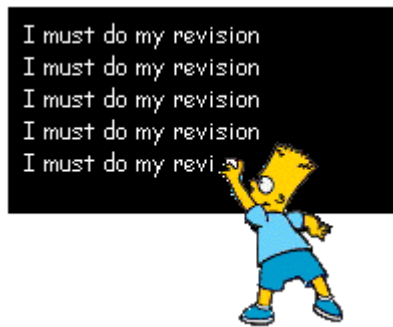




When should I revise? How can I revise?



Preparing for exams and beyond.....



When should I revise?

It is always a good idea to make yourself a **revision timetable**:

- Work backwards from the date of your first exam, taking into account how many hours you think you will need for each subject (allowing for re-visiting all topics) and the number of hours you are going to allocate to revision each week. Remember - many of your exams will take place before study leave actually begins!
- For the evenings after school, only plan one or two subjects - leave time for relaxation.
- For revision during school holidays or study leave, it is suggested that morning and afternoon revision periods last approximately 3 hours (with appropriate breaks), while evening ones last 2 hours (with breaks).
- Spread your subjects out over time so you cover each one several times.
- Plan 30 minute or 50 minute slots (with breaks).
- Have a start and a finish time. Get into the routine of following your revision plan.
- Set your aim for the session and get on with it - have clear and specific goals, for example, 'at the end of two hours, I will be able to label a diagram of the heart and answer a question on how the heart works'.
- Plan to revise specific topics or aspects of a subject: eg. 'Electricity' rather than just 'science'.
- Leave some days a bit vague in case you need extra time for some topics.
- Ensure that your revision calendar allows you to go over a subject just before the exam itself.

- Colour code your chart if possible: eg. school times in orange, revision work in green, days off in blue.
- Remember this revision calendar may have to be changed when subjects turn out to take longer (or less time) than you had anticipated.

Put exam times in position in

BOXES

 on your weekly revision timetable for exam leave. Use colour highlighting so it is a visual plan. Leave gaps to allow for breaks and social life and/or sports commitments. See the example below:

	AM	PM	EVENING
M 2	French Verbs	Algebra Maths	-
W 3	Rivers - Geog	WW1 - Hist	Source Qs - Hist
Th 4	<div>History</div>	Metals Ch	Life Processes - Bio
F 5	<div>Science</div>	<div>Maths</div>	-
S 6	Football	Volcanoes - Geog	-

How do I approach my revision?

- **Little and often:** repetition helps learning so go through material 4/5 times.
- **Actively:** make your brain work e.g. old question papers; write summary notes; create a memory map.
- By **building on** what you already know/understand.
- **Alert/fresh:** well-rested; good diet; right frame of mind.
- **After a rest period** so you can assimilate information then review.

How should I revise?

Revision aims to put information into the memory for the duration of the exam. Just reading through notes is not usually a very effective way of getting this information to stay in! In the next few pages you will find a selection of revision activities that you could try. Different methods work for different people, and for different subjects - try out more than one to make sure you come up with what works best for you.

1. Look, Cover, Write, Check

First of all make notes on a topic you are studying. Then look at them for 2 minutes only!

For example, look at the list below.

Regular Aerobic Exercise

1. Increase heart muscle
2. Increase stroke volume
3. Decrease resting heart rate
4. Lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure
5. Increase tidal and vital capacity in lungs
6. Increase muscle size
7. Decrease blood cholesterol levels
8. Improve a person's resistance to disease

Cover it so you **cannot see it**. Get a friend to test you or if you are on your own just write down what you can remember. Then look at it again for 2 minutes. Have a 10 minute break and then do it again.

2. Make notes of key points - or questions to follow up later.

You could use **split lists**. These are lists of related key points which balance each other.

- Sides of an argument ('for', 'against')
- Alternative solutions to a problem ('either', 'or')
- Advantages and disadvantages
- Similarities and differences ('compare and contrast')

Split lists visually reflect the nature of the relationship between the points, so they're particularly memorable.

