

REVISION GUIDE

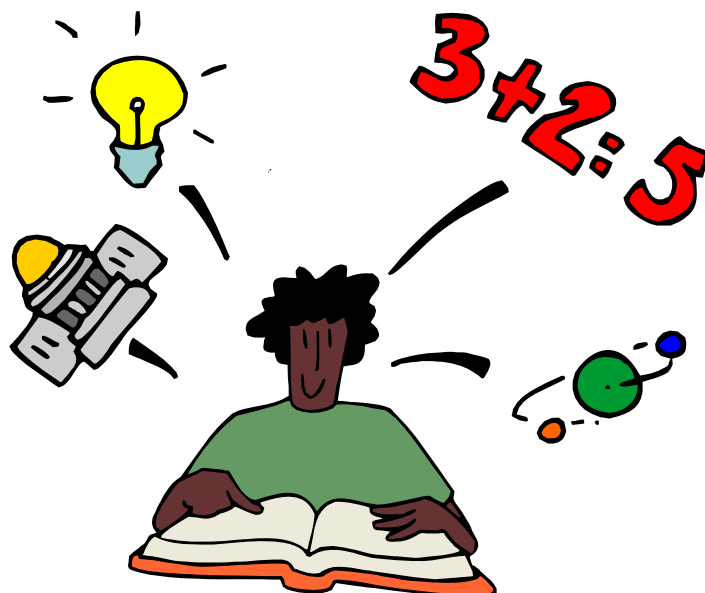
This revision guide was produced for our teaching staff to deliver to students. Having seen the benefits we would like to make it available for Students and their Parents/Carers to view.

Section 1: GETTING ORGANISED/STARTED

Section 2: REVISION STRATEGIES/TECHNIQUES

Section 3: LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Section 4: SITTING YOUR EXAMS



What is revision?

Revision is whatever you make it. But let's get clear (a) what you're trying to achieve, and (b) what revision can do for you.

1 Revision is **FIXING IN YOUR MEMORY** things that you know.



Like a computer, your memory holds information in store for future reference. Revision is like 'saving' information on a disk. If you've done your coursework, the 'input' and the 'processing' of the data has already happened: you have learned and understood the topic. But the knowledge needs to be stored in your memory, so it can be 'called up' later.

2 Revision is **LEARNING TO UNLOCK YOUR MEMORY** in the exam.



All the information stored in a computer can't be 'on screen' all the time. When you want a piece of data, you have to call it up: you need a menu or code to 'access' the information. Your mind works in the same way. Revision gives you memory prompters which can be used to bring what you know into your mind when you need it—in the exam room!

3 Revision is **LEARNING TO ADAPT WHAT YOU KNOW** to an exam.



If your computer printed out long lists of numbers, when you asked for a graph, you'd be pretty annoyed. That's how examiners feel when you don't answer their questions! Revision is a chance to think about how you would select and use the things you know, to answer specific exam questions—in the style required and in the time available.

So Revision Isn't...?

It's NOT trying to learn lots of new topics.

It's NOT trying to do two years' work in two weeks.

It's NOT trying to memorise notes or essays to reproduce in the exam.

RE-VISION = SEEING AGAIN

Let's get this straight.

If you haven't already covered and understood a topic, you won't be revising: you'll be learning. This is harder to do on your own and it takes longer.



Talk to a teacher—as in, NOW!
- about any topics you think you've missed or misunderstood. (They may or may not be important: it's always worth asking...)



If you do have some catching up to do, allow for extra time in your revision plan.

TOP TIP

Clear the decks for revision as early in your course as you can! At the end of each week, review your class notes and handouts on all the week's topics. Check that they're **Complete Correct Clear**

Get any problems or gaps sorted out, as soon as you can. Your Final Revision Phase is for Final Revision!

So the best time to start revising is ...?

Never mind when your first exam is.
The best time to start *revising* is TODAY.

- **If it's the beginning of your course: terrific!**

Why not review some of your notes from time to time throughout the year? You don't have to be too heavy about it: just pick a topic, and see whether it 'rings a bell'. That shouldn't be too painful—and it all adds up!

- **If it's 6-8 weeks before the first exam: great!**

This is pretty much the IDEAL TIME to be starting an intensive—and sensible—Final Revision Phase.

- **If it's 3-4 weeks before the first exam: OK...**

If you haven't started yet, your Final Revision Phase is going to be intensive. Really intensive. But don't panic. It can still be sensible as well—provided you get moving NOW. Cramming is not the Easy Option: you'll need to be a lot more hardworking and efficient—from now on—than those who started work weeks ago... But you can do it!

- **If it's less than 2 weeks before the first exam: Panic!**

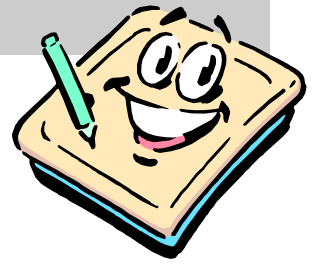
Only kidding. You can still do it—if you're up for it. But if you really haven't started revising yet, there's a problem somewhere. If you don't know what it is, Unit 4.1 is a good place to start. Get it sorted...



