

Study Skills and Revision Techniques



Name: _____

Form: _____

What are study skills?

Study skills are the skills you use to improve the way you learn. These skills are important tools you will need to harness in order to achieve success in your examinations.



Learning to Learn

Ways to accelerate your learning and make it more effective

Writing

Focus on successful writing for exams

Remembering

Make your memory work for you



Speaking & Listening

Listening, note taking, discussions & Presentations

Time Management

Getting to grips with your time.



Motivation

Skills to get you started and keep you going

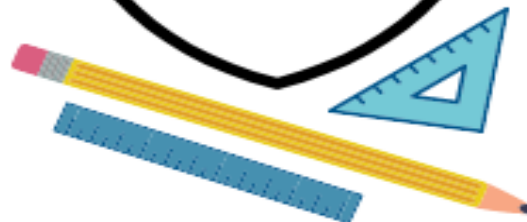


Revising

Skills for exam prep

Organisation

These skills make you more productive and successful



Finding Answers

Skills for effective research, reading & note-taking

Getting Ready For Study

Before you start any kind of revision or work you will need to make sure you are in the right “frame of mind” to get work done! You should think about following the “Study Dojo!” (This is the state of mind)

Before you start work:

- You should be looking to achieve at least 8 hours of sleep a night for your brain to work at its optimum.
- Study fuel - A healthy breakfast will help give you the energy needed for a morning of study. (Cereals, toast, fruit and yogurt etc.)
- Study at the same time each day - having a routine in place will make it easier to get started!



When studying:

- Make sure you are prepared with everything you need. Switch off any distractions. (Turn off phones and Social Media!) If you focus on the task ahead, it will be completed much quicker.
- Get active! Just 5 minutes of exercises such as star jumps, running on the spot or dancing can help give your energy systems a kick start.
- Once you have been active, sit calmly for one minute, focusing on your breathing technique. This will help clear your mind of any distractions and fully focus you for the study session ahead!

During the study session:

- Do not attempt to do too much in one go! Focus on completing 20 minutes of intense revision, followed by a short break, then another 20 minutes. This way your study will seem much more achievable!
- Fill up on brain fuel! Eating small chunks of berries, nuts or even dark chocolate can help give your brain the little burst of power it needs. Chewing gum can also help.
- Some people find it is helpful to have music on in the back ground. The music can often help focus your attention and drown out any unwanted distractions!



Ending your study session:

- ✧ Sit and reflect - think about what you have learned. Identify any points you may need to revisit later on!

Study Skills and Motivation.

You are more likely to want to do something if you can see the point of it and understand why it is important to you.

Motivation is how much you want to do something. Research has indicated that if you are really motivated, you are more likely to succeed than others that may be more intelligent but less motivated than you.

Procrastination - Motivations enemy!

It can often be hard to get on with revision or studying as we often choose to distract ourselves to avoid the task at hand. This is known as *Procrastination*.

It is good to relax and have a break from work, and some tasks are easier to complete if you think you are going to be able to achieve them, however procrastination is a problem when it makes you start to feel annoyed or frustrated about your work. We tend to put off work when we don't think we will be able to do it. However, it is important to try it and get on with it!

How to beat Procrastination

All you need is TWO MINUTES!

Set a countdown timer for two minutes and start doing the task you have been putting off. The reason the two minute rule works is that your brain hates incomplete tasks! So once you start something for two minutes, you'll often find yourself happily continuing to do the task until it is done!



Try this:



Think of a task you have been putting off for a while. This could be making notes on a Science topic you find difficult, annotating a piece of poetry for English or completing tasks for a BTEC assignment. Try the procrastinator-breaker technique on it!

Motivation and Setting Goals.

There are three things that really help to make something motivating.

1. If something is fun and/or interesting
2. If something is important - it matters
3. If you get to do something your way.

Think about breaking tasks up, so that they don't seem to big/unachievable! Think about chunking tasks.

Chunking tasks



- *Break assignments/tasks down into smaller, more manageable chunks.
- *Write down what might make each chunk difficult to achieve (problems or challenges you may face)
- *decide what your reward for achieving each chunk will be.

