

HELPING OUR STUDENTS ACHIEVE SUCCESS

# REVISION SUPPORT BOOKLET



**GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS  
AND PARENTS**



# INTRODUCTION

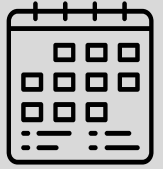


This booklet is designed to offer guidance on study skills and exam preparation. It is full of useful tips and explanations of different revision methods to help you achieve your best in your upcoming GCSE exams. Different revision strategies work better for different individuals - use this opportunity to experiment with a wide range to see what works best for your learning in each subject area. Remember that just re-reading and highlighting your notes has very little impact on your long-term learning.

## **Parents - how can you help?**

- Recognise the importance of GCSE exams and the preparation time needed to do as well as possible.
- Reward the effort made to revise.
- Reduce the amount of work they may undertake in paid jobs.
- Reduce the amount of chores they may do within the home or looking after brothers or sisters.
- Reduce sporting, musical or other out of school commitments appropriately.
- Agree the balance between work and social life and try to stick to it.
- Explain the importance of revision to the rest of the family.
- Nominate a quiet place for revision, where disturbances will be kept to a minimum.
- Minimise the number of distractions in the revision space e.g. phone, TV, gaming, social media etc.
- Make sure your child has one good revision guide for each subject – check with the teacher if you are not sure which one to get.
- Enable the provision of relaxation time, especially away from the place of study.
- Emphasise the need for plenty of sleep and hydration to help concentration and memory.
- Remind them that although it might seem like exams and schoolwork will go on for ever, it will soon all be over.
- Most of all, praise them when they are working hard!
- Maintain a positive attitude.

# REVISION TIMETABLE



Creating an effective revision timetable and starting early is crucial to being well prepared for your exams. A bank timetable for the year can be downloaded from the [revision area](#) of the college website. You can also use the [GetRevising](#) website to create a timetable for you.

**Subject audit** – to see which areas may need more focus:

1. List all of your subjects.
2. Rank your subjects from number 1-9 (1 being your strongest subject).
3. Then re-write your list in the order of the subjects you have numbered.
4. The subjects nearer the bottom of your list need more time allocating to them on your revision timetable.

You can do this with topics too, RAG rating each one (green very confident, amber ok, red a concern) and then start with the red topics.

## Writing a revision timetable

1. Create a timetable running from now until your final exam.
2. Add in any extra-curricular or job commitments you have.
3. Write in the subjects you are going to cover and when in 30-40 minute sessions. Be specific about which topics you will study each time. Research shows that spaced learning is highly effective so you should aim to spread everything out and include opportunities to revisit subjects. Subjects with more content to learn or that you are less confident in may require more time allocated to them.
4. Look at when your exams are and ensure you include time the day before to do a last minute recap.
5. Not every space needs to be filled – leave yourself time to relax.

**Interleaving** is a process where you revise more than one topic from a subject in each revision session. This is proven to be more effective in improving learning than blocked practice (which is when you do one topic very thoroughly before moving on to the next).

1. Break units down into small chunks and split these over a few days rather than revising one whole topic all at once.
2. Decide on key topics you need to learn for each subject.
3. Build interleaving into your revision timetable.

# WELLBEING



The exam period can be a busy and stressful time so it is important that you do all you can to look after your mental and physical health.

**Eat** – Diet is important so don't neglect it during the exam period. Don't skip meals as it will reduce your concentration. Stay consistent with a healthy balance of meals and stay hydrated.

**Sleep** – Staying up late to revise is not a good idea. Sleep deprivation can have a very negative impact on concentration, performance and memory.

**Exercise** – Take regular breaks from your revision and do some exercise. Take part in a sport you enjoy, get outdoors and go for a walk or just build more activity into your daily routine.

**Relax** – It is essential that you make the time to switch off and have a break by relaxing with family and friends, watching TV, reading or whatever else you find relaxing.

## WHEN REVISING – DOs AND DON'Ts

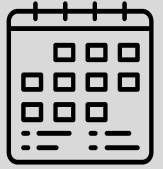
**Do** create a clutter and distraction free area for you to study in. **Do** get into a regular routine, revise in short chunks of 30 minutes and take breaks. **Do** put away your mobile phone or turn off notifications.

**Don't** revise late at night or when you are tired. **Don't** revise for long periods of time with no break. **Don't** listen to music with lyrics when revising as it will distract you.

