

A level Revision Guide



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1. Instructions to Students

- All exams usually take place in the Drama Studio or Gym. Check the exam and Sixth Form Café noticeboards for roomings and seating plans.
- Seating. There will be a seating plan for each exam. It is important that you check it in advance.
- Exam Regulations and Behaviour. Exam conditions must be maintained. Please leave your bags at the door and carry only the equipment you need in a clear plastic bag or clear pencil case. Be in SILENCE at all times in the exam room. Any infringements will be dealt with seriously. For a full list of regulations please see our Guide to Exam Regulations which can be found on our website and will also have been emailed to you.
- SEN. If you have access requirements, you may be in a separate room. The seating plans for these will be posted along with the Gym plan.
- Equipment. We will NOT provide spare equipment.
- Prepare as well as you can. Plan ahead – use our Revision Planner to help. And be prepared on the day – have a good breakfast and a good night’s sleep.

Perform as well as you can. You are you, so you can only do the best you can on the day.

Good luck!

2. What To Do

Have a goal

- What do you want to do after your A-levels? E.g. University course, Apprenticeship, Employment? You should know by now what the entry requirements for your next steps are!

Be prepared

- Course Assessment Information – If you weren't issued one for each of your subjects in Year 12, ask your teacher or find it on our website under Course Information. This one page subject summary contains loads of useful information about the Exam Board, subject specification, Exam specifications (number and length of each exam paper, % of each paper towards the total mark), as well as recommended text books, trips and more.
- Ask your teachers if they will be selling revision guides; if not, which they recommend. There are lots out there – don't buy one without a recommendation.
- Do every available past paper – several times each is even better. Compare your answers with the mark scheme. You need to become very familiar with the style of questions and similar questions occur frequently. Time yourself so you get used to managing the time allowed.
- Also, look up the examiners reports to see what the common mistakes were.

Beating Exam Stress

- If you're feeling stressed there are lots of things you can do to relieve some of the pressure. Our website has loads of really booklets and guides. The Stress Management Leaflet, Beat Exam Stress are especially good. There's also great stuff on the NHS website.
- Come and speak to us if you are struggling. We're all here to help.

Revision

- Have a calm place where you revise which has no distractions – no TV or computer and no phone!
- Make a revision timetable – and include time for leisure. Prioritise subjects with more time for the ones that need more work. You can just use a paper and pen, or try www.examtime.com or www.getrevising.com
- It's never too early to start revising!
- Always do something active – write out notes or condense them onto postcards. If you just read the information won't stay in your head.
- Take breaks – but not too many! One ten minute break for every hour of work is about right. Make it active rest – go for a walk. Avoid social media!
- Stick to a strict routine – get up at the same time, eat a decent breakfast and timetable your day. Keep drinking water to stay hydrated.
- Experiment with different ways of revising until you find one that suits you. It may help to understand your learning style – there are numerous websites to help you find out, www.examtime.com might help. Also, vary it so you don't get bored – watch a podcast, then make some postcards, then try some questions.

In the exam

- On the day of the exam, make sure you've had a good breakfast.
- Get to the exam in good time so you're not rushing. Have everything you need with you – water, tissues, pens, pencils, calculator
- Don't let nerves take over – breathe deeply and visualise the answers.
- Read the instructions carefully before you start any answers.
- If you get a question you can't do, don't panic. Leave it and come back to it later.

REVISION

What is revision?

Revision is looking back at information that you have previously learnt.

You need to understand the information, know the information and remember it for the exam!

How should I structure my

revision?
✓Have an aim for the session. E.g by the end of this session I want to be able to answer questions on...

✓Think about what you already know and identify the bits you need to spend more time on

✓Break topics down into chunks

✓Make notes with key points, phrases or words

✓Test yourself

✓Have a tick list so that you can see your progress

✓Look over your notes 1 month, 1 week and 1 day before the exam

What is the aim of my revision?

The aim is to make a series of key-points relating to a subject

You need key points, phrases, or words to prompt you to remember the information stored in your brain

You should aim to have a card or A4 sheet with the key points for each topic or sub-topic

What can I do to revise?

