

Tip-top revision tips!

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!



Set up your study space

Make sure it's comfortable, has good lighting, temperature and is quiet enough for you to study.



Do what works for you

You've been doing tests for ages and ages and by now, will have some good ideas as to what works best for you. Do try new ideas if you are struggling – check out the rest of this booklet for suggestions.



Look ahead and plan

Get a copy of your exam timetable and make your revision plan based on that. It'll get you organised and focused on what you need to do first.



Cut out distractions

Move your phone!

It can be a huge help for revision or a huge distraction. Put it away, or delete apps that eat up your time so you're not tempted.



Take regular breaks

It's important to rest your brain so you can process what you are learning so regular breaks are good. But you have to ensure a good balance between work and play!



Eat healthily

Reduce the caffeine and sugar intake.

Make good choices over your food – 3 healthy meals a day. Good foods for the brain include, blueberries, salmon and nuts.



Start with the biggest or most difficult

Getting the most challenging topics out of the way first, will boost your confidence.



Exercise

Healthy body = healthy mind.

Try to do at least 15mins per day to help you relax and boost your brain with oxygen.

Check out *The Daily Mile* on YouTube.

Prevent the Panic

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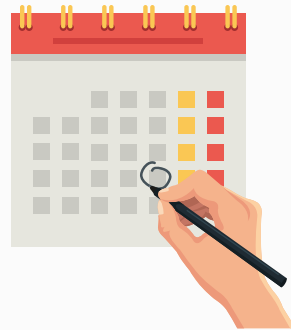
Start in plenty of time

Get your exam dates sorted and plan ahead. Most GCSEs start in early May but they are finished by the end of June so there will be time for fun ... LATER. A small sacrifice now, will pay dividends with results.



Use your resources

Your school will have LOTS of materials you can access – find out from your teachers which websites, apps work best and give them a try. Bet your school is setting up a revision programme to support you too – ask when it is and book yourself in. Every little helps.



Sort out your revision routine

What has worked for you in the past with revising for tests? If you start in plenty of time, you'll have a chance to experiment with new suggestions if you are struggling. Read through this booklet, there are lots of suggestions which have been proven to help.



Don't underestimate

Yes, it's all stressful. But recognise the importance of what you need to do and go for them head-on! Panic and stress will be reduced if you are honest with yourself.

Arrange feedback sessions

Talk to your teachers!

They know you best, have taught you for years and will be able to help you list out topics you need to work on. Now is the time to look back over all the questions, quizzes, tests you've done in class ... you don't need to re-learn what you know ... a refresh is all that's needed but where your scores on the doors haven't been strong ... maybe that's where you need to spend some time and put in some work?.



Be realistic

Talk to your teachers, parents and carers to make sure that you are setting yourself fair goals and targets. You will not stick to a routine which demands 12 hours a day of revision – be reasonable and fair on yourself.



Don't panic!

Stay up to date, get prepared and motivated. 1000s of others have got through this hurdle ... and so will you!

You CAN do it!

Revision Timetable

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TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
9AM							
9.30AM							
10AM							
10.30AM							
11AM							
11.30AM							
12PM							
12.30PM							
1PM							
1.30PM							
2PM							
2.30PM							
3PM							
3.30PM							
4PM							
4.30PM							
5PM							
5.30PM							
6PM							

Don't forget schedule breaks into your timetable.

It's important to rest your brain so you can process what you are learning, so regular breaks are good.

Spaced Practice

REVISE, REST, REPEAT. SPACE OUT YOUR INPUT FOR BETTER RESULTS

Spaced practise is the cognitive science theory which tells us that short, sharp bursts of learning are more effective than cramming just before the exam.

How it works:

With Retrieval Practice: this works a treat!

Lots of self testing in lots of separate revision sessions will cement the learning in our long term memory. Yes, it's about doing little and often, and not trying to cram. So, best advice, get your plan sorted and give yourself plenty of time – and guess what, that's stress busting too.

