓ Read through the whole paper – check all pages to ensure that you don't overlook questions or miss relevant data.
- ✓ Read through each question carefully – identify and highlight the key content words (i.e., what the question is about) and the trigger/command words (i.e. what the examiner wants you to do). Check that you have not misread any key words.
- ✓ If you have a choice of questions, tick the ones you could attempt, and double tick the ones you could answer best.
- ✓



## During the Exam

- ✓ Before you start a new question, think before you start writing – planning your response will help to structure your answer and improve your communication.
- ✓ Re-read the question as you write – this is especially important for questions requiring a detailed response, in order to remain focussed on the question set.
- ✓ Stick to your time allocation – producing very long answers for initial questions that carry relatively few marks is not an effective strategy, especially if this prevents you from having any time to tackle subsequent questions.
- ✓ Label all diagrams fully and include any working out – easy marks to miss!
- ✓ Don't miss out questions – it is much easier to gain marks from demonstrating some understanding on all questions, so it makes sense to tackle all questions, however weak you feel on some of them.
- ✓ Review your answers at the end – this should allow you to spot any errors or omissions.



# General Notes

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 28 horizontal dotted lines.