There's so much you can do to boost your confidence—and your grades! If you can start early, and spread the workload over a longer period, you'll be able to:

- Accomplish more
- Use sensible techniques which maximise your memory—with less strain on your brain.
- Fit in more rest, relaxation and recreation (the Real Three Rs).
- Avoid unnecessary pressure and stress.

Get organised



Get organised for learning—don't wait for your teacher or your mum or dad to organise you. Once you get into those good habits you will have made the connections and it will be easy!

LAST WEEK DID YOU ...

	YES	NO
• Plan your week?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Set any goals or targets?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Prioritise what you had to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Set any deadlines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Meet all your deadlines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Give in all homework?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Arrange any social activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Spend time relaxing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered 'no to four or more of these questions you may need to get more organised!

The list below will help you for schoolwork and homework. Tick any you

ARE YOU A PROCRASTINATOR?

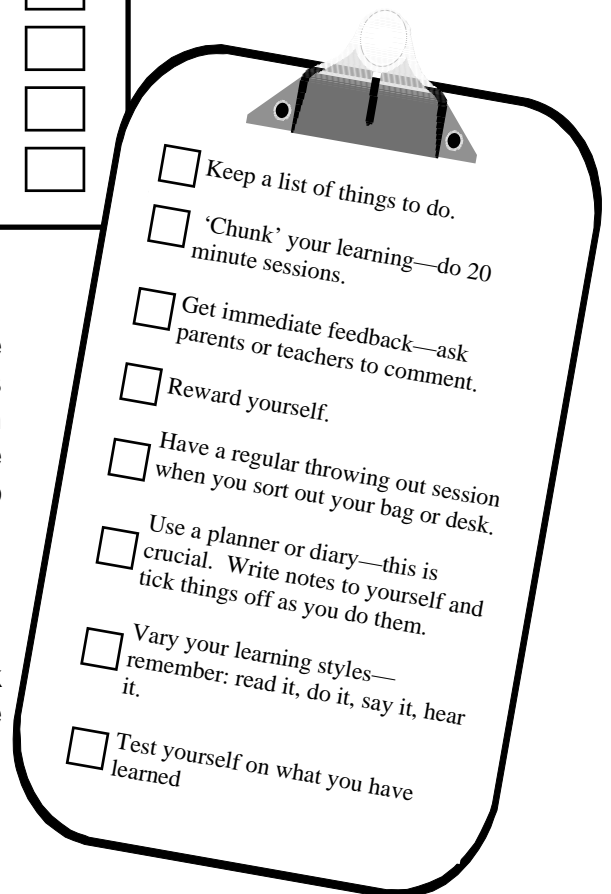
Procrastinators put things off until the last minute and seldom get them done on time. When this happens you can get into a decline which ends in feeling bad about yourself. Think of some positive things you can say when you feel tempted to procrastinate.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The place you work as well as the way you work can make so much difference. Create the learning environment that suits you.

Write a paragraph describing your favourite learning environment. Where is it? Any music? Food for grazing? With friends? What clothes? Using books or internet? Time of day?


Swap these ideas with a neighbour and see if they have similar ideas.




Planning for timetable types


Some people are timetable types, and some aren't. Timetable types are quite good at estimating how long a task is going to take them. They try to finish tasks when they are supposed to. If you're not sure this is you, it may *still* be worth giving a timetable a go—just for a week: it is the most effective way of planning revision. (But don't panic: Unit 3.3. Offers an alternative approach...)

Drawing up a timetable

 Draw up a blank timetable for all the weeks you have available between now and your first exam. (Or photocopy the one opposite.) Divide each day into hourly or half-hourly sessions from 9am to 9pm: don't worry—it won't all be studying.

 Enter your *commitment*: times when you will not be able to revise: Include:

- Lesson (and break) times at school—including 'extras', like sport, and travel time.
- Meal times (very important!)
- Other activities in your normal routine—like household chores.

 Now enter '*appointments*' with yourself. Choose and enter:

- One Big Thing per day that is really important to you and FUN: meeting friends, your favourite soap, or whatever, plus.
- Two other things per day that will not take long, but that will make your life easier and more 'normal': a bit of fresh air, a break to listen to music and so on.

Space them out over your day if possible. Don't let them take up too much time: two hours (max) for your One Big thing and half-an-hour to an hour for the others.

The 'open' times left on your timetable are for revision, and you should enter what you intend to study in each hourly or half-hourly period. Over the page, you'll find some further tips on how to map out which subjects to study, in what order, and for how long.

Take a copy of the timetable opposite and work through our checklist, for the current week

Enter things you regularly have to do, and will be doing throughout your revision period, in RED ink, so you'll remember to transfer them to each new weekly timetable, when you actually start scheduling revision.

GO FOR IT

How long should a revision session be?

You'll be tempted to try and work for hours without a break. Especially at night. And as the exams approach, you're more likely to feel—or to be told—that you're not working hard enough, than that you're not taking enough breaks! But here are the facts.