Make spider diagrams

Make posters and stick them on the wall

Highlight key points in notes or books

Put revision aids around the house

Record yourself saying key points and play back

Read a page – shut the book, make notes on what you can remember

Tell someone what you have learnt

Ask parents or friends to test you

Use pictures to associate with keywords

Use Mnemonics – making a rhyme from the first letters

3. Drawing up a Revision Timetable

Please see our Revision Timetable booklets and print off a copy for your personal use. These are useful during school and also when you have finished for study leave. When drawing up your revision timetable remember the following:

- Enter all your commitments such as lessons, clubs, work and most importantly, time to relax.
- Leave time for leisure activities
- Balance revision time between different subjects, however if you have an exam coming up, plan appropriate revision leading up to it.
- Vary the subjects revised on one day
- When it comes to the end of the week, review how well it worked and make changes to the next week if you need to.
- Review and re-do each weekly timetable until your last exam.

Put copies of the timetable up at home for everyone to see. If they know you are revising they will leave you alone to get on. If these timetables don't work for you, make your own, however do not spend hours making it look pretty!

4. Organising your revision

Make a topic checklist

- For each subject make a list of the major topics you have covered – this is called a topic check list. If you find it difficult to list the topics ask your teacher, however many will provide this.
- For each subject look at the topics and decide the order. Start with a topic you liked or found easy. Remember you do not have to revise the topics in the same order you were taught them.
- Re-write the topic check list in the order you want to revise. Pin up the topic check list in your bedroom. Write the topics on your timetable too.
- Check your timetable to see which subject you have chosen to study and check the topic list for which specific part you have chosen to revise.

Organising your time

- Set a definite time to start and finish revision sessions and stick to them. The best advice is to stick to the same routine as a school day.
- Revision sessions should be 1 ½ to 2 hours, about the same length as your exams – make sure you have breaks though.
- Work in good light, at a table and not in front of the TV / computer / iPad. Some people like to revise to music. Just be careful, if you find yourself being distracted or singing along turn it off, it isn't helping. Keep the volume low. When you have a break play the music loud and lively!
- Try working on difficult topics in the morning when your mind is fresh.

Improving your concentration

- Start with short sessions and gradually build up to longer sessions. Try revising for 40 mins, 10 mins testing, 10 mins resting.
- For every hour you work you should have 10 mins break.
- It will help your concentration if you vary the subject or topic during the revision session.
- Always attend revision sessions and remain focussed.
- Walking around whilst reading aloud can help concentration.
- When testing yourself answer out loud.
- Give yourself a reward when you complete a revision session.

5. Smashing Scope

This is a set of memory techniques – not all will work for you, it is important to identify what works and go with it.

Your memory works best when it associates a piece of information with something memorable – see examples below:

SENSES – Use all your senses – vision, smell, hearing, taste, touch/movement (all learning styles)

MOVEMENT – move images around, walk or space out the thing to be remembered

ASSOCIATION – link the information to something that is already stable in your mind – make up a story

SAY IT – say it aloud, you’ll remember it better

HUMOUR – the more funny, ridiculous, absurd, weird you make your images, the more memorable they will be

IMAGINATION/IDEAS – Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge”. The more you apply your imagination and memory, the better your memory will be – Use it! For example Mnemonics are often a useful way to remember. Take the first letter of each key word and make up a silly phrase. E.g. to remember the points of the compass in the right order Never Eat Shredded Wheat = North, East, South, West

NUMBER – numbering adds efficiency to order and sequence

GOALS – remind yourself WHY you need to remember e.g. to pass exam, get into uni, get a job etc.

SYMBOLS – use symbols (signs, pictures, graphs) instead of words – your brain remembers pictures much more easily than words

COLOUR – most people find colour helps make things more memorable

ORDER and/or SEQUENCE – in combination with other techniques it allows for more immediate reference

POSITIVITY – the brain tries to shut out negative feelings or memories so be positive to open up your brain and memory bank.

