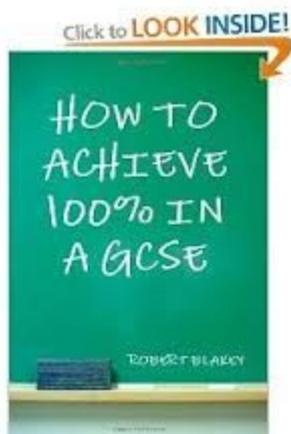


Year 11 student revision guide

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PREPARING FOR EXAMINATIONS



HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL 'DO'S'

- Do make sure that you get all that you can from each lesson. It makes sense to ask if you don't understand.
 - DO make sure you understand new concepts – if in doubt ask. Never leave something you don't understand in the hope that it will sort itself out. It won't happen.
 - DO discuss new ideas and concepts with a friend. Try to test your own understanding by explaining the idea or concept to someone else.
- DO go over your day's work at home. You know that homework helps you to learn your classwork – programmes the brain – and helps you understand new concepts. Don't let yourself down – do it!
- DO practise doing questions. This helps to ensure that you understand your work, gives you practice in doing research and helps your memory.
- DO develop ways of memorising information. Write notes or read out loud – this helps concentration. Keep doing this until you can remember all the information easily.

BEATING STRESS

If you are organised, you are far less likely to suffer from stress. Some people can cope with stress and always seem to be very relaxed, but most of us find stress difficult to cope with. If you experience some of the symptoms of stress, the chances are you are under too much strain.

Here are some strategies, which may help you to cope with stressful times.

- DO establish a routine – and stick to it. Make sure that you have proper meals and that you sleep well and keep to your work plan.
- DO get plenty of exercise. If you are fit, your mind will be more alert and revision will be just that little bit easier.
- DO start revising as early as possible. Give yourself a headstart.
- DO take regular breaks with revising. The result is less stress.
- DO practise past papers. These help you to know what to expect and give you experience in doing exam papers.
- DO build in variety. Beat the boredom factor this way.
- DO seek company. Make sure that you see friends regularly, enjoy yourself and get right away from work!
- DO your best. Decide what works for you, and stick to it. If others are panicking, keep away from them.
- DO relax regularly. Make sure you still have plenty of fun.

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL 'DON'TS'

- DON'T let yourself get tired. Your brain will be 'fuzzy' after a really late night and even easy tasks may seem harder.
- DON'T worry if you haven't solved every single problem before you finish your evening's work. The brain is a problem solver and can solve problems while you are asleep – use it!
- 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 the notes. It won't. Very few of us have a photographic memory. You will need to employ other techniques.
- DON'T feel guilty. If you miss a session in your revision plan, try not to panic – you can catch up as time goes on.

OK SO LET'S BE POSITIVE. HOW CAN WE MAKE CERTAIN THAT WE ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR EXAMS?

- Come to school!
- Listen in class and complete all your class and homework to the best of your ability.
- Make sure that your controlled assessments are completed on time and, again, to the best of your ability.
- Make sure that you know what your target grades 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 achieving your target grade.

GIVE YOURSELF THE BEST CHANCE YOU CAN



- Go to revision classes offered by your teachers.
- Revision needs to be planned. As soon as you know when your examinations will take place, draw up a revision timetable/study planner. Be specific; don't just write in 'maths' – write in 'maths, algebra', for example. A study planner is included in this pack
- Plan your revision in 40 minute chunks with built-in 5 to 10 minutes breaks. 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

Revise!

to your family. After all, your friends will be unavailable.....they will all be revising.

- Revise in a quiet environment. Close the door. Ask your friends not to call, text or email you and tell your brothers and sisters to stay away.
- 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. These things have an equal chance of appearing on the examination paper.

STAYING HEALTHY DURING YOUR EXAMINATIONS

- 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.

ENVIRONMENT BASICS

- No distractions, e.g. TV, radio, iPod, mobile 'phone or computer games and no 'phone calls. Turn all of these off.
- Lighting – Make sure the room is well lit. Natural light is better than artificial light.

