

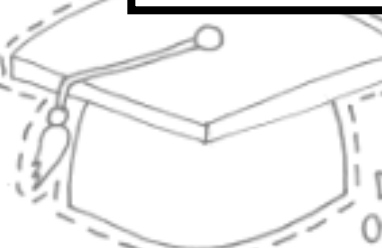
**FURZE  
PLATT**  
SENIOR SCHOOL



**REVISION GUIDE  
FOR STUDENTS  
AND PARENTS**

**YEAR 11 GCSE EXAMS**

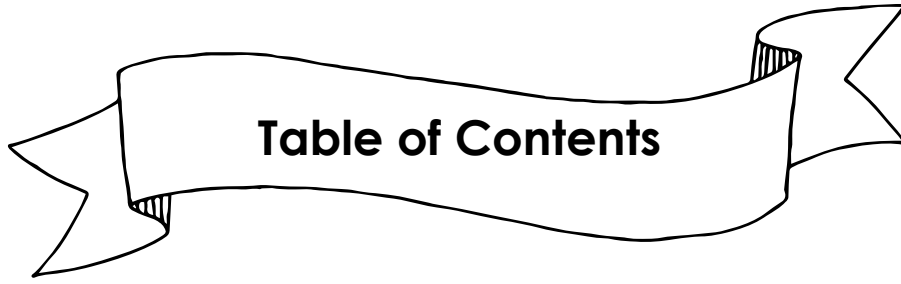
	MON	TUE	WED
7-9	===	gym	
9-11		TEST!	
11-1	===		
1-3		TEST!	
3-5			
5-7	===		



WHAT YOU KNOW TO YOURSELF OR TO OTHERS  
DRINK LOTS OF WATER



Remember  
YOU ARE  
BRILLIANT



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Each day will **NEVER** happen again.  
 Don't waste each day with a false start or no start at all.

Week 15		Week 14		Week 13		Week 12		Week 11	
Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon	
Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues	
Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed	
Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs	
Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri	
Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat	
Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun	

Week 10		Week 9		Week 8		Week 7		Week 6	
Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon	
Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues	
Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed	
Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs	
Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri	
Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat	
Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun	

Week 5		Week 4		Week 3		Week 2		EXAMS START	
Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon		Mon	
Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues		Tues	
Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed		Wed	
Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs		Thurs	
Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri		Fri	
Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat		Sat	
Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun		Sun	



It's the final countdown!



# Introduction

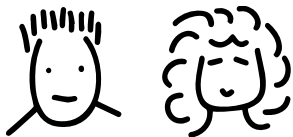


This booklet has been designed to help both students and parents of GCSE students at Furze Platt Senior School. It provides details of:

- planning revision
- how to revise
- access to support
- resources available
- strategies
- performance

Above all, it has been produced with the key concerns of students in mind. That is, keeping them sane, safe and healthy. Balancing between work and play is paramount to their success and the booklet will go through how to best obtain both.

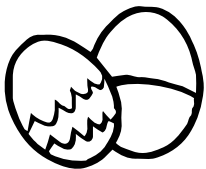
Supporting your child through the next few months will make a huge difference and this booklet will help you work together. We expect students to be revising independently at home for a minimum of 2 hour a night. Furze Platt can also help support your child during this busy time:-



**Learning Mentors** –the Learning Mentors can help students to produce revision timetables, work on revision skills, provide students with resources such as past papers. Students are welcome to pop in and see them either before school, during tutor time or during breaks and after school if they would like help with revision.



**After school revision/catch up** – these are set up by each teacher and will be on an invite only basis or whole class basis. Students should speak to their teacher to find out what is available when.



**Easter Holidays** – there will be numerous catch-up and revision sessions offered to students during the Easter break so please be prepared for this and try to keep their time as free as possible. Teachers will contact students individually in due course to let them know what is available and when.

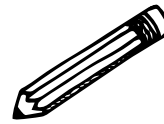
Any queries or questions on this booklet, please contact:

**Mrs Debbie Slater, Senior Learning Mentor**

Call - 01628625308 on extension 127

Email - [debbie.slater@furzeplatt.net](mailto:debbie.slater@furzeplatt.net)

# Revision Timetable



MAKE  
A  
SCHEDULE

Create a revision timetable – your child has already been shown how to produce a revision timetable this term.

Short bursts of revision (40-45 minutes) are most effective. Your concentration lapses after about an hour and you need to take a short break, have a Kit-Kat! (5-10 minutes).

Times	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
4pm - 4.30pm			Drama Club	Maths afterschool	
4.30pm - 5pm					
5pm - 5.30pm					
5.30pm - 6pm	English Jekyll & Hyde	Physics Light Spectrum	English Macbeth	Philosophy & Religion Easter	
6pm - 6.30pm					Maths Algebra
6.30pm - 7pm					
7pm - 7.30pm					
7.30pm - 8pm	Biology Animal Cells		History Cold War	French Listening	
8pm - 8.30pm		Tennis Club			
8.30pm - 9pm			Netflix		
9pm - 9.30pm					

- Write in weekly commitments – e.g. Saturday jobs, football training, dance training.
- Devise your time slots – e.g. 2 hours a week for Maths, English, Science and P&R and then as required for other subjects. Remember, concentrate on your weaker subjects, don't put all your time into the ones you are doing really well in just to make yourself feel better! Do this **using post-it notes**, that way, you have flexibility.
- Plot these sessions onto your timetable – remember work to your strengths, if you are better at working earlier in the evening, then plot them then. Agree a balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, be flexible. If something comes up, the revision session can be moved to another day. This will ensure the revision is done and not lost.
- It is flexible, if you find it's not working, change it! E.g. You could keep a "bank" of revision sessions and simply put them onto your timetable as and when you do them rather than having plotted them before hand.

