

Revision Tips for Students and Parents / Carers

How to Revise

Be active – Just reading through notes or textbooks has limited impact. Effective revision requires you to engage your brain. Good strategies for this include making notes, creating diagrams and flash cards. Using podcasts and videos are more helpful when you make notes or mindmaps as you listen.

Create mindmaps – Mindmapping builds new neural pathways that helps you recall information and they can lead to improved learning and creative thinking. For more see: <http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/>

Use past papers – using past papers and markschemes helps you to get used to the exam format, question styles and time limits. Testing yourself improves your ability to recall information and also shows you the gaps in your knowledge.

Variety – Using a variety of revision methods is important. This not only keeps revision interesting but different methods work better for different subjects.

Repetition – Don't just go over a topic once. Repeating revision of a topic with a couple of days break in between helps you to memorise information.

Where to Revise

A quiet area – revision is most effective in a quiet environment. Music is more of a distraction to some people than others but rarely helps. Certainly, loud music or music with lots of lyrics should be avoided.

No distractions – Smartphones and tablets can sometimes be useful for revision but can often be a huge barrier to concentration. Students should be brave enough to switch their phones off or leave them in another room. The brain can't handle the distraction of social media whilst revising. Even having a phone in sight affects the ability to concentrate. Revision in front of the TV does not work!

A separate area – Having an area where there is a table or desk big enough to spread out and leave out resources can be very helpful.

When to Revise

Revision timetable – Having a revision plan ensures that you have everything covered. It also allows you to build in breaks to switch off and relax. As well as being important for wellbeing, these planned breaks also help the brain to process what has been covered during revision. There are various websites that will help you create revision timetables, for example getrevising.co.uk.

Short bursts – Working for 35 – 45 minutes and then having a short break of 15 minutes helps the brain to take in information. Short bursts of revision can also be far more productive than working for hours on end where it is hard to maintain focus.

Time of day – The most effective time of day to revise will vary from person to person and depend on other commitments you have. Try revision at different times of day and see what works best but stick to a regular bedtime.

Don't put it off – Revision should be spread out over many weeks. This helps avoid a sense of panic and allows you to repeat revision of key information to get it into your long term memory.

Routine – Get yourself into a good weekly revision routine.

Looking After Yourself

Sleep – Getting enough good quality sleep is crucial. 8-10 hours a night is recommended. A regular bedtime, a Sunday morning lie-in and no screen time in bed all help with this.

Healthy food, including breakfast – It is important to maintain a healthy diet during revision. Not skipping breakfast will boost concentration and memory.

Exercise and Fresh Air – Regular exercise will help to reduce stress and anxiety as well as boosting self-esteem.

Reduce hours at work – If you have a part-time job, talk to your employer about your studies. They should understand the importance of your revision. Ask for a break from your job for a few weeks or to reduce your hours.

How Parents/Carers can Support

Praise – Praising the effort that your child is putting in is very important. Make the praise meaningful by being specific and praising when it is really deserved.

Perspective – Help your child keep a sense of perspective. The weeks leading up to exams are tough but will pass quickly. Remind them why they are working hard and what they will gain from their efforts. At the same time reassure them that you will be proud of their efforts whatever the final outcome.

Listen – Talk to your child about their revision. Listen to them. Encourage them to be resilient and keep a positive attitude. Reassure them that hard work will pay off.

Get the family on board – Ensure that everyone at home realises the importance of your child's revision and is able to support and not distract them.

Get your child to explain to you what they know - Explaining to you what they know, even if it is not a topic you know about yourself, will require your child to think and structure their knowledge.

What can you do?

Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the exam period.

Agree the balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, flexibility is the key – if a special night comes up, agree that they can make up the work at a specified time

All students fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution

Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright

If your child asks for your support, encourage them by helping them to see the difficulties in perspective. Teenagers often take an all or nothing 'catastrophic' approach to difficulties – "I've messed up this essay, I might as well give up."

Help prepare you child for the exam – talk with them about when it starts, how long it lasts for, what are the main topics that might come up. **Don't 'over egg' this – they may have worked all day and have come down stairs to relax.**

Promote

Promote healthy sleeping and eating habits



Share

Share relaxation ideas to help your child cope with exam stress



Encourage

Always encourage your child to relax before they go to bed after concentrating for long periods of time. Activities such as reading a short story may help them unwind and sleep better.



Suggest

Suggest that they go out for a walk, run or do some other exercise they enjoy.



Teach

Teach them relaxation techniques such as listening to some gentle music, getting them to lie down, closing their eyes and taking a deep breath while visualising a calming scene such as a deserted beach.



Help

Help your child to develop a positive mindset by encouraging them to visualise success - this can really help with self-confidence.



Understand

Understand that life, temporarily, will not be the same – certain things need to change to help manage stress

Avoid rushing on the day of the exam by organising and packing everything they need to take with them the night before.

