

St Joseph's College

A specialist science college

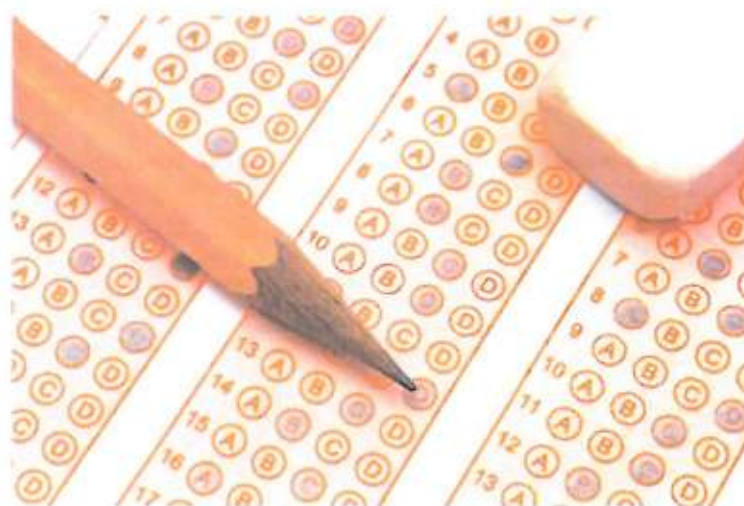
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Year 11 Revision Programme



**Advice and strategies on coping with GCSE revision
& examination planning**

NAME & FORM _____

C Gilligan

Y11 Revision Preparation at St. Joseph's



Read & Discuss:

The aim of these sessions is to help you achieve the best GCSE exam results possible. Success in exams is not simply just a matter of intelligence or ability. Other factors can seriously affect the final outcome. We all need a little help from time to time – and that is why these group sessions are happening. Some students can cope with exams better than others. Some may underachieve causing them to feel disappointed and upset or even angry with themselves. Have you ever wondered what it is that makes the difference? What do people who are good at exams do that others don't? In this booklet, you will be provided with signposts to help you through your exams. The advice is based on conversations with students who have experienced exactly the same GCSE journey as you. It contains realistic and practical suggestions on things like boosting confidence and self-belief, eating sensibly to avoid stress, coping with coursework, relaxation tips and surviving the exam itself. Follow the signposts carefully, prepare thoroughly and **you will become that person who is good at exams**. Read through this booklet, keep it somewhere accessible and use it alongside the support material in your Key Stage Four planner. You are guaranteed to find some advice that is of use to you.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	
✓	To Raise Standards of Performance.
✓	To Develop Social Skills And Interpersonal Standards.
✓	To Develop Time Management Skills
✓	To Develop Revision Techniques
✓	To Develop Exam Survival Skills
✓	To Develop Opinions And Beliefs
✓	To Share Ideas And Exam Practices



Good GCSE results - what is the secret?

We tend to think of our exam results being down to what happens on the day of the exam itself. Will I be in the right frame of mind? Will I be lucky and get the right questions? Will I remember what I have revised? In fact the results of exams are generally determined well before you sit the exam itself. There are a number of stages in the process of achieving exam success. The secret of good results in exams is about getting things right (and being aware of what can go wrong) at each stage of the process. The broad stages are:

STAGE 1: Make every lesson count

Learning the content first time round the process of revision (literally 'looking at something again') does assume that the content of the subject has been learnt in the first place.

STAGE 2: It's never too early to start revising

Even the 'perfect student', who has attended every lesson and paid attention throughout the exam years, needs to revise to achieve his or her potential. For the rest of us the need for revision is even greater. Revision can be done in many ways, some of which are more effective than others. During Y11 mentoring we will explore ways of planning revision as well as tips for using the most effective techniques. Also, look at the support pages in your KS4 planners.

STAGE 3: The Exam

Even with the first two stages successfully achieved, things can still go wrong. There are three sets of skills involved in taking exams – 'knowing the subject matter', 'organisational skills' and 'exam technique'.

Don't leave this blank make a note!

what's it all for?

Exam results matter.

Your GCSE grades will determine which pathways are open to you after Y11 and which are closed off.

So much depends on your GCSE results that it is worth getting some serious revision done now. Don't put yourself in the position when you get your GCSE results in August of regretting not working now!



nobody likes revising



Nobody likes revising!

You just have to face it and get on with it.

Good revision = Good GCSEs. In the long run, it is worth the effort. So stop putting it off and get down to it! NOW!

Once you get into it, you will feel a sense of achievement and your confidence about the exams will grow.

planning your revision



You need two things to plan your revision:

- a **topic list**
- a **revision schedule**

Your teacher should have given you a **topic list** (or *course outline* or *syllabus*) at the beginning of the course. Ask if you have not received it. You can also access the GCSE syllabuses online by going to the websites of the exam boards – but make sure you know which boards you are sitting. Exam boards use the word *specifications* to mean syllabuses.

Plan your revision by creating a revision schedule like this:

	subject 1	subject 2	subject 3	subject 4
Monday	Maths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fractions • percentages 	French <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing • -re verbs 	Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • atoms • molecules 	Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glaciation
Tuesday	ICT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spreadsheets 	English		
Wednesday				

etc.

Plan to cover four subjects each day. Use your topic list to break up subjects into smaller topics to revise each day. Allow about 20-minutes worth of revision for each subject. When you get through the topic list, start again at the beginning. You should plan to look at each topic at least three times before the exam.

the right conditions for study



It is important to study in the right conditions. Often people forget this and try to revise in the wrong conditions and are surprised when they don't get much work done!

The room where you revise needs to be:

quiet you can't study if there are noisy distractions – try to make the room as quiet as possible – if you must have music then play it softly – if it is loud it demands attention from your brain which takes your mind away from revision

well lit make sure you have good lighting on the books and notes you are reading and writing – if the light is poor, your eyes get tired – if you get tired, revision becomes a waste of time

cool if the room is too hot you won't get much done – most people have the heating on too high – the room should be cool (no more than 20 degrees – and open a window for fresh air

**free of
distractions**

don't have the TV on - don't have music playing unless it really is quietly in the background - don't have younger brothers or sisters getting in the way

**properly
equipped**

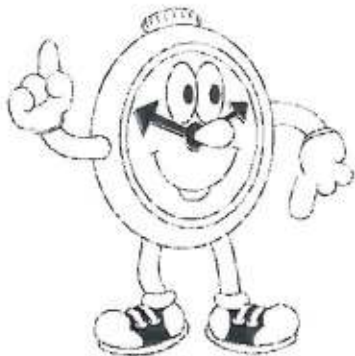
make sure you have topic lists, text books, exercise books, notes, handouts, pens, pencils and paper, drinking water – keep everything you need for revision organised – then you won't waste time getting sorted out every evening!