Please see the A3 laminated timetable provided.

♥	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
7-9	==	gym			run	net	gym
9-11		test	==				gym
11-1	==		==		==		==
1-3	↓			test			
3-5	↓	net	gym	==		net	gym
5-7	==				==	↓	

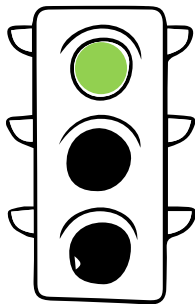
## Traffic Light Topics within Subjects

Make sure you don't just revise the subjects and topics you like.

Work on your weaker ones as well.

Traffic light each topic within each subject - so that you concentrate your efforts in your weaker areas, not just your good ones.

### Green



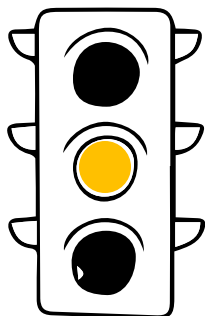
#### **I know the topic well**

I am comfortable with the content

I can answer questions (from exam papers)

Check the topic 1 week before the exam

### Amber



#### **I am not sure – 100%**

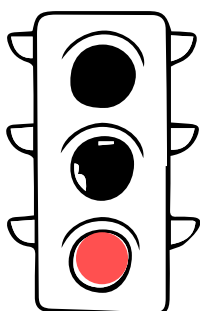
I need to write notes

I need to revise this topic/most of this topic

Revise with your parents/friends – ask them to test you

Revise – check – repeat – check, etc!

### Red



#### **I am completely/nearly in the dark!**

I may need to speak to my teacher for help

I need to fill the gap/read up on the subject/read someone's notes

Look it up!






Ask

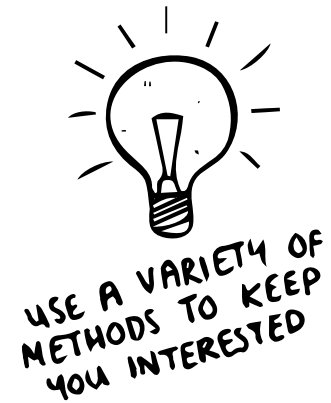
Find out, learn

# How would you prefer to revise?






There are various techniques that may suit different people according to their preferred learning style. Have a look below and see which one you think you are.

## Have you considered?






-  Draw diagrams and mind maps
-  Colour code their work
-  Use different coloured paper, pens etc
-  Use their own system of symbols etc
-  Create images and scenes in your minds



## Or, would you rather?

-  Say your work aloud
-  Give presentations to an imaginary audience
-  Record notes on a tape recorder
-  With partner, read text aloud, repeat
-  Hear the information in your mind

## Don't forget...

-  Do actions when learning key facts
-  Walk about when learning
-  Try to experience what you are learning
-  Using 'post-it' notes, write down the main points and devise questions about the text.
-  Assemble the 'post-its' on the wall to see how different areas relate to each other

# Revision Techniques

## Cue Cards

Use different coloured cards for different subjects but remember some topics might appear in other subjects e.g. the cardio-vascular system can be found in PE and Biology.

Look in your test book for the most relevant points (usually the keywords are highlighted or appear in a different colour font).

Only write your cards in bullet/note form, whole sentences are not required.

Use different colour pens to write the word and then the meaning.

Highlight the most important points.

Ask your parents/friends to test you – give them your cue cards to do this – if you can answer the questions they pose, you know you've produced them correctly!

You should be able to reduce on average 100 words to 15....



### Averages

Mode – Most common      5,7,9,5,6,8      5 appears them most so is the mode

Range – highest to lowest      9-5      4 is the range

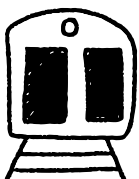
Mean – hardest to do (cos it's mean!)

Add up all the numbers      40 = 6.6

How many no.s there are      6

Median – Middle value      5,5,6,7,8      6 is the middle number

In numerical order



Cue cards are portable – use them during “dead time” – waiting for a bus, spare time during tutor, waiting for a friend, waiting for the train home.....





