

Year 9 Revision Skills

Preparation for GCSE, College
and Beyond



IXWORTH
FREE SCHOOL

"Providing a foundation for life"

Introduction - Why do we need a revision skills programme?

- GCSEs are the most important exams of your life. They are the key to unlock the door to the future.
- At GCSEs you learn for the exam, at A level and university you need to study. At university you read for a degree –this implies students have to work for themselves.
- Universities are telling us, work places are telling us and teachers are telling us that students are too reliant on being told what to do. They need to learn to be independent learners.
- Students who perform poorly in GCSE miss homework and coursework deadlines, forget their notes and folder, don't interact in class and cram in revision in the last weeks before exam.

The information in this booklet will help you to make a good start to your revision and journey to success. Remember:

Think of your future, the big picture!

REVISION

What is revision?

Revision is looking back at information that you have previously learnt.

You need to understand the information, know the information and remember it for the exam!

What is the aim of my revision?

The aim is to make a series of key-points relating to a subject

You need key points, phrases, or words to prompt you to remember the information stored in your brain

You should aim to have a card or A4 sheet with the key points for each topic or sub-topic

How should I structure my revision?

- ✓Have an aim for the session. E.g by the end of this session I want to be able to answer questions on...
- ✓Think about what you already know and identify the bits you need to spend more time on
- ✓Break topics down into chunks
- ✓Make notes with key points, phrases or words
- ✓Test yourself
- ✓Have a tick list so that you can see your progress
- ✓Look over your notes 1 month, 1 week and 1 day before the exam

What can I do to revise?

- Put revision aids around the house
- Tell someone what you have learnt
- Make spider diagrams
- Record yourself saying key points and play back
- Ask parents or friends to test you
- Make posters and stick them on the wall
- Use pictures to associate with keywords
- Read a page – shut the book, make notes on what you can remember
- Use Mnemonics – making a rhyme from the first letters
- Highlight key points in notes or books

Drawing up a Revision Timetable

You will find a two example template **Revision Timetables** annexed with this revision handbook. These can be adapted / used to structure your revision.

Template 1 – Appendix 1

- This shows the working week when you are at school, therefore that time has been blocked off. You will see that there is plenty of time remaining after school / at weekends!
- Firstly, write all of the tasks / revision you wish to complete in the week in the box on the right.
- This then needs transferring to the available time after school / during the weekend.
- Colour code each of the subjects as this will give you a visual aid as to how much time you have committed to revision on each subject.

Template 2 – Appendix 2

- This timetable is better for when you have finished school for study leave.
- Make enough copies of the weekly timetable to take you up to the end of your exams
- Enter all your commitments such as lesson, clubs, work and most importantly time to relax.
- When drawing up your revision timetable remember the following:
 - Leave time for leisure activities
 - Balance revision time between different subjects, however if you have an exam coming up, plan appropriate revision leading up to it.
 - Vary the subjects revised on one day
 - When it comes to the end of the week, review how well it worked and make changes to the next week if you need to.
 - Review and re-do each weekly timetable until your last exam.

Put copies of the timetable up at home for everyone to see. If they know you are revising they will leave you alone to get on.

If these timetables don't work for you, make your own, however do not spend hours making it look pretty!



Organising your revision

Make a topic checklist

- For each subject make a list of the major topics you have covered – this is called a topic check list. If you find it difficult to list the topics ask your teacher, however many will provide this.
- For each subject look at the topics and decide the order. Start with a topic you liked or found easy. Remember you do not have to revise the topics in the same order you were taught them.
- Re-write the topic check list in the order you want to revise. Pin up the topic check list in your bedroom. Write the topics on your timetable too.
- Check your timetable to see which subject you have chosen to study and check the topic list for which specific part you have chosen to revise.

Organising your time

- Set a definite time to start and finish revision sessions and stick to them. The best advice is to stick to the same routine as a school day.
- Revision sessions should be 1 ½ hours, about the same length as your exams – make sure you have breaks though.
- Work in good light, at a table and not in front of the TV / computer / ipad. Some people like to revise to music. Just be careful, if you find yourself being distracted or singing along turn it off, it isn't helping. Keep the volume low. When you have a break play the music loud and lively!
- Try working on difficult topics in the morning when your mind is fresh.