EXAGGERATION – in all your images, exaggerate size, shape and sound

6. Mind Maps

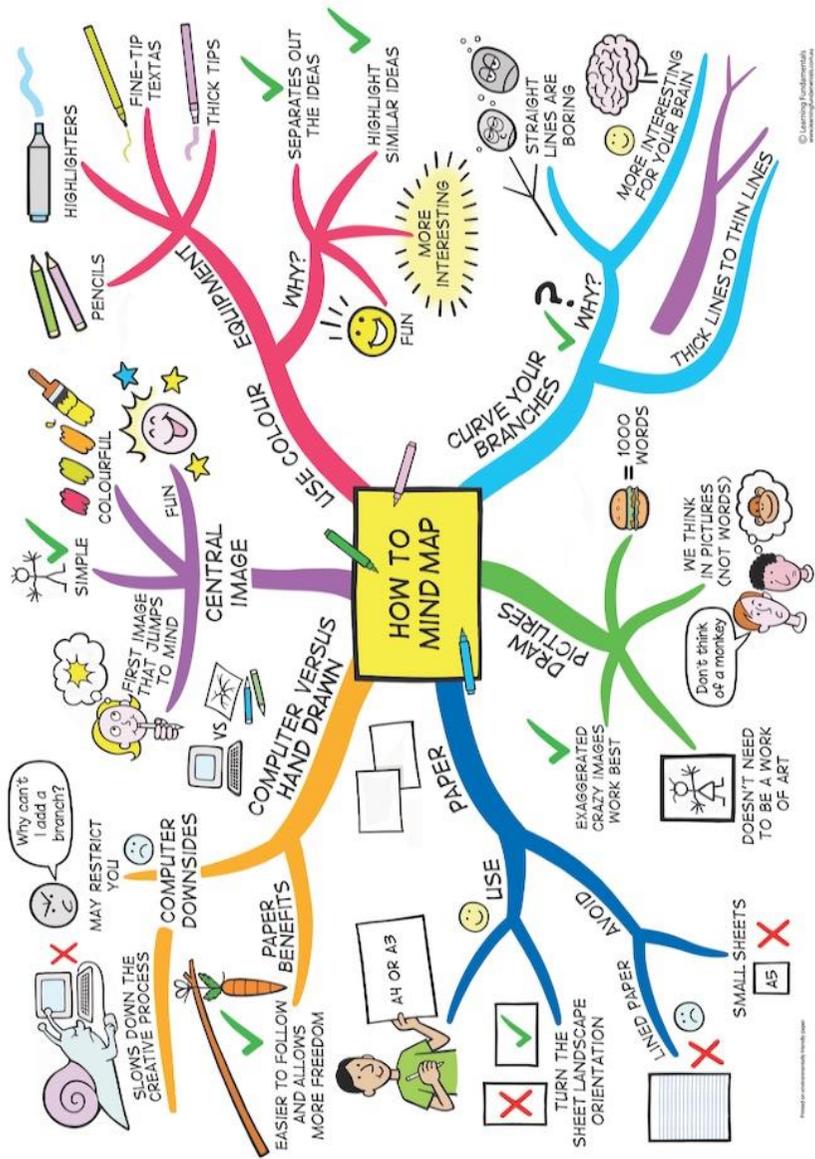
Why do a mind map? Notes often end up being the book repeated word for word (unless, of course, you have taken good notes using the techniques above).

This is an alternative way to make notes because your brain likes colour and pictures which help your memory. A study in the US gave participants 10,000 images to look through. They then added 10 other images. 95% of participants could identify the foreign images. Conclusion? Pictures stay in your brain.

How to Mind Map

Advantages of Mind Map

- You only need to write down what's important
- You can easily show how things link up
- All the information you need is on one page
- When you have made a pattern, your brain will remember the whole shape of the topic.



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7. Don't Just Read Notes - Make Notes and then test yourself...!

Writing your own revision notes

- Writing revision notes is a great way of being active in your revision.
- Revision notes should be created in early stages of revision. Don't attempt to memorise everything in your lesson notes, condense it first. Revision notes are designed to jog your memory of the things you have learnt.
- Ways of making revision notes include: traditional revision notes on A4 file paper, revision cards, mind maps and patterned notes. Select which method works best for you, often a combination of methods works best.
- Subject revision guides you can buy in shops or have been given by school are usually very good but it is very important you still write your own notes – don't fall into the trap of just reading the book.

Writing traditional revision notes

- Read through the notes you have on a topic
- Go back and pick out the key points and phrases. Also pick out any important diagrams, tables, graphs or formulae.
- Read through the rough notes you have made, make sure they contain all the important bits, then write them out again neatly.
- Pay attention to these key points:
 - Use your own words
 - Make sure your notes are well spaced out, don't cram too much onto one page
 - Use large writing and put important key words in capitals
 - Make your notes more interesting by using colour, boxes, circles, underlining, abbreviations and so on

Making revision cards

- You can purchase revision cards from the LRC or stationary shops
- These can be carried around in a pocket or bag and can be used whenever you have a spare moment.
- Pay careful attention and do the following:
 - Always write the subject in the top right hand corner of the card
 - Always put a title on the card
 - Number the cards
 - Cards covering the same topic and/or subject should be kept together using an elastic band or treasury tag in the top left corner

Purchase revision guides

You need to speak to your teachers specifically for advice on which guide to buy

Detailed below you will find various web-links that may be beneficial in assisting you with your revision and planning for your the forthcoming examinations.