Keep away from people who may agitate them before the test or may say unhelpful, anxiety-provoking comments.

Instead – they should go and see subject teachers

Take time to slow their breathing and relax when they first sit down in the exam room.

Skim over the exam paper, underlining key words and instructions.

Work out how long they have for each question or section.

Watch out for the wording of the questions - they need to understand and address what the question is really asking.

Answer the questions they find easiest first to build their confidence, then as they relax more move on to more difficult ones.

Re-read answers if possible and make any changes that are necessary - correct spelling, check workings.

If your child is not able to do well in the exam and they feel very upset about it, reassure them that there is always a second chance and passing an exam is only part of the story. It may be helpful to take some time to discuss any problems they had so they can avoid them next time.

The Exam Day

Subject	Revision Tips
English Language AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reading: Get ahead: you know the questions in advance, so revise them. It is the passages that will be different. •Writing: Think about form and structure. Practise quick, effective planning that meets the mark scheme. Think about great ways to start and finish your texts. Practise being adventurous with vocabulary choice, sentence variety and writing with passion! <p>Firefly: English/GCSE (use tabs on the left to revise for your English Language & English Literature GCSE.</p> <p>Revision Guides: On sale since November, still available, purchase form is on Firefly.</p> <p>School Work: For revision look at past work, exam questions and assessments in colour coded exercise books with individualised feedback on how to improve guidance on yellow feedback stickers and summary sheets.</p> <p>External Sites: BBC Bitesize / Mr Buff's channel on Youtube – regularly updated, includes approaches to each paper by an experienced examiner/publisher/teacher. Listen to one a day. Access via 'playlists' and click on 'AQA English Literature', 'AQA English Language Paper 1' and 'English Language Paper 2'.</p>
English Literature AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Know ALL your texts well. •Practise running through check lists of the main techniques the writers use to get their ideas across •Identify key quotes for each text and develop resources to help you learn them; get to know the quotes really well by zooming in on the language choices made and how this affects you, the reader. •Practise summing up the writer's ideas in one or two sentences – for top grades, have an argument (a clear idea of writer's messages). •Learn key contextual points for each text.
Maths EDEXCEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revise little and often. •Don't just do past papers, spend 20 minutes focusing on specific topics, watch a video and complete the set of past exam questions linked to the topic on https://corbettmaths.com/contents/ <p>Firefly: Maths/Year 11 Revision GCSE – This contains past papers with mark schemes, topic lists, formulas you need to know, links to revision websites and passwords for useful sites.</p> <p>External Sites: A list of recommended external revision sites can be located on Firefly.</p>
Biology AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Focus on a topic for 10-20 minutes, use the revision guide to read all about it. Check key words and concepts. Put the revision guide away and find a blank piece of paper. Spend 5-10 minutes write down the key ideas from memory on what you have just read. Refer back to the revision guide and identify any bits that you may have missed / got wrong. •Talk to family and friends about the subject, this is particularly interesting as you will soon discover how much you know. <p>Firefly: Biology/Past papers</p> <p>Revision Guides: You have been issued with a revision guide and a workbook. You should steadily work through both, completing as much as possible.</p>
Chemistry AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revise little and often – 45 minutes revision, 15 minutes break. •Use past papers and get your teacher to mark them. •Summarise information on cards/mind maps/posters and highlight key words. Learn the reactivity series off by heart. •Use your workbooks you have been given to test yourself after revising a topic. <p>Firefly: Chemistry/GCSE</p> <p>Revision Guides: You have been issued with revision guides (Triple Science students).</p> <p>Workbooks: You have been issued workbooks (Combined Science students).</p> <p>Websites: BBC Bitesize, S-cool, Doc Brown's, AQA for exam questions.</p>