Improving your concentration

- Start with short sessions and gradually build up to longer sessions. Try revising for 40 mins, 10 mins testing, 10 mins resting.
- For every hour you work you should have 10 mins break.
- It will help your concentration if you vary the subject or topic during the revision session.
- Always attend revision sessions and remain focussed.
- Walking around whilst reading aloud can help concentration.
- When testing yourself answer out loud.
- Give yourself a reward when you complete a revision session.

Monday
- Maths
- Football ✓
Tuesday
m - Review Maths
.m - History
Wednesday
a.m - Science
p.m - Review Hist
Thursday
- Science

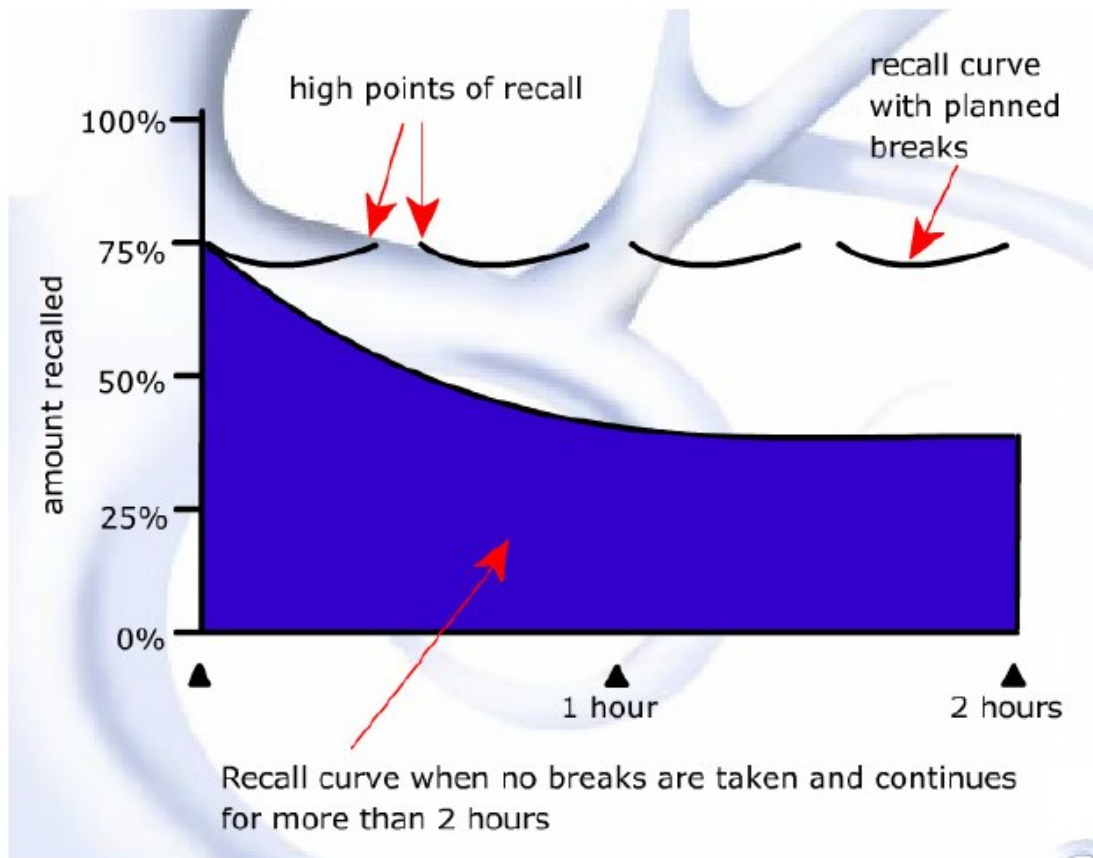
The Best Way of Working

The best way to remember is to keep:

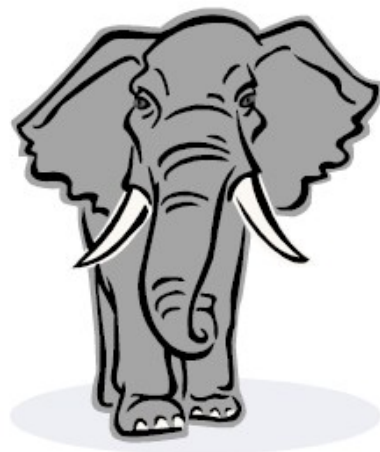
- Starting (when memory is good) and
- Finishing (when memory is good) and
- Cut down on the middle (when things aren't so well remembered)

Studies suggest that the optimum time for working is 40 minutes followed by a 3-5 minute break (a complete change of activity).