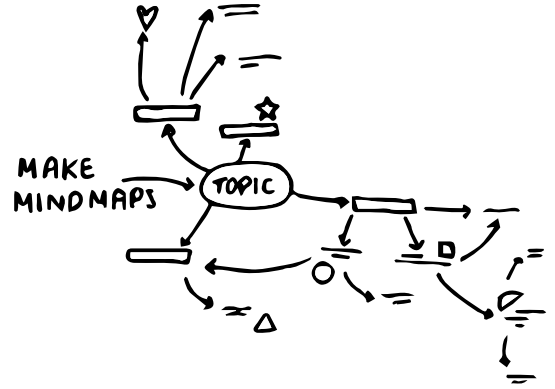
# Revision Techniques

## Mind Maps

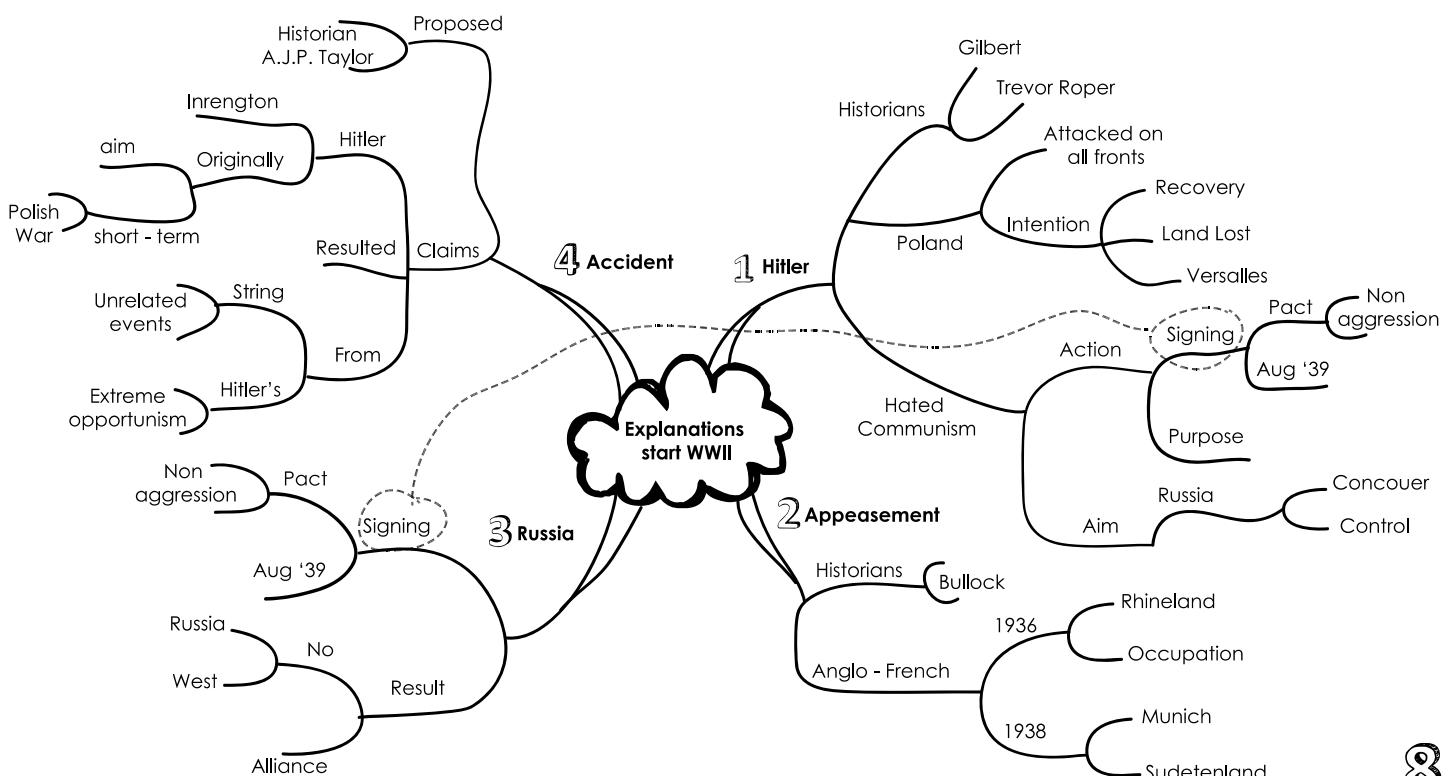
Make mind-maps or association maps rather than taking linear notes. Mapping your notes by radiating key words out in a pattern of links from a central point will make best use of your memory. If you use colour and images on the maps, you'll be harnessing the power of both sides of your brain - creative and logical.

### How to mind map:

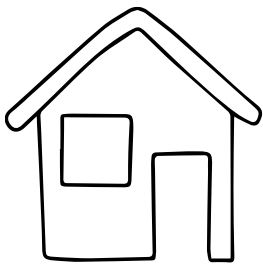
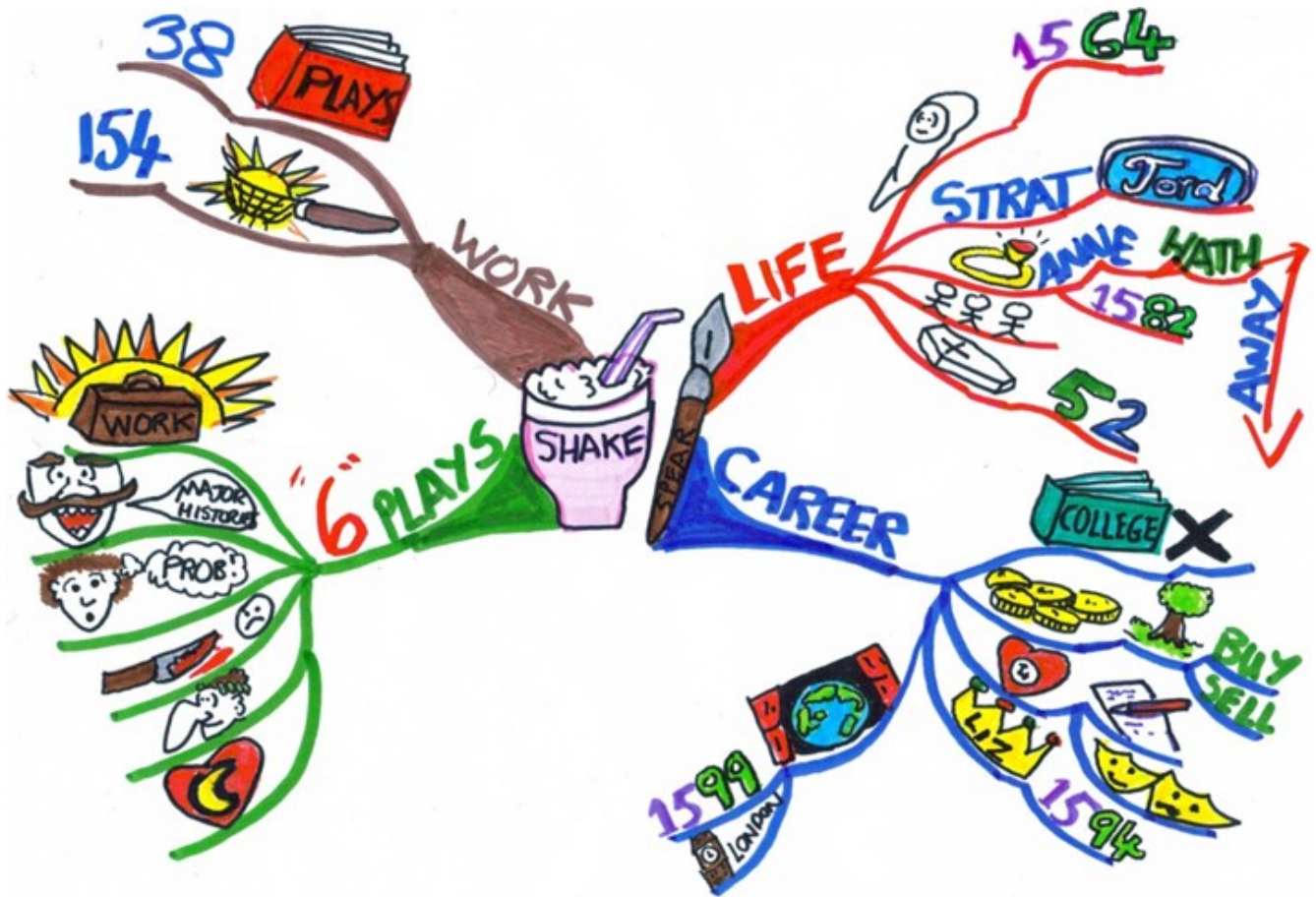
- 1 Start with the theme in the middle of the page.
- 2 Then develop your main idea.
- 3 Each branch must relate to the branch before it.
- 4 Use only key words and images.
- 5 Key words must be written along the branches.
- 6 Printing your key words makes them more memorable.
- 7 Use highlighters and coloured markers to colour code branches.
- 8 Make things stand out on the page so they stand out in your mind. (This doesn't show up well on a black and white photocopied booklet! You should use a different colour for each main branch and all its sub-branches)
- 9 Brainstorm ideas. Be creative.
- 10 Design images you can relate to which will help you remember key information.