## ON THE DAY OF AN EXAM

- Try to get a good night's **sleep** before the exam.
- Have **breakfast**, even if it's just a banana on the way to the bus!
- Check you have all the **equipment** you need - at least black pens, pencils, ruler and rubber. Some exams may require **special equipment**, for example: Maths equipment - calculator, compass, protractor, ruler; DT - coloured pencils, rulers, compass, protractors etc.
- Ensure you have a copy of your **exam timetable**.
- You know **the location and start time** of the exam(s).
- After the exam don't dwell on your performance, instead focus your energy on preparing for the exams coming up.

# DELIBERATE PRACTICE



Deliberate practice is when you practice something you are almost able to do, but not quite yet so you become an expert. It includes the following:

## SPACED PRACTICE

Spacing is regularly revisiting material so that you are doing little and often instead of all at once. Doing a little amount regularly is more effective than doing a lot all at once. This is because the time in between allows you to forget and re-learn the information, which helps cement it in your long-term memory.

### Tips

Start early and set aside a little bit of revision time everyday.

Each day review new information but also study older information so it stays fresh in your memory.

Divide your revision into short manageable chunks of time (30 minutes).

Research suggests there is an 'optimal gap' between revision sessions so you can retain the information:

Time to the test	Revision gap
1 week	1-2 days
1 month	1 week
3 months	2 weeks
6 months	3 weeks
1 year	1 month

## RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

Retrieval practice is when you practice bringing information to mind. Repeatedly recalling information helps to test what you know and the effort of remembering helps to strengthen your memory. Therefore it is particularly useful for effective exam performance.

### Examples of retrieval methods

- Short quizzes and tests
- Flash cards
- Brain dumps

# QUIZZING



Quizzing is a great way to introduce self-testing into your revision, which research shows is very effective at helping you retrieve and embed your knowledge. The process of forgetting and then remembering is excellent for building long-term memory of knowledge.

## Tips

Write your own questions and get someone to test you.

Alternatively there are lots of online resources which can produce quizzes on topics for you e.g. [Educake](#), [BBC Bitesize](#), [Seneca](#).

Don't just answer in your head – write your answers down.

1. **Identify knowledge** – what you wish to cover.
2. **Review and create** – spend 5-10 minutes reviewing content (use notes/knowledge organiser/revision guide) then create 10 quiz questions or use an online resource.
3. **Cover and answer** – answer the questions from memory
4. **Self mark and reflect** – go over the answers and mark in green pen.
5. **Next time** – revisit the areas where there were gaps in knowledge.

# TEACHING

This is a good technique which works well with quizzing and retrieval practice. One of the best ways to consolidate knowledge is to teach somebody it. You are forced to select and organise the most important information so that your teaching is as straightforward as possible. Having someone to interact with and ask you questions also strengthens your learning. This is also an effective way to revise with friends.

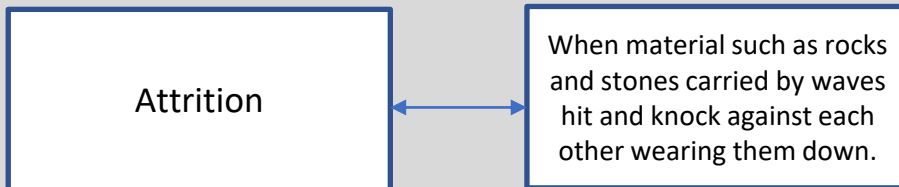
Teaching somebody else a topic draws on many different successful revision strategies such as summarising, quizzing, mind-mapping and thinking hard.



# FLASH CARDS



Flashcards are very effective for self-testing. Use both sides of the card with the question/key concept on one side and the answer on the other. Keep it simple and short so it's easier to remember.



## Tips

Creating your own cards is better than buying them as it helps you retrieve knowledge.

Try adding pictures to make them more memorable.

Use colour coding to organise different topics.

Try recalling the information out loud or writing it down before checking the card (research shows that just answering it in your head is not very effective for remembering).

Use your flash cards in both directions.

Get friends and family to test you with the cards.

Use the Leitner system to recall knowledge over different time intervals:

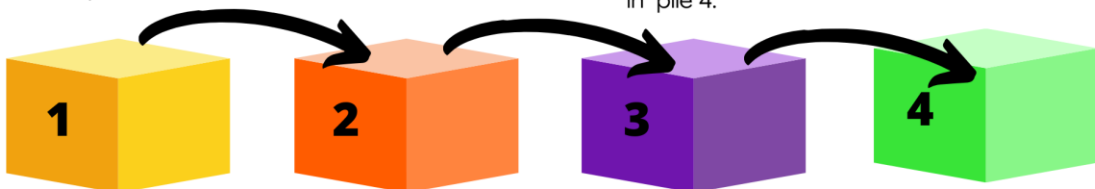
## Introducing the Leitner System

All flash cards start off in pile 1 .  
As you review the cards, each card you answer **correctly** goes into pile 2.