DESK SPACE

- The simple ideas are always the best
- Make sure you have a quiet place to work and a tidy place at a table or desk.
- Have all your books ready, so there is no need to move to a different room.

TIMINGS

- Put aside a set period of time and try to stick to this.
- Suggested timings: 40 MINUTES REVISING 10 MINUTES TESTING 10 MINUTES RESTING
- When you return, see what you can remember from the first 20 minutes. Revisit the ideas you cannot remember and move on.
- Set yourself little tests to do on occasions in your 40 minute revision slot. Or try mocks for an hour.

TIMETABLE

Creating a revision timetable

• A week in your child's life:
Eat...sleep...socialise...relax...work...play



	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Day time (08:00-12:00)							
5-8							
8-11							

- Make yourself a revision timetable/study planner.
- Put up multiple copies around your house.
- Add in essentials:

1. EXAMS - Include time for final revision sessions at school e.g. the hour before the examination.
2. REVISION BLOCKS - For each subject (remember, these should be 40 minute blocks).
3. BREAKS - Food and fresh air (remember these should be in 10 minute blocks).
4. EXERCISE – Make sure you get plenty of fresh air and regular exercise.
5. SOCIALISING – You will need to see friends and relax at times.

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:

- o You will need to write things down. You may need to do this more than once to get it into your head.
- o Complete practice papers. Your teachers will be only too happy to provide them for you and give you advice.

TOP REVISION TIPS

- CONDENSE INFORMATION – First to one side of A4 then onto a post card.
- HIGHLIGHT key words and phrases.
- RECORD key information and quotes onto PC/MP3 player or phone and play them back.
- TALK – Read notes and recall key points out loud.
- TEST progress regularly.
- ANSWER PAST QUESTIONS AND PAPERS in real time.

MEMORY TECHNIQUES

- ACRONYMS E.g. SPORT (Specificity, Progression, Overload, Reversibility, Tedium).
- MNEMONICS E.g. Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain. (colours of the rainbow)

GOOD WEBSITES CAN MAKE REVISION ACTIVE

- www.gcse.com
- www.bbc.co.uk/gcsebitesize
- www.s-school.co.uk • www.studystack.com
- www.quizlet.com
- www.linguascope.com
- www.mymaths.co.uk

DURING THE REVISION PROCESS

- Little and often.
- Regular breaks.
- Food and water.
- Do something different – go for a walk.
- Good sleep pattern.

DURING THE EXAMINATIONS

- Do not listen to those who claim they are doing no revision...they are probably exaggerating their lack of work.
- Check the examination timetable for dates and times.
- Adjust revision focus linked to when the exams are taking place. You may need to spend more time on those subjects you have first in the early part of your revision timetable.
- Serious problems? – Talk to a teacher.

EXAMINATION PREPARATION

Now that you know how you think and have guidelines to help you learn. You cannot revise effectively if you don't have all the information you need so...

- **GET COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS.** Make sure you have a copy of the specification for each of your courses so you know what you need to know. Your teacher may have give you one. You can also get one off exam board websites. If you don't know how to do this, ask a teacher.
- **GET COPIES OF PAST PAPERS.**
- **ORGANISE YOUR FILES.** Place your notes in sections that relate to the specification. Then you know what you have covered and have already started to place things in a logical order – this will help you remember how topics relate to each other. Ask your teacher to help you with this if necessary.
- **FIND MISSING WORK.** Check somebody else's file if you have missing work. Choose this person wisely and ask first!
- **CHECK WITH OTHERS.** See what they are doing to revise and to see if they have found good revision guides or websites. However, do not be afraid to do your own thing and use a different resource if it suits your learning style better.
- **GATHER REVISION GUIDES AND A RANGE OF TEXTBOOKS.** They all have strengths and weaknesses – use what suits you best. Ask your teacher which is the best one to use.