Short bursts

Make it short!
Make it count!

- **You concentrate better in short bursts.** In a two-hour study slot, you'll work faster and better if you:

study 25 minutes and break for 5 minutes (four times) or
study 50 minutes and break for 10 minutes (twice)

than if you study for the full two hours in one go!

- **You take in and remember more in short bursts.** Like your stomach, your brain gets 'full': it needs to digest what you've fed into it, before it can take any more.

Do you ever find, at a certain point, that you haven't taken in what you've been reading for the last few minutes?

It's called Saturation Point: time to let things settle.

- **You get less tired in short bursts.** You can keep going over a longer working day, if you break up the time. And you're less likely to suffer eye strain, headache, backache, hunger pangs and so on!

Short bursts

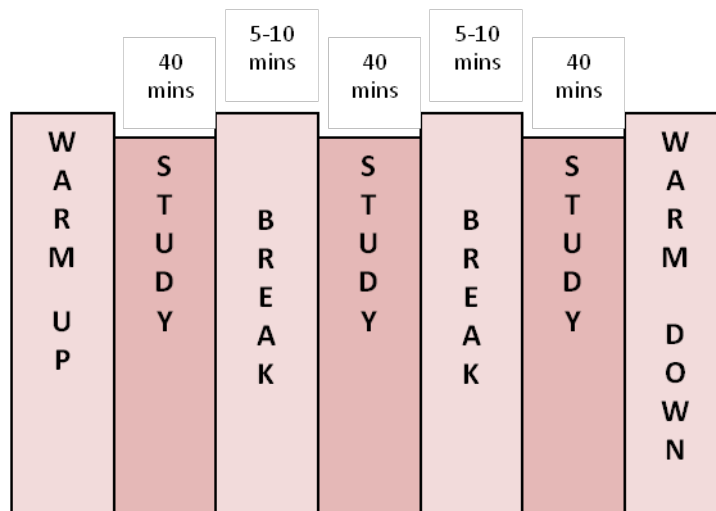
Prescription for
The real
'three Rs'

- REST
- RECREATION
- RELAXATION



- **Breaks motivate you to get down to work.** Breaks, and what you do with them, are something to look forward to. That session won't seem so bad if you know you'll be due for a break and a treat in a short while.
- **Breaks help you stick to your revision plan.** You need refreshment, fresh air, exercise, other people—and fun—on a regular basis. By allowing for these things in your schedule, you stop them from stopping you getting down to uninterrupted work during your study time.
- **Breaks give you a chance to de-stress.** Switching off is very important, if you're not going to let exams get to you. As long as the break is short and/or scheduled, it shouldn't load you with guilt, either: it's the only way to revise sensibly.

STUDY GRAPHS



My Personal Study Environment

Time

Temperature

Lights

People

Place

Position

Food

Sounds

Clothes

Timetables

There are many good reasons for using revision timetables:

- To avoid a last minute rush the night before an exam.
- To share revision time between subjects.

What goes wrong with timetables

- Cover too many weeks ahead.
- Drawn up in too much detail.
- Over ambitious and unrealistic

Revision Times

Morning—9.00am—11.00am

Afternoon—1.00pm—5.00pm

Evening—6.00pm—9.00pm

REVISION PLANNER

Week beginning _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
9.00am							
10.00am							
11.00am							
12.00pm							
1.00pm							
2.00pm							
3.00pm							
4.00pm							
5.00pm							
6.00pm							
7.00pm							
8.00pm							

Fill in your commitments, times when you will not be able to revise – lesson times, travel time to and from school, other activities in your normal routine – household chores.

REVISION PLANNER

Week beginning _____

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
9.00am							
10.00am							
11.00am			SCHOOL DAY				
12.00pm							
1.00pm							
2.00pm							
3.00pm							
4.00pm							
5.00pm							
6.00pm							
7.00pm							
8.00pm							
9.00pm							

Fill in your commitments, times when you will not be able to revise – lesson times, travel time to and from school, other activities in your normal routine – household chores.

Section 2

Doing your REVISION

The best revision methods involve being active. So don't just sit there – DO SOMETHING!

Active or passive revision?

- Active revision means involving your eyes, ears and hands in a variety of ways. Revising actively is the best way to make sense of the material you're revising and also helps you to remember it.



- Active methods of revision include: writing revision notes, reading notes aloud, recording key points onto an MP3, phone or tape, discussing topics with a friend, testing yourself, getting others to test you, rewriting notes, doing examples, trying past exam papers and using revision websites. Use as many of these methods as you find useful.



- Passively reading through your notes and books is a very poor method of revision. It doesn't help you to understand or remember what you are revising. Don't just sit there reading page after page until you get bored.



Making Notes



Notes are meant to be short memory-joggers! There is no point in simply re-writing your class material.



Keep your notes as brief as possible. One idea is to reduce all your notes into key words (a whole subject should fit onto 1 side of A4 paper).



