

## Introduction

To help you over the next few months we have put together this advice booklet. It contains all the key information you will need to revise effectively for your exams.



## Starting Revision

Before you can start planning your revision, you need to know what you've got to cover, what your strengths and weaknesses are and what you need to help you revise. To do this well you'll need to be systematic, going through each subject in turn, working out:

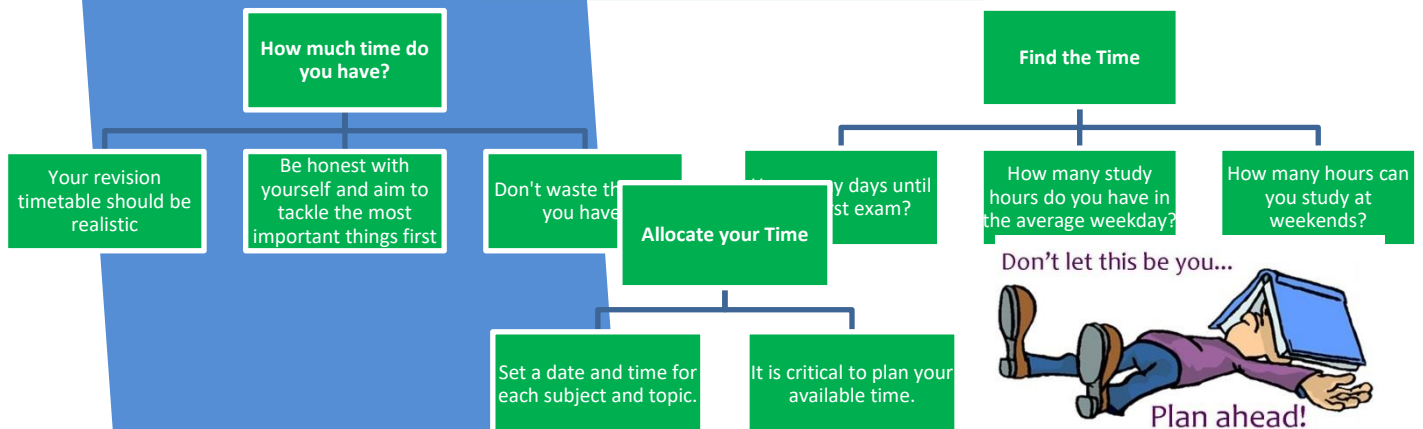
- ✓ What you need to cover
- ✓ Your current level of understanding
- ✓ What you are going to need to revise in that area

Once you have all this information, you can start to plan your revision timetable.

**Don't Panic!**  
Don't worry if you think there are things missing and things you don't understand. Everyone feels like that – you just need to make sure that you get all the resources and information you need. There are various places you can obtain the information from:

- Your Teacher
- [www.getrevising.com](http://www.getrevising.com)
- GCSEPod

## Preparing the Basics



## The right space to work in...

Make sure you've got the following:

- ✓ Comfortable chair and desk
- ✓ Good light and comfortable temperature
- ✓ Revision timetable/planner
- ✓ Storage to keep your revision space tidy
- ✓ Revision kit

## Remove Distractions

- ✓ Let your family know your study timetable so you are not distracted
- ✓ Remember that useful concentration only lasts about 30-40 minutes
- ✓ Take breaks of 5-10 minutes
- ✓ Like anything, concentration improves with practice

## Complete Revision Kit

- Coloured pencils, highlighters and pens
- Paper
- Folders and dividers
- Post-it notes
- Dictionary & Thesaurus
- Text books & Revision guides



## Have you got a Study Buddy?

Having a Study Buddy means questions and answers. Working with your study buddy helps outline what information you know and what you need to work on.

Your Buddy will also motivate you to study. It tends to be easier to stay in and study if someone else is doing it with you - It's always better if someone else is testing you, rather than testing yourself.