Setting Targets and Rewards

We've already established motivation is key. A good way to stay motivated is to set yourself targets and then reward yourself when you hit them.

Setting targets: it is a good idea to set a target before each chunk of work/revision. Remember to make your targets achievable and realistic.



Rewards: reward yourself when you hit your targets. Think about;

- *Small Rewards for hitting a revision target. E.g. a small chunk of chocolate, 5 minutes television time
- *Medium Rewards for completing all your targets for that day, the week etc.

*Large Rewards once all your exams are over.

Try this:



1. Create three specific revision targets for the subjects you are doing. This may be to learn a specific topic or complete an assignment set for your course.
2. Think about some small, medium and large rewards you can give yourself for achieving the targets.

Organisation.

How organised you are can have a big impact upon how well you do your work, how long tasks can take and how you feel about your studies.

If you can find what you need, when you need it, then you can get tasks done more quickly and efficiently. This saves you wasting time and effort. You should think about the following tips!

Keep what you need



Go through all your study stuff and get rid of anything you don't need. This will make it easier to find the work you need!

Organise your work



Think about getting folders to keep any note. Keep all your exercise books and notes for each subject in a separate wallet or magazine rack.

Sort out your school bag



Empty your bag at the end of each day! Don't let it fill up with bits you don't need! Sort everything you do need into its proper home. Always pack your bag that night for the next day!

Organise your computer



If you use a computer or tablet for your work, organise your files the same way you have organised your books and revision notes.

Study area



Sort out a study area at home. Make sure this has the things you need right there so you don't have to mess around finding them when you come to study.

Bookmarks



Organise your computers bookmarks. It is important you keep track of useful websites you use for revision.

Try this:



Look through your bag, how much stuff in there do you actually need? Are there letters and notes from earlier in the term? Have a clear out!

Do you have all the equipment you need for school? Do you have the right books with you today? Do you use your planner?

Time Management.

It is important this year that you plan and then use your time effectively. Before you know it, you'll be sat in the Sports Hall sitting your first exam! In order to plan your time effectively think about the three tools outlined below.

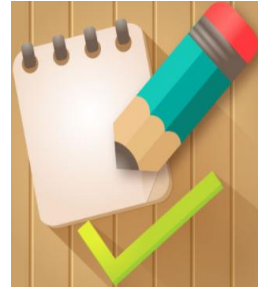
"To do" lists help you organise the time you have available each day to complete tasks.

You can use "to do" lists to prioritise what you need to do.

You can also use the lists to work out how much time you have to give each task.

Think about prioritising the tasks - identifying the tasks more important using highlighter pens or stars.

Remember to tick each task once its done so you can see the progress you have made! This will help you feel positive and like you had accomplished something



Planners help give you a view of what is happening either day by day or week by week.

Planners can help you see what you have on in the week ahead so that you are well prepared for the week ahead.

You can use a planner as a visual queue of what deadlines you have ahead or what days you have exams on.



Calendars can show a month at a time or even a year on one page!

You can use calendars to keep track of the events ahead, keeping track of the time left until exams, or significant assignment deadlines in the future months.

Calendars can also help you organise your time outside of school, time with friends and family etc. This time is also important as a break from the stresses of the academic year.



Try this:



Using the Study Diary given to you, organise your schedule and time so you know what days you have free for revision and assignment work.

Use the diary to make a note of any important coursework/assignment deadlines or forthcoming exams that you may have. The more organised you are, the more efficient you will be with the time available to fit in study as well as having time with family and friends!

Working out your study/revision time.

It is important to know how much study time you have available in your average day, once you have identified the time available you can identify when you are going to study.

What is the point of a revision timetable?

A revision/study timetable has the following benefits:

- * It will help you cover what you need to in the time that you have available
- * Helps you identify and then prioritise subjects that may need a little more revision
- * It can motivate you to use your time effectively
- * It can help kick start your revision

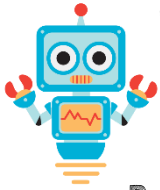
Once you have created your revision time-table you just need to get it up on your wall and follow it!