The brain remembers things best by seeing them or storing them in different ways. For example, if you read about the causes of World War 1 draw them in a diagram and then discuss them with a friend or teacher. You are more likely to remember what you revise if you are able to articulate what you have learned.



Use highlighter pens to colour code your notes.

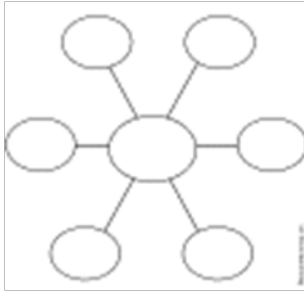


Use Mind Maps, flowcharts, spider diagrams and other visual tools to make your notes more distinctive. (Examples of these can be found in this booklet.)

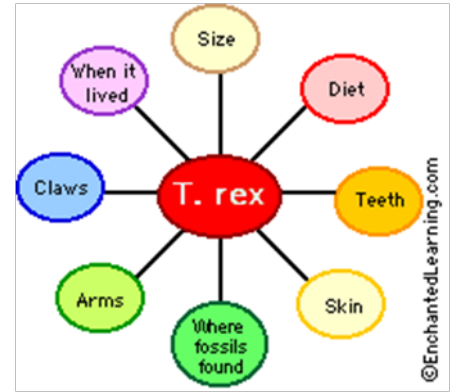
How to make a Spider Diagram

.... A Step by Step Guide

Spider diagrams are sometimes called Graphic Organisers and they come in various shapes and sizes including the traditional spider. Below are 4 illustrations of different types of Graphic Organisers and examples of how you can use them.



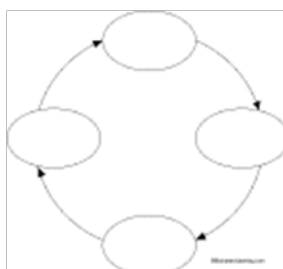
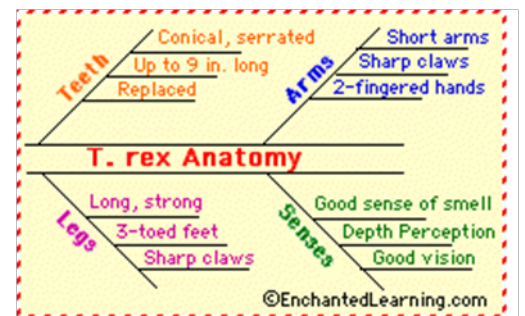
Star diagram