You will have lots of different pieces of information to remember as your course progresses. In order to use your time effectively you need to employ effective memory techniques which can be used when note taking or revising.



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Learning Styles

Different people learn in different ways. Decide which style you prefer and use the following techniques. If you don't know which you are, try each and see which style works best for you.

VISUAL

- Use pattern notes/mind maps/posters/leaflets/Dvds/YouTube/Pictures/Diagrams
- Visualisation of information and outcomes
- Highlighting
- Transform information into cartoons
- Subject specific vocabulary / key words on cards
- Computer – revision sites like www.khanacademy.org / bitesize
- Use key words – display key words and key information around your room just above eye level
- Attach pictures or images to keywords/information to improve memory
- Covert text/key information into a picture or a diagram

AUDITORY

- Any activities involving reading AND listening or speaking
- Group discussion/debate
- Describe out loud what you are doing as you do it
- Describe something either in writing or orally, in your own words
- Make rhymes, jingles, songs etc.
- Use mnemonics (see memory page)
- Discuss your plans/ideas/answers with a partner
- Report back / present / teach someone else what you have learnt
- Use podcasts, record yourself speaking and listen to them whilst on bus etc.
- Use rhythm to learn key information e.g. spelling
- Put key words to a familiar or popular tune – e.g. Happy Birthday, favourite song
- Write poems
- Create your own questions and use these for quizzes, bingo, nought and crosses and board games.

PRACTICAL

- Use role play, re-create or re-enact an event,
- Use models – create a model of the human heart, plan a battle etc.
- Use paper based activities – write notes/key words on post its, post cards or scrap paper then use to arrange, organise, plan, sequence, classify and prioritise or turn into pattern notes/mind maps
- Use movement – walk, dance, run while listening, reading, talking out aloud
- Games: bingo, noughts and crosses, pairs
- Fiddle with blue tack, ball etc. to keep yourself in appropriate learning state or to energise/relax yourself.

Not all these strategies are appropriate for all subjects or all tasks. Write down 3 strategies you already use that work and one that you will try.

SMASHING SCOPE

This is another set of memory techniques – not all will work for you, it is important to identify what works and go with it.

Your memory works best when it associates a piece of information with something memorable – see examples below:

SENSES – Use all your senses – vision, smell, hearing, taste, touch/movement (all learning styles)

MOVEMENT – move images around, walk or space out the thing to be remembered

ASSOCIATION – link the information to something that is already stable in your mind – make up a story

SAUCY – we all have almost a perfect memory of things that are a bit “saucy” or that have sexual connotations

HUMOUR – the more funny, ridiculous, absurd, weird you make your images, the more memorable they will be

IMAGINATION/IDEAS – Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge”. The more you apply your imagination and memory, the better your memory will be – Use it! For example Mnemonics are often a useful way to remember. Take the first letter of each key word and make up a silly phrase. E.g. to remember the points of the compass in the right order Never Eat Shredded Wheat = North, East, South, West

NUMBER – numbering adds efficiency to order and sequence

GOALS – remind yourself WHY you need to remember e.g. to pass exam, get into uni, get a job etc.

SYMBOLS – use symbols (signs, pictures, graphs) instead of words – your brain remembers pictures much more easily than words

COLOUR – most people find colour helps make things more memorable

ORDER and/or SEQUENCE – in combination with other techniques it allows for more immediate reference

POSITIVITY – the brain tries to shut out negative feelings or memories so be positive to open up your brain and memory bank.