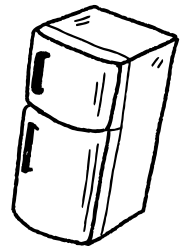
### Mind maps can be mostly text.....



Or they can include more images (much easier to remember!) Look at this one summarising William Shakespeare's life..... (again -would be better in colour!)



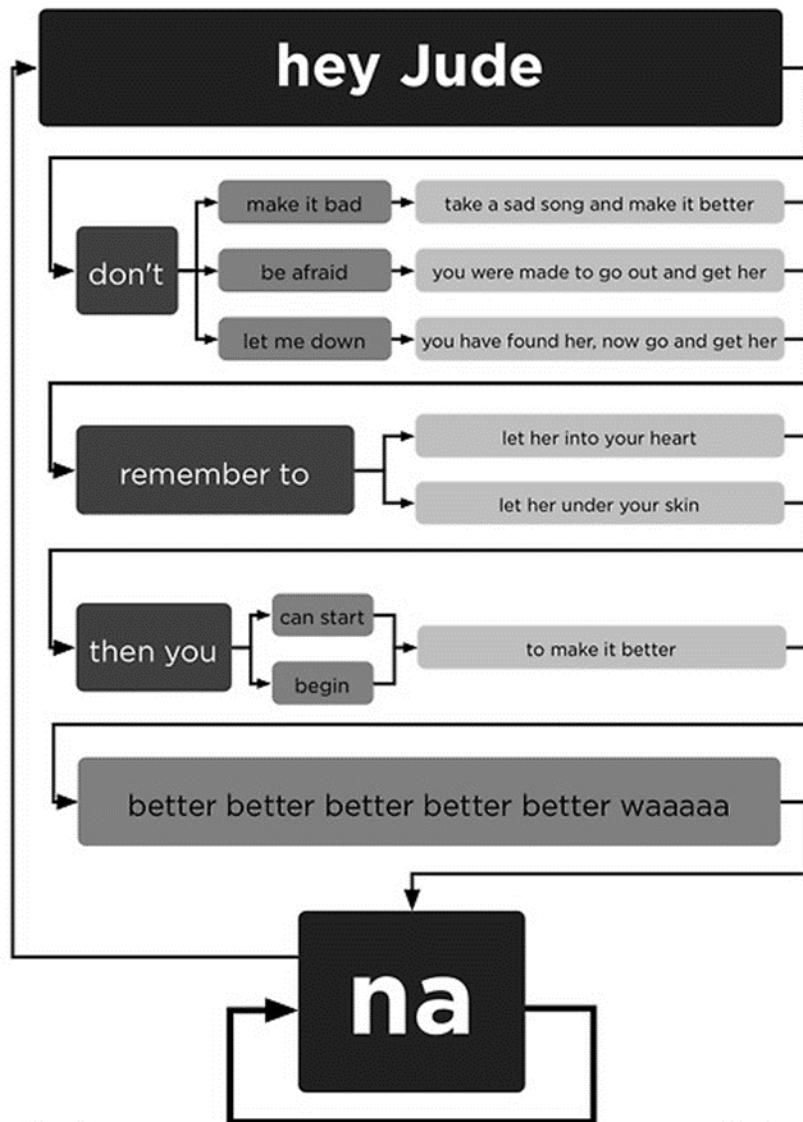
You can place your mind-maps around your house, put your PE notes relating to healthy eating on the fridge, put your notes for Geography on your bedroom for a week, then change to Business for the next week. Placing your notes strategically around your house will help recall the information. You will be using your mind to "place" the notes and this in turn will help you to recollect and find the information in your brain.