If it is impossible to get good conditions at home, think about using the school IT Centre, or ask your Head of Line to make a room available to you, or use your local library.

using revision time well

It's no good starting revision at any old time, picking a subject at random, and finishing when you are bored!

Work out a revision timetable for yourself and stick to it. Something like this:



7.00 revise subject 1
7.20 take a break
7.30 revise subject 2
7.50 break
8.00 revise subject 3
8.20 break
8.30 revise subject 4
8.50 stop

Do the same each day. Cover all your subjects in strict rotation. Don't spend more time on one subject than others.

At weekends have at least two revision sessions (of 2 hours each) on Saturday and another two on Sunday.

The working day all over again!



A very good place to start is to think about this –

Our school day ends at 3.35, if you go to bed at 10.35 that's 7 hours!

The working day all over again! It's very important that you invest in this time sensibly and don't waste it.

HOW DO YOU INVEST IN YOUR EVENINGS?

Divide the time up into bitesize boxes that include *i.e.*: -

HOME WORK

EAT & REST

REVISION

SCHOOLWORK

RELAXATION

SCHOOLWORK

This example was used by a year 11 student last year

Day		Tue	Wed	Thurs.	Fri
Monday					
4pm	Home work				
5pm	Evening meal				
6pm	Home work				
7pm	Break				
7.30pm	Revise Sub 1				
8pm	Revise Sub 2				
8.30pm	Break				
9pm	Revise Sub 3				
9.30pm	Revise Sub 4				
10pm	Rest & relax				
11pm	Bed				

A blank weekday evening revision timetable is on the next page:



Weekday Evening Revision Timetable

Day	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm
Mon							
Tues							
Wed							
Thurs							
Fri							

Revision Timetable

A useful and effective tool that can help you prepare for exams and achieve the grades you deserve. Some people prefer A4 sized daily or weekly timetables whilst others prefer larger wall sized charts that cover a month long period. Whatever your preference you can use the revision timetable templates on this page as a base to organise your revision periods.

Tips on making a revision timetable:

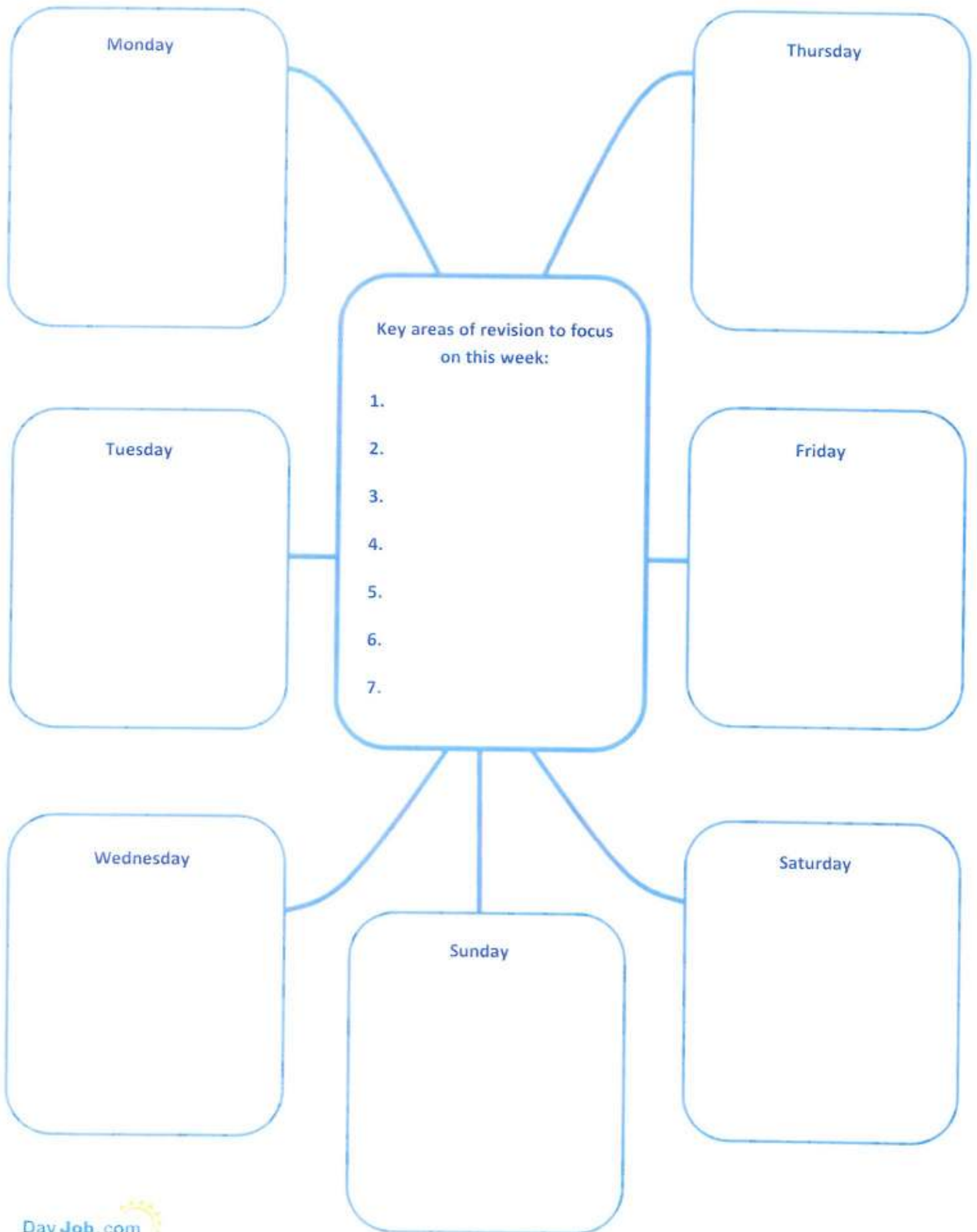
- When compiling a timetable try to be as realistic as possible. Do not try to overburden your day.
- Make a list of the subjects that you need to revise for between now and your exams.
- Work out which subjects have the most content that needs to be revised.
- Concentrate on those specific topics or modules that you are weak on.
- Break down major revision subjects into smaller parts.
- Ensure that you include break times during the day, these are important to help you unwind and to make sure you don't burn yourself out.
- Work out when you 'study best', for instance some people are able to concentrate better in the morning. Then use these times to study those topics that require the most effort and energy.
- Do not leave your most difficult or hardest subjects till the end of the day. Instead try to get these out of the way early on.
- After completing a revision period cross it off from your timetable. This will help to instil a sense of accomplishment.
- At the end of each week assess your performance and change your plans accordingly.
- Consider using different coloured pens to highlight specific classes or rank subjects according to importance. However if you feel you may be changing things around then use a simple pencil.
- Keep your timetable flexible and be ready to change it if circumstances change.
- Try not to spend the whole day revising one subject.
- Most experts suggest studying in slots of 40 minutes and then taking a break before your next session.