- Pick someone who is **reliable** and who you **like and trust**
- **Plan in advance** what you're going to discuss
- Share your **summary sheets, mnemonics** and other **methods of remembering information**.

Working with your Study Buddy:

- **Structure** your meetings: **Study, Discuss, Study, Discuss**
- Teach your Study Buddy a subject, then have them teach it back to you
- **Stay in touch** by phone and email, **support** each other
- Check your revision planner for **areas to focus on** and plan for
- Don't get side-tracked – **stay on track!**

## Revision Cards

Revision cards are a good way of turning lesson notes into a more manageable form to revise from.

Good revision cards should:

- ✓ Contain all the key points of a topic
- ✓ Be clear and concise
- ✓ Be a condensed version of your notes
- ✓ Enable you to take in the information at a glance
- ✓ Not have loads of detail

By transferring information from notes to the revision card, you are re-learning what you have covered in class. This is because you have to be able to understand it in order to put the information in your own words!

If you come back to a revision card and you don't understand it, revisit your detailed class notes to recap and re-write it in a form you understand.

## Mnemonics

For some learners, where there is an order or a long list to learn mnemonics are very helpful.

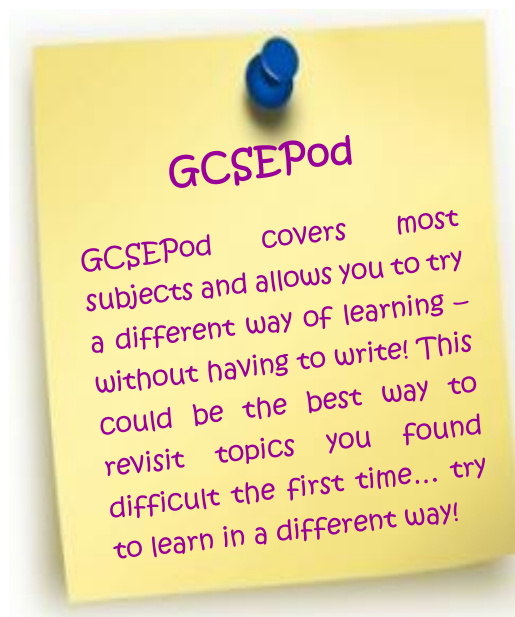
The idea of learning

***My Very Early Morning Jam Sandwich Usually Nauseates People***

might seem odd, in fact the stranger the phrase the more likely you are to learn it, but consider that it stands for:

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune (and Pluto)

You learn the planets and their order, all through a jam sandwich!