# Revision Techniques

## Flow Diagrams

Flow diagrams are easy-to-understand diagrams showing step to step how a subject fits together. It uses shapes connected by lines to show the steps in a process. By visualising the process, a flow diagram can quickly help consolidate information and streamline it to help with revision notes.



loveallthis.tumblr.com

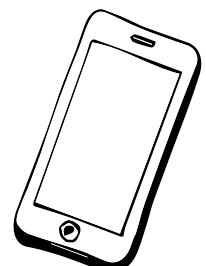
lyrics © sony atv

## Are you a Talker?

### Record your Learning



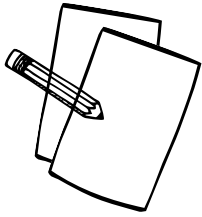
Record your notes on your phone and listen to them back. You can copy your vocal efforts onto your computer/lap top and even from there onto your I-Pod. Use your skills to chant or make up a rap song.



# Practical Help and Advice Now You Know How

Now you know how to revise, what else can you do to prepare for your exams?

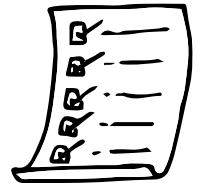
## Practice Past Papers



Practice should make perfect. These should be your constant companion in all revision tasks. For each topic you revise, consult the past questions on this subject and then attempt answers to them. Check your answers, fill in the 'knowledge gaps' where necessary, and file away the correct 'model answer' in your notes for future reference. You will also start to notice any trends in the questions asked. If you are not sure which exam board your subject is under, ask your teacher or a member of the Raising Achievement team.

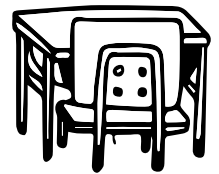
### Follow the marks

Marking schemes are an invaluable aid to exam preparation. You can see how the marks are allocated for each question on the paper and what quantity or style of answer is required in each case. This knowledge will greatly inform your revision work and helps to remove the mystique of the exam.



### Try a dress rehearsal

Each exam paper contains its own particular structure and challenge, with varying emphasis on answering style and depth. While much of your ongoing revision will be based on individual topics and questions, it is a very useful exercise to tackle an exam paper in its totality. It forces you to consider your strategy – the issues of timing, the number of points you will need to make in each part of a question. Having performed this exercise a couple of times, your confidence levels rise as you fix on your strategy for the exam and realise that there can't be any major surprises for you in June.



### The Examiner's View

The job of examiners is to give you marks, not to take them away, but they are powerless to help you if you fall into the most common traps. Here are the **biggest pitfalls** identified:



- **Not reading the paper correctly**
- **Not finishing the paper** Mismanaging your time within the exam can easily cost you a full grade. The biggest exam 'crime' is to leave suitable questions unattempted. **Remember: it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the last 5%.** Therefore, if you find yourself stuck for time as you struggle through your third answer out of five, do not spend your remaining time extending and perfecting that answer. Instead, move on to questions four and five, even if your attempt is sketched or in point form. If you have answered only three questions instead of five, the highest mark you can get is 60%.
- **Ignoring the marking scheme** You must take the marking scheme into account when you allocate time to each question or part of a question. If the marks allotted to a question clearly indicate that a few paragraphs are sufficient, do not write an essay on the subject. Avoid the temptation of writing everything you know about a topic – just give the appropriate amount of information.
- **Repetition** Make the point once. There are no extra marks for restating facts.
- **Missing part of a question** Sometimes, part of a question can be carried onto the next page and, in the pressure of the moment, you don't see it. Always take time to familiarise yourself with the whole paper before you start answering it.
- **Planning and working out** Include your planning and working out with your exam script – you might get some credit for formulae or calculations contained therein.
- **Understand the exam language/terminology** See next page for full list.



## Understand the exam language/terminology



Command Word	What Does It Mean?
<b>Account for</b>	Explain why something is the way it is.
<b>Analyse</b>	Explain your view of why the main points of an idea, text or process are important. Do not just describe.
<b>Calculate</b>	Show the method and obtain a numerical answer.
<b>Compare</b>	Write about the differences <b>and</b> similarities.
<b>Conclude</b>	Make a decision after thinking something through.
<b>Consider</b>	Take into account. What are your thoughts about it?
<b>Contrast</b>	Show the differences between two things.
<b>Criticise</b>	Analyses and make a judgement or give an opinion. Do not just be negative, give a considered view.
<b>Define</b>	Give a brief explanation of what something means.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show using lots of examples.
<b>Describe</b>	Say what something or someone is like or give an account of events.
<b>Discuss</b>	Explain the advantages <b>and</b> disadvantages of something, and give your opinion.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Make a judgement about the quality of something, taking the evidence into account.
<b>Explain</b>	Give reason WHY something is as it is or HOW it operates.
<b>Give reasons for</b>	Explain using words like because to make clear WHY things happen.
<b>Illustrate</b>	Give examples to make your points clear. It can also mean to use diagrams, drawings or figures to support your answer.
<b>Identify</b>	Point out the required features or reasons.
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain what you understand to be the meaning, or what someone else intended the meaning to be.
<b>Justify</b>	Give good reasons for.
<b>Summarise</b>	Give the main points of an idea or argument.

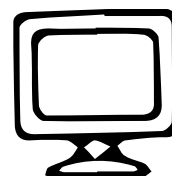
### Buddy Revision

You may find it easier to pair up to revise – learn with a friend who is taking your subject. You can then spend some time each week with them teaching each other a topic – tutor time in the mornings is a good time (put this on your revision timetable). Help each other to fill the gaps – the best way to learn is to teach....



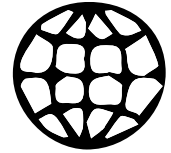
**TEACH  
WHAT YOU  
KNOW TO  
YOURSELF OR  
TO OTHERS**

Get your buddy to test you, person-to-person revision is always best but the times when you are not able to do this, you can always use Skype (or similar).





## Useful Websites



There are lots of useful (and some not so useful) websites to help you with revision – not only on specific subjects but also how to approach and survive your exams.