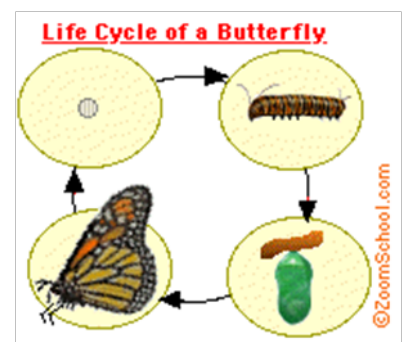
Spider diagram



Fishbone diagram

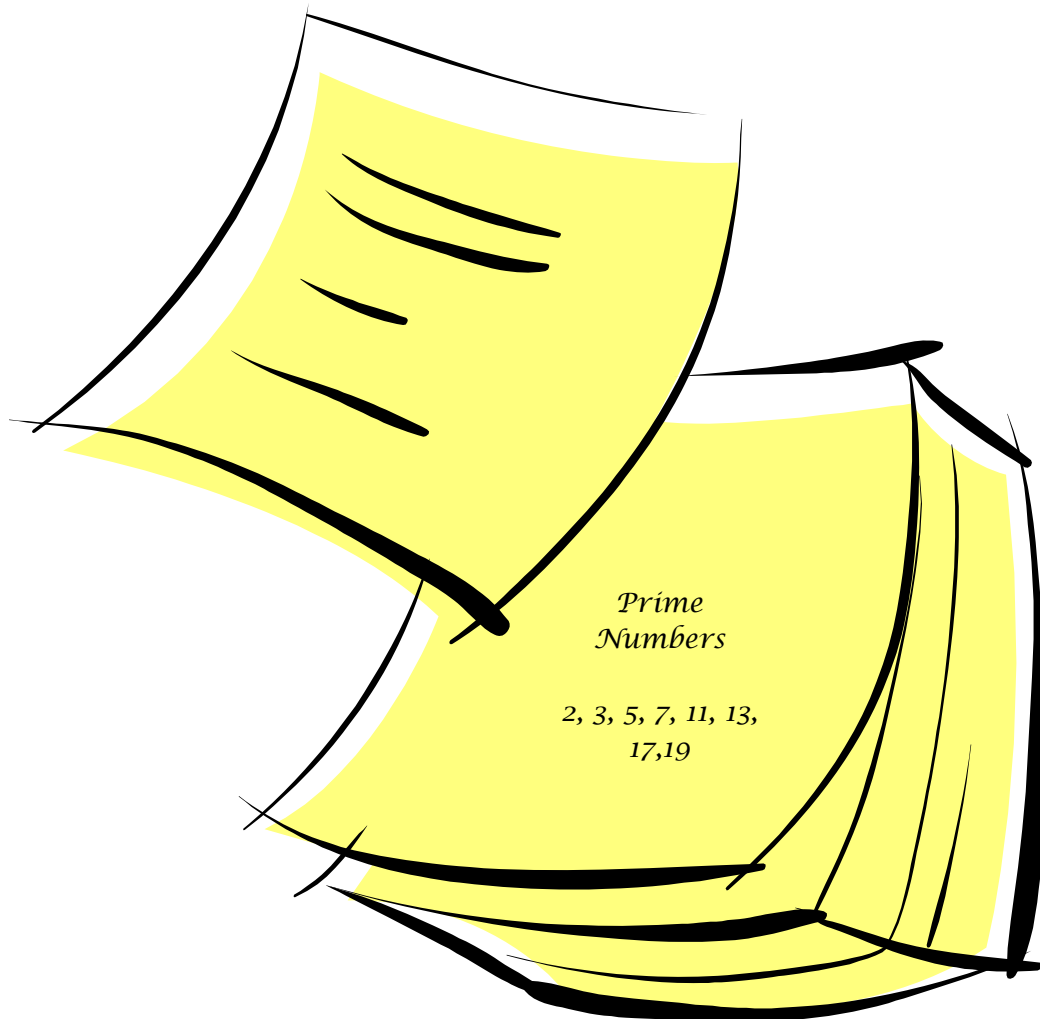


Cycle diagram



Using Post-it Note Memory Joggers

Buy yourself some “Post-its” which can be used to write keywords, concepts, vocabulary, quotes, formula, etc and then stuck around the house in the rooms that you spend a lot of time in (with parents permission of course). This means that you have a ready source of revision in your line of vision, even when you are not formally revising!



Revising using Mnemonics

Mnemonics (*pronounced without the M–nemonics*) need not be as complicated as it sounds. This word literally means 'memory'. It's about putting something memorable into your mind to help you recall information. You create a code using rhymes, phrases or acronyms which helps you to recall information that is essential for doing well in your exams.

Mnemonics have been used for centuries in education. Anyone remember these?

'**Every Good Boy Deserves Favour**' – This stands for the musical notes **E, G, B, D,** and **F.**

"**Never Eat Shredded Wheat**" – It refers to the points of a compass - **North - East - South - West.**

'**Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain**' refers to the colours of the spectrum **Red - Orange - Yellow - Green - Blue - Indigo - Violet.**

The point is you have fun making up your own to remember keywords, formula and key facts for any subject you like. Remember that Mnemonics should be short and memorable. The funnier the better however ludicrous the Mnemonic is! Below are some further examples relevant to your subjects for revision. Once you've read these try making up your own, then write them on a Post-it, stick them on a wall or mirror somewhere at home and memorise them!

KINGS PLAY CARDS ON FAT GREEN STOOLS *the order of taxonomy in biology* = **Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, Species.**

OIL RIG – *In Chemistry in relation to Electrons* = **Oxidation Is Loss, Reduction Is Gain.**

SOHCAHTOA *Trigonometry in Maths* = **SOH ... Sine = Opposite leg divided by the Hypotenuse. CAH ... Cosine = Adjacent leg divided by the Hypotenuse. TOA ... Tangent = Opposite leg divided by the Adjacent leg.**

DIVORCED, BEHEADED, DIED, DIVORCED, BEHEADED, SURVIVED *helps you to remember what happened to the six wives of Henry VIII*

Revising with an MP3



You may learn best by listening so why not 'talk'! Do some revision by recording onto your MP3 and then listen to these while lying in bed, or travelling in a car, or walking to the shops. This also takes the 'guilt' out of being out and about instead of in front of the books.

Revising with Friends

Another great way to revise is to talk about what you do know about your subject to your friends who are also studying the same subjects as you. Take it in turns because you will learn insights on your subjects from them that you may not have even considered before and help clarify anything you have not fully understood! Be careful though to be disciplined about using your time for revision and not just for idle chit chat!