Examples:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							

Weekly Revision Timetable



REVISION:

Key tasks for students

- Setting yourself up for revision. Buy (or get your parents to buy you) a set of files especially for your revision - one for each exam you will take (for many subjects you will take two or more separate exams).
- Start revision early - allowing at least 2 weeks for each exam. The sooner you start, the less you will have to do each day and the less stressed out you will be.
- File handouts and information from lessons in the relevant files at the end of each day.
- The most important thing is to make a realistic revision timetable that you will stick to. Allow plenty of time for setting up your revision plan (at least a day) and rope your parents into helping you - it's the best investment of your, and their time out of everything in this section!
- Get one good revision book, CD-ROM, or aid for each subject. These do much of the initial work for you by breaking the subject matter down into 'do-able' chunks and key facts. Be selective about which you buy check with your subject teacher for the best ones for the level of exam you are taking.
- Keep everything you need - hole-punch, paper, pens, calculators etc. in one place so you don't waste ten minutes of each session searching for a pen.

Discuss it & write it down:

Get going this is good stuff – Read it!

Go to all lessons and make them work for you especially the ones you don't like or find harder. In the past your work might have depended on how much you liked the teacher - but now you are working for YOU. Make the most of their knowledge about the subject, revision and exam techniques.

Find out about good and bad revision techniques and try them out - find out what works for you. The key thing is to reduce the notes you work from to a single A4 page by the night before the exam - look briefly at the notes you make a day later, a week later, and just before the exam. **This WORKS!**

Match the revision notes you make to the sort of questions you will be asked in the exam. Get hold of old papers from your school or from the net.

Have clear and specific goals for each revision period, for example - 'at the end of this two hours I will be able to label a diagram of the heart and answer a question on how the heart works'.

Have a start and finish time and stick to it



Get into the routine of following your revision plan - if you really don't feel like it tell yourself you will do it for fifteen minutes and then decide whether to carry on. At least you will have done fifteen minutes. Set your aim for the session and get right on with it - ignore the impulse to suddenly tidy your room for the first time in three years.

- Clear your head before you begin - give yourself 2 minutes to write down anything on Your mind and tell yourself you will deal with that later.
- STOP and take a break if you are becoming frustrated, angry or overwhelmed. Put aside the problem. When you have had a break and feel less stressed, think about what issue is causing the problem and talk to someone about possible solutions. Don't waste time struggling - note down anything you are finding hard or don't understand when you are revising and take it into your next lesson.
- Don't be influenced by friends who talk about how little work they are doing and get your head down your results don't matter to them, but they will be crucial for you. Tell yourself it's not for long and think of that long summer holiday!

Last Minute Revision:

Yes it is worth it! By the day before the exam, your revision notes should be short enough to read through in one session. The final read-through will help key words and concepts to stick in your mind. Focus on revising your notes for one or two key areas immediately before the exam.



I HATE REVISION!

HOW DO I MAKE IT MORE FUN?

I put this question to a group of Y13 students and this is a Summary of their answer

At the end of the day, you'll just have to accept that revision isn't fun! It's almost impossible to make fun out of revision especially if you don't find the subject interesting. It also depends what kind of person you are when it comes to revision.

Are you a Visual person? If so, draw cartoons / use images / diagrams related to the work. Look at youtube and visit BBC Bitesize- so you can test yourself!

Do you make Lists? - Then Write things down. Facts / Notes / Feedback / useful websites - keep going you know it works for you.

Are you a Kinetic learner? - I suppose if you like to exercise or go to the gym; you could record yourself reading out facts or necessary information and replay it back on your ipod....on a run....

YOU'VE got to do it. Don't blame your teachers or parents. Revising is like giving up something difficult like smoking. You can get the patches, but at the end of the day it's YOU that's got to do it, and it involves decision, and will-power.

Revision takes time. There is no 'instant' version which will cut corners. Sleeping with your book under the pillow doesn't do it. Stop playing at other things, and start working at your revision. And the worse you are at it, the longer you've will have to spend on it ... or fail.

Fix the information. Revising is remembering. It's not 'revising' unless you're fixing it into your brain. If you spend five hours working in your room, but you still can't remember it in the exam, you've spent 5 hours working, but you've not done any actual revision. Never just read your notes. You must always be **DOING** something with them to **FIX** the information in your brain (and probably the easiest way to do this is to write it down).

Horses for Courses: Choose your Method

There is no 'way to revise' which works for everybody. All our brains work in different ways. The thing to do is to find the way that works for you.

SUGGESTION:

I always found that the best way to revise was to take all these suggestions teachers throw at you and mix them up.

1. 'Write it down' is the best way to learn your notes.
2. Walk around while you try to revise your notes.
3. Write down your notes, but put them into diagrammatic form as you do so.
4. Stick your notes on the far wall where you can't read them, then walk around at the far side of the room as you try to remember what each bit on each page said.
5. Write down your notes on postcards, then spread them out on your desk etc.

Whatever you do don't just read out of a revision guide!

The 'Signposts' info from Y10 that Mr Murray & Mr G bang on about is useful, have a look back at it.

YEAR 13 STUDENTS SAY - REMEMBER!

"The easiest way to
Fix the information' in your brain is to
WRITE IT DOWN"

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS
- - -
WORK ON YOUR WEAKNESSES

For goodness sake:
DON'T JUST READ THROUGH YOUR NOTES
YOU WILL LEARN NOTHING!

Sorry if this has been really unhelpful but you won't be able to make revision fun, if you really want the good grades I'm sure you will be able to motivate yourself somehow.

Good luck :) Y13

how to revise

We are all different and learn and revise in different ways.

But there are some tried and tested ways which have been shown to work.

The biggest mistake that most people make is to think that revision means sitting down with a textbook or notes and reading through them. Scientists have shown that we retain less than 10% of information this way. So reading your notes is an almost total waste of time.



By writing things down, we remember around 80% of what we learn.

So the trick is . . . **TAKE NOTES!**



Something lots of people have found helpful is to get some **index cards** (sometimes called library cards). You can buy index cards in WH Smith and Ryman's. If they are too expensive then just cut paper into small sheets.

Use one card per topic.

Then write **bullet points** on the card for the main things you need to know.

As you write out the cards, you are revising. You can then use the cards like flash cards for further revision. Keep them in your pocket and do bits of revision on the bus, at lunchtime, and any spare moment.

Some people find **mind maps** and **spider diagrams** a useful way of revising. The important thing is to find a way of revising that works for you. But be honest about it – don't take the lazy way and just sit there gazing at a book!

revision online



There are lots of resources for revision online.