### General

covering lots of different GCSE subjects:-

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

- use the revision bites to brush up on your skills

[www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)

[www.s-cool.co.uk](http://www.s-cool.co.uk)

[www.revisionworld.com](http://www.revisionworld.com)

[www.examtime.com](http://www.examtime.com)

[www.getrevising.co.uk](http://www.getrevising.co.uk)

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)

[www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)

### English

[www.sparknotes.com/sparknotes](http://www.sparknotes.com/sparknotes)

- great for Jekyll and Hyde and Macbeth.

[www.englishbiz.co.uk](http://www.englishbiz.co.uk)

[www.educationquizzes.com/gcse/](http://www.educationquizzes.com/gcse/)

### Maths

[www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk)

[www.methodmaths.com](http://www.methodmaths.com)

[www.mrbartonmaths.com](http://www.mrbartonmaths.com)

### Science

[www.mygcscscience.com](http://www.mygcscscience.com)

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

[www.docbrown.info/gcseadditionalscience.htm](http://www.docbrown.info/gcseadditionalscience.htm)

### Philosophy & Religion

[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

### Business

[www.bized.co.uk](http://www.bized.co.uk)

[www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com)

[tutor2U.net](http://tutor2U.net)

### Child Development

Past papers found on [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

### Modern Languages - French

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/french/index.html>

<http://shopkins.wordpress.com/gcse-french/>

[http://www.stantonbury.org.uk/podcast/french\\_nonrss.htm](http://www.stantonbury.org.uk/podcast/french_nonrss.htm)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/french/>

[www.language-gym.com](http://www.language-gym.com)

[www.languagesonline.org](http://www.languagesonline.org)

### Modern Languages - German

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/german/>

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/german/index.html>

### Modern Languages - Spanish

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/spanish/index.html>

### Drama

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/)

### Geography

[www.bennett.karoo.net](http://www.bennett.karoo.net)

[www.bbc.co.uk/education/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/)

[www.georesources.co.uk](http://www.georesources.co.uk)

- an excellent link site with many web-based resources indexed by subject area

[www.multimap.co.uk](http://www.multimap.co.uk)

- useful UK mapping site

[www.thebrf.org.uk](http://www.thebrf.org.uk)

- a great case-study of sustainable development in India

[www.geographyatthemovies.co.uk](http://www.geographyatthemovies.co.uk)

movie clips linked to geographical themes

## History

<http://www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/history/index.html>

[www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision](http://www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/z29rbk7> (Elizabeth I)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zymqwx8> (Germany)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/topics/zwbysg8> (Cold War - ignoring Vietnam War info)

## Music

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/>

## PE

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/pe/>

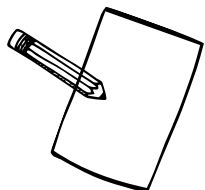
<http://www.brianmac.co.uk/index.htm>

[http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic\\_index.asp?subject\\_id=28](http://www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=28)

## Other Media To Help With Revision



**Phones** – there are lots of apps that can help with revision. These can be particularly useful for modern foreign languages. Go to the Play Store and search by “GCSE \_\_\_\_\_” to see what’s available. There are numerous free ones though they will not include the full complement of revision for that subject. The paying apps are all reasonably priced from around £3.



**Past Papers** – there is a direct link between the improvement of performance and the amount of past papers a student completes. Go to the web-site of the exam board for that subject – e.g. AQA, Edexcel or OCR and search for the relevant GCSE subject.



**YouTube** – search for “gcse \_\_\_\_\_ revision” and there’s lots of information for you to use. For example, you can watch a presentation/lesson on a particular subject, complete and follow a tutor completing a Maths paper, learn songs to help you remember information, produce mind maps to name but a few.



# Revision Books



There are plenty of revision and workbooks available for each subject, below are some of the better ones available, if in doubt, ask your teacher which one(s) they recommend.

## English Language

- WJEC Eduqas GCSE English Language
- WJEC Eduqas GCSE Book 1 English Language (Developing Skills for Component 1 and 2)
- WJEC Eduqas GCSE Book 1 English Language (Assessment Skills for Component 1 and 2)

## English Literature

- WJEC Eduqas GCSE English Literature: Student Book
- WJEC Eduqas GCSE English Literature\_ Skills for Literature and Unseen Poetry
- Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: The Study Guide Edition, Francis Gilbert
- An Inspector Calls – Letts or CGP produce good study guides
- Macbeth – CGP, York Notes both produce good study guides

## Maths

- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Mathematics Foundation Revision Guide and Workbook
- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Mathematics Higher Revision Guide and Workbook
- *Can be purchased through the Mathematics Department for £6 each*

## Science AQA 9-1

### Biology

- Biology Separate Science Revision Guide
- Biology Separate Science Higher workbook
- Combined Biology Trilogy Revision Guide
- Combined Biology Trilogy Found. workbook
- Combined Biology Trilogy Higher workbook

### Chemistry

- Chemistry Separate Science Revision Guide

- Chemistry Separate Science Higher workbook
- Combined Chemistry : Trilogy Revision Guide
- Combined Chemistry: Trilogy Found. workbook
- Combined Chemistry: Trilogy Higher workbook

## Physics

- Physics Separate Science Revision Guide
- Physics Separate Science Higher workbook
- Combined Physics : Trilogy Revision Guide
- Combined Physics : Trilogy Found. workbook
- Combined Physics: Trilogy Higher workbook

## Philosophy & Religion

- My Revision Notes AQA GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Specification A