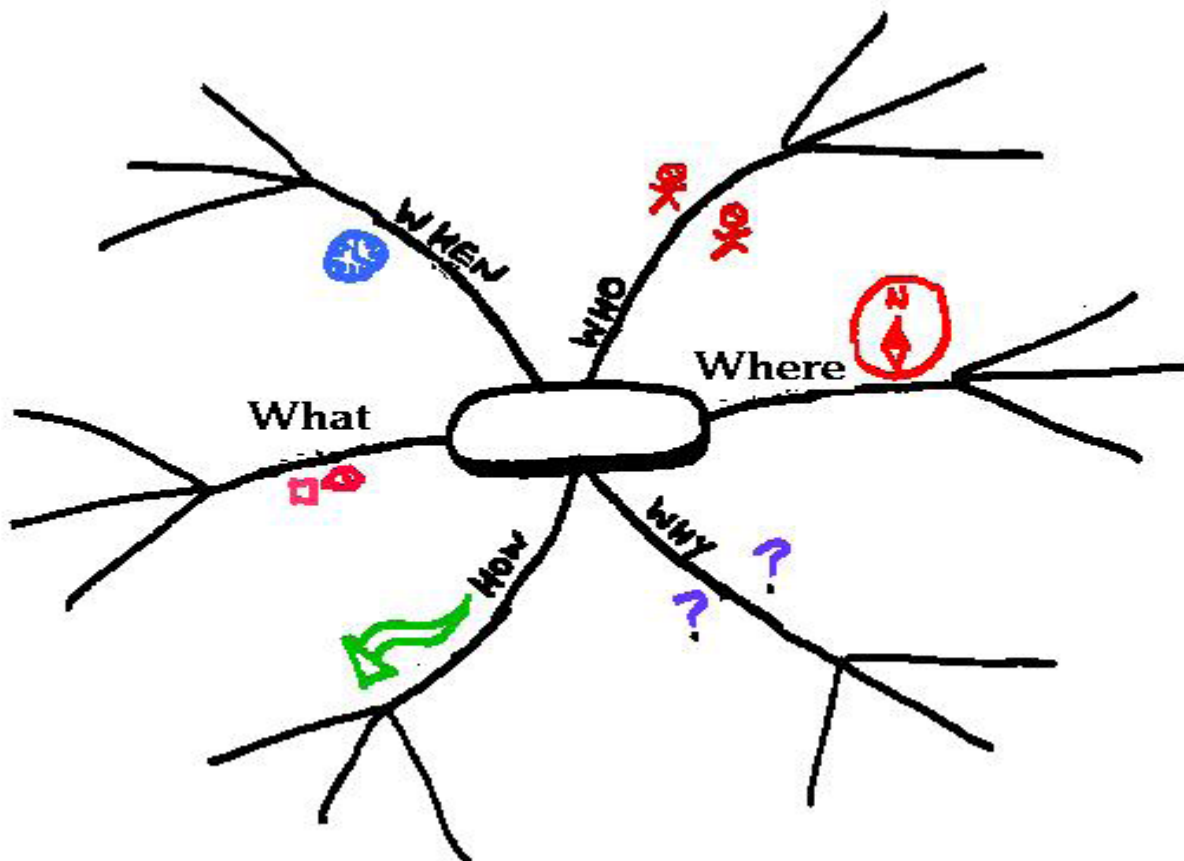


How to make a Mind Map

...A Step by Step Guide...

You can turn your subject lesson class notes into a Mind Map by following the instructions below. There are 3 examples of Mind Maps over the page!

- ☑ Start from the centre of the page and work out. Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.
- ☑ Use a combination of key words and appropriate images. Put ideas down as they occur and wherever they fit.
- ☑ Put main subject words on main lines and key words for each subject on branch lines. **DO NOT USE TOO MANY WORDS ON YOUR MIND MAP!**
- ☑ Use **colour** to depict themes and to make things stand out. Anything that **STANDS OUT** on the page will stand out in your mind. Use arrows, cartoons or other visual images to make the Map more memorable.





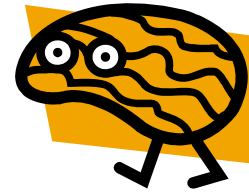
**The Hungry Caterpillar
Is a Revision Resource that Students and identify with and may
find useful when learning ways to aid revision.**

[Click here to view](#)

Mastering your Memory

70% of what you learn today can be forgotten within 24 hours if you don't make a special effort to remember it.

However, don't worry too much because your memory is amazing.



I've forgotten already!

- Jot down everything that is in your bedroom.
- Write down every phone number that you know.
- Remember some adverts from the TV—how many can you think of?

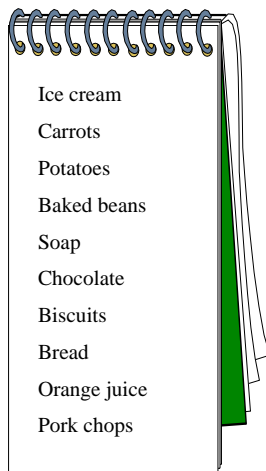
Research shows the best way to remember is to make those sorts of connections.

Rhyming is a powerful way to help you remember. Here is a shopping list to memorise.

Take a minute to memorise, then see how many you can recall.

Now, create a wacky rhyme for each word and a mad image to go with it.

How many can you remember now?



tip

Learning names is easy if you use alliteration. For example: Gentle Joe or Saucy Sarah, Perfect Paul, Mad Matthew

Yes, your memory is good but can you remember what you have learnt this week?

Your memory works best when you get good at making associations—links between things that connect the learning.

TRY THIS

Learn these pairs of nouns:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1 Car / ring | 2 house / book | 3 sky / rabbit |
| 4 hat / sausage | 5 computer / flower | |

How did you learn them? Did you make mental pictures? Use other words to link them together, making sentences?

USE MNEMONICS TO HELP YOUR MEMORY

This means using letters to make up phrases that help you remember. Here are two examples.