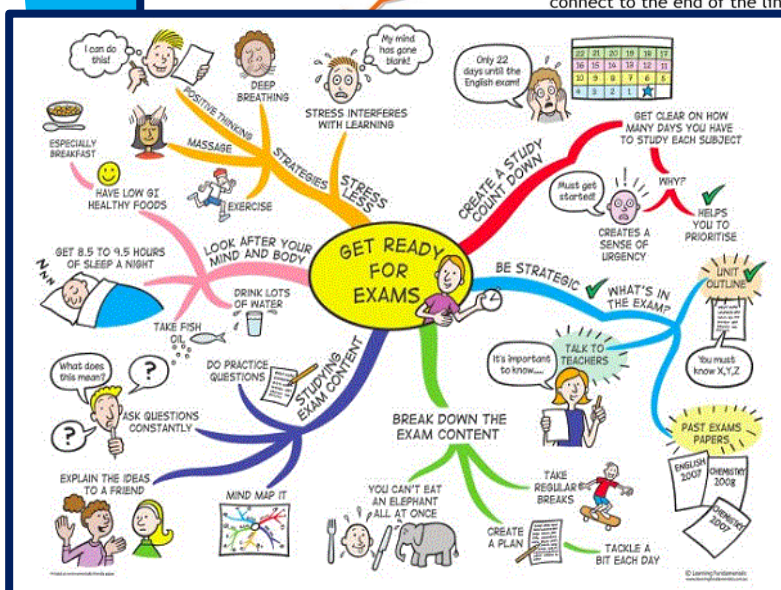
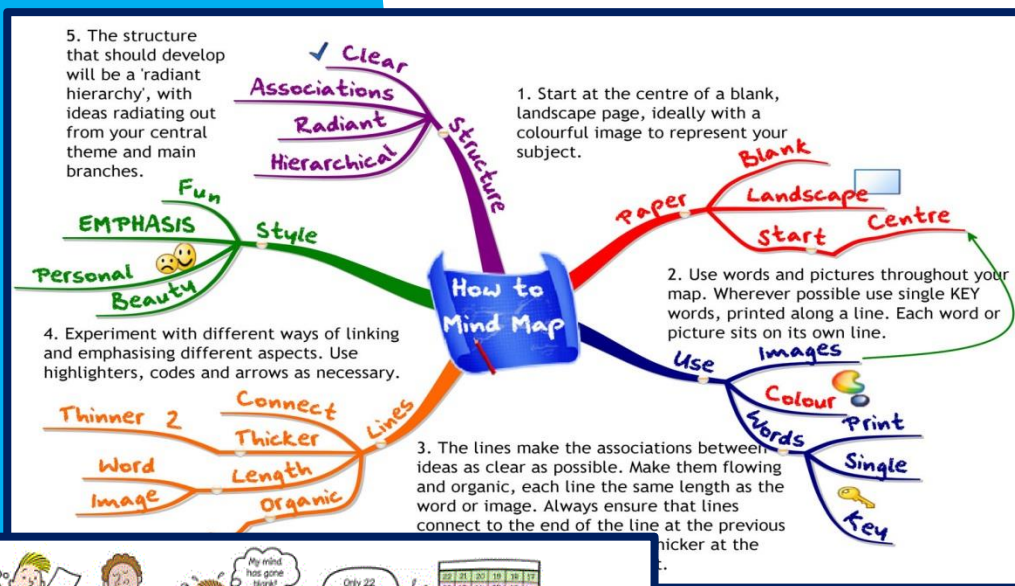


## Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is useful for listing lots of ideas and connecting them together. You can use this technique to record information as you are revising or you can use it to see how much you know or have remembered about a subject or topic.

### How to mind map:

- ✓ Use key words or images
- ✓ Start in the centre of the page and work out
- ✓ Make the centre a clear visual image that represents the general theme of the map
- ✓ Put key words on lines. This reinforces the structure of the notes
- ✓ Use colour to portray themes, associations and to make things stand out
- ✓ Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind
- ✓ Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements
- ✓ Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit
- ✓ Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map
- ✓ Be creative!



## Doodles

Create a drawing to help fix key points in your mind.

Most information can be presented visually – use your imagination!

You don't have to be able to draw well – scribbling or stick figures will be just as effective.

## Key Command Words to Learn

Command words are words in an exam question which tell you what to do. It is vital that you understand what each one means.

<b>Analyse</b>	Look very closely at the detail
<b>Comment on</b>	Give your opinions or point of view, with reasons
<b>Compare</b>	Say how things are the same and how things are different
<b>Contrast</b>	Say how things are different
<b>Describe</b>	Write about in detail
<b>Discuss</b>	Give the main reasons for and against, come to a conclusion
<b>Estimate</b>	Give a rough idea, with evidence
<b>Explain</b>	Give reasons for
<b>Illustrate</b>	Give examples that make the point clear – it can include diagrams, figures or drawings
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain the meaning in your own words
<b>Justify</b>	Give reasons to support an argument or action
<b>Outline</b>	Give only the most important details
<b>State</b>	Write briefly the main point
<b>Summarise</b>	Bring together the main points

## Plan your Answers using the WILT Approach!

<b>W</b>	What is Wanted?	Look at the command words – what do they mean? What other key information is there in the question?
<b>I</b>	What should it Include?	What is really needed for the answer?
<b>L</b>	How Long should I spend on it? How Long should the answer be?	Look at the number of marks awarded – if it's only a few, the answer does not need to be very long.
<b>T</b>	What Type of answer is needed? What form should it take?	Should it be a letter, diagram, explanation, essay, etc.?