If you give the wrong answer the card stays in pile 1.

When you review cards in pile 2, if you **get it right** you move the card to pile 3 and so on until all cards are in pile 4.

If you answer a card incorrectly in any pile it moves back to pile 1 for you to go over again.



# MIND MAPS



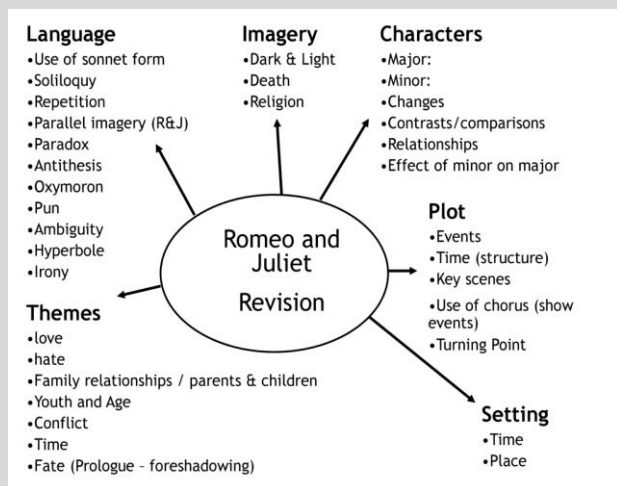
Sometimes also known as concept or knowledge maps, mind maps allow you to map out the main points of a topic and then elaborate with further detail e.g. facts or quotes. They help you memorise information and see the connections between different ideas.

## Tips

In subjects where you have to write an essay or long written response, take a question and map out your answer without writing a full response.

Check your response against the exam mark scheme.

Do this for a number of questions then choose one and complete a full response.



1. Identify knowledge
2. Identify sub topics
3. Branch off
4. Use image and colour
5. Put it somewhere visible

## BRAIN DUMPS

Also known as recall revision, brain dumps are similar to mind maps but you only refer to your notes at certain points:

1. Read through your notes or revision guide/knowledge organiser on a topic and then put them away.
2. Write down everything you can remember on the topic in a set period of time e.g. 15 minutes, without looking back at your notes.
3. Look back over your notes to see what information you have missed.
4. Put your notes away again and attempt to fill the gaps using a different colour pen.
5. Finally check your notes a third time and add in the missing information in another colour pen.
6. Each time you should find you can remember more.



# DUAL CODING



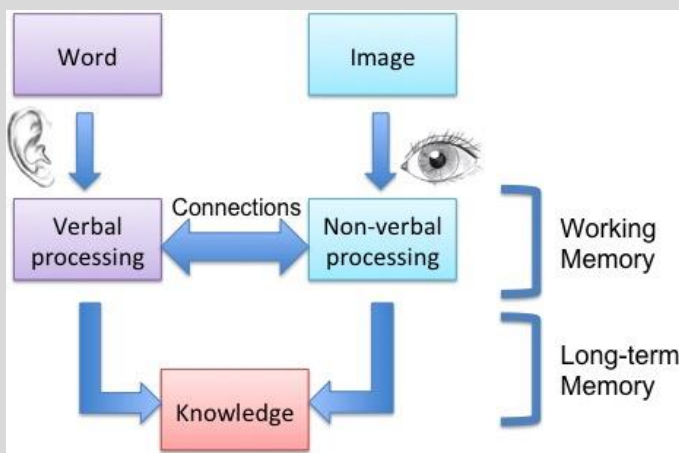
Dual coding works well with mind mapping as it involves you combining words and images. This provides you with two ways to understand and remember information and helps move knowledge from your working memory to your long-term memory.

## Tips

Take information that you are trying to learn and draw visuals to go with it. Use existing visuals and add words to explain them in more detail.