Day	4:00 – 5:00	5:00 – 6:00	6:00 – 7:00	7:00 – 8:00	8:00 – 9:00	9:00 – 10:00
Monday		Family Tea and TV break time	Science - Biology		BTEC Sport Assignment work	
Tuesday	English Club		Maths	Football Training	Football Training	
Wednesday	French Club		RE – Ethics	French	Science - Physics	
Thursday	Maths club		English		BTEC Business Assignment Work	
Friday			Science - Chemistry	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time

Things to think about:

- * Include any revision clubs you may attend after school. These are all hours that count towards your revision time
- * Highlight revision sessions which are a priority/need a little more time
- * Include time for other activities such as family time, sports clubs etc
- * Allocate an hour block to a subject, but then break these in to smaller chunks with little breaks in between. Remember to chunk your revision!

Try this:



Using the timetable below, have a go at creating a revision/study timetable to use over the next few weeks.

Think about what subjects will need what revision/study time. Are there subjects that need more time than others? Do some subjects have exams coming up or assignment deadlines?

Remember to include “leisure time” to avoid burn out and losing motivation.

My Study/Revision Timetable						
Day	4:00 – 5:00	5:00 – 6:00	6:00 – 7:00	7:00 – 8:00	8:00 – 9:00	9:00 – 10:00
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						

Revision Hit Lists

When revising, it is important that you have a clear start points so you know where to start and don't waste time! You should think about identifying the topics you feel **least** confident about. These areas will be your revision hit list! Hit these areas hard and they shouldn't be a problem any more!



How to identify the topics you feel less confident about:

- * Ask your teachers for past papers and identify the questions you would struggle to answer. Which topic are they from? What skills do they require?
- * Skim through your notes looking for the topics that make you think "I hope that it doesn't come up in the exam"
- * Look through the topic checklists from each of your subjects and circle the topics that seem least familiar.

Revision Hit List: Science

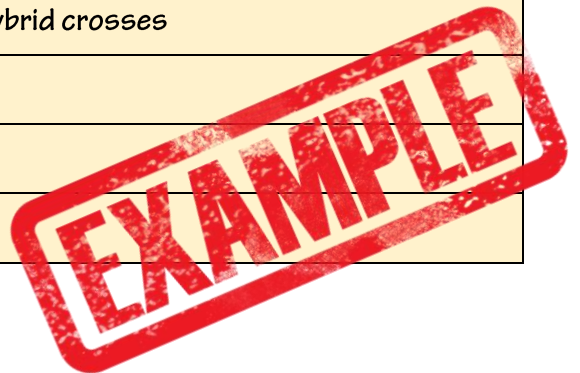
Subject: Biology

Top Three Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?
Genetic Diagrams	Can't remember how to do these
Alleles	Just the whole thing! Need to get it straight in my head
Spread of Pathogens	What are animal vectors? On past paper but.....?!

Next Five Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?
Darwin and the theory of evolution	Hard to remember all the different parts to the theory
Calculating ratios	For monohybrid crosses



Try this:



Use the revision Hit List templates for your current subjects. You should think about identifying the topics that need to be on the hit list and then any others that need covering!

Revision Hit List:
Subject:

Top Three Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Next Five Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Revision Hit List:
Subject:

Top Three Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Next Five Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Revision Hit List:
Subject:

Top Three Hit List Topics

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Topic	What's the problem?

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Topic	What's the problem?

Revision Hit List:
Subject:

Top Three Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Next Five Hit List Topics

Topic	What's the problem?

Revision Strategies



Most of us tend to read through things several times and then hope some of the information sticks. However, this isn't the best way to revise. You should think about unpicking the information and then explaining it to yourself.

The brain learns best when you challenge it to make connections and create meanings. Pick and mix the methods you use, not all will work for you! If you get stuck revising a topic in one way, try out another strategy and see if that helps!