The best is probably the BBC Bitesize website which has revision notes, self-tests and even podcasts to download:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize

Another good revision website is www.gcse.com

Some subject websites are listed below:

biology	www.purchase.com/biology/revision.htm
geography	www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/gcse/revision.html
history	www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision/
maths	www.mathsrevision.net/gcse/index.php
re	www.gcse.org.uk/
sports studies	www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=28

other opportunities for revision

Teachers often offer **revision classes** at lunchtimes and after school – listen for announcements, read your line noticeboard and check the school website.

The Knowledge section of the school website has revision guides in some subjects.

Teachers are always willing to help. If you do not understand something or need some **extra help**, ask! If a group of friends gets together and asks for revision classes so much the better.

what not to do

There are a few bits of good advice about how not to do revision:

- don't leave it to the last minute
- don't be disorganised
- don't just read through your text or exercise books – you must make revision notes
- don't think you can wing it on the day

Good & Bad Revision - If you read nothing else, READ THIS!

What is revision?

It means literally 're-Looking' at information you have learnt previously, the aim is that you know the information you will be tested on and can remember it for the exam. Knowing something depends on understanding it.

The aim of revision.

The aim is to reduce the amount of information relating to a subject to a series of key-points, any of which you can expand upon in an exam answer. The key point, phrase or word prompts your brain to retrieve the information stored in it. At the end of your revision for each topic or sub-topic, aim to finish with a card or A4 sheet with the KEY points for that section.

The structure of revision sessions. Good revision techniques always include:

- An aim for the session. e.g. 'By the end of this two hour revision session I will understand and be able to answer questions on photosynthesis'.
- Thinking about what you know already and identifying the bits you need to spend more time on (usually by doing some sort of self-testing - many revision aids include opportunities for self-testing).
- Breaking down each topic into 'do-able' chunks. Revise each section - not just reading the information but doing something active with it
- Producing notes (shorter each time you revise a particular area) noting key points, phrases or words.
- Testing yourself to see what you have learnt.
- Ticking off the subject on your 'overall list' so that you can see regular progress.
- Revisiting your notes briefly after one day, one week and one month, as well as just before the exam THIS REALLY WORKS!

The key to effective revision. *Useful revision involves DOING SOMETHING with the information you are trying to learn and remember. This is ESSENTIAL to allow your brain to learn, make connections and remember. Different people find different activities useful and you need to find out how you revise best.*

Some more ideas: -

- Drawing 'spider maps' on large pieces of paper - to show how different parts of a subject hang together.
- Use pictures and big flip-chart sheets and colour to make posters with key points and display these on the walls or where you will see them regularly.
- Put revision aids up around the house - especially for chemical or mathematical formulae, French verbs - read them when sitting on the loo, brushing your teeth or eating your breakfast.
- Record yourself making 10 key points about a particular topic, then play it back when you are travelling, running etc.
- Highlight key areas of notes or books, picking out the key points or summaries.
- Listen to tapes of e.g. books and plays and discuss them with another person.
- Watch revision DVDs but don't just sit back passively pause them and make notes of key or difficult areas, test yourself or get someone to watch with you and test each other.
- Read a page and shut the book - what can you remember?
- Tell someone about what you have learned - explain how the heart works over a meal (or perhaps stick to something less gory).
- Get people around you to test you on 'core knowledge'
- Have a family quiz.

Revision Planning

Revision Planning – (Pitfalls)

- X You can be disorganised
- X You try to do too much
- X You are easily distracted
- X You do not plan ahead
- X You do not prioritise
- X Your revision does not test how much you have learnt
- X You become bogged down in small unimportant details.
- X You work too much in isolation
- X You do not ask for help if you are stuck

You Need To:

- ✓ Make a revision plan / timetable
- ✓ Prioritise your revision
- ✓ Test yourself
- ✓ Avoid distractions
- ✓ Rest, eat sensibly and exercise
- ✓ Don't be afraid to try new revision techniques
- ✓ Start a revision session by writing down three points about the topic just to get you started.
- ✓ Ask others for help and discuss matters.

Starting Your Revision Plan:

A revision plan will make revision easier for you. It will make it easy to work out what you need to revise, when you can fit the time in and record what you have done in order to move on to the next topic. Making a thorough revision plan is essential and will get you off to the best possible start.

In order to make a plan you will need to work out:

1. When the exams are – you should now have inserted these dates on the calendar you received from school in the first term of year 11.
2. How much time you have each week to revise – Look back at how previous students have divided up their time on page 6 and the student survey on page 10.
3. What you have still to do in addition to revision – coursework etc...
4. Periods of relaxation time – to be built into every revision session. →

5. How much can you realistically cover in a session –20mins, 30, 40, and 50, 1hr bitesize chunks of time?
6. Be familiar with the topics on the syllabus. Then break them down into manageable sections of revision time.
7. A detailed weekly plan to record when you intend to revise individual topics.

Remember: - Simply reading your notes and exercise books over and over again is not revising! You should use a variety of revision techniques:

Revision Techniques:

- ✓ Ask for help with anything you don't understand.
- ✓ Break revision down into manageable chunks & highlight key points in your notes.
- ✓ Make a mind map, poster, diagram, chart or cartoon record your key ideas on tape or mini – disc and listen back to your own voice.
- ✓ Make notes on key ideas & practice using past paper questions (Be pro-active and ask your subject teacher for them!)
- ✓ Test each other & take regular breaks.
- ✓ Look at revision sites on the Internet know what the test/exam involves.
- ✓ Make a revision plan / timetable and stick to it.
- ✓ Talk about key ideas with a family member or friend.
- ✓ Reward yourself for completing sections of revision.
- ✓ Ask for help at any stage if you need it.

Notes:

Quick tips for revising



Make yourself start however much you don't want to - the hardest bit is over with then! Build in short breaks.

Do frequent short exercises - stretches, neck and shoulder rolls, walking around etc.

Drink water and get fresh air. Keep the temperature cool.

Eat 'brain food' - avoid sugar and have lots of healthy snacks around to eat little and often.

Take a day off and do something completely different. Don't leave the difficult bits to the end.

STOP and take a break if you start feeling frustrated, angry, and overwhelmed. Make a note of the problem to take to your next lesson, and move on to something else.