Mind mapping: After some time working or revising, close the books, power down the tech and reach for the scrap paper and mind map. (Again, spending lots of time making it pretty is a waste ... it just needs to be functional). **Do it once**, check for gaps, add the gaps, **REPEAT** on a new piece of scrap paper. **Still missing bits?** Now add colour. Check for gaps and do it again. Then have a break. The try once more ...

Memory Cards: Flash cards with answers/ information on the back ... don't get side tracked into "sparkles and glitter pens" ... only highlight the bits you keep forgetting.

Less is so much more!

Tips and Advice:

If you are trying to work out what to spend your time on, look at each topic and rank in order of your confidence.

- 1 Not a clue. I need help –
make an appointment to see your teacher
- 2 I need to learn this. I don't remember it at all.
Make some memory cards.
- 3 I remember doing this but need to revise it. Create a mind map and add in all you know about it, check and add anything you've missed.
- 4 I know this but need to practise. Find some questions. Ideally exam paper questions on this topic and go over them. Just bullet point your answers and then check ... did you get all the marks?
If you've missed them – why did you miss them?
Not enough detail or you didn't know?
- 5 Bring it on – I am ready.
Go find a topic you're less confident with.
Half way through that – find a question on this topic and answer it!



Keeping a diary of when you plan to do stuff and then ticking it off or better still adding in the short bursts you've done as extras will give you confidence ... it's real evidence of you doing this!



BUT breaks are just as important. You need to get up, move and hydrate. But don't get side tracked ... small pain now, huge gain later!

Interleaving

WEAVING DIFFERENT TOPICS TOGETHER WILL HELP YOU REMEMBER MORE

Interleaving is the cognitive theory which suggests that revising more than one topic in each session will help you make better connections between the learning.

How it works:

It's all about memory association. Your amazing brain is constantly retrieving different responses from your long term memory and bringing them into your short term memory. The more you do this, the more connections you can make which enhances your learning.

1 **Switch** – change topics during each session.
A → B → C

2 **Review your topics in a different order**
C → A → B

3 **Make links** –
What links can you find between what you are revising?

Tips and Advice:

- 1** Switch but not too often! Make sure you are confident that you've learnt something before moving on.
- 2** Break down topics into smaller chunks so you can switch easily.
- 3** It may seem slower or harder at first revising this way, but give it a go. See if it works for you.
- 4** Finally review in the order in which you learnt the material in class ... one topic often builds on the next. This will strengthen the connections you are trying to make.

Revision Techniques

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!

Here's a run down of some of the most common ideas

Summary Posters

Key words, pictures, images, diagrams, definitions can all be used to create a summary poster on a topic or even a whole subject. Pin the poster up somewhere where you can look at it on a regular basis.

Mind mapping

Sometimes called a spider diagram. Pop the name of your topic in the middle of your page and branch out your linked ideas. Keep adding more and more detail. Images and colour will help the content stand out.

Flash Cards

Jot down a summary on a flash card or post it note. Keep it brief – only key words, symbols, dates, quotes etc. On the back, add in the key points. When you test yourself, looking at the key words can you list the key points? (Number them too so you can keep them in order!).

Note Taking

Notes help if they are in your own words. Copying isn't really helpful! Keep them brief, you don't need top notch SPAG, highlight key words, quotes, dates.

Timeline

Handy when chronology is important – like in history, English Literature or if there's a process – like in CDT, Science. They are great for making sense of a series of events or a plot.



Practice Exam Questions and Past Papers

The more you can try the better. You don't have to answer perfectly when practising. It's about getting the points down and checking with the mark scheme. If you can't answer a question ... it's a gap. Go find the answer in a text book or online. Read that, summarise that, no peeking ... try to write the answer. Then go back and check; again, filling in any gaps.