EXAGGERATION – in all your images, exaggerate size, shape and sound



Mind Maps

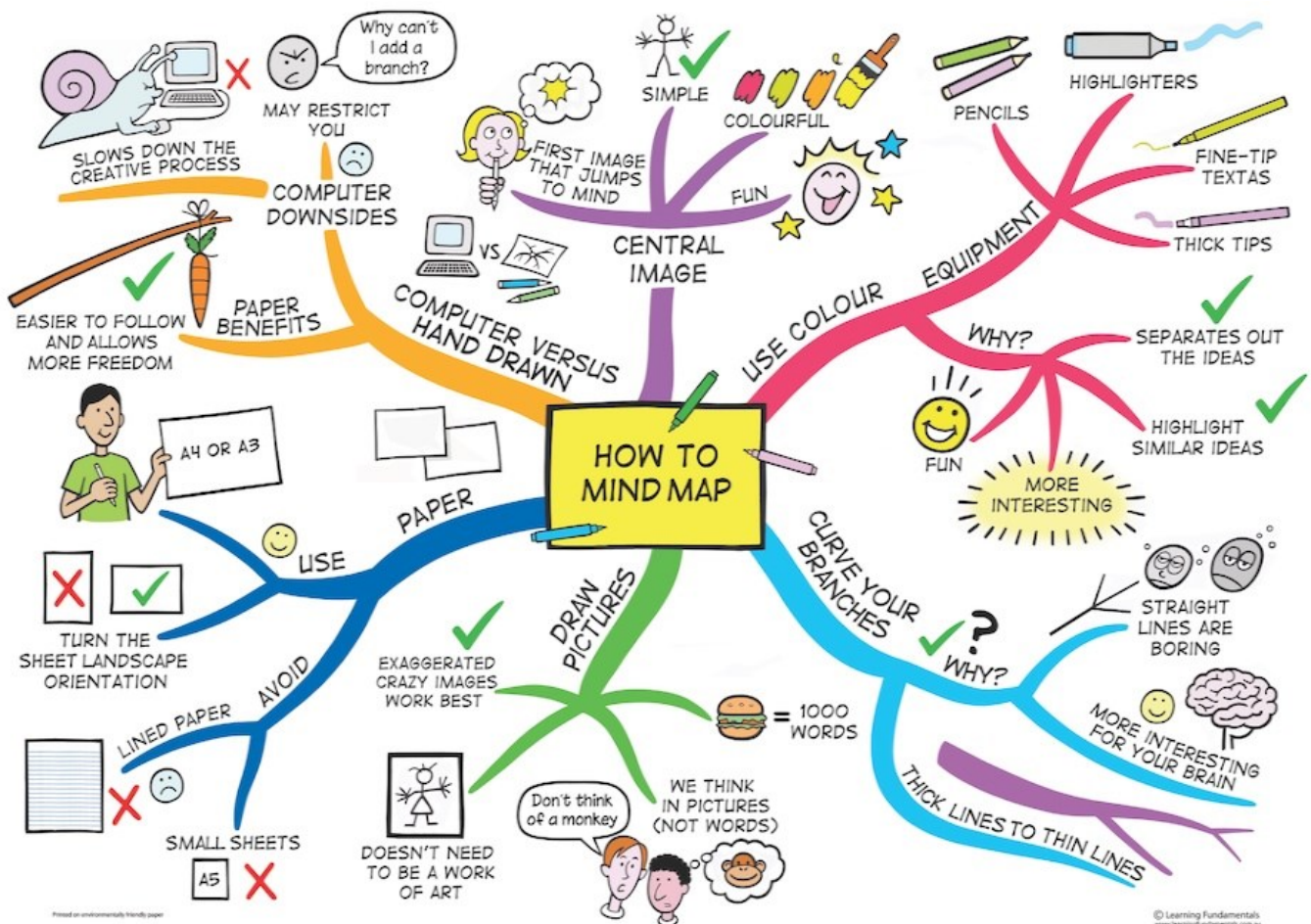
Why do a mind map? Notes often end up being the book repeated word for word (unless, of course, you have taken good notes using the techniques above).