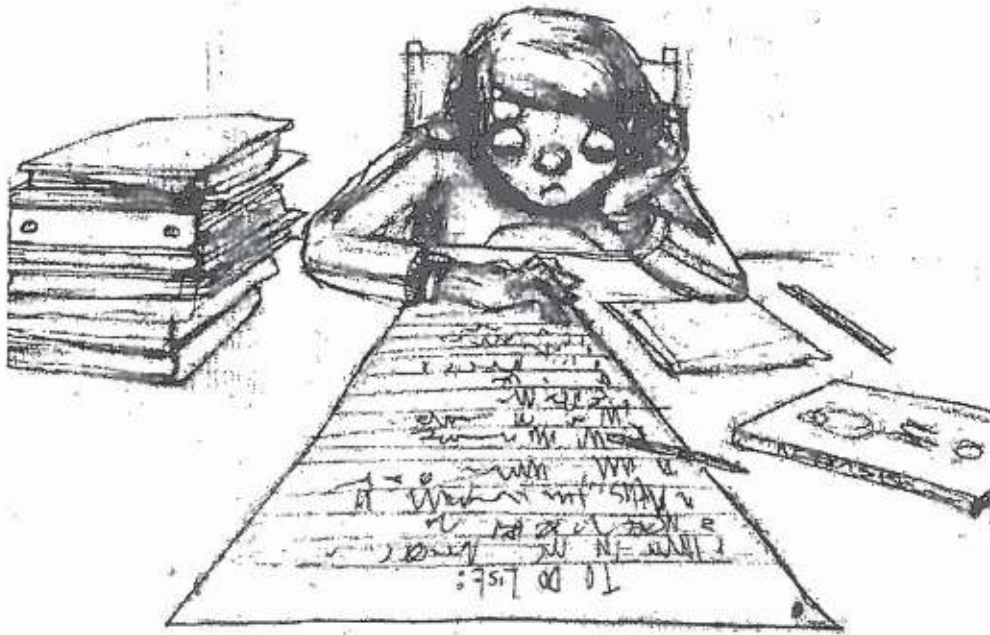
Focus on what you have done, not all the things that you haven't - every little helps.

Promise yourself little rewards after each session - a favourite TV programme, listen to music or going out with friends.

At the end of each session, file away your notes and clutter so that your work-area is clear for the next session.



When the going gets
tough...



Maintaining motivation
and encouraging
persistence



Crank up the volume to Mozart

Research has proven that listening to Mozart's music can temporarily increase spatial-temporal reasoning which is said to increase perception and conceptualization of solutions.

Mint with a hole!

Eating mints increases mental focus and improves alertness. On top of that, it gives the lovely side effect of minty fresh breath.

Revise on the go

Time on the bus and in the car shouldn't be wasted and a tablet allows you to keep revision time going even when you're on the go.

Sneak in some munchies

Snacking on super foods such as almonds throughout the day will avoid annoying hunger pangs and keep you going.

Go green

Try switching your morning cup of java for green tea. A daily cup packs a chockfull of antioxidants and caffeine that will help you to stay alert, hydrated and most importantly, awake!

Plug yourself in

In order to make sure you are in full study mode bring a pair of headphones with you wherever you go. Listen to some classical music or leave them on simply to block any unwanted noise.

Take chocolate breaks

By no means are we encouraging you to gorge on sweets, but taking a break with a square of good quality dark chocolate will help you clear your mind and concentrate once you get back to your books.

Make H2O your best friend

Water is crucial to keep your body cells at a healthy level and not only will it quench your thirst, but it will also keep your skin looking vibrant.

Always bring a plus one

Study buddies are the key to avoiding dragging your feet and making the "crunch-time" experience slightly less painful. Just make sure you postpone gossip time for the post-exam celebrations.



looking after yourself

If you want your brain to perform well on the day of exams, you must look after it! Your brain depends on your body for its health. So:

eat properly eat healthily in the run up to important exams – make sure you have proper meals and that includes breakfast – eat or drink something to give you energy before you start revision

stay hydrated drink plenty of water – your brain needs it to work properly – especially when you are revising

attend school don't make the mistake of taking time off lessons to revise – teachers will be covering more of the course, revising and answering questions and preparing you for the exam

keep up activities just because it is exam time, don't give up your extra-curricular activities – you may need to cut back a little and give priority to revision but don't stop doing things you enjoy – you need a balanced approach to life

exercise if your body is tired and sluggish, your mind won't work too well – make sure you get proper exercise – walk, run, swim, play football – do a little bit every day

sleep 15 and 16 year olds need around 9 hours of sleep each night – that means if you are getting up for school at 7am, you need to be in bed by 10pm – and don't make the mistake of staying up revising the night before the exam – being fresh in the morning is far more likely to benefit you than a bit of rushed last minute revision!

can't sleep? it's quite common for people not to be able to sleep properly when exams are coming up – what to do?



BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

Remember that success in life is when planning and preparation meets opportunity. You have been given the opportunity to study for your GCSE's at St. Joseph's. If you plan carefully, prepare thoroughly and follow the signposts provided by your subject teachers you should do fine. Therefore, there is no need to worry.

Don't try to be perfect. It's great to succeed and reach for the stars, but keep things in balance. If you think that "anything less than A* means I've failed" then you are creating mountains of unnecessary stress for yourself. Aim to do your best but recognise that none of us can be perfect all of the time.

Take steps to overcome problems. If you find you don't understand some of your coursework, getting stressed out won't help. Instead, take action to address the problem directly by discussing the matter with your subject teacher, Mrs Machin or Mr Gilligan you can also ask for help from your classmates.

Don't keep things bottled up. Confiding in someone you trust and who will be supportive is a great way of alleviating stress and worry, the most obvious being your parents. Most of us feel anxious particularly when facing exams but together we can solve most problems if we talk. You are not alone or the first to be in this situation so if you are finding things tricky, communicate!

Keep things in perspective. The exams might seem like the most crucial thing in your life at the moment, but in the grander scheme of your whole life they are only a small part.

Eat well to stay stress free. You can reduce the effects of stress by eating foods that restore depleted nutrients. Carbohydrates (starches) such as rice, pasta, even popcorn. Proteins such as meat and fish, Fruit such as bananas, melon and strawberries. Vegetables such as, broccoli, carrots, spinach and other green leafy vegetables are all rich in vitamins and nutrients. Milk (low fat), whole grain bran and nuts are sources of potassium, a mineral that helps muscles relax. It is believed that eating the above will enhance mental performance in stressful exam situations. Recent research also indicates that omega – 3 fish oil supplements may aid concentration. Try sardines in a salad or on toast! Too much sugary or processed food will leave you feeling sluggish, irritable and unable to concentrate. Drink too much coffee, tea and fizzy drinks and the caffeine will 'hype' you and make your thinking less clear. I am not suggesting you become some kind of health freak! Of course you can still have the occasional McDonalds, KFC or Burger King just in moderation.

In a nutshell: Eat healthily, drink water, do moderate exercise and get plenty of sleep.

Key tasks for pupils

Don't stop going to, or working in, lessons you find hard or dislike. Talk to someone about any difficulties you are having - there is always a solution!