Condensing your notes

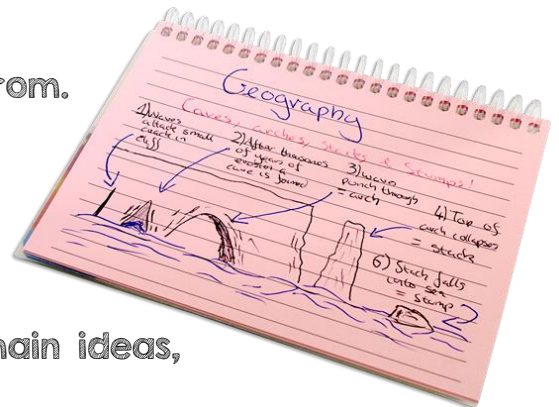
Condensing your notes means making summaries of the main points.

Why is this a good idea?

- * Making the summaries is good revision
- * The summaries are a lot easier to revise from.

There are four steps to condensing your notes:

1. Get your notes organised
2. For each page of notes, write a summary of the main points on a piece of paper
3. Condense each summary down to the main ideas, key terms and key points
4. Write your condensed notes on index cards, leaving plenty of space between points.



Memory Strategies

First-letter phases: Use the first letters of a list of things you need to remember to make up a memorable phrase.

Putting things in your own words: Read through your notes, then turn the page over and see how much of the information you can recall and then write down. Try explaining to someone what they mean. Can you explain the information you have just revised?

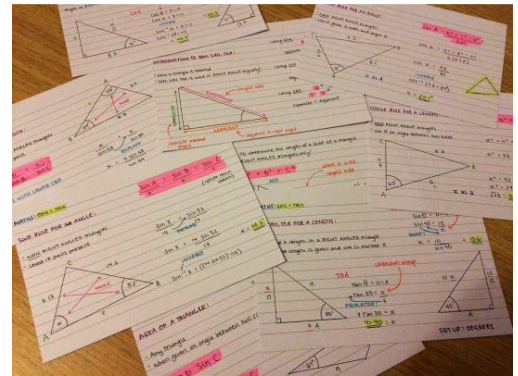
Making unusual connections: Your brain will often remember things that seem unusual. Try thinking of **weird connections** to things you need to remember.



Flashcards

Flash card revision strategies work better with some subjects than others. You can use flash cards to help revise key terms and vocabularies from a range of subjects.

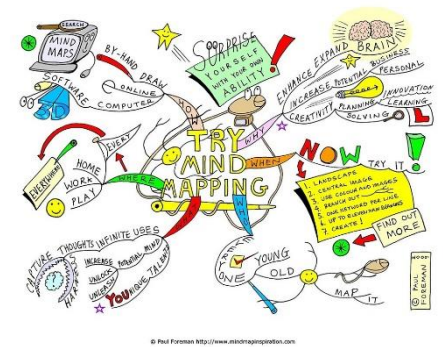
An effective way to use flashcards is to have something to remember on one side of the card, and the explanation or definition on the other. You can either test yourself or ask your friends or family members to test you on your knowledge.



Getting Visual - Diagrams, Flow Charts and Concept Maps

Flow Charts: These are helpful when you are having to revise processes.

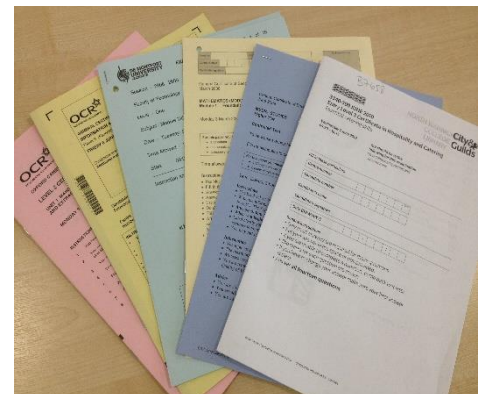
Concept/Mind maps: concepts are a great way to revise how one thing connects to something else. A good technique is to start one as you start revising a new topic and map the connections as you go through. Once you have completed it, hide strands of the map and redraw it to test your knowledge. Think about using sheets of A3 paper which gives you room to expand your map. Use colours and little pictures making the maps memorable and interesting to look at.