Example: split list

Characteristics of Arteries and Veins

Artery

Vein

TUBULAR
ENDOTHELIUM PRESENT
TRANSPORTS BLOOD

THICK WALL
NO VALVES
CAN CONSTRICT
BLOOD FROM HEART
HIGH PRESSURE

THIN WALL
POCKET VALVES
CAN'T CONSTRICT
BLOOD TO HEART
LOW PRESSURE

3. Summarising

Read through the information you need to revise. Scan for key words and then highlight them. List the key words. Go back and check you have not missed anything and that you have understood what you have written. For example:

Educational research shows that students enjoy their learning and do well when they understand how to revise. A revision schedule that starts at the beginning of the year and is structured until their examinations, has been shown to be the most effective strategy. A combination of such activities as coaching on revision techniques, practising those techniques in situ, pre-examination preparation sessions and revision schools results in most students exceeding their target grade.

Now try to summarise this text.

After **highlighting** it will look like this:

Educational research shows that students **enjoy their learning** and do well when they **understand how to revise**. A revision schedule that starts at the **beginning of the year** and is **structured** until their examinations has been shown to be the most **effective** strategy. A combination of such activities as **coaching** on revision techniques, **practising** those techniques in situ, **pre-examination** preparation sessions and **revision schools** results in most students exceeding their target grade.

And then it should look like this:

- enjoy their learning
- understand how to revise
- beginning of the year
- structured
- effective
- coaching
- practising
- pre-examination
- revision schools

But what can you do now? Well....

- You could *look cover write check*.
- You could make up a story which has these words in it.
- You could draw a picture which represents each word.
- You can even create a memorable phrase or sentence from the first letter of each word. This is called a **mnemonic**.

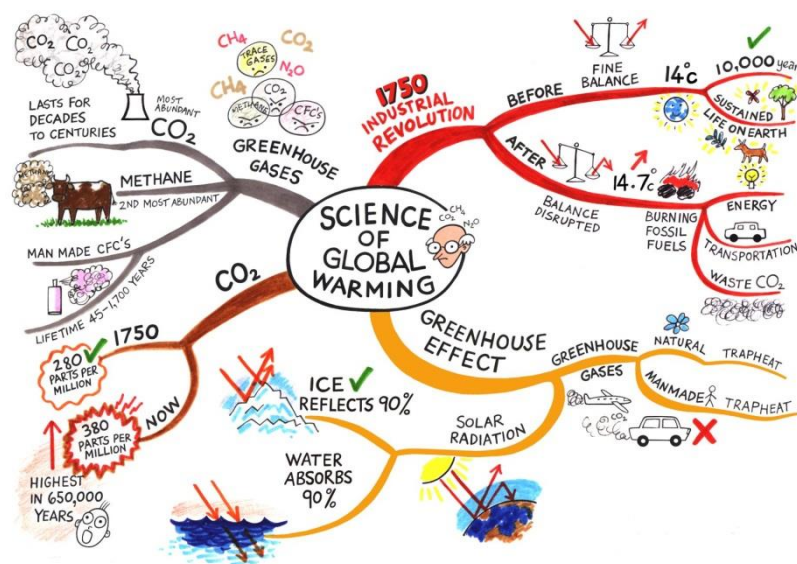
4. Mind Mapping

If you are revising more than just some text and you are covering a whole topic then Mind Mapping is really good!

First of all get a nice big piece of plain paper and lots of coloured pens/pencils.

Write the topic in the middle of a page, using also pictures and colours to make it clear what the topic is about. Take 4 main ideas about the topic and draw branches coming from the middle - write your main ideas on each branch. Then think of any words associated with the ideas and draw mini branches coming from the main branch with the words on each one. Make it colourful so each idea is represented by a certain colour; use symbols/pictures to reinforce what it is about. Then try and see if there are any links between the ideas (branches) and make those clear on your diagram.

See an example below:



5. Use **Chains**. Chains are lists of key points which link in a particular order or sequence: for example, chronological order ('X, then Y, then Z') or cause and effect ('X causes Y, which causes Z'). Your notes could follow a simple line or a flowchart.

6. Some other ideas from students which work for them.....

'Make up some question cards with questions on the front and answers on the back! Then make a right, an almost, and a wrong pile. Keep going through the questions till they are all in the right pile, but make this FUN!! Give yourself rewards when you get them all correct!!'

'For each word, come up with a specific visual example. This will help you to see the differences between the terms, and help you to use the words correctly.'