Revise your homework schedule if necessary and stick to it - even when you don't feel like it. Don't wait until you are in the mood - the further behind you get the less you will be in the mood. (Agree the schedule with your parents for a hassle-free life.)

Resist the temptation to bury your head in the sand if things are getting out of hand - talk to your parents/ tutor/subject teacher or Head of Year.

Ignore what friends and others are doing or saying, you are working for an easy life for you. Let them have the hassle of redoing coursework and the last-minute panics.



Keep yourself going by making a list of coursework pieces you have to do over the two years and ticking each one off as it is completed. Remember to celebrate and reward yourself when you complete a piece of work.



DEVELOPING SELF – CONFIDENCE

One of the main causes of stress is an individual's sense that they are not in control of their circumstances. In the run up to your exams, there are likely to be times when you feel that, however hard you try, life has presented you with an overwhelming set of obstacles. Perhaps you will set aside time to revise all weekend only to find that you come down with flu, or perhaps you will decide to get up early but forget to set your alarm and have rush to catch the bus. Occasionally, life will present you with unfortunate obstacles, therefore, expect them to happen, build them into your planning, stay ahead of the situation and stay confident throughout. By doing this you are in control.

Some advice on maintaining self-confidence in the run up to exams.

- ✓ Set yourself ambitious but realistic and achievable goals.
- ✓ When completing entries in your planner, make a list of all your daily achievements, however small they might appear.
- ✓ Develop a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment in the whole process of preparing for exams, rather than focusing on the results alone.
- ✓ Recognise mistakes as offering opportunities for feedback rather than as failures.
- ✓ Remember that success is a direct result of preparation and hard work not just chance or luck.
- ✓ Celebrate and reward yourself for short-term achievements.
- ✓ Complete tasks rather than leaving them unfinished.
- ✓ Share your feelings with your friends and family.

Support networks. Research suggests that students who benefit from positive support from a few close friends experience lower levels of stress than those who lack such support. Make sure that you avoid temptations and tendencies to isolate yourself in the run up to exams. Similarly, take care to keep an eye on and support your friends and classmates. Identify other people who might be able to support you, such as family members, teachers and friends. The personality types most at risk are known as 'type A' personalities and are characterised, in particular, by highly competitive, self protective and aggressive attitudes towards other people when completing tasks. In contrast, students who adopt a more communal and caring attitude towards one another tend to experience lower levels of stress. It is therefore very important to view classmates as companions rather than competitors and to make an effort to maintain close friendships in advance of exams. This will ensure you are provided with the social support that you require while preparing for and completing your GCSEs.



GOOD TIME MANAGEMENT

1 - Be Smart

Set targets that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related:

2 - Reward Yourself

When you finish a task, give yourself a treat:

3 - Prioritise

Organise your work into 'date required' order:

4 - Tomorrow - v - Today

Don't keep putting things off!

5 - Make it Manageable

Break down long tasks into smaller sections:

6 - Stay Alert

Work in short bursts - no more than an hour at a time:

7 - Plan Ahead

Decide in advance when you are going to do each piece of work:

8 - Be Organised

Have the right equipment for doing the right task. Don't waste time having to search for things:

9 - The Right Place

Don't waste time trying to work in a place with too many distractions find a calm, familiar place to work.

Next Task: -

Complete The 'Time Management Course'

Revision Planner:



RELAXATION TIPS FOR THE EXAM REVISION PERIOD.

- ✓ Start your revision early so that you don't get into a situation of having to do last minute cramming. This approach will help to boost your confidence and reduce any pre-exam stress. Divide revision topics into small manageable chunks.
- ✓ Draw up a timetable so you can track and monitor your own progress. Make a note of anything that interferes with your work so that you can avoid it. Make sure you allow time for relaxation and exercise so that you don't burn out. *See page 14-16 in your planner.*
- ✓ Make a list of the work you want to cover in order of importance, setting realistic goals, so you have a plan for the day. Go through the list, finishing one job before moving on to the next. Any unfinished tasks should be transferred to the following day's plan.
- ✓ After an intense revision session you will notice a dip in your concentration level, at this point stop working immediately and take a short break. If you continue after your concentration is broken nothing will sink – in and you are wasting your time. This is not easy, it may be the evening before an exam and stopping will seem out of the question. But full concentration is essential for effective revision.
Try the following relaxation techniques to boost your concentration: -
 1. Count backwards to yourself from 40, after you say each number repeat the word relax like this: 40 relax, 39 relax, 38 relax and so on.
 2. Breathe deeply, inhaling through your nose. Hold your breath for 10 seconds and then exhale. You should feel your stomach expand with each breath. Sometimes it helps to close your eyes and picture a pleasant place or view.
 3. Stretch to help break physical tension. Stand up, walk around and shake your arms and legs. Roll your shoulders forwards, then backwards.
 4. Place your fingers and thumbs on your scalp, apply as much pressure as is comfortable and massage gently.
 5. Soak in a warm bath and listen to your favourite music.
 6. Find an activity that you enjoy. Rugby, swimming, cycling, football, netball or anything as long as you have chosen it because it interests you and involves fresh air and exercise.
- ✓ You will then come back to your revision refreshed and may even be able to find a new way around a topic that had previously frustrated you.
- ✓ Experiment with alternative revision techniques *i.e.* revise with a friend or online learning (*web addresses in your planner page 12*) so that revision is more fun and your motivation to study is high. *Check out page 18 in your planner.*



Top Tips for Parents

Tips for revision preparation

- ◆ Talk to your son/daughter about how you can support them and what they would find helpful
- ◆ Buy folders, dividers, wall-charts, cue cards that your son/daughter will need for their revision
- ◆ Encourage your son/daughter to empty bag and file all work in an organised fashion
- ◆ Help choose with your son/daughter relevant revision guides for each subject
- ◆ Help to plan their revision timetable

Tips for revision time

- ◆ Help them stick to their plan. Keep to timings agreed
- ◆ Provide favourite snacks and drinks
- ◆ Be flexible and agree times they can go out ensuring that the time is caught up
- ◆ The **40 minute** revision session
- ◆ 5 mins Collect info/data/resources; Check what you really need to learn
- ◆ 5 mins Overview topic
- ◆ 20-25 mins Multi-sensory revision (notes, tape, maps, past papers)
- ◆ 5 mins Assess what you have learnt. What needs more attention? Make a revision card

Creating a focused mind

- ◆ Do something ambidextrous like doodling with both hands or juggling
- ◆ Put up posters or diagrams..... you learn subliminally
- ◆ Don't eat heavily just before sitting down to work. Avoid foods that have chemical additives (crisps, fizzy drinks, wine gums)
- ◆ Don't set yourself too much to do
- ◆ Drink water occasionally - (2 litres/day, sipped regularly)
- ◆ Build in rewards and new ways to relax

Create a successful environment

- ◆ If possible the following can be helpful:
- ◆ Somewhere you feel at ease, motivated and positive
- ◆ Good lighting
- ◆ Shelving, power points, posters to back up your learning
- ◆ Space for timetables and syllabus plans
- ◆ A place where work can be left undisturbed

When is it best to revise?

