Revision – What is That?

Or

How To Revise More Effectively

Hints and tips on how to get the best out of your exams

If you are not one of those lucky people who have a photographic memory and can remember everything you've read, you will need to revise for your exams. Each year you will have 'revised' for numerous tests and common tests. Ask yourself, how successful were you? Now multiply that work by 10 or 20 and do it all in a few months. It seems like a huge task. And it is. But you can do a lot to help yourself make it easier....It's not going to be easy.... Just easier. The information in this booklet will help you to get organised and stay in control.

Make sure that you start to revise early enough in the year. Make an action plan: This would change depending upon whether it is term time or Easter holiday or if you are on study leave. When you have a **plan**, you are in charge of your work and you are more likely to stay in control. This will reduce the stress you feel and make you less panicky.

Setting up a Revision Timetable.

Term time

You will have to fit in your revision with the school work that you are still doing. At this stage **smaller** amounts of revision are more likely to succeed.

Aim to do **15mins** revision each on two subjects a night for four out of the five week days. This gives you 8 slots. You can fill these with either one subject each, covering all your subjects. Or, you might prefer to concentrate more on the subjects you know you have more trouble with or that have a higher amount of content.

At the weekend you should spend 5 mins reviewing what you did in each 15 min session during the week. That makes two 20 min sessions (do one on Saturday and one on Sunday). All you need to do in the session is **check** your understanding or memory of what you covered in the 15 min revision session; you should not have to relearn it. If you have forgotten it, make a note to go over it again next time you revise that subject.

The review is important because you must embed the information in your brain so that you don't forget it. It helps to transfer the information from short term **memory** to long term memory. Without the reviews you will find it harder to remember the information until the exam.

Holidays and Study Leave

It's important to work and rest

Either get a **calendar**, or make your own, to cover the time period from the start of the Easter holidays to the exams. You can copy the blank timetable from these notes. Divide each day into six 1 hour sessions: 2 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon and 2 in the evening. Only work 4 out of the 6 sessions on these study days i.e. morning/afternoon or morning/evening or afternoon/evening. Each session should be about 1 hour with a short break between the two sessions. You will also need about 20 -30 mins for two days at the end of your week for reviewing (see below).

It is important not to overstretch yourself and get **exhausted**. You will not be able to perform at your best if that happens. Therefore, plan your rest days or days when you are unavailable to work e.g. going away, family commitments. Remember you owe it to yourself to be as prepared as you can be for your exams. This means putting in an appropriate amount of effort. If you put in the minimum amount of effort, you will get the minimum grade out. So if you would like to take a few days off hanging around with your mates, think if that is something that would be better done after your exams and your time used for revision. Remember you should aim to work for 42 out of the six sessions in a day. That gives you plenty of rest and relaxation time.

To Do -
Chemistry:
Acids and alkalis
Rates of reaction
Bonding
Mole calculations

Make a **list** of the topics you still need to revise for each subject. Work out how many revision sessions you have in a particular subject, and divide up the work into that many sessions. For example, you can divide your chemistry into 12 topics; there are 5 weeks when you are either on holiday or study leave, until the beginning of June. Say you devote 2 sessions a week plus an extra weekend session in 2/5 weekends to chemistry revision. That gives you your 12 sessions.

Plan a **week** at a time. Fill in which sessions you are going to use for which subjects/topics. You may find that some subjects need more time and that some don't need as much. That's all part of the planning you are doing now.

Plan **reviewing** sessions for the week's work at some stage, at the end of the week. Just as you did in the term time timetable. Ideally, as each week passes, you should review past weeks work. This need only be a quick look - a few minutes worth - at the condensed revision notes (see below) you have created in your revision sessions. this means that, you will remember the work that you revised at the start of your revision and not forgotten it by not looking at it for a month or more.

When making your plan for a week, set **realistic** targets for yourself. However, once you have done the week's plan, don't think that it has to be followed to the letter. Allow a certain amount of flexibility, particularly at the start as you get used to how it works and how much you can get done in a session. If you don't complete a day as planned, don't abandon the timetable and think that it's not going to work. Get back to it the next day. Or change it if necessary. Once you get it working, try to stick to it.

Revision Techniques

Check your notes are **complete**. If they are not, you have several sources from which to find out the missing information; text books, teachers, other pupils, revision sites on the internet. Check your understanding by discussing work with friends or teachers.

Summarise your notes. Convert them into condensed packets of information. These can be in the form of;

- Index/flash cards
- Bullet pointed concise lists (you could do this as a powerpoint if you like using the computer. Then simply run through your presentation. Give it to anyone who will listen, Mum, Gran, your little brother, the dog, your hamster. Who is not important. Explaining it out loud is. It just sounds better than talking to yourself. But you can do that too.)
- Mindmaps
- Recording the essential information onto tape/computer
- Or any other format that you like and are successful doing.

The important thing with making these is that you **change** the format of your original notes. The very act of changing the information into another format means that your brain is processing the information, which means that it is much more likely to stick.

