

top revision tips

Keep it sharp Aim for focussed 45 minute bursts, with 10-minute breaks in between.

Start early The mind is much more alert first thing in the morning. Also, it means you can get your day's revising out of the way by lunchtime. Start with the subject you like least, while your powers are still at their strongest.

Cut radio contact Switch off your mobile! Incoming calls and texts are just too tempting, especially if the alternative is memorising irregular verbs. Turn off the computer, too (unless you are visiting revision websites such as *www.s-cool.co.uk* where you get given lots and lots of nice green ticks when you get the answers right, *bbc bitesize*, *justmaths*, *mymaths* etc.).

Establish cunning habits A habit is something you do automatically. Things you do automatically are really easy- they happen automatically, after all. So it's useful to make your revision automatic by establishing a routine. Create a routine of work eg. 2 hours in the morning, 2 in the afternoon, and do it the first three days of your revision time and you've made your habit!

Boost morale It helps motivation to have a treat or two lined up at the end of a revision session: a favourite snack, a favourite pre-recorded television programme, time with a friend etc.

Replenish supplies Make sure you have what you need to hand - paper in differing sizes according to your preference (postcards to A3), invaluable highlighter pens for marking out key facts and coloured fine liners that can help the brain cells with the memorising process.

Make it active Writing, highlighting, sketching, talking, drafting, online revision sites are involve you actively in your revision. In this way, creating mind maps, spider diagrams, revision cards, checklists etc. you'll really engage in your learning. Planning and writing timed answers is also a great tactic.

Forge alliances Revising with friends is a good way of reinforcing what you do know and finding out what you don't. You can test each other on vocabulary, set about teaching each other the aspects of a course you are stronger at or creating Q and A to challenge each other with (using revision guides etc.).

Don't work too much Go for four hours of good work in a day where possible. Make sure that what you do is effective. By setting yourself reasonable targets, you won't feel overwhelmed, you'll have the satisfaction of hitting your goals, you'll work faster, and you won't waste time telling yourself you are working when you're actually just staring at a piece of paper.

Remember? Ineffective revision means forgetting! If we are not careful, what we learn in revision is promptly forgotten, and then has to be learned again the night before the exam. You can fight this by revising cyclically. At the end of each day, look over what you've revised. Do the same at the end of each week, and at the end of each fortnight. These reviews help consolidate your learning, save you from forgetting, and allow you to understand things you'd missed before.

Look after yourself Make sure that you eat well, get some fresh air and exercise, get a good night's sleep and keep hydrated!



Ideas to help make you revision successful

- **Make a plan**
Create a schedule that suits you, ensures coverage of all subjects and highlights the exams you will be taking. Include all key topics, not just the ones you hope might come up!
- **Share this plan**
The simple act of sharing this plan with someone (a parent for example) increases the chance of keeping to it and therefore getting the most.
- **Prioritise what you learn and revise**
Identify the subjects, topics and questions most likely to cause you problems and focus on these to begin with when your brain is most receptive to learning. Tackling the most difficult bits first will give you the best chance of cracking them!
- **Learn material and practice applying it**
Now get down to doing your revision! Stick to your plan. Learn the academic content, theories and skills; dedicate time to practise exam style, timed questions to improve your exam technique. Then transfer the improved knowledge, skills and understanding to boost your current learning.
- **Set yourself revision goals, rather than amounts of time**
When you sit down to revise, set yourself tangible goals such as memorising twelve quotations, being able to solve three difficult equations etc. Making realistic goals like this will help improve your learning efficiency.
- **Take regular breaks and make them count**
Planned breaks are vital and can help assimilate new information which is crucial when revising. To begin with, 30 to 45 minutes of revision/10 minutes break will establish good habits. During breaks resist the temptation of doing anything that needs you to consider processing any new information (Facebook etc!) – get up, get a breath of fresh air and get back to it!
- **Eat well, exercise, sleep well and keep hydrated**
Nutrition will play an important part (find out about ‘brain nourishing foods’) in keeping you in a great state for learning. Physical exercise will also keep you fit for learning! Research has suggested that having a full 8 hours’ sleep can increase memory retention by up to 35%!

On the exam day ...

- Eat something an hour or two before the exam - bananas are recommended!
- Stay calm
- Avoid people who might stress you more
- Read through the whole exam paper checking carefully which questions need to be answered
- Plan your answers then re-read the question to make sure you are going to answer it!
- Re-read your work, checking grammar and spelling

Planning your tactics for exam success ... (be even more focussed and ready for the exam!)

always

sometimes

not yet!

For each subject and exam paper consider

	Preparing by doing timed exam questions as part of your revision			
	Ensure that you have (and take!) the correct equipment for every exam			
	Create your own ' routine '. What will you do the night before, the morning of, on the way to school, before the exam, at your desk etc? Sports people do just this!			
	Make sure that you listen to and read the instructions on the front of the exam really carefully . Do you have to do every question/all sections?			
	How long should you be spending on each section and question? Is there a simple guide of so many minutes per mark ?			
	Before you start any of the questions, look through the whole exam paper and get a sense of all of the different questions.			
	Do you need to start with question 1 – which is best for you to start with ? ' <i>Best</i> ' first? <i>Toughest</i> first? Save your <i>best 'til last</i> (as long as you plan time carefully!)?			
	Highlight the command words and key parts of the question . Then make sure you actually answer the question set, not one you want to!			
	Quickly (but carefully!) plan longer answers. Underline the plan and start your answer. This way it can then still be marked whereas if you cross it out it can't.			
	Show all your workings – this way you may still get some marks if your process was right but the answer isn't! And remember to include the units if required .			
	Read your answers carefully and check for specific things – ask your teacher for the top 3 things that you need to check for! You'll be surprised at what you'll find this way.			