# Useful Strategies

## Annotation

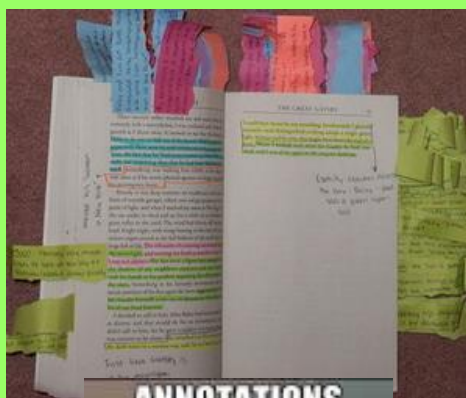
As an 'active reader', you already know that when you read textbook assignments, you should have questions in your mind. As you read you should be looking for the answers to these questions.

Have a pencil in hand so that you can 'annotate' your text.

Unlike highlighting, the process of annotating helps you to stay focused and involved with your text book. You'll find that the process of taking notes as you read will help you concentrate better. It will also help you to monitor and improve your understanding.

List of some techniques that you can use to annotate text:

- ✓ Underline important terms
- ✓ Circle definitions and meanings
- ✓ Write key words and definitions in the margin
- ✓ Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin
- ✓ Write short summaries in margin at the end of sub-units
- ✓ Write the questions in the margin next to the section where the answer is found
- ✓ Indicate steps in a process by using numbers in the margin
- ✓ Draw pictures to represent key ideas



## Post It Notes

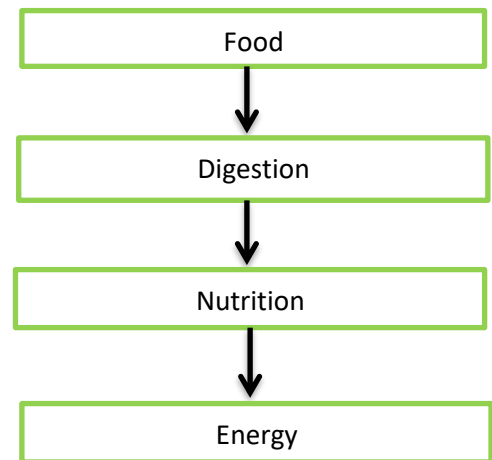
Write information onto post it notes and stick it where you will see it often.

You could use them to learn key quotations in English, key dates in history, or formula in maths. The possibilities are endless!

Try removing a post it note and see if you can remember what it says.

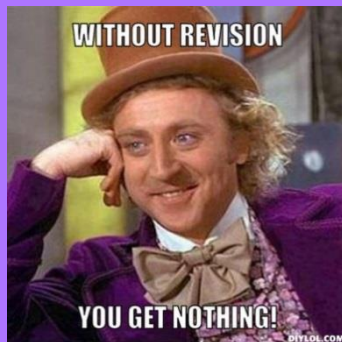
## Simple Flow Charts

If your mind works in a straight line, try creating a list of connecting ideas:



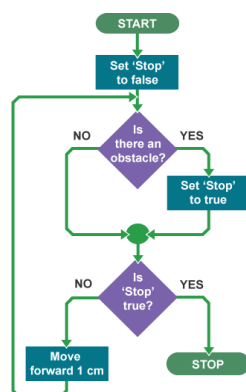
## Colour Code

- ✓ Write key points on coloured card or paper.
- ✓ Use different colours for different aspects of the topic.
- ✓ Turn pieces of paper over to use as flash cards and test yourself.



## Complex Flow Charts

Sometimes the connections between ideas are too complicated to be shown in a straight line. Here is an example of a more complex flow chart.



