

Revision Techniques

...or how to pass exams

Let's start with what *not* to do!

- Don't imagine you can learn everything you need to know the night before the exam. Your memory won't cope and, apart from anything else, it may well turn out that you have more than one exam on the same day. What then?



- Don't imagine that life will go on as 'normal' during important examinations. It won't. This is a critical time in your life, possibly with HUGE implications for your future. You must be prepared to make some sacrifices to make sure that you do the very best that you can.



- Don't be negative about what you think you can achieve. Revising thoroughly and receiving the help and support of the people around you will make all the difference. So, don't tell yourself you "can't do it anyway" – that's just opting out.



- Don't think it will be enough simply to read through your notes. It won't. Very few of us have a photographic memory. You will need to employ other techniques.



OK, so let's be positive. How can we make certain that we are fully prepared for exams?

- Come to college!
- Listen in class and complete all your class and homework to the best of your ability.
- Make sure that your coursework is completed on time and, again, to the best of your ability.

- Make sure that you know what your target grades or levels are and, most importantly, *what you need to do to achieve them.*
- Check this against your own work. Identify with your teacher what you need to focus on to improve your work and increase your chances of improving your target grade.



Give yourself the best chance you can.

- Go to revision classes offered by your teachers!
- Revision needs to be planned.
- Draw up a revision timetable. Be specific: don't just write in '*maths*' – write in '*maths, algebra*', for example.
- Stick to your timetable, but build in room for manoeuvre. Make sure that all areas of each subject are covered within your timetable.

- Avoid the temptation to focus on what you are good at or what you most enjoy. We all do this to make ourselves feel successful, it's human nature.
- Make sure you devote extra time to those areas you find more difficult and, possibly, less interesting. You can bet your life that these things will crop up on an exam paper.

- Plan your revision in half hour chunks with built-in breaks of at least 5 minutes. Every couple of hours, take a slightly longer break of, say, 15 minutes. During your break, forget about revision – have a drink and a snack. Talk to your family!

After all, your friends will be unavailable...they'll all be revising!

- Revise in a quiet environment. Close the door. Ask your friends not to call, text or e-mail you and tell your brothers and sisters to stay out!



- Examination time is not a good time to go on a diet!
- Eat breakfast!
- Eat lunch!
- Eat dinner!
- Eat healthy snacks!
- Your brain needs and uses energy and burns calories. So feed it!



So, how will you learn?

What techniques will you use?

- We all have different learning styles, but a mixture of all of them suits most of us best. Here are some you might like to try:
- You will need to write things down. You may need to do this more than once to get it into your head.
- Complete practice papers. Your teachers will be only too happy to mark them and give you advice.

- Learn and use the key words for each of your subjects. It is important to spell these words correctly, so take time to learn them if you need to. Use the 'look, say, cover, write , check' method.
- For really tricky words, write your own mnemonic to help you remember.
- **BECAUSE** is easy to remember, because:

- **B**ig
- **E**lephants
- **C**an
- **A**lways
- **U**nderstand
- **S**mall
- **E**lephants



- Use post-it notes, strategically placed around your home, to remind you of tricky facts.
- This is a good place...



You need to choose places you go to regularly.

- Ask someone in your family to test you.
- Be the teacher! Once you have revised a topic, try teaching it to someone else.
- You might try recording your own notes and listening to them last thing at night.
- Upload your recording to your MP3 or MP4 and listen to it on the way to and from school etc.
- If you are musically inclined, set your notes to the tune of your favourite tune and sing them!

- Don't forget the internet! If you have a computer at home, there are many excellent revision websites,
- Your teachers will be able to advise you of the best places to look.



PAST EXAM PAPERS

WHY IS THIS A GOOD REVISION TOOL?

Why use past exam papers as a basis for revision?

Make model answers to revise from. Annotate and highlight points to focus on.

Use notes/revision guides to answer exam questions

Make a mind map of the key points in a 'longer' answer

Form a study group with 2/3 friends and work together through an exam paper

Practice drawing and labelling accurate diagrams

Review past exam papers to identify topics you are not sure of

How do they mark? Are there similarities or common themes they are looking for?

Use the markscheme to mark your work
4 marks = 4 points to be made

Practice timing

Highlight key words used in exam questions with a highlighter - a.g. Explain, Describe, Evaluate, calculate

Practice question types e.g. short/long topic area

Write down a list of what you will need to know or find out to answer the question

Re-do past exam paper questions 2 or 3 times with or without notes

Knowledge and understanding

- Model Answers
- Understanding assessment
- Practice timing
- Use to clarify areas they are unsure of
- **Re-do questions to show progress**
- Using notes to help build answers at first:
then take notes away

Technique

- Short / Long answer styles
- Question STEMS

Practice is key, so getting your hands on past paper questions and answers is very important. You're able to make connections between different areas of the syllabus. This is very important when it comes to A / A* questions.

So put down those revision cards and mind-maps once you've learned them. There's no point going over something a million times; you need to be able to apply it. At least one month before the exams, start concentrating on past papers. Do each one at least twice. With each one, trawl through the mark scheme and ensure you understand everything there.

This gives you a better idea of how to think through an exam question.

achieve approach change death decision declared defeat
deportation different europe failed failure germans
germany happen himmler historian
hitler holocaust ideas ideology
interpretation invade jewish jews looked
mass murder nazi needed operating order people planned
point policy question quotes resettlement russia russian shows
situation started thinks understanding used victory war world

- What can you learn from this extract about the interpretation of this historian in relation to the Holocaust?

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The More I Practice The Luckier I Get



Arnold Palmer - www.quoteikon.com