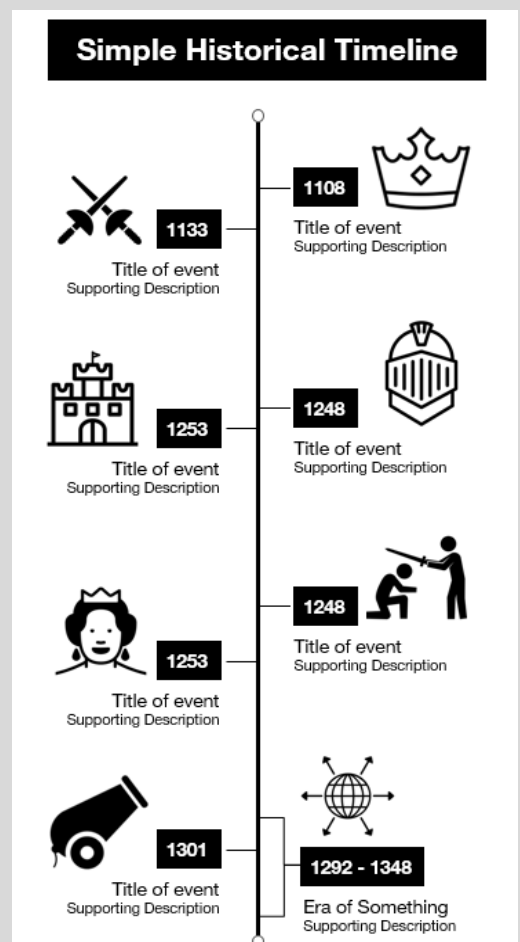
Try to come up with different ways to represent the information e.g. infographics, timelines, cartoons, diagrams, symbols.

Work your way up to drawing or writing what you know from memory.



## SUMMARISING AND NOTE TAKING

Dual coding can work well alongside the revision strategy of summarising key information. One approach to summarising is to **delete** some information, **substitute** some information and **keep** some information. This approach is effective because you need to really analyse the information you're trying to summarise. Another good method is [Cornell notes](#).



# THINKING SKILLS



## THINKING HARD: REDUCE

1. Read a section of your notes then put them aside and reduce what you need into 3 bullet points, each one no more than 10 words.
2. Look back at your notes and decide if you missed anything important.
3. Put the notes away and write a fourth bullet point.

## THINKING HARD: CONNECT

1. For each subject, consider the exam paper requirements (looking at the assessment objectives can help here) and group together questions that require the same technique to answer.
2. Write down the requirements for each type of question e.g. explain, analyse.
3. Find a previous example which you have completed of one of those types of questions and identify where you have met the criteria.
4. Complete practice questions of that type together.

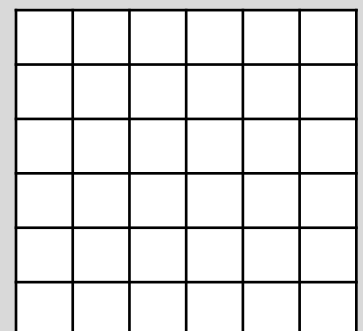
## THINKING HARD: TRANSFORM

1. Read a paragraph from your notes or revision guide and transform it into a diagram, chart or sketch with no words allowed.
2. You can flip this and look at a diagram (science is a good example) and transform it into a paragraph of explanation.
3. Read your notes/revision guide/knowledge organiser and transform the key knowledge into mind maps, flash cards or quizzes.

## THINKING AND LINKING GRIDS

These force you to think deeply about an area of a subject you have studied.

1. Create a 6x6 grid and fill each square with a single word linked to key ideas, themes, facts etc.
2. Roll 2 dices to get your coordinates of each box.
3. Write both words down and spend time thinking how they link to the main topic.
4. Talking for a minute on each area works well here.



# EXAM VOCABULARY



There are subject-specific key terms that you need to learn for each of your subjects. However, below are a range of common command words used in exams. Make sure you understand what the exam question is asking you by knowing what these words mean. Command words can vary across subjects so ensure you understand the context too.

**Analyse** - Examine something in detail and try to explain or interpret it.

**Annotate** - Add to a diagram, image or piece of text to illustrate or describe features rather than just identify them which is labelling.

**Assess** - Consider different options/arguments/factors and weigh them up to reach a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.

**Calculate** - Work out the value of something.

**Compare** - Give a point by point identification of similarities and differences.

**Define** - This means what is meant by “.....” give the precise meaning of a term or concept.

**Describe** - Provide an account in detail of an event/individual/concept etc.

**Discuss** - Set out both sides of an argument and reach a conclusion, including evidence.

**Evaluate** - Consider different options/factors and reach a conclusion about their importance/impact/value/worth.

**Examine** - Consider carefully and provide a detailed account of the topic.

**Explain** - Provide a detailed description or interpretation of a term/concept etc.

**Identify** - Point out and name from a number of possibilities.

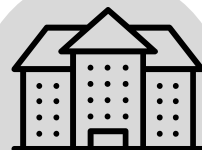
**Illustrate** - Refer to a specific case study or example (not illustrate as in draw).

**Label** - Point out specific features on a diagram, image or piece of text.

**Justify** - Explain why your selected choice/judgement is better than other options.

**Summarise** - Sum up the main points/arguments (this can be similar to outline).

# EXAM BOARDS



The below details are correct for the summer **2024** exams – please check with your teacher for subsequent years.