You may have to try out various formats to find one that **suits** you personally. If you like colours and diagrams more that words, try a mindmap or colourful flash cards. If you like lists of words, try reducing your notes to the bare essential words in bullet points. If you have a strong auditory preference, try recording the main points onto a tape or use the record facility on your computer for play back. One of the advantages of a mindmap is that you will be able to see the whole topic and get a feel for how each part fits together.

Use your condensed notes to **review** your revision in the reviewing sessions you have planned into your revision timetable.

Exam Technique

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When you are sitting your exams you are going to feel **nervous** (to a greater or lesser degree).

This is normal. Use that nervous energy to help you. Don't let it panic

Read the **instructions** and descriptions (rubric) at the front of the exam. Make sure you know which sections to read and which questions to answer. It will tell you how long you have and how many marks there are for that paper. Follow the instructions *carefully*.

The **examiners** are on your side. They are trying to find ways to *give you the marks.* They are not trying to take away marks from you. But if you make it like hunting for a needle in a haystack, it is very difficult for the examiners to find anything worth giving a mark to.

One of the most common **mistakes** is that people don't read the question properly and answer the question they think they read, or wanted to read, not the actual question. As good as the answer may be, if it's not the one to the question, it won't get any marks.

Address the question showing understanding and detailed explanation. You must **demonstrate** clear thinking and understanding of the topic. A muddled answer is hard to award marks to. Plan your answer. Even if it is jotting down all the key words that you associate with that question, numbering them, and then using them to construct a full explanation. It may help to underline or circle the questioning word (how, why, what, explain, compare, contrast, describe, outline etc). Also highlight the key words or concepts mentioned in the question. Doing this gives you a breathing space if you need it, and helps to clarify your thoughts and ideas, so that you can communicate them clearly.

You may not know this, but if you cross out a correct answer and don't replace it with a wrong answer, the examiner can give you **credit** for it even though it's crossed out. However, if you obliterate the crossed out answer, it can't happen. Use a single line to cross out, so it can still be read. Just in case!

In an exam, everyone's writing gets more untidy than it would be normally. However, it must be **legible**. If the examiner can't read it, it doesn't matter how good the answer is. If you know this is a problem for you. Practice writing out answers. Get someone else to read them to check that it is legible.

Lay out your answer **clearly**.

Use the space given.

The exam setters have worked out how much space a well laid out answer will take and have put that in the paper. For numerical questions show *all* your working. Credit will be given for the method even if you don't get the correct answer. It will be possible in most cases to get follow through marks even if you carry an incorrect answer through, but use the correct method. If you pluck numbers out of the air i.e. don't show how you got them, you can't get the method marks, and in some cases may not even get the mark for the correct answer.

- For some subjects, short answer questions that are worth up to 4 or 5 marks can be answered with **bullet** points.
- Check with your teacher if it is appropriate in their subject.
- If there are, for example, 3 marks, then you must make 3 points to get them.
- Before you answer the question, look at how many marks there are for it.
- Space out the same number of bullet points as marks, over the space given for the answer.
- Write down a point next to each bullet point.
- The advantage in doing this is that it gives you breathing space, it focuses you on making enough points to get all the marks for the question, and it makes your communication to the examiner much clearer than a sentence that starts, waffles around a bit and eventually ends not having covered the appropriate number of points because you lost track of what you were doing.

Don't spend too long on any one question at the expense of others. As a rough guide, you should aim to spend as many **minutes** on a question as there are marks for it. Think, 'a mark, a minute'. This means that you should be working for most of the time that the exam is going on, with a short time at the end for checking your work. If you get really stuck on a question. Jot down all the keywords you associate with that topic. Leave it. Move on to the next question. When you have finished, go back to the question that you had trouble with. Look at the words you have written down. See if they help you find the correct answer now.

You might try to reduce the advice given here to a revision format as **practice** and so that you take in and understand the information

Finally.

Good Luck!

Take Time. **Plan Carefully.** **Stay Calm.**

Try looking at this 15 min video
http://beanbaglearning.com/resources/0000/0004/exam-technique.mp4

Revision Timetable for term time

Week starting

09-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Eng	math	sci	DT		review	
Fre	geog	sci	Lat			
						review

EXAMPLE TIMETABLE
Remember you will also be doing regular school work and course work that has to fit in with the revision

Chose one evening during the week to have off from revision
e.g. Friday night to go out with friends
chose one slot of each weekend day to have off
e.g. Saturday night out and Sunday morning lie in
or Saturday afternoon playing football and Sunday night at the movies
These are you relaxation times and are important if you are going to be able to keep on top of your work. They can vary from week to week.

Fill in the rest of the week day evenings with 15 minute slots of revision
You may want to cover all your subjects from now on each week.
Or you may want to start with a few subjects that you think you need extra work on, and add other subjects as the weeks go by.

You need to pick a 20 minute slot on each of Saturday and Sunday to do a 20 minute review of the revision you have done that week.
This would be 5minutes per subject. So 4 x 5mins=20mins on Saturday and 20 mins on Sunday.
The rest of the Saturday and Sunday work slots can be used for school work or course work that needs to be done or if you have time more revision.

Term time revision timetables

Week starting

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

Week starting

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

Week starting

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Review:							
Morning 1							
Morning 2							
Afternoon 3							
Afternoon 4							
Evening 5							
Evening 6							