'Memorise the words whilst listening to a particular song or album. Then, when you need to remember the words, remembering the song might help you to recall them.'

'For each topic, write up one set of index cards with the word on the front, and the definition on the back. Shuffle them and drill yourself. Take turns with a classmate testing each other.'

'DECORATE YOUR BEDROOM WALL BY USING A BRIGHT ARRAY OF COLOURED PAPER, POST IT NOTES, BRIGHT DIAGRAMS AND PEG WORDS. THIS WAY, WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING, YOU ARE CONSTANTLY LOOKING AT YOUR REVISION NOTES! A TOILET IS ALSO A GOOD PLACE TO PUT REVISION POST IT NOTES – ASK THE REST OF YOUR FAMILY FIRST THOUGH!'

'I think one of the best ways to learn something is to make a song about it with a catchy tune, so you can remember all the information more easily'.

Revising with your friends can be good fun but be careful as you can also get too distracted. Make it into a game to make sure you stay focused – for example use monopoly money and the rules of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* to see who gets the richest.

What you need:	an A4 sheet of paper, an A5 sheet of paper and a postcard.
What to do:	First, write out the key topics onto your A4 paper. Fit as much on as you can. Then, take only the important bits and copy the information onto the A5 piece. Try to fit it all on! Condense it again onto the postcard. You should now have only the very important words left.
How to extend it:	Can you get all the important points on the back of a business card?

'If you've got a favourite song, then change the words to facts that you need to remember; you should find that they stick in your mind longer if you associate them with a tune.'

WHAT YOU NEED: A SMALL PILE OF NOTES (POST-IT OR SIMILAR) AND A BIRO

WHAT TO DO: WRITE ALL THE KEY WORDS FROM YOUR SUBJECT ONTO THE NOTES, THEN STICK THEM ALL OVER YOUR HOUSE. AS YOU WALK AROUND AND SEE THE WORDS, CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO BE ABLE TO SAY WHAT THEY MEAN. IF YOU CAN'T DO ONE THEN LOOK IT UP. KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU KNOW THEM ALL (OR THEY ALL FALL DOWN!)

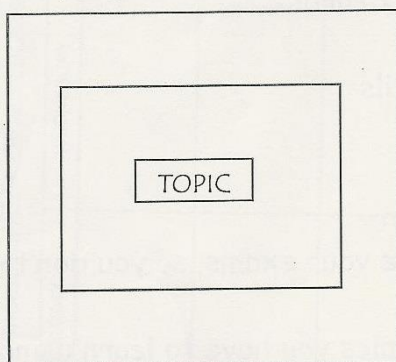
7. Test Yourself!

- Put aside or cover up your books/notes and try to jot down the essential points from memory. Check them against the source.
- Pick one of your brief revision notes or index cards, and expand on it (talking or writing).
- Explain the topic to someone else - or to yourself in the mirror.
- Debate two-sided questions with a clued-up friend.
- Role-play people and situations from your history, geography or literature.
- Make a list of questions that might be asked about a topic - and give an outline answer, verbally or in writing.
- Analyse and attempt past exam questions. Make sure you set the appropriate time limit, and try to work under exam conditions. Remember, questions are designed to make you select relevant points that relate specifically to the question, combine relevant points - perhaps from different aspects of a topic or from different topics, and also to make you interpret data to show you understand the points being raised. Past questions help you think about the content of your notes in different ways, so they are really worth doing.

Brainstorm

How does it work?

This is a simple tool and one that's useful to use at the beginning of your revision. Write the name of the topic you're revising in the central rectangle, then simply jot down everything you know about it in the rectangle around it. Your ideas don't need to be organised in any way at this stage.



Why is it useful?

Using the Brainstorm tool will help you identify what you know already. Complete it without any help, then - once it's finished - compare it with your notes. In the outer rectangle, add any key words and concepts that you had forgotten to include.

Helpful Hint!

Don't use a Brainstorm diagram for a whole subject - there would be too much to include. Break each subject into mini-topics first.

Power Notes

How does it work?

Making Power Notes is a great place to start when revising. Divide an A4 page into about 6 sections, numbered down the side. When you're looking through your work, split it into main areas, one for each section. Take the time to condense the information into clear, simple bullet-point notes. Finally, underline or highlight key words in a different coloured pen for each section.