## Business

- CGP Edexcel (9-1) GCSE Business Studies

## Geography

- My Revision Notes: WJEC GCSE Geography

## History

- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History Early Elizabethan England Revision Guide and Workbook
- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History Weimar and Nazi Germany Revision Guide and Workbook
- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History Superpower Relations and Cold War Revision Guide and Workbook
- Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) History Crime and Punishment Guide and Workbook
- CGP GCSE Edexcel History (9-1) The Revision Guide (Elizabeth, Cold War, Weimar only)



## **Modern Languages**

- Revise AQA GCSE 9-1 French Revision Guide/ Workbook
- Revise AQA GCSE 9-1 German Revision Guide/ Workbook
- Revise AQA GCSE 9-1 Spanish Revision Guide/ Workbook

## **Music**

- Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Anthology of Music (as sold by Pearson)
- Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Music Student Book (as sold by Pearson)

## **PE**

- Revise Edexcel: GCSE Physical Education (9-1) Revision Guide
- Revise Edexcel: GCSE Physical Education (9-1) Workbook

## **Child Development**

- Collins Revision – GCSE Child Development Essentials
- CGP GCSE Child Development The Revision Guide

## **Computing**

- Learning to Program in Python – PG Online
- AQA GCSE (9-1) Computer Science 8520 Textbook.

## **Drama**

- AQA GCSE Drama: Student's Book

## **Food Tech**

- My Revision Notes: WJEC Eduqas GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition
- CGP GCSE Food Preparation and Nutrition for WJEC Eduqas

## **Graphics**

- CGP GCSE Design & Technology Graphic Products AQA Revision Guide (A\*-G Course)

## **Resistant Materials**

- CGP GCSE Design & Technology Resistant Materials AQA Revision Guide

## Performing on the Day

1

**Get a good night's sleep:** While the temptation is to stay up half the night 'cramming' in more facts and figures, the evidence suggests this approach is counter-productive. In the context of a two-year course, an extra night's studying can make very little difference to your knowledge. However, having a mind that is refreshed, alert, and ready to respond to circumstances will obviously be of far greater benefit.



2

**Arrive in plenty of time:** To perform well on the day, you need to be relaxed and to feel in control of the situation. This is difficult to achieve if you have missed breakfast and are stuck on a bus in traffic or standing on a train for 45 minutes as the exam time approaches. You will need about 15 minutes 'quiet time' to mentally rehearse your exam and run through your 'game plan' for the final time.



3

**Have your equipment ready:** Each exam has its own requirements. Apart from properly functioning pens, pencils, rulers, etc, you may need a calculator for the Maths or Science exam. Drawing pencils may be required for diagrams in some subjects. A lot of nervous energy can be expended on last-minute hassle if these items aren't checked in advance.



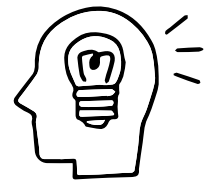
4

**Think positive:** On the day of the exam, remind yourself of the good things (the material you know well, the revision you have completed, all the past exam questions done, the good grades achieved) rather than dwelling on areas of weakness. Having that self-belief will give you the confidence to trust your judgement within the exam hall and 'hit the target'.

Remember-  
**YOU ARE  
BRILLIANT**

5

**Maintain your focus:** There can be a lot of tension, drama, and hysteria in the air on the days of an exam. You want to keep the balance between maintaining your focus and interacting normally with your friends and classmates. Try finding a quiet spot *far from the madding crowd* to 'warm-up' before each exam and 'warm-down' afterwards. Surround yourself with people who are likely to add to the calm rather than add to the clamour.



6

**Beware of post-exam analysis:** The more you participate in the exam post-mortem, the more confused and disheartened you are likely to become. You can't change what has happened, you can only focus on the present and this will need your full attention.



# Top Tips on Exam Strategy

Success in exams involves two ingredients - having a thorough knowledge of the subject matter AND making the most of your knowledge in the exam through effective answering technique. Two students with identical knowledge and attainment levels can sit the same exam and their final grades can differ by as much as 25%. The difference is down to having an effective strategy and exam technique.

**Here are four golden rules to apply to all your GCSE papers:**

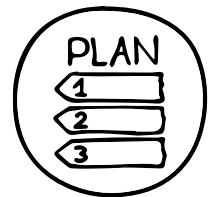
# 1

**Allow time to read the paper carefully:** The importance of reading the paper carefully and choosing your questions wisely cannot be emphasised enough at this stage. The natural inclination is always to start writing immediately and launch into a favoured topic. Resist the urge. Take your time. Be smart and size-up the paper before answering.



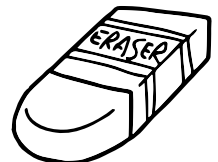
# 2

**Stick to your game plan:** An overall strategy should have emerged from your revision and exam preparation in each subject. This covers the areas you will tackle, the topics you will avoid if they appear on the paper, the sequence in which you will tackle the various sections, the style of answering you will employ in each subject, the amount of time you will allocate to answering each section. In some cases, this plan will work like a dream but there will always be surprises to deal with in some papers. Don't get flustered. Stick to your game plan, trust your judgement, and move on.



# 3

**Sweep up any mistakes:** In the pressure of the exam hall, it is easy to make elementary errors. These will sometimes have the potential to lose you a lot of valuable marks. Misreading the instruction on a question can render an entire answer invalid. You might have known the correct answer, but you didn't put it down. A simple miscalculation can lose you valuable time as you try to figure out the balancing item. Be disciplined with your time. Always leave a few minutes at the end to tidy-up errors. Simply changing a definition / formula / calculation at this stage could be the difference between a good and an average grade.



# 4

**Attempt all questions:** It is amazing how many exam scripts are handed up unfinished. Every year, capable students who just didn't get time to finish the paper lose easy marks. Don't fall into this trap. Work on the basis that you will get an answer written for the required number of questions. Remember that it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the final 5%. You can always polish an answer further but, if there is no attempt made at part of a question, the examiner can't give you any marks. BUT if the instructions on the front of the paper tell you to answer a certain number of questions – stick to this - don't answer too many!