Mnemonics

This is an acronym, phrase or rhyme to help you recall knowledge easily. PEE/ ROYGBIV/ My Very Easy Method Speeds Up Naming (Planets)/ Many Naughty Rabbits Eat Green Rhubarb Roots (movement, nutrition, reproduction, excretion, growth, response to stimuli, respiration).

Question yourself

THIS CAN'T BE OVER EMPHASISED!

You only know what you don't know, because you test yourself and spot, that you don't know it!

Who? When? Where? What? Why? How?

(Looking at the marks for the question, keep asking yourself

"What else? What else? What else?"

till you've got a new and different point for each mark in the question.)

Exam Top Tips – Maths

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Revision:

- 1 Revise maths by doing maths:** Lots of questions, little and often, but LOT of questions. You don't need to do 10 examples of the same idea ... just 3 or 4. Pick from the beginning, middle and end if you're looking at your text book. The more exam paper questions you can try ... the better. Do them, check the answers and then fill in gaps. Do them with the answers. Start with the answers and work backwards to the questions. Anywhere you're stuck ... ask for help. 5mins help from a teacher could sort you out for good.
- 2 Identify your key areas:** Spend time on the topics you're not good at or not confident at. You'll have done lots of class tests ... which ones weren't so hot? That's where to start. Use past papers (again!) to identify areas where you weren't as good as you know you can be.
- 3 Checking, checking and checking again:** Learn this skill! Does your answer really make sense? Would you expect the number to be THAT big or THAT small. We can all hit the wrong keys on the calculator and we can all add an extra 0 here and there. Offer to mark your pals' work. You'll spot where they went wrong ... do you make the same mistakes? Get them to mark your work too and chat about it.
- 4 Learn your formulae:** Check with your exam board and the specification. What formulae do you just have to know? Area of a circle? Circumference of a circle? Compound Interest? [Prep some flash cards!]

In the Exam:

- 1 Timing:** Sort out how long you are in the exam and divide that by the number of marks on the paper. This will tell you how long you can spend on each question.
Eg 45mins and 30 marks. So you have to earn 1 mark in $45/30 = 1\frac{1}{2}$ mins.
- 2 Don't spend too long on one question.** If it looks like your workings out are over complex have you heading off in the wrong direction?
- 3 Does the exam start with straightforward questions or mix them all up?** Know before you go in. If it's easy at the beginning and harder at the end, **CHECK** back to the questions at the beginning, make sure you picked up ALL the marks.
- 4 If the questions are all muddled up, take a look over the WHOLE paper before you dive in ...** don't miss the easy questions because you are spending time stuck on the hard ones.
- 5 What is the question asking?:** **READ it. REALLY READ it. REALLY READ THE WHOLE THING.** Underline key numbers and key words. **PAUSE** to think. What is it asking you to do? Diagrams are not there to make the exam look pretty ... they have valuable information in them. **LOOK** at them. Regularly they are "not to scale" but they still have clues.
- 6 Accurate work:** Write your calculations out, line by line. Be clear and tidy. Even if you make a mistake, if the examiner can follow your thinking they can give you credit for "doing it right" even if it's got the wrong numbers in it. Check your calculations. Do they look right?
- 7 SHOW ALL OF YOUR WORKINGS:**
How many times have you heard it? Well now's the time to do it.
- 8 Always have a go:** In long questions, there's always bits that you need to do to get to the final answer. Find those bits and do them. Even if you're not getting full marks, you could pick up a few and **EVERY LITTLE MARK ADDS UP!**
- 9 Check your work:** Oh yes, I know we sound repetitive ... please **CHECK, CHECK AND CHECK AGAIN**, units, rounding up and down, explanations where required, right up until they say "Stop and please put your pens down!"

Exam Top Tips – English

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!