Subject title	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet point notes about 1st main area of topic • Key words highlighted in colour no. 1.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to use colour no.2 for key words in this section
3	

Why is it useful?

The process of creating Power Notes makes you think logically about how to divide your topic up into separate sections. Using bullet points and coloured key words means that each piece of information stands out and sticks in the mind more easily.

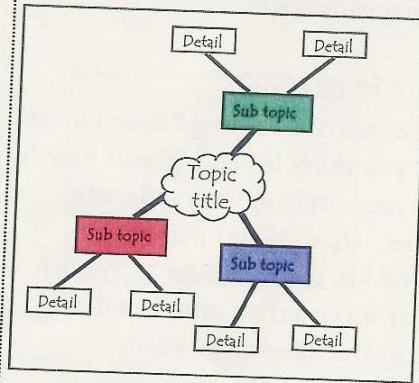
Helpful Hint!

Test yourself by glancing at the key words only, then seeing if they help you to remember the rest of the information.

Spider Diagrams

How does it work?

Turn your page so it's in landscape format and write the title of your topic in the centre. Decide on how many sub-topics it can be divided into and draw a line out to each one. At the end of each line, divide the sub-topic into key points. You might like to use colours to make your diagram more bold and memorable.



Why is it useful?

Creating a Spider Diagram is a great way of revising as it forces you to *organise* what you know rather than simply copy it out. Once it's done, you have a neat summary of your topic which can be skimmed over much more quickly than going through all your notes again.

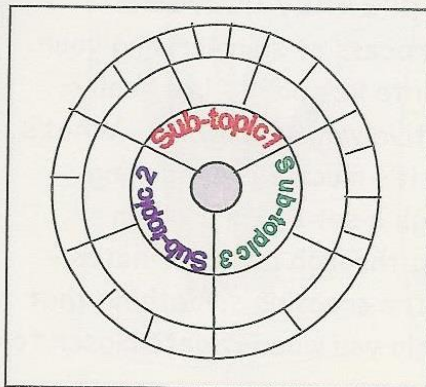
Helpful Hint!

Think carefully when picking out key words from your books so they trigger your memory to recall other details.

Mandala Diagram

How does it work?

This is similar to a Mind Map in the way it organises information, but it uses a 'tighter' format which some people prefer. Write the title of your topic in the central circle, then draw another circle around it. Divide this into three or four main sub-topics, using a different colour for each one. Add a third circle around this and divide the sub-topics still further into details.



Why is it useful?

A Mandala has many of the useful properties of a Mind Map in that it helps you to pick out and record key information from your topics. It provides a clear, visual picture of any given subject and is easier to revise than looking at lots of notes.

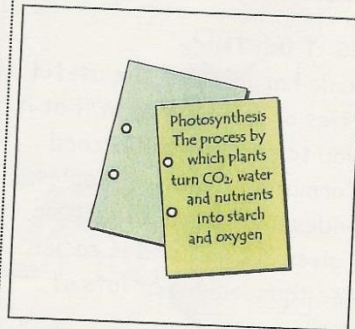
Helpful Hint!

Your Mandala can contain as many circles as you need, so is a very flexible diagram for recording information.

Flash Cards

How do they work?

Instead of writing your notes on pages of paper, buy a pack of index cards (available from any stationery shop) and create a set of Flash Cards for each topic. Summarise one key concept on each card, using highlighter pens to pick out the most important words (or underlining them with felt tips), and illustrate it where possible with a picture.



Why are they useful?

The process of summarising your work into key points is a really effective way of learning. What's more, it's much easier looking through a set of cards than wading through pages of notes - so you're creating something that will help you when it gets closer to the exams.

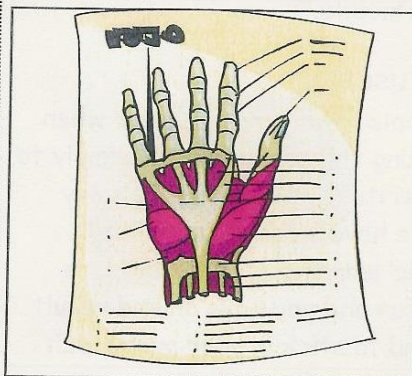
Helpful Hint!