USING YOUR REVISION TIMETABLE

A revision timetable/study planner will help you to know what you want to do and when you want to do it. You have been given a revision timetable/study planner in lessons/form time - here is an example of how to use one.

Revise!

Date	time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Mornin g	7-8							
	8-9							
	9-10					History		
	10-11					Geog		
	11-12					English		
PM	12-1						Play sport	History
	1-2						Play sport	MFL
	2-3							Science
	3-4							
	4-5	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework	Homework		
	5-6	Chill out	Chill out	Chill out	Chill out	Chill out		
Evenin g	6-7	Maths revision	English revision	Science revision	Free revision	Relax/and/ or/exercis e		
	7-8	Geog revision	History revision	English revision	Science revision	Relax/and/ or/exercis e		
	9-9							
	9-10							

[Download and use the online revision Timetable](#)

REDUCE IT ALL TO A SET OF REVISION NOTES

Read through your notes, along with relevant sections from revision guides, textbooks and websites one section at a time and reduce the material to brief notes, using the tips below:

Discipline yourself to write down KEY POINTS, NOT whole paragraphs.

'C H U G' Along: To help highlight key points (names, dates, evaluation points, definitions etc.) revision notes could include the use of:

- Coloured pens
- Highlighters
- Underlining

Revise!

- Gaps (spaces between points) Revision Cards (or A4 paper folded in half) are a device to force you to reduce notes to a set of bullet points. Revision guides often help to highlight the key points.

Diagrams. Force yourself to organise your material:

- You might remember a diagram better than a whole page of notes.
- Diagrams force you to think about the material – which idea is connected to another idea – so they aid understanding.

It is the process of reducing your class notes and other material down to a brief set of key points and diagrams that will help you to revise.

There is no point simply reading the notes you have already got and maybe highlighting bits in the text.

You might kid yourself you have done something useful, but you'll probably forget most of it.

Also, having a few revision cards and maybe a diagram or two to look over before the exam, is far more productive than trying to read a whole textbook 15 minutes before the exam starts.

REMEMBERING INFORMATION

Once you have reduced your notes to a set of revision points, it is time to commit them to memory. In the exam, you will recall information from your LONG TERM MEMORY (LTM). Revision the night before is still part of the LTM. Short Term Memory only lasts for about 1-30 seconds, so don't rely on it for the exam!

THE GOOD NEWS Once you've got information into your LTM, it should stay there!

THE BAD NEWS The problem is how to locate the information once it is in your LTM.

WAYS TO GET INFORMATION INTO YOUR LONG TERM MEMORY

- REHEARSAL (re-reading your notes). Improves recall a bit but the best way to ensure you can recall information is to understand your notes in the first place. Make sure you ask questions at school if you are unsure. Remember you can't check your understanding with a teacher when you are at home.
- EFFORT - Proper revision is hard work. You need to get organised and plan revision sessions, with breaks to give your brain a rest. If you are lying on your bed, listening to music and simply reading your notes over and over again, you probably won't learn much. Have you ever read a page over and over again and then looked up and realised you cannot remember a thing?

- **MAKE NOTES** – It is a good idea to make notes as you go, but don't just copy. The process of reading something, understanding it and then reducing it to a few key points, words or a diagram really helps to get it into your LTM.
- **RECORD INFORMATION** - Some people like to record themselves talking through a topic and play it back to themselves. Just the process of thinking what to say will help you to retain the information.

WAYS TO GET INFORMATION OUT OF YOUR LONG TERM MEMORY

The trick here is to develop your own retrieval cues (things that jog your memory) e.g.

- “Methods of loci”. (method of places). Place the key points you need to remember in an imaginary room or place. Then try to remember the layout of the room (e.g. To remember a shopping list – a picture of a carrot on the wall, peas scattered on the floor, a glass of milk on the coffee table, etc.)
- “Associations”. Associate ideas with an ‘odd’ or ‘bizarre’ image (e.g. To remember two criticisms of a study – you might have an image of the researcher arguing over the two criticisms and the person criticising holding two hands up!)
- “Mnemonics”. Think of the first letter of each of a series of key points then make a word from them to help you remember all the points (e.g. For a shopping list: CHAP: cabbage, ham, apples, pears). Hint: manipulate words (i.e. Manipulate the key points so that you can find a memorable word).
- “Organisation”. Sorting notes into categories/topics might help retrieval cues. Using the shopping list example again, categories such as bakery, meat, fruit and vegetables, dairy – might help recall a greater range of items. Mark schemes often reward a range of issues rather than lots of points from a similar point of view.