Revision:

- 1 Try not to Waffle:** On and on and on and on, saying the same thing 3x over! Yep you're hitting a word count but not showing off your brilliance. Clarity and Focus. Think about the number of marks; clear writing, with an idea for each one, equals a clear mark.
- 2 Know your Exam Board:** Ask your teacher what the Assessment Objectives (AOs) are for your exam. Pay attention to the specific things your exam board is interested in. Is it themes/ characterisation or Who? What? When? Where? The boards are different. Know yours.
- 3 Plan and Proof-Read:** Start with a plan. Jot down those amazing ideas you have when you first read that question ... so you don't forget them. Juggle them round to make a good order and structure. Then re-read the question. You ARE what it's asking, right?
- 4 When you've given it your best shot – READ IT OVER:** Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG), do you need to add anything to make it really clear. Have you removed waffle. DON@T get to keep on scratching out ... a simple line through is plenty.
- 5 Remember your Timing:** Again, how many marks in how long? 15mins to read/ 60mins to write for 60marks. Means one mark per minute AFTER you have read over the text/ questions. Leave a little time for checking, checking and checking again. Answering 1 question with full marks out of 3 isn't going to get you through. You have to attempt EVERY question you need to but do make sure you know which questions you do need to answer. Often in Literature exams, you may have questions on books and poetry which are in a different group (anthology) to the one you've studied.

Writing your answers:

- 1 Comparing, Agreeing and Disagreeing:** If you are comparing of course you'll mention techniques but please, not just "one has a simile and the other has a metaphor!" – do find something a bit more than just that! Don't forget the writer will be communicating feelings, and their own perspectives too.
- 2 If you are agreeing or disagreeing, could you scale it:** 10 being "completely and utterly never" with 5 being a "maybe"?
- 3 Answer clearly and concisely:** It's an art to be able to do this! Read any text at least twice in the exam. You need to understand what it's about and be specific about the text's effects on the reader. If it creates imagery, of what, how does that make the reader feel? What effect does it have on the reader?
- 4 Avoid listing techniques:** Detail about the effect or effectiveness of the devices used by the writer is going to win you more points than just mentioning them and pointing them out. Keep focused on the text and keep referring back to what the question is asking you to think about ... that's what the examiner wants to know about so stick to telling them.
- 5 Plan to succeed:** Notice when you are reading texts how it starts, and develops. If it changes, why? If it doesn't, why? What's the writer trying to do and communicate with you? How are they achieving this through, language, technique, devices, structure, context and tone.

Dealing with Exam Stress

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Believe in yourself

You've been to all the classes, you've done all/ most (!) of the homework, you're committed to working hard and staying focused and positive now. All of which will help reduce your stress levels. You can do this!



Eat well

Yup, this you've heard before as well. A good balanced diet, three meals a day, reduce the caffeine, reduce the sugar and you'll whiz along.

Keep it in perspective and stay in control.
There is no need to let exam stress overwhelm you.



Get organised

You will be more in control and confident if you've got a to-do list, a schedule and your revision materials ready to go.



Sleep

Proper rest and relaxation are essential. You're in training! And athletes train and rest. Get a good 8 hours of sleep each night. Switch off the tech and keep it on charge OUTSIDE of your bedroom.



Exercise

We've said it once and here it is again – a good 20mins of activity will help clear your mind, improve your focus and keep you calm and relaxed.

Sort out any problems as quick as you can

Don't get worked up if you can't remember something or don't understand something. Bookmark it, think about who'd be the best person to help then make an appointment to see them. That's being proactive. The more you are in charge; the better you'll feel.



Talk about your nerves

It's perfectly normal to be nervous, it's perfectly normal to feel a little stressed. BUT, if you bottle it up and don't talk to a trusted (sensible) person about it, it can overwhelm you and you're back to feeling like jelly. Talk about your nerves, talk about how you are feeling, ask for help to get your work in perspective.

These exams are not the end of the world – if you give it your best, no-one can ask for anything more.

Stay Motivated

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!

1

Get a study routine:

It takes 4 days to create a habit. Get yours with a revision timetable, make a study space yours and stick to it. After 4 days you'll have the revision habit!