Use Flash Cards to record important diagrams for Science and Geography and to learn formulae for maths.

Draw it: Posters, diagrams, cartoons...

How does it work?

Take a topic and turn your notes into a poster or annotated diagram, with lots of illustrations and colour. Alternatively, create a cartoon strip version of your subject, for example describing an event in history or an experiment in science. Add speech bubbles and comments to explain what's going on in each picture.



Why is it useful?

Our brains often remember pictures and colours better than words, so we're only tapping into part of our learning power if we rely on written methods. This is likely to be particularly true for people who learn well from visual methods.

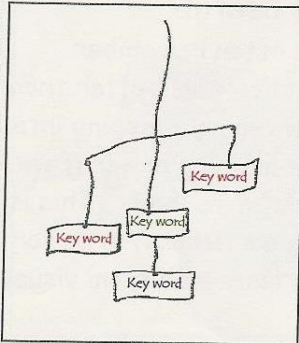
Helpful Hint!

Display your posters in parts of your home where you're likely to see them, for example by your bed or next to a mirror!

Make it: mobiles and models

How does it work?

Why should all your notes be on paper? Try turning them into a completely different form. Make a model to demonstrate what you're learning and add labels to explain the different parts. Alternatively, pick out all the key words and concepts from a particular topic, write them onto separate pieces of coloured card and string them together to make a mobile.



Why is it useful?

A lot of people find learning easier when they're making things as opposed simply to reading or writing. (We sometimes say these people have a preference for 'kinaesthetic' learning.) The process is active and fun and you have an end result that is bound to stick in your mind much more than a page of notes!

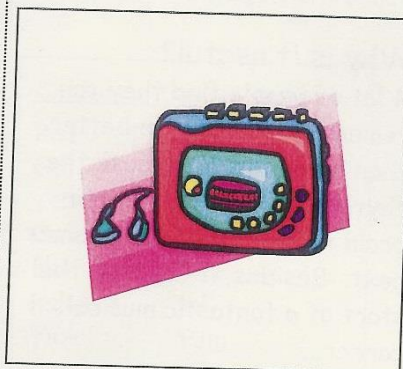
Helpful Hint!

Display your model or hang your mobile somewhere prominent to catch your eye and remind you of the topic you're revising.

Tape it: Record yourself

How does it work?

Talking about a topic can really help you to understand it. Once you've made your notes, you could tape yourself reading them out, then re-play and listen to this later on. Alternatively, liven up your revision by turning your notes into a short news-flash or interview.



Why is it useful?

For those of you who learn best by using auditory methods, the process of acting or reading aloud will help you to remember the information much more easily.

Helpful Hint!

Making an audio or video tape is great, as you can re-play it when you're feeling too tired to revise in a more active way.

Make up a song or rap

How does it work?

How many times do you find yourself humming a song that you just can't get out of your head? Well, next time that happens, make use of it! Keep the tune, but change the lyrics so the song is all about one of your subjects. Alternatively, re-write your topic in rap form!



Why is it useful?

A lot of people find they can remember songs much better than normal text because the rhythm and tune helps their brain to remember what comes next. Besides, it could be the start of a fantastic musical career...

Helpful Hint!

Tape yourself singing the song and play it back at night before you go to sleep or first thing in the morning.

Acrostic Method

How do they work?

An old favourite, the acrostic method work by linking words and concepts to sentences that will stick in your mind. Simply list the words you need to learn, then take the first letter of each and think of alternative words that begins with these letters. Choose words that link together to make a memorable sentence.

Colours of the rainbow

Red	Richard
Orange	Of
Yellow	York
Green	Gave
Blue	Battle
Indigo	In
Violet	Vain

Why are they useful?

This method works particularly well when you have a list to learn, eg the planets in the Solar System, the names of King Henry VIII's wives and children or the muscles and bones in the human body. An extra advantage is that it helps you to remember things in order - which is sometimes important.

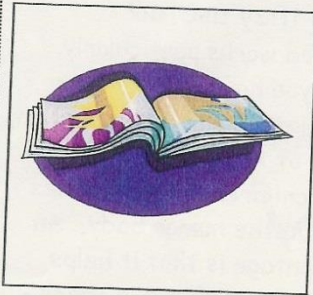
Helpful Hint!