This is a formula for trigonometry you need for Key Stage 3 maths:

Sine = Opposite/Hypotenuse
Cosine = Adjacent/Hypotenuse
Tangent = Opposite/Adjacent

The first letters say SOHCAHTOA—which is made easier to remember.

Spelling 'necessary' is hard to remember.

But ... 'Never Eat Cakes, Eat Salad, Sandwiches and Remain Young' is easier to remember.

MAKE UP TWO OF YOUR OWN MNEMONICS

Using mental pictures, associations, mnemonics and rhyming techniques are powerful aids to your memory. Advertisers know this—can any of you remember any radio advertising slogans? Why did you learn them? Did you need to?

REVIEW is an essential part of learning and memory. If you top up your learning on a regular basis you will find it stays with you.

Review NOW all the tips you have learnt this lesson about how to improve your memory

WEBSITES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

ICT

www.teach-ict.com

www.ict4me.co.uk

Languages

www.rgshw.com/languagesonline

www.linguascope.com user name:hanson password:Sutton

www.modlangs.co.uk user name: 50025 password: path5nice

www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/curriculum/modlang/index_students

Business/Communication

www.ocr.org.uk

www.iw-chameleon.co.uk

www.ict.com

Business Studies

www.edexcel.org.uk

www.businessstudiesonline.co.uk

Health and Social Care

www.nhs.uk

www.dh.gov.uk/en/socialcare/index.htm

www.practicalcaring.com

English

www.podcastrevision.co.uk

www.rsc.org.uk/learning/learning.aspx for Shakespeare specific revision

All video/ DVD resources available to be viewed for free at the TV room, Media Museum, Bradford

Art

www.artchive.com

www.artcyclopedia.com

www.world-arts-resources.com

Drama

www.sparknotes.com

PE

www.revisionworld.co.uk
www.physicaleducation.co.uk/GCSE/gcse.htm
www.arrowvale.worcs.sch.uk/sportscollege/pe.htm
www.sportsinjuryclinic.net/
www.brianmac.demon.co.uk/
www.sportengland.org/
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize
www.teachpe.com
www.educationforum.co.uk/PE/peoffline
www.arrowvale.worcs.sch.uk/sportscollege/pe_revision_quiz

Social Science – Geography

www.scool.co.uk
www.bbc.http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/managing_resources/tourismrev1.shtml
www.geographypages.co.uk/revision.htm
www.scalloway.org.uk/
www.georesources.co.uk/
www.revisioncentre.co.uk/gcse/geography/

Social Science – History

www.johndclare.net
www.schoolhistory.co.uk
www.historymad.com

Science

www.aqa.org.uk
www.samlearning.co.uk

Maths

www.nlvm.com
www.mathisfun.com

Music

www.soundjunction.org
www.gwhite.co.uk/music/index

Technology

www.technologystudent.com
www.design-technology.info
www.design-technology.org

Other websites which offer information for most subjects:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bitesize
www.samlearning.co.uk
www.alite.co.uk/PAL username: hanson sch password: 4rUha5Uc

Section 3

Feed your body and Feed your brain

What you put inside your body really does affect your brain. Write down here everything you might eat in a normal school day.

Check the list below to see if you have eaten foods that are good for your body and your brain... or not.



GET GOOD RESULTS WITH THESES



- Carbohydrates such as wholemeal bread, bagels, muffins.
- Fruit - you need that vitamin C
- Vegetables - especially greens.
- Lean meat or cereals, nuts and beans if you are a veggie.
- Bananas - good for stamina
- Cereals - especially oats
- Pasta and rice
- Salad
- WATER - essential for learning - drink at least eight glasses a day.
- Chocolate - some say it is good for you!

AVOID THESE



- Sugar and any sugary food like sweets
- Coffee
- Alcohol!
- Fizzy drinks, especially colas
- Artificial flavourings - lots of 'e' numbers
- Too many fatty foods such as chips and burgers
- Chocolate - some say it is bad for you!

Sleep is crucial too. Make sure you get eight hours. Use a relaxation exercise if you need help getting to sleep. If you do lie in bed awake, use the time to think happy, positive thoughts about yourself.

Try to exercise at least three times a week by:

- Cycling
- Dancing
- Walking
- Swimming
- Jogging
- Aerobics (get a video)
- Team sports



Make a list of the things you enjoy doing.

Do they include any of the things that are good for you? If not add some.

Have fun, enjoy yourself—do something everyday that you enjoy.



LOOK AFTER YOUR BRAIN

We all know that good athletes have to be fit. They have to eat well, sleep well and practise hard. They have to look after their bodies. To learn well you need to look after your brain.

You can improve brain power by:

- Getting plenty of sleep; this allows your theta and delta waves to buzz. Your brain needs time to sort out information that has come in during the day.
- Drinking lots of water - it helps to conduct electricity and speeds up learning by 30 percent. Dehydration will lead to headaches and tiredness. Water does not mean tea, coffee or coke... it means pure H₂O.
- Eating a balanced diet. Plenty of 'brain food' like fish and green vegetables really does help!
- Trying brain exercises helps connect the right and left hemisphere for whole-brain learning.
- Exercise in general helps enormously; your brain uses up 20 percent of your total oxygen intake. Regular aerobic exercise is therefore very important. It also improves your mood and is helpful when you are stressed.
- Avoiding too much chocolate, coffee, sugar, coke, foods with E numbers and, of course, alcohol; these are bad for your brain. They interfere with the messages being passed from one cell to another.