Physics AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the equations off by heart. • You have been issued with a workbook to help with your revision. • Past papers are available on Firefly. Firefly: Physics/GCSE/Year 11 Revision Guide: You have been issued with a revision guide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Websites: BBC Bitesize / Minute Physics
Art AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise little and often – some techniques are time consuming and require a lot of motivation; a comfortable place to work helps, it is helpful to take breaks. • Check you have all the materials you need which could range from paint to embroidery threads. • Take time with research, where possible visit galleries, go out to photograph or collect resources. • You have an exam preparation check list stuck on the front inside cover of your sketchbook. The checklist outlines what is expected each week for classwork, homework to attain a grade 4 and above. The weekly 'aim higher' task is for students working towards a grade 6 and above. Firefly: Art/GCS Internal Support: The Art Department offers regular revision sessions
Business Studies GCSE AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a key terms sheets for both units which you need to learn to ensure that your knowledge of concepts is secure. These will be tested in lessons each week. • Focus on Unit 2 topics (Growing Business) independently as we will be covering most of Unit 1 in lessons. Firefly: Business Studies/GCSE – Past papers for both units can be located on Firefly or downloaded from the AQA website (Specification 4130). Revision Guides: are available from the Business Department if you have not yet purchased one. Website: useful website is Tutor2U, which has a range of GCSE Revision presentations, case studies and practice tests that will help you to consolidate topic areas.
Drama OCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and Questions - keep reading and watching snippets of Blood Brothers. Attempt to answer practice questions similar to the style on your PPE but for different characters. • Response - Read reviews of Billy Elliot and any other theatre performances you would like to review. Write a review on your chosen play focusing on different aspects (the opening/narrator/staging). Remember that you cannot review Blood Brothers for this question.
DT Product Design AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt past papers from the AQA site. There are questions and mark schemes to use going back over a number of years. • Organise a folder linked to the AQA research task and practise drawing different products for 15 minutes. This should include adding notes and colour, client, materials, construction methods, ways of gathering information and even create a design criteria for the different products. • All students will be set regular exam questions for homework and should be creating learning mats to help with this. Firefly: DT Product Design/GCSE – hard copies of revision guides can be located here. Websites: AQA website/Product Design / Bitesize.
DT Food Prep & Nutrition AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue cooking at home – when cooking think about the functional and chemical properties of the food. • Watch cookery programmes – look out for information based on 'how things happen' and 'why things happen'. Firefly: DT Food Prep & Nutrition / Revision Revision Guides: These are available to purchase from the main office, one is a revision guide and the other a practice work book. Websites: Youtube – Food Science sections. You can also access the illuminate digital book online, username SWESSEX3 & the password is STUDENT3. AQA website.
Geography AQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of all six topics studied should be completed by end of Easter holidays. Students can then focus on their third Geographical Skills Paper. • Practise applying your knowledge to exam questions using the exam question paper packs which are sent home each week. • Familiarise yourself with command words – make sure you know what each work is asking you to do. • Try and link back to the question by using the wording in the question in your answer.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Revise case study examples. <p>Firefly: Geography/GCSE Revision Guides: are available, these can be purchased from the main office.</p>
<p>History EDEXCEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Break each of the 5 units studied into manageable chunks – use the revision lists available on Firefly or in H3 and H2 to work out how to do this. •Divide revision into hour long blocks - spend 30 minutes producing a mindmap, foldable, quiz or timeline or revise the content. Spend the remaining 30 minutes applying your knowledge to one of the many exam questions available on Firefly. •The department has put together a 43 page booklet of sample exam questions. These are available on Firefly or students can purchase a paper copy for 50p from the department. <p>Firefly: History/GCSE Revision Guides: are available to purchase from the main office or the EXEXCEL/Pearson guides are available from, for example, Amazon.</p>
<p>ICT EDEXCEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You should use the revision countdown guide provided to which outlines revision focusses on a weekly basis with the matching resources necessary to revise. A copy of this guide is on Firefly in the ICT Section or a hard copy is available from the folder on the ICT office door if you need a replacement.
<p>Computer Science EDEXCEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You should use the revision countdown guide provided which outlines revision focusses on a weekly basis with the matching resources necessary to revise. If you have lost this guide, a copy is on Firefly in the Computer Science Section or a hard copy is available from the folder on the ICT office door.
<p>Languages AQA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You have been given workbooks with vocabulary lists and challenge tasks for every topic area. •You have handbooks for the speaking examination. <p>•Firefly: French/GCSE/Revise (Les Revisions) German/GCSE/Revise (Wiederholung)</p> <p>Revision Guides: available from the Languages Department. Websites: www.languagesonline.org or linguascope.com for grammar, reading and listening practice. You can also use memrise.com to learn and revise vocabulary.</p>
<p>Music EDEXCEL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You need to listen to the set works regularly, summarising and checking the key points and follow from the anthology. •You should also be listening to related pieces and trying to summarise the key points of previously unheard works. <p>Firefly: Notes in the resource section on all set works. Revision Guide: EDEXCEL GCSE Music Revision Guide – Rhinegold ISBN 978-1-78558-168-7 from, for example, Amazon.</p>
<p>PE OCR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Divide your revision into paper 1 and paper 2, it is vital you are revising for the right exam. •Revising little and often is the key to success and it is easy to organise revision into bitesize sessions. •Use the quick revision sheets regularly to check what you have retained and what areas you need to work on. •Revision workbooks have been provided to you. <p>Firefly: PE/GCSE/Revision Revision Guides: OCR guides are available to purchase from the PE Office, please pay money at the main office.</p>
<p>RE Eduqas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learn your key concepts: there are eight key concepts for Christianity, eight for Judaism, and eight for each of the Moral Issues units. These terms will be the part a) questions, and the terms could come up in other questions. •Learn your key quotations: use the resource booklets to identify one key quotation from the Bible/Torah for each topic. •Practice Questions: Practice doing the eight mark part c) questions and the fifteen mark part d) questions – use the guidance in the back of the revision booklets to help structure. <p>Firefly: RE/GCSE has an extensive range of revision material covering the course.</p>