Take the time to invent sentences that you really won't forget - make them as funny and imaginative as you can!

Story Method

How does it work?

As with acronyms, start by listing the key words that you need to learn. This time, take each one in turn and build it into a story. Try to create a really good plot, with lots of colourful and imaginative images. If you come to a difficult word, think of other words that sound like it and build these into your story instead.



Why is it useful?

This one's great because it makes use of our brain's natural programming to remember stories. Having used them for centuries to pass on information, we are much more likely to remember a story than a list of facts. One event leads naturally to the next, so this helps us recall a sequence of ideas.

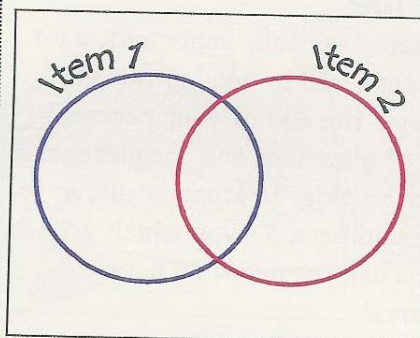
Helpful Hint!

This combines well with your Power Notes. Once you've picked out key words that help you recall more detailed information, link them together with a really memorable story.

Compare and Contrast

How does it work?

Pick two aspects of your subject, eg, two important people in history, two river features in geography or two animal groups in science. Write their names above the circles in the Compare and Contrast Map. Note everything you know about each one, using the overlapping section to record similarities between the two and the outer sections to record differences.



Why is it useful?

Using a Compare and Contrast tool gets you thinking about a topic in a new and more active way. As a result, it is likely to help you understand topics much more deeply. It's also interesting to see what creative ideas you come up with!

Helpful Hint!

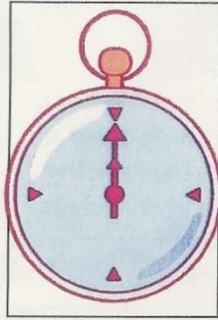
Use your Compare and Contrast map to work with a friend and test each other. Who can come up with the most ideas?

The Quiz

How does it work?

Make a folder of plain sheets of paper, one for each subject you're studying. This can be done by hand or stored on the computer.

Whenever you're revising a subject, pull out its sheet of paper and add some more quiz questions. Remember to note down the answer under each one as well!



Why is it useful?

While quiet revision is really important, a lot of people also learn well by talking things through. Towards the end of your revision, once your lists of questions are complete, ask an adult, friend, or older brother or sister to quiz you. You could have 3 'lives' which you use up whenever you ask for a hint or have to consult your notes!

Helpful Hint!

Find a 'study buddy' and swap copies of your quiz sheets. That way, you'll have a mixture of questions you're prepared for and ones you may not have thought of.

Question Cards

How do they work?

This is another version of the Quiz which works in much the same way. Buy a pack of blank index cards and use these to create sets of cards for each topic, with a question on one side and the answer on the other. Vary this sometimes by writing a key word on one side and its definition on the other or make sets for languages with foreign words and their English translation.



Why are they useful?

Not only do Question Cards offer a great way of testing yourself (which can be used even if you don't have anyone to work with you), but the process of creating them also helps you learn the material.

Helpful Hint!

Shuffle the cards and work through them, trying to answer the question or define the word each time. Make three piles - right, almost right and wrong - and play them until you get them all right!

Teach it!

How does it work?

This one's an absolute winner. Find someone (ideally older than you) who is willing to give up some time to be your 'pupil', then prepare a 'lesson' in which you will teach a particular topic to them. Most importantly, encourage them to ask you lots of questions if something's not quite clear.



Why is it useful?

It's often not until you stand up and try to teach something to someone else that you really come to understand it fully. When you're explaining something out loud, you can't gloss over those 'tricky bits' and you have to be prepared to explain things in several different ways, using words that are clear and simple, to make sure that your 'pupil' genuinely understands what you're saying. This helps you identify any areas which you haven't understood as well as you thought - and these can be followed up with further revision afterwards.

Helpful Hint!

Try to make your lesson varied and interesting: include explanation, diagrams, maybe even a Powerpoint presentation on the computer...

We learn:

- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we hear and see
- 70% of what we discuss with others
- 80% of what we experience ourselves
- 95% of what we teach