Coping with your STRESS

Everybody gets nervous, but you can learn to reduce your nerves.

Talk about it

- Think about the people you know who will listen to you and make sure you talk to them.
- Your listeners can be friends, family, teachers or others.
- Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of maturity and strength to realise when you have difficulties and to feel confident enough to share those difficulties with others.

Take time out to have fun

- During the revision period make sure you give yourself some time to do the things you enjoy. Do the things that relax you and take your mind off your studies.

Do some exercise

- One of the best ways of dealing with stress is to exercise as you will find that after exercising your muscles are relaxed and calm.

Think positively

- A lot of exam success can be put down to positive thinking. Thinking you might fail drains away your confidence, makes you worry more and makes you less enthusiastic about working hard.
- Don't tell yourself things like, 'I'm useless at this subject' or 'I haven't got enough time to revise properly'. Replace this unhelpful self-talk with statements like, 'This subject is difficult but I've had difficult subjects before and understand them' or 'I can get my revision done in time when I plan a proper revision timetable'.

Relax your muscles

- Muscle relaxation doesn't simply mean doing nothing with your muscles; it involves tensing and relaxing them.
- Start by tensing and then relaxing the muscles around the head, face, neck and shoulders. Then work down your body tensing and relaxing your arms, hands, back, stomach, hips, legs and feet.

Eat Well

- Eating well reduces the overall stress on the body and can also make you feel good about yourself. Try eating a variety of foods.



Use breathing techniques

- Here is a step-by-step approach to help you relax:
 1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
 2. Breathe in slowly through your nose to the count of ten.
 3. Hold this breath while you count to ten again.
 4. Now let out your breath slowly and count to ten once more.
 5. Repeat this three times.
 - 6.

You can use this technique at any time when you feel nervous, such as on exam days.

Use mental imagery

- Mental imagery is a bit like a daydream and can help you relax your mind.
- Start by getting yourself comfortable. Close your eyes and start to breathe deeply, concentrating all the time on your breathing.
- Now form a picture in your mind of a pleasant scene such as a tropical island, a valley, a woodland area. Try to include smells and sounds.
- Explore the scene and enjoy the surroundings. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

Section 4

Sitting your EXAMS

Exams measure not only what you know, but how well you take them!



The night before

- Only attempt light revision using your revision notes and try not to do any totally new revision.
- Get all the equipment you will need (pens, rulers, calculators etc) ready the night before. The last thing you want in the morning is to be rushing around trying to find things.

Try to get a normal night's sleep (if you can!).

On the day

Get up in plenty of time.

- When you leave home make sure you've got with you everything you will need for the exam.
- If you want to, do some last minute revision by flicking through your revision notes.
- Don't spend too long waiting outside the exam room as this can make you feel more nervous than you already are. Make an agreement with your friends not to talk about the exam.

Compose yourself

- The moment you first open your exam paper is always a bit of a shock. The exam never looks or reads quite the way you expect it to, so be prepared for this.
- Ease yourself gently into the exam, and resist the temptation to start answering the first question immediately.
- Don't worry about your classmates who may already be scribbling away.
- If necessary, begin by taking a couple of minutes to write down anything you are afraid of forgetting.
- If you are the sort of person who freezes in exams or finds that your mind goes blank, it may be better for you to get writing as quickly as possible so that you can get your ideas flowing.

Read the instructions carefully

- Read the whole paper through carefully, noting all the instructions given about the number and choice of questions.
- If you have a choice of questions, select and mark those questions you feel confident that you are able to answer well.
- Decide on your question order then start by answering the questions you know you can answer well. This gives you more time to think about the difficult questions and boosts your confidence.
- It can be a mistake to tackle difficult questions first, as you might run out of time to do the questions you can answer more easily and fully.
- One of the most common ways that pupils fail is simply by not answering the right number of questions.



Budget your time

Always take a watch with you.

- Before the day of the exam, work out roughly how much time you can devote to each question or section. This will depend on: how much time you have for the whole exam, the total number of questions, the type and difficulty of each question and the marks given to each question.
- You may also wish to write down approximate finishing times for each question or section to help you see the progress you are making, so take a watch in with you.
- As you're taking the exam, you may find yourself falling behind the schedule you set for yourself. Don't panic, simply work a little faster.
- Don't fall into the trap of spending the most time trying to answer the questions about which you know very little.

Tackle the questions

- Read every question at least twice, picking out key words.
- Think about the question and analyse it before you get into your answer. Get a sense of how long and detailed an answer is expected.
- For essay-type questions outline the main points you intend to include in your answer. Without an outline you are likely to stray from the point or forget important points.
- Remember to stick to what the question is asking!