This is an alternative way to make notes because your brain likes colour and pictures which help your memory. A study in the US gave participants 10,000 images to look through. They then added 10 other images. 95% of participants could identify the foreign images. Conclusion? Pictures stay in your brain.

How to Mind Map

Advantages of Mind Map

- You only need to write down what's important
- You can easily show how things link up
- All the information you need is on one page
- When you have made a pattern, your brain will remember the whole shape of the topic.



Don't Just Read Notes - *Make* Notes (and then test yourself...)!

Writing your own revision notes

- Writing revision notes is a great way of being active in your revision.
- Revision notes should be created in early stages of revision. Don't attempt to memorise everything in your lesson notes, condense it first. Revision notes are designed to jog your memory of the things you have learnt.
- Ways of making revision notes include: traditional revision notes on A4 file paper, revision cards, mind maps and patterned notes. Select which method works best for you, often a combination of methods works best.
- Subject revision guides you can buy in shops or have been given by school are usually very good but it is very important you still write your own notes – don't fall into the trap of just reading the book.

Writing traditional revision notes

- Read through the notes you have on a topic
- Go back and pick out the key points and phrases. Also pick out any important diagrams, tables, graphs or formulae.
- Read through the rough notes you have made, make sure they contain all the important bits, then write them out again neatly.
- Pay attention to these key points:
 - Use your own words
 - Make sure your notes are well spaced out, don't cram too much onto one page
 - Use large writing and put important key words in capitals
 - Make your notes more interesting by using colour, boxes, circles, underlining, abbreviations and so on

Making revision cards

- You can purchase revision cards from the LRC or stationary shops
- These can be carried around in a pocket or bag and can be used whenever you have a spare moment.
- Pay careful attention to:
 - Always write the subject in the top right hand corner of the card
 - Always put a title on the card
 - Number the cards
 - Cards covering the same topic and/or subject should be kept together using an elastic band or treasury tag in the top left corner

Purchase revision guides

- You can get a revision guide list from the LRC but you will need to speak to your teachers specifically for advice on which guide to buy. All guides are easily obtainable online (e.g. Amazon) or from high-street bookshops.
- As a school, we have trailed the Pearson 'Study Skills Guide' as a general revision resource, and staff have found it very effective. You can either purchase these online or at a discounted rate on the 'Helping your Child Revise' evening on 4th December.

Using Technology

- There are some great revision programs / websites – use them!
- Many departments have specific programs for you to help with revision / studies e.g. My Maths, linguascope, etc.
- Use technology to enhance your revision. You can use it as a break from your books and it is great revision.
- Apps for your ipod, smartphone, Ipad can be downloaded too.
- Past exam papers can be downloaded from the exam boards website (see below or just search ‘past papers Product Design AQA’ for example).
- Detailed below you will find various web-links that may be beneficial in assisting you with your revision and planning for your the forthcoming GCSE examinations.

EXAM BOARDS

AQA	http://web.aqa.org.uk/
Edexcel	http://www.edexcel.com/Pages/Home.aspx
OCR	http://www.ocr.org.uk/
WJEC	http://www.wjec.co.uk/

GENERAL

BBC Schools Revision and Tips: Includes dealing with exam nerves and stress	http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/revisionandskills/
BBC Bitesize	http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/
Get Revising: Includes revision timetable generator	http://getrevising.co.uk/

Sitting your Exams

The night before

- Only attempt light revision from your revision notes, not any totally new revision.
- Get all the equipment you need (4 black pens, 2 pencils, ruler, rubber, calculator, English novel etc.) ready the night before. The last thing you want is to be rushing around looking for stuff in the morning.
- Try to get a good night's sleep – no computer games or late night TV!

On the day

- Get up in plenty of time.
- Make sure you have everything you need before you leave home.
- If you want to, do some last minute revision by flicking through your notes.
- Don't spend too long waiting outside the exam room as this can make you feel more nervous.
- Make an agreement with your friend not to talk about the exam.

Budget your time

- Always take a watch with you.
- Work out how much time you can devote to each question or section (do this by dividing the minutes of the exam by the marks available to work out how long to spend per mark).
- As you take the exam you may find yourself falling behind schedule – don't panic just work a little faster.
- Don't fall into the trap of spending most time answering the questions you know least about. Give them a go but don't be afraid to move on.