## Timeline

A timeline is a good example of a visual organiser. It works in most subjects.

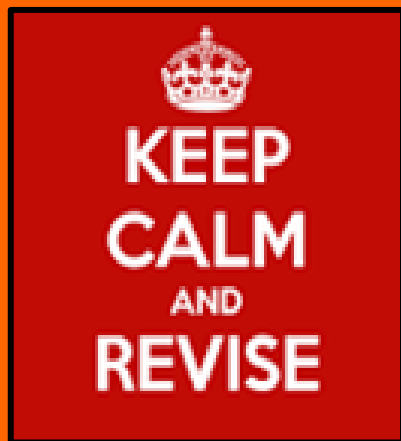
Examples of when you could use a timeline:

- ✓ Steps in a scientific experiment
- ✓ Significant moments in a novel
- ✓ Stages in a process in technology
- ✓ Dates/events in a historical period

[timetoast.com](http://timetoast.com)







### Using Past Papers

Exams are like anything – the more practice you have, the better you get. This is why past papers are so important to your exam preparation.

Get to know:

- ✓ Their layout, names/numbers of questions
- ✓ The format of instructions
- ✓ The range of questions: multiple choice, short answers, essays etc.
- ✓ What is required in your answers
- ✓ The marking scheme
- ✓ What really good answers actually look like

### Successful Revision: Ten Steps

1. Find a good environment in which to revise (comfortable, quiet and no distractions)
2. Make a realistic revision timetable; mark subjects and topics on it (use your subjects' revision lists to do this; see your teachers about missing work)
3. Know your strengths and weaknesses in each subject – mix them up on your timetable (you won't gain by only revising the easy topics or just the hard bits)
4. Always make your own revision notes – you will learn as you write!
5. Stay focused (don't try to make notes about everything – stick to the important bits)
6. Use other active revision techniques for extra success
7. Tick off topics when you've revised them; feel good about it!
8. Split your revision into 10, 20 and 30 minute long sessions. At the beginning of the session test yourself on what you learned in your last session.
9. Have a short relaxation/exercise break between revision sessions to unwind
10. Frequently remind yourself of how useful your revision is, and look back at what you've achieved so far.

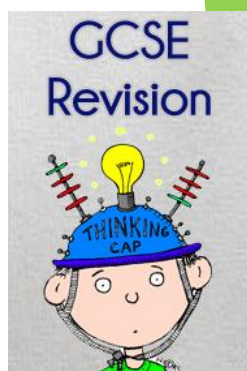
## In the First Few Minutes of the Exam

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- ✗ Always read the instructions carefully
- ✗ As you read through the examination paper, circle the questions you want to answer
- ✗ Make sure you read through the whole paper before you start to write
- ✗ Check how many marks are given for each questions – this gives a clue of how much information is required
- ✗ Stay calm, don't panic. Counting to ten or breathing deeply may help if your mind goes blank
- ✗ Before you start writing, work out how much time you have for each question. Don't spend too long on one question!

### Examination Advice

- ✓ Check your timetable. They do not all have the same start time!
- ✓ Know when and where your exams are going to take place
- ✓ Know your candidate number
- ✓ Arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of exam
- ✓ Attend pre-exam booster revision with your teachers
- ✓ Do not be late! If you are late you may not be allowed to sit your exam
- ✓ Do not communicate with any student whilst you are in the exam room. If you do, you may be disqualified from your exams
- ✓ No mobile phones/iPods/MP3 players
- ✓ No correcting fluid/pens
- ✓ Pencil cases must be transparent
- ✓ Bring a spare BLACK pen. You can only use black ink in exams
- ✓ If you are allowed to use a calculator in your exams, make sure the batteries are working
- ✓ Listen and follow instructions carefully