2

Set Attainable Goals:

Challenge yourself with a time limit goal or an amount of material/ work goal. Something that will help you feel you are making progress, but not too long for you to lose focus nor too short to be meaningful.

3

Study in short bursts:

Keep your attention high.
Short bursts, break, repeat.

4

Review your results:

When you are testing yourself, check and check again. Fill in those gaps and then test yourself again. Look over homework questions, now you know more, how could you have improved on that original answer. Look over old tests and old exam paper questions – same again, how you could have made your original answer better? Not sure, check the topic/ content again.

5

Inspire yourself:

Stick a reminder and an inspirational quote up on your room/ bathroom mirror – say it to yourself every time you see it.

6

Don't compare to others:

Everyone is different. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. Focus on what you do well. Focus on what you need to do to be even better.

7

Progress:

It's all about progress, however small. It's all about small building blocks. Every little bit moves you closer. Recognise your progress as to revise. You are knocking this out of the park!

8

It's boring! Ok, make it interesting:

You are not going to be thrilled at revising some topics/ subjects, so try to find different ways to learn the dull stuff.

Can you sing it?

Can you draw it?

Can you quiz with a study buddy?

Can you gargle it?

Can you dance it?

Can you stand on your head and do it?

Can you suffer it for 20mins and then take a breather with something less boring instead?

And again, yup, you know this by now:

Eat well, Sleep well, Exercise well and reward yourself with a little of what you really enjoy ... but don't get distracted. Binging box sets are off the agenda as is munching through ALL the snacks in the house!



Fellow Student Top Tips

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!

- 1 Pace:** you don't need to do everything immediately. Start early, set a schedule and timetable, pace yourself.
- 2 Goals:** time or quantity and stick to it. Keep them manageable and effective – not too much and not too little.
- 3 Organise:** get a timetable sorted. Include breaks.
- 4 Cut the late nights:** remove the tech from your bedroom. TV, phones, computers, tablets, game consoles – turn them off. 7 to 9 hours sleep.
- 5 Calming music:** quiet calm music can help you to focus. Try it. Search for study compilations.
- 6 Test yourself:** you don't need to write it down neatly, scribble, doodle, scrawl, think it over, but do test, test, test and then check, check, check and plug the gaps.

- 7 Minimise distractions:** remove the tech from your study space! TV, phones, computers, tablets, game consoles – turn them off if you are not using them.
- 8 Rewards:** something nice when you've done good. Again, keep it in moderation.
- 9 Homework corner:** set up your own space. Fill it with a few photos/pictures which make you smile and add a quote or two. Good light, comfortable desk and chair, pens and scrap paper around you.
- 10 Use colour:** highlight key points, use colour to emphasis elements, use colour to pick out the bits you keep forgetting when you're testing yourself. BUT don't lose hours to making things pretty, don't cover pages in highlighter, use it where it's needed.
- 11 DON'T LEAVE IT TO THE LAST MINUTE:** The exams kick start in mid-May. You should be getting ready in plenty of time, a little and often is so much better than trying to do everything days before. That just never works. You may still be fighting with homework but getting ready, trying 10 – 20mins as soon as you can will start to add up!

Talk to your teachers, parents/carers, trusted adults and folks who've been there and done it ... if they had their time again, what would they try to do differently? Bet you, they'll mention one or three of the tips above.



GOOD LUCK!

Exam Checklist

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING!

Exam Preparation	
Get a good night's sleep	
Eat a healthy meal – protein is good for the brain	
Check your exam timetable Where do you need to be? What time does the exam start?	
Arrive 15 minutes early	

Do you have...	
2 pens (black)	
Pencil	
Ruler	
Eraser	
Angle measure or protractor	
Calculator	
Highlighters	
Bottle of water	
Get a good night's sleep	
Clear pencil case	
Check your timings and know what you're expected to do – how long have you got? What do you need to do in the exam? How much time should you spend on each bit?	

DONT FORGET TO BREATHE!