Subject	Board	Spec Code	
Art & Design	AQA	8201	
BTEC Art and Design Practice (yr11 only)	Pearson	BAD01	
Business Studies	OCR	J204	
Citizenship	AQA	8100	
Computer Science	OCR	J277	
Design and Technology	AQA	8552	
Drama	AQA	8261	
English Language	AQA	8700	
English Literature	AQA	8702	
Food Preparation & Nutrition	WJEC	3560P1	
French	AQA	8658	
Geography	OCR	J383	
German	AQA	8668	
History	OCR	J410	
Maths	OCR	J560	
Music	OCR	J536	
PE: GCSE	AQA	8582	
PE: Cambridge National	OCR	J829	
RE	AQA	8062	
Combined Science Trilogy	AQA	8464	
Triple Science	Biology	AQA	8461
	Chemistry	AQA	8462
	Physics	AQA	8463
Spanish	AQA	8698	
Higher Project Level 2	Pearson	JPJ20	

# METHODS CHECKLIST



Revision method		Tried successfully before	Will try it	Subjects where I will use it
Methods from this booklet	Spaced practice			
	Quizzing			
	Teaching somebody else			
	Flash cards			
	Mind maps			
	Brain dumps			
	Dual coding			
	Summarising and note taking			
	Thinking hard: reduce			
	Thinking hard: connect			
	Thinking hard: transform			
	Thinking and linking grids			
Other methods	Mnemonics			
	Websites			
	Essay planning			
	Time yourself			
	Past exam papers			
	Mark schemes			
	Revision classes			

# USEFUL WEBSITES



## GENERAL REVISION TIPS AND VIDEOS

- [Tips for beating exam stress](#)
- [How to revise](#)
- [Revision tips](#)
- [Revision tips by students](#)
- [How to write a revision timetable](#)
- [The importance of spaced learning](#)
- [How to use retrieval practice](#)
- [How to improve your memory](#)
- [How to develop memory techniques](#)
- [How to create and use quizzes](#)
- [How to use flash cards](#)
- [How to create mind maps](#)
- [How to use dual coding](#)
- [How to make Cornell notes](#)

## SUBJECT REVISION RESOURCES

- [Getrevising](#)
- [Seneca](#)
- [BBC Bitesize](#)
- [Oak National Academy](#)
- [Educake](#)
- [Corbett Maths](#)
- [Dr Frost Maths](#)
- [Sparknotes](#)
- [Quizlet](#)
- [Kahoot](#)

## COLLATED INFORMATION

- [UCC website student revision area](#)
- Exams boards: [AQA](#), [Pearson Edexcel](#), [OCR](#), [WJEC](#)

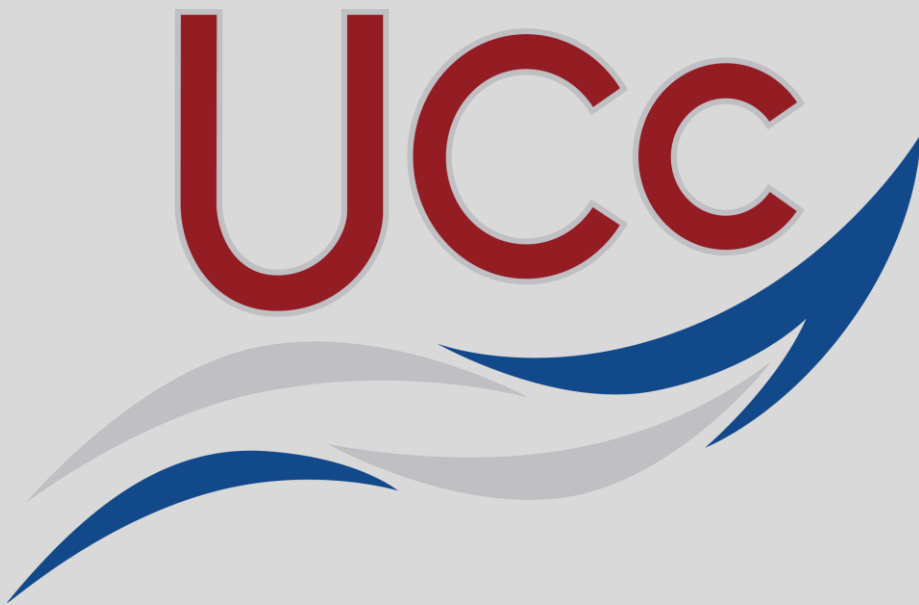
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# NOTES

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***“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow  
belongs to those who prepare for it today.”  
Malcolm X***



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**RESPECT**

**HONESTY**

**KINDNESS**