- ◆ Early in the morning for NEW learning
- ◆ Late afternoon for an extra topic or two
- ◆ Evening - 5 mins reviews of what you've done
- ◆ Morning - review them again first thing the next day

Diet in general

- ◆ Too much sugar, starch and caffeine leads to mental dullness
- ◆ Glucose generates electricity and this enables the brain to function
- ◆ Do not skip meals, especially breakfast
- ◆ Bananas and kiwi fruit increase potassium - good for thinking
- ◆ Pasta, oats, etc help release energy more slowly, prolonging energy and stamina

Vitamins

Vit B - Keeps you mentally alert, found in whole grains, seeds, lentils, yeast, nuts, eggs and milk

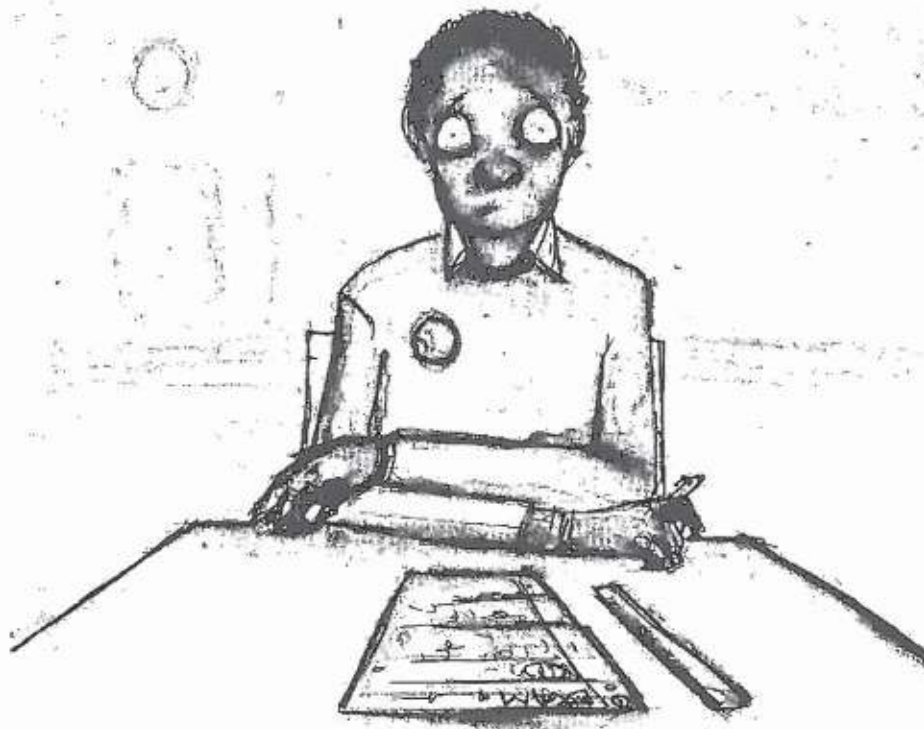
Vit B5 and B - Good for memory, also found in fish and chicken

Vit B3 - Essential for proper brain functioning

Vit B12 - Essential for production of red blood cells which carry oxygen

Vit E - Found in whole grains and sunflower seed oil

The moment of truth Sitting the exams



Before the examination



- Know your exam timetable (put your exams in red on a wall planner or similar).
- Know where and when you need to be each day and plan to get there early - leave plenty of time for last minute unforeseen problems.
- Allow time for your brain to wake up - have a shower or a relaxing bath and eat breakfast (or take a banana or other energy giving food if you really can't eat in the morning).
- Before the exam, check the exact subjects you will be asked about, and be familiar with the structure and marking system of the exam (e.g. 2 essay questions, one from Section A and one from Section B, each worth 30 marks).
- Make sure you have EVERYTHING you will need, including spares and any notes or books you are allowed to take in. Make sure these are in the correct format - e.g. type-written notes or handwritten?
- Take a pen you enjoy writing with - it will improve your performance no end. Take two, just in case.
- Keep to your normal routine - go to bed and get up at the normal time.
- Keep anxieties at bay by repeating to yourself 'It will be fine', 'It will all be over tomorrow by three', 'No body's going to die', or whatever works for you. If you have worried thoughts say to yourself 'STOP', and think of something positive.
- **LEAVE YOUR MOBILE PHONE & IPOD AT HOME. DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO ENTER THE EXAMINATION ROOM WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN ESSENTIAL ITEMS! REMEMBER TO BRING A TRANSPARENT PENCIL CASE AND WATER IN A CLEAR PLASTIC BOTTLE.**



taking exams

There are strict rules for public exams like GCSEs.

If you do not follow the rules, the exam board can fail you and even prevent you from taking other exams at school this year and in the future at college.

Invigilators are the people who run the exams. Your teachers will be there at the start to make sure everything is OK but then the invigilators will take over. You must treat them with respect and do what they tell you. They have the power to remove you from the exam if you do not co-operate.

Some things to remember about exams:

- make sure you **arrive in good time** (you will line up on the Syntax playground)
- make sure you have all the **equipment** you need: pen and pencil, spare pens, ruler, rubber, pencil sharpener, calculator
- pens and pencils must be in a **clear plastic pencil case** or clear plastic bag
- **leave notes, books and revision cards outside** (it is no good saying they were in your pocket and you weren't looking at them)
- **no mobile phones** (there are very strict rules on this – if you bring a mobile phone or any sort of electronic device into the exam you will certainly be disqualified)
- check that you can **see a clock** – or put your watch on the desk
- **no talking** (you must be silent right from the moment you enter the exam hall)
- **don't look around** (it can be construed as cheating)
- **don't disturb others** (this is especially important when you have finished and there is still some time to go – don't get restless and make it difficult for others to concentrate)
- go to the **toilet** before you enter the exam hall – but if you really need to go during the exam, don't be afraid to ask
- **don't start looking at the exam paper** until you are told to do so
- make sure you have the **correct exam paper** (correct subject, level, topics)
- **read the instructions** carefully
- take note of **how many marks** are available for each answer – if there are more marks, you need to provide a fuller answer

- if you have **special needs** (such as extra time, someone who will read the exam paper, or someone who will write for you), make sure the invigilator knows (usually there will be a note on your exam desk which says what special provision is to be made for you)

after the exam



After an exam everyone will be talking about it. And you will get more and more depressed because it will always seem that everyone else knew more than you and did better than you! If you can – don't do a post-mortem!