Past Papers and Mark Schemes

Using past papers and mark schemes are a good way to test your knowledge and understanding of a subject as well as practicing exam technique. Using past papers and the mark schemes also helps you understand what the examiners are looking for.

You can find past papers on the exam board websites, however, it is best to ask your teacher, as they will be able to provide you with the correct ones for your course.



Try this:





During lessons, ask your teacher for a copy of a past paper or where you can find a selection of papers. Have a go at a paper and mark it! How did you do?

Have a go at creating a concept map for a key topic in one subject you are finding difficult. How creative can your map be?

Command Words

Every exam you sit will use one or two different command words. These command words tell you what the examiner is asking you to do and give you guidance on how you should answer the question. Spread over the next two pages is a table of all the command words that exam boards use on the exam papers.

	<h1>COMMAND WORDS AND DEFINITIONS</h1>	
ANALYSE	Identify separate factors, say how they are related and how each one contributes to this topic	
APPRAISE	Consider positive and negative points and give a reasoned judgement	
ASSESS	Give careful consideration to all the factors or events that apply and identify which are the most important or relevant; to determine the importance, size or value of something	
COMMENT	Give your view after you have considered all the evidence. In particular decide the importance of all the relevant positive and negative aspects	
COMPARE	Identify the main factors that apply in two or more situations and explain the similarities and differences or advantages and disadvantages	
CONTRAST	Show differences	
CRITICISE	Review a topic or issue objectively and weigh up both positive and negative points before making a decision	
DEFINE	Clearly explain what a particular term means and give an example, if appropriate, to show what you mean	
DEMONSTRATE	Provide several relevant examples or related evidence which clearly support the arguments you are making. This may include showing practical skills	
DESCRIBE	Give a clear description that includes all the relevant features – think of it as “painting a picture with words”. A detailed account	
DESIGN	Create a plan, proposal or outline to illustrate a straightforward concept or idea	
DRAW CONCLUSIONS	Use the evidence you have provided to research a reasoned judgement	

EXPLAIN	Set out in detail the meaning of something, with reasons. More difficult than describe or list; it can help to give an example to show what you mean. Start by introducing the topic then give the “how” or “why” or provide details and give reasons and /or evidence to clearly support the argument you are making
EVALUATE	Review the information then bring it together to form a conclusion. Give evidence for each of your views or statements
EVALUATE CRITICALLY	Make clear; intelligible; a definite and precise account for
IDENTIFY	Point out or choose the right one/ give a list of the main features
ILLUSTRATE	Include examples or a diagram to show what you mean
INTERPRET	Define or explain the meaning of something (words, actions, etc)
INVESTIGATE (EXPLORE)	Inquire into; examine; investigate by going through it
JUSTIFY	Give reasons or evidence to support your opinion or view to show how you arrived at these conclusions. Prove right; vindicate
LIST	Provide the information in a list, rather than in continuous writing
OUTLINE	Write a clear description; give a summary of/ a general plan showing essential features but no detail
PLAN	Work out and plan how you would carry out a task or activity
STATE	Provide a clear and full account in speech or writing
SUMMARISE	Write down or articulate briefly the main points or essential features

Try this:

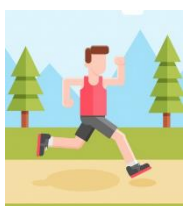


Working with a partner, can you create some exam questions that use the command words to help practice your exam technique? Can you make the mark scheme to help mark each others answers? Challenge your self with a mixture of one, four and six mark questions.

Health and Lifestyle during Exams

It is important to remember that having a healthy mind and body is also key to achieving within exams. Making the effort to maintain a healthy body and mind will help keep your stress levels to a minimum helping you achieve your best come exam day!

Eat a well-balanced diet: It's tempting to reach for study snacks such as crisps and chocolate to see you through exams, but you'll find it much easier to concentrate if you eat nutritional meals and healthy snacks. While the odd treat here and there is a good study reward, overloading on sugar or salt will only leave you feeling flat. It's also important to make sure you eat a decent meal and drink plenty of fluids before your exam.