## Answering Exam Questions

- Scan **all** the questions.
- Mark all the questions you could answer.
- Read these questions carefully.
- Choose the correct number of questions in each section.
- Decide on an order: **best answers first**.
- Divide up your time, allowing more time for the questions with the most marks.
- Underline the key words in the question.
- Plan your answer.
- Stick to the point of the question.
- Write your answer.
- Use the plan at every stage – e.g. every paragraph.
- Check your answer against the plan. Look out for mistakes.
- If you have time, re-read the questions and your answers and make any necessary corrections.

## Dealing With Distractions

- **"I just start daydreaming"** Become an active learner. Always work with a pen and paper. Focus on a specific task, not a specified time for your study.
- **"I can't focus because I'm anxious about the exams"** Try to limit yourself to your immediate concerns, the things you have some control over (preparation for the upcoming revision test) rather than the things you cannot determine (like what questions the examiners will choose for this year's English Lit paper.)
- **"I often fall asleep when I'm supposed to be studying"** Try to get to bed on time over the coming weeks. A tired brain is very unproductive. Get some genuine rest at the weekend. Be sure to get regular exercise, even just a walk around the block at night to clear your head.
- **"I'm constantly interrupted by other people"** Study in the location most likely to offer peace and quiet. Ask for consideration from family members over the final run up to exams. Never have a TV, phone, computer game, or music system within arm's reach while you are trying to work. Make a rule of not taking phone calls within certain defined periods.
- **"I keep thinking of other things while I'm studying"** Divide the study session into smaller, short-range goals which demand your full attention e.g. vocabulary or poetry test. Keep a 'reminder pad' beside you, a little notebook to jot down something that strikes you (someone to call, a job to do, etc.) and deal with it after the study period. Having made a note of it, you can more easily re-focus on your work.

## Obvious but True

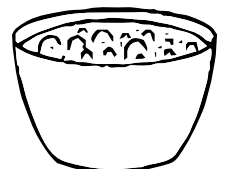
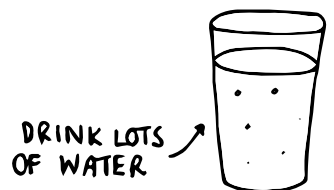
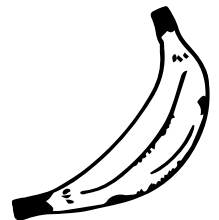
### Healthy Body = Healthy Mind

#### Food for thought

Eating a variety of healthy foods doesn't just give your body a boost, it also benefits your brain cells. Skipping meals may well give you extra cramming time, but it can also leave you hungry and unable to concentrate. So, eat regularly and sensibly. Think wholemeal sandwiches and fruit, rather than cakes and biscuits!

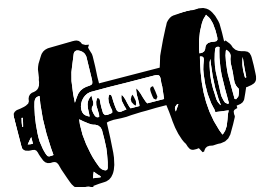
#### Brain Fuel

- Bread, pasta, cereals and potatoes are filling and packed with starchy carbohydrates, which release energy slowly, meaning you can keep going for longer.
- Fruit and vegetables give you essential vitamins and minerals. Aim for at least five portions a day.
- Food like pasties, chips and crisps are high in fat, keep them for treats.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydrated brains don't think clearly and water is healthier than sweet, fizzy drinks, especially energy drinks.
- Meat, fish, pulses, milk and dairy foods are good sources of protein. Moderate amounts are essential for a healthy diet.
- Make sure you eat breakfast on the day of an exam. If you're not getting enough iron then you'll damage your ability to concentrate for long periods of time and your energy levels will begin to drop. If hour long sessions of revision are proving too much, try eating more red meat, eggs and leafy green vegetables like spinach.



#### Exercise

Staying in your room can seem like the best option when revision time is short. But a bit of the great outdoors can blow the cobwebs away and help you relax. If you can't get out, at least get up and out of your chair for a stretch and a wander. Better still, go for a swim or put those footie boots on and give your mind and body a workout.



**Believe in yourself and be positive.**

If you think you can succeed you will; if you convince yourself that you will fail, that's what will probably happen.



**Learn to relax**



Take mini breaks throughout the day. Work on relaxation techniques, such as taking slow deep breaths.

**Get organised**

Have a realistic daily schedule including revision, sleep, eating, relationships and recreation.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
7-9							
9-11							
11-1							
1-3							
3-5							
5-7							

**Be positive**

Talk positively to yourself! Don't pay attention to that internal voice saying you can't do it; tell yourself you can do it and you will do it.



**Exercise**

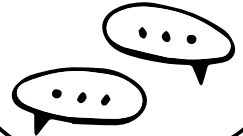


Physical activity provides relief from stress. The brain uses 20% of oxygen in the blood so you need to think about your posture and exercise to make sure your body gets enough. 30 minutes of sport or a short walk will do the trick.

**STRESS MANAGEMENT**

**Talk**

Talking and meeting with friends and occasionally sharing deep feelings and thoughts can be helpful in reducing stress.



**Time**



Recognise that you can only do so much in a given time. **Try to pace, not race.**

**Stay calm**

Make sure you are in a calm, positive mood before you start studying.



**Make a list**

Make a list of the things that are worrying you and the possible things that could happen - then your brain will stop bringing them forward all the time.



**Be healthy**

Watch your eating habits. Make sure you eat sensibly and have a balanced diet. Avoid too much chocolate, cola, caffeine and foods with lots of additives. Drink lots of water.



**Sleep**

Don't become overtired by forcing yourself to work late. Your brain needs time to sort out the information it has come across during the day. Your ideal sleep time is about 8 hours a night.