Organising notes into categories will help you recall a range of points. Remember, you do not have to use any of the methods above – they are just suggestions – but make sure you have got a method that suits you.

TESTING YOURSELF

Find out if you can actually recall what you have revised BEFORE the exam.

- Ask yourself simple questions. e.g. recall 5 key points about a theory.
- Ask yourself awkward questions (use past paper questions). You might have learned lots of information, but can you use it to answer an exam question?

The questions YOU ask yourself and the questions the EXAMINER might ask could be very different. Speak to your teacher if you need any help here.

- Write down key points from a page of notes/revision card, cover the page and see if you can remember all the points. Those you forgot you should write down and then try the process again.
- Remember to ask yourself:
 - o What if the examiner asks me something awkward?
 - o Can I answer questions under timed conditions?

o Am I balancing remembering material with applying the material to the exam questions? Many students start revision too late, spending all their time learning and only applying what they know for the first time in the real exam.

IN THE EXAM

It can be difficult to be confident in the exam itself, but if you remember the following, you are likely to perform much better:

- **READ THE EXAM INSTRUCTIONS** e.g. How many questions from each section? Find this out before the exam.
- **IDENTIFY THE SKILLS REQUIRED FROM EACH SECTION/QUESTION** e.g. Have you examined which skills are required for each type of question? (e.g. knowledge, evaluation, interpretation).
- **IDENTIFY THE KEYWORDS IN THE QUESTION** Make sure you underline the key points in the question (the skill, e.g. describe, discuss; how many examples to use; instructions – either/or; keywords). Remember – the exam question paper is yours throughout the exam so feel free to make notes on it to help you.
- **PLAN AND SHOW YOUR WORKING OUT** Everything that appears on your answer sheet can be rewarded so if you have a plan, do not cross it out. Examiners cannot deduct marks – only reward you.
- **BE DISCIPLINED IN THE EXAM – KEEP TO TIME** Work out how much time to spend on each question. Be strategic – answer all questions, particularly those that carry extra marks. Do not spend too much time on questions which only carry a few marks.
- **FINALLY, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, REMEMBER TO READ THE QUESTION** It sounds silly, but in every exam, there are always lots of students who write really good answers, but not to the question they have been asked. Don't be one of them! **GOOD LUCK**..... But remember, if you have used this guide properly, you won't need it!!

CHECKLISTS FOR REVISION PLANNING

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR GCSE EXAMINATIONS	√
See how you might learn best by reading the information above	
Use school resources and websites to gather revision information, along with a range of textbooks. Ask your teacher if you have any problems.	
Organise your files.	
Put a revision timetable up on a wall.	
Make sure you stay healthy - eat healthy meals and snacks.	
Ensure you take regular exercise and plenty of sleep.	

Revise!

Go to revision classes offered by your teachers and ask if you need extra support.	
Make sure you have a quiet, well-lit, dedicated study area at a table or desk. Switch off mobile, radio, TV etc. Ask people not to disturb you – not even to bring you a coffee – until your revision period has finished.	
Have all your books/revision notes and resources ready for revising.	
Suggested timings: 40 minutes revising 10 minutes testing 10 minutes resting Make sure you take regular breaks and get some fresh air.	
Include every subject in your revision planning.	
Make a list of all the topics to revise for each subject.	
Highlight those parts of your work you are not sure of, and give them more time.	
Ensure that there is enough time to go through each topic several times.	
Leave some time during the final week of revision to cover the most difficult topics again.	
Divide each topic into manageable parts.	