Keep Active: It is important to maintain an active lifestyle. It is recommended that young people should engage in moderate to vigorous activity for at least 60 minutes a day. The benefits of an active lifestyle include a healthy heart and lungs, maintains a healthy weight as well as improving self confidence and social skills!

Avoid excess caffeine: Many students fall into the trap of turning to coffee or energy drinks to help them study. You may think that it will help you study into the night - or pep you up for an exam - but it's more likely that you'll 'crash' and fatigue during the exam.



Get a good night's sleep: Sacrificing sleep for late-night cramming isn't a good habit to keep, even if you want to be more prepared for your exam. It's unlikely that you'll do your best study if you're struggling to stay awake - and it goes without saying that you should try to get a full night's rest before an exam. You should aim to achieve 8-10 hours sleep a night.

Allow yourself some breaks: Studying can be tiring, so it is important to stop and refresh every so often - even if you're feeling overwhelmed and short of time. Taking five minutes to go for a short walk or make a cup of tea can help you clear your head and regain your focus.



Learn to manage stress: Each student has their own way of dealing with stress - you need to determine what works for you. Doing some exercise, having a short nap, catching up with friends or even just taking a few deep breaths are all good ways to relieve stress and refresh. If the stress is really starting to build up, you can speak to someone at your institution - your tutor or lecturer, an academic adviser or a counsellor.


Study Tips - Things to think about or try!

 **Study Triage:** When completing Extended Learning tasks, think about dividing the tasks in to three groups according to their priority level. Skim through the tasks and decide:

1. Which are essential (think about colouring them red)
2. Which are important/urgent (Think about a yellow or amber colour)
3. Which are optional/less important (Think about using a green colour)




You should then tackle each of the tasks in this order. This will help with your time management, as you won't be wasting time on tasks that can be completed later.


 **Design a simple routine to help you stay healthy during your exams.** The routine should include time for exercise, relaxation, study and also sleep! You should also think about your diet during the routine. Remember it is important to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle during this crucial time!



Reward yourself! Think about different rewards you can use to motivate yourself when studying and revising. Think about smaller rewards for small victories (completing a nights revision) and larger rewards for when your exams are over! (A cinema trip with friends!)


 **Where do you see yourself in two, four or even ten years times?** Set these goals and link your study tasks to steps on the way to achieving those goals! This should help motivate you when things get tough!



 **What motivates you?** Find a motivational quote which inspires/motivates you to do well. Stick this on your wall or some where you will see it each day to remind you to keep going!



Compare the planner! Look at your friends revision timetables and planners, identify what works well for them. Would these help for you? Try them and see if they are effective.

 **Podcast it!** Some people find they learn better by listening to information. There are some really useful podcasts available to support your revision in subjects. Look for some reliable podcasts on a subject you enjoy and see if listening to learn works for you.





Past Papers: Ask your teacher for past papers that you can practice and then self-mark. Attempting exam questions is a great way to practice your exam technique. You can also then use the mark scheme to mark your answer and see what went well and where you may have gone wrong.



If your course uses Case Studies, make a list of them, and practice writing about them. Think about including all the information you need. Make comparisons - can you find other cases that are similar? Remember the more you can justify answers with evidence, the more knowledge you are demonstrating.



Specialist terms - make a glossary of the different terms that you may need to use from each of your subjects. Include information about what the term means thinking about using examples to support your definitions.



Mix it up! Try to use different methods to help with revision. Scientists have found that the more ways something is introduced to the brain; the more likely it is to be stored and remembered!



Sort it out! Try to organise your revision and notes in to groups. (E.g. putting all biology units together in science, all equation-based mathematics together etc) your brain loves things to be organised as it helps attach meaning to things.



Bookmark it! When using websites to help with revision, bookmark sites that you have found to be helpful to your revision. This will help save you time in the future as the link will be in your bookmarks, meaning no time wasted looking for the content!

References:

Bircher, R - Revise GCSE Study Skills Guide - Pearson

Bircher, R - Revision Planner - Pearson

See Ms Taylor - Cartwright if you would like more information about these texts to help with your revision!