Tackling the questions

- Read every question at least twice.
- Think about the question before you get into your answer.
- Work out how long and detailed the answer needs to be by looking at the space you are given and the number of marks available.
- For essay-type questions outline the main points you intend to include in your answer. Without an outline you are likely to stray from the point or forget important points.
- Remember to stick to what the question is asking.



KEEP
CALM
AND
ENJOY
YOUR EXAM

14 Killer Revision Tips

1. Start revising early

i.e. months, not days before the exam. Make a timetable (see samples) to plan your revision and stick to it.

2. Don't spend ages making your notes look pretty

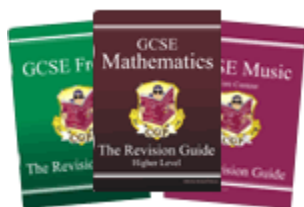


This is just wasting time. For diagrams, include all the details you need to learn, but don't try to produce a work of art. Limit yourself to 2 or 3 colours so you don't get carried away colouring things in.

3. Take short breaks

Not every 10 minutes! During these breaks it is a great idea to try to exercise once a day if you can. Go for a run, a swim or a game with your mates – you will feel better for it.

4. Use revision guides



5. In study leave, start revising early

i.e. 9am — that way you'll get your day's work done much quicker and will have time to relax in the evening.

6. Stick revision notes all around your house



So in the exam you think — "aha, quadratic equations, they were on the fridge..."

7. Get yourself drinks and snacks

So you don't make excuses to stop every 10 minutes...

8. Sit at a proper desk

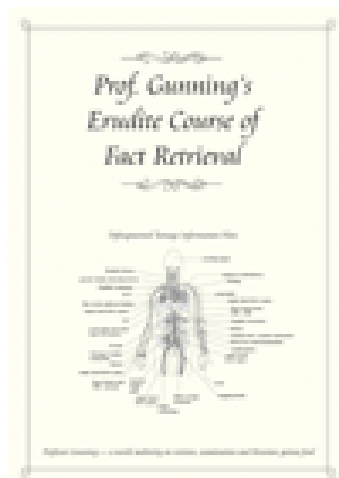


Don't try to revise in bed — you'll be in the land of pink igloos and elephants before you can say "Captain Birdseye".

9. Don't put it off

"Procrastination" is the long word for it. And it means rearranging stuff on your desk, getting a sudden urge after 16 years to tidy your room, playing the guitar, thinking about the weekend, writing love poems about that girl/boy you fancy, painting your toenails, etc, etc, etc,... Sit down at your desk and GET ON WITH IT.

10. Don't just read your notes



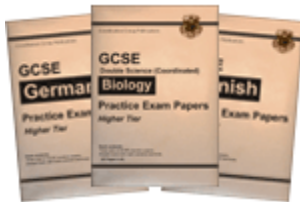
You have to WRITE STUFF DOWN. This is real basic "how to revise" stuff.

11. Don't turn yourself into a revision zombie



If you stop doing anything else but revision you'll turn into a zombie. It's really important that you keep time to do things you enjoy... like cinema, shopping, sports, frisbee, rock-climbing, making model planes, nose-picking, whatever tickles your ferret... When you're doing these try to relax and totally forget about revision.

12. Do lots of practice exam papers



This is especially important as you get close to the exams — CGP has plenty available (another blatant advert).

13. Read the exam timetable properly

Double-check so you don't miss an exam and have plenty of time to prepare for it.

14. Find the right environment to revise



NOT in front of the TV. NOT listening to the radio. Music can sometimes be OK, but you need to find the right kind. It's got to be something that's just there in the background that you're not thinking about at all. Music without singing is better as you won't be tempted to dance around your bedroom like a big fool.

Appendix 1

Weekly Planner for W/C

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 AM	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL	IN SCHOOL		
7:30 AM							
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Tasks to complete this week.....

Revision/coursework completion timetable

Weekly Revision timetable week beginning

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Zone 1 9.00-10.30							
Zone 2 11.00-12.30							
Zone 3 1.30-3.30							
Zone 4 5.00-9.00							