EXAM BOARDS

AQA	http://web.aqa.org.uk/
Edexcel	http://www.edexcel.com/Pages/Home.aspx
OCR	http://www.ocr.org.uk/
WJEC	http://www.wjec.co.uk/

General Information and Support

BBC Bitesize

Revision Tips, includes dealing with exam nerves and stress

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/articles/zw8qpbk>

Includes subject content and materials for A'levels.

<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/subjects/>

Get revising

Includes revision timetable generator

<http://getrevising.co.uk/>

Beating Exam Stress

Loads of practical advice to overcome exam stress on our school website.

<http://www.st-gregorys.org.uk/parent-information/exam-information/>

Use Technology

- There are some great revision programs / websites – use them!
- Many departments have specific programs for you to help with revision / studies e.g. My Maths, linguascope, etc.
- Use technology to enhance your revision. You can use it as a break from your books and it is great revision.
- Apps for your iPod, smartphone, iPad can be downloaded too.
- Past exam papers can be downloaded from the exam boards website (see below or just search 'past papers Product Design AQA' for example).

8. Thirteen Tremendous Revision Tips

1. Start revising early

Start months, not days before the exam. Make a timetable (see samples) to plan your revision and stick to it.

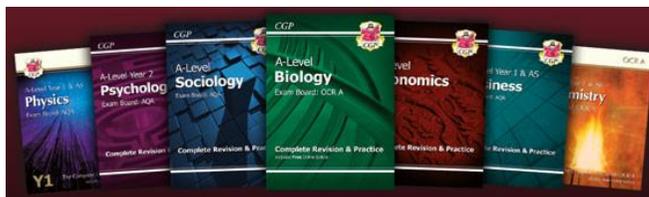
2. Don't spend ages making your notes look pretty

This is just wasting time. For diagrams, include all the details you need to learn, but don't try to produce a work of art. Limit yourself to 2 or 3 colours so you don't get carried away colouring things in.

3. Take short breaks

Not every 10 minutes! During these breaks it is a great idea to try to exercise once a day if you can. Go for a run, a swim or a game with your mates – you will feel better for it.

4. Use revision guides



5. In study leave, start revising early

i.e. 9am — that way you'll get your day's work done much quicker and will have time to relax in the evening.

6. Stick revision notes all around your house



So in the exam you think — "aha, quadratic equations, they were on the fridge..."

7. Get yourself drinks and snacks

So you don't make excuses to stop every 10 minutes...

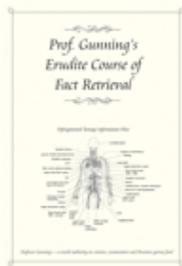
8. Sit at a proper desk

Don't try to revise in bed — you'll be in the land of pink igloos and elephants before you can say "Captain Birdseye".

9. Don't put it off

"Procrastination" is the long word for it. And it means rearranging stuff on your desk, getting a sudden urge after 16 years to tidy your room, playing the guitar, thinking about the weekend, writing love poems about that girl/boy you fancy, painting your toenails, etc, etc, etc,... Sit down at your desk and GET ON WITH IT.

10. Don't just read your notes



You have to WRITE STUFF DOWN.

This is real basic "how to revise" stuff.

11. Don't turn yourself into a revision zombie

Sadly, it's too late
for Daniel.



Before



After

If you stop doing anything else but revision you'll turn into a zombie. It's really important that you keep time to do things you enjoy... like cinema, shopping, sports, frisbee, rock-climbing, making model planes, nose-picking, whatever tickles your ferret... When you're doing these try to relax and totally forget about revision.

12. Do lots of practice exam papers

This is especially important as you get close to the exams

13. Find the right environment to revise

NOT in front of the TV. NOT listening to the radio. Music can sometimes be OK, but you need to find the right kind. It's got to be something that's just there in the background that you're not thinking about at all. Music without singing is better as you won't be tempted to dance around your bedroom like a big fool.

9. What's in my Exams?

Subject	Number of papers	Length of papers	Content