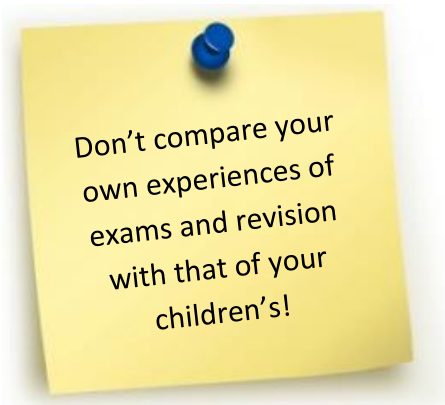


## Don't Forget Revision Sessions!!

Don't forget to check when each of your subject teachers are holding revision sessions for your GCSE's. Try to attend as many as you can – your teachers are experts at preparing students for exams and have lots of past papers for you to try.

# How Parents Can Help

It goes without saying that all children are different, so it follows that there is no single approach to how a parent can help out, but here are some suggestions.



Don't compare your own experiences of exams and revision with that of your children's!

## Do

- ✓ Discuss with your child what will be involved in the revision period and what your role could be.
- ✓ Provide the environment necessary for success. Ideally, they need a quiet, well-lit place to study with interruptions kept to a minimum when they are working.
- ✓ Respond positively when they ask for help. Ask exactly how you can help and if you can't help immediately say when it's convenient.
- ✓ Give plenty of praise and encouragement, stay calm and don't expect too much.
- ✓ Keep them well supplied with food and drinks.
- ✓ Keep a low profile.
- ✓ Be prepared to listen when they want to talk about a problem as everything becomes more emotional and heightened during the exam period.
- ✓ Encourage them to take regular breaks during long periods of revision.
- ✓ Encourage morning revision when the brain is more receptive and discourage studying right up to bedtime.

## Don't

- ✗ Make comparisons with brothers, sisters, their friends and so on.
- ✗ Unintentionally add to their worries by constantly mentioning the exams.
- ✗ Relate too much to when you were sitting your exams at school or how you did your revision.
- ✗ Worry if their revision techniques seem strange or unusual.
- ✗ Make a battleground out of whether or not they listen to music when doing their revision.
- ✗ Distract them unnecessarily.
- ✗ Expect them to study all the time as taking some time out to relax will have a positive effect on their work.



## Exam Stress

Do you feel a pang in your stomach when you think of your upcoming GCSE exams?

You're not alone, every year countless GCSE students worry about their exams but it's important to understand **how to deal with stress** so that it won't negatively affect your performance. A little bit of stress can motivate you to work harder but excessive anxiety can cause:

- Lack of sleep
- Poor appetite
- Increased heart rate
- Migraines or headaches

Let's put those harmful feelings to one side and focus on GCSE revision tips that can help you control your stress levels. Here are some **practical tips to help you revise for exams** without the pressure:

- ✓ Try to get enough sleep – get between 6-8 hours a night to help keep you focused and concentrate better. Turn off digital devices at least half an hour before bed and try unwinding by reading a book or chatting to family.
- ✓ Use Mobile Apps like GCSEPod
- ✓ Practice timings to get you used to exam conditions
- ✓ Eat the right foods- follow a healthy diet and avoid stimulants such as coffee or energy drinks
- ✓ Get organised! Build a revision timetable and outline short term goals which will boost your motivation when you hit them
- ✓ Avoid negative people
- ✓ Listen to music –music can fight boredom and motivate you to continue studying
- ✓ Get some exercise – incorporating exercise in study breaks can boost brain activity and improve memory. It can also allow you to switch off, letting your brain have some down time.
- ✓ Fit fun into your study routine – test yourself with interactive online quizzes or watch academic videos on YouTube
- ✓ Keep your end goal in mind – write the end date of your GCSE exams so you know that this is the final push and you will soon reach the final goal of results day when all of your hard work will culminate.





## GOOD LUCK!

We hope you have found this booklet useful. For more guidance please see or contact any member of staff in the Academy. Finally, we would like to wish all our students the very best success in their exams!