TIPS FOR THE EXAM ITSELF: Avoid panic. It's natural to feel some exam nerves prior to starting the exam, but getting excessively nervous is counterproductive as you will not be able to think as clearly. Make sure you have an early night and take a bottle of water in to the exam room with you.

The quickest and most effective way of eliminating feelings of stress and panic is to close your eyes and take several long, slow deep breaths. Breathing in this way calms your whole nervous system. Simultaneously you could give yourself a mental pep-talk by repeating, "I am calm and relaxed", "I know I will do fine" or "I am fully prepared for this exam"

If your mind goes blank, don't panic! Panicking will just make it harder to recall information. Instead, focus on slow, deep breathing for about one minute. If you still can't remember the information, move on to another question and return to the problem area later.

When answering questions, try and be as clear and detailed as you can. Some people think of the examiner as a nasty character who tries to trick you out of marks. Nothing could be further from the truth - the examiner actually tries to give you marks, but only if you can demonstrate that you've earned them! If you think you don't know the answer to a question, try and tell the examiner what you're thinking - you may find that you actually understand more than you realise!

After exams don't spend endless time criticising yourself about where you think you went wrong. Often our own self-assessment is far too harsh. Congratulate yourself for the things you did right, learn from the bits where you know you could have done better, and then move on.

In a nutshell: These tips will only help if you've done solid revision before the exam itself. However, there is no doubt that the better prepared you are the less nerves you will feel because preparation reduces anxiety!



You already have some excellent advice in your KS4 student planner. Including, Useful Websites, guidance on Good Time Management, Coursework, Revision Techniques and How We Learn. Use it together with this document. It will help you.





How we learn:

Different people learn in different ways. In which ways do you learn best?

Read & Discuss as a group.

Logical / Mathematical Learners:

- ✓ Learn by reasoning and finding sequences and patterns
- ✓ Are good at solving problems
- ✓ Are often good at math's and IT

Linguistic Learners:

- ✓ Learn through listening, writing, reading, discussion
- ✓ Are good with words
- ✓ Are good communicators - verbally and in writing

Kinaesthetic Learners:

- ✓ Learn by doing
- ✓ Explore things by touch and have good balance
- ✓ Can use their bodies skillfully and have good co-ordination

Interpersonal Learners:

- ✓ Learn best by working in groups and listening to others
- ✓ Build good relationships
- ✓ Can understand things from another's point of view

Visual and Spatial Learners:

- ✓ Learn through seeing, observing and visualising
- ✓ Like using graphs, maps and posters
- ✓ Can imagine scenes or objects easily

Musical Learners:

- ✓ Learn by finding patterns in sounds
- ✓ Enjoy experimenting with sounds and are extremely sensitive to music
- ✓ Have a good sense of rhythm and can often play several instruments

Intrapersonal Learners:

- ✓ Learn by working independently
- ✓ Understand and know themselves and are self-motivated
- ✓ Can express well what they are feeling

More Tips....

- Go to all your lessons
- Listen extra-carefully to any information about coursework, write it down and ask if you are not completely sure about what you need to do, and by when.
- Keep a file for each subject with dividers for each new section (this will save hours of time in the long run)
- File information, notes and handouts immediately or at the end of the day.
- Keep on top of your coursework – know what is due in when, and schedule in time to do it – it usually takes longer than you think
- Make sure you know exactly what is expected for each piece of coursework and how marks are awarded. Hundreds of hours are wasted by students spending too long on the wrong thing because they didn't ask what they were supposed to be doing
- Don't leave coursework until the last minute – having 6 weeks to complete a piece of coursework may seem like forever, but it passes quickly. Make a plan of the work to be done, dividing it into smaller sections. Aim to tackle sections one at a time and reward yourself for each small step completed
- Up your work by TWO grades the easy way. No one likes going over work they have done, but allow some time for this before the deadline – it really does make a difference. Get draft work in before the deadline so that your teacher can comment and make suggestions before you submit your final draft. Your grade will be much improved and you won't have to redo it.
- Keep a balance between social life, work commitments and studying – if you have done the studying, you will feel much better when you go out – you CAN do both!
- Remember that coursework COUNTS – sometimes you can redo it, it's true, but this is extra work and extra stress when you will have other pressures on you. Do it the best you can the first time.

Further Mentoring in Year 11

One-to-one Mentoring

Individual Mentoring takes place once a week at lunchtime or after school and each session lasts around twenty minutes. There are many reasons why you might benefit from individual Mentoring, for example you may be finding a particular subject difficult, you may be having problems at home or school, or you could be disorganised. These sessions are designed to offer you, the pupils of this school, extra support in whatever area you need it. This could include study and revision skills, organisation techniques, subject specific help or simply a friendly chat with someone who is willing to listen.

Study Support:

In some cases studying for ten GCSE's is not always the best option. Some pupils will drop one (or more) subject as they work towards their GCSE's. In this instance study support takes the place of the dropped subject on the pupil's timetable. The majority of time in these lessons is spent working on coursework and revision. There are plenty of resources, such as revision guides and computers, for the pupils to use.

Who are the learning mentors and where is their classroom?

Mrs Blunstone & Mr Steele are located upstairs in the Brothers House. Their classroom is at the top of the stairs, turn left, and the room is at the end of the corridor.

How do I access mentoring?

If you feel that mentoring could help you the first step is to talk to either:

Your Form Tutor

Head of KS4 (Mr. Gilligan)

Inclusion Manager (Mrs Machin)

Learning Mentors (Mrs Blunstone & Mr Steele)

They will work with you, your head of year, subject teachers and your parents to find the best way forward.

GCSE Revision Secrets

facebook



Useful Websites

Research

www.encarta.msn.com
www.britannica.com
www.school.discovery.com
www.bl.uk
www.infoplease.com

Higher Education

www.ucas.co.uk
www.universityoptions.co.uk

Careers

www.connexions.gov.uk
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Education

www.bbc.co.uk/education/gcsebitesize
www.bbc.co.uk/education/revision
www.schoolscience.co.uk
www.projectsgcse.co.uk
www.gcse.com
www.schoolzone.co.uk
www.learn.co.uk/learnthings
www.geography.about.com
www.rgs.org
www.nationalgeographic.com
www.french.about.com
www.yourdictionary.com
www.english-zone.com
www.dictionary.com
www.chem4kids.com
www.nhm.ac.uk
www.samlearning.com
www.learnpremium.com
www.schoolshistory.co.uk
www.nutrition.org.uk
www.sparknotes.com

Search Engines

www.yahoo.co.uk
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www.ask.co.uk
www.lycos.co.uk
www.excite.co.uk

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