



A PARENT'S GUIDE

TO

EXAM REVISION



THE PARENTS' GUIDE TO EXAM REVISION

The next 6 months period is one of the most important times in a student's life. It is the culmination of 12 -13 years of school education. The grades achieved this June remain with a student throughout their life no matter what else they go on to achieve; more frequently we are seeing colleges, employers and further education institutions declining applications from people that do not have at least a C grade in English and Maths at GCSE, even if they are applying as a mature student.

Our young people can rarely achieve their best independently; best results are always achieved when a partnership is formed between student, family and Academy and your support as parents is fundamental to success

The aim of this document is to give you some useful information that will help you as you become involved in the revision process over the coming months.

It is worth remembering that an examination is a test of learning, not memory. It is important that the Revision process starts early.

Learning Styles:

For a person to learn effectively, it is important to understand how we learn. In general, there are 3 learning styles:

1. Visual – learning by seeing: reading, making notes, spider diagrams, watching a film/documentary, pictures, graphs, reading past paper questions and answers.
2. Auditory – learning by listening: having something explained, listening to a recording, talking about the work, being asked questions and talking the answer through.
3. Kinesthetic & tactile – learning by doing: making revision cards with words and pictures, use of revision games, making spider diagrams, making a game from past paper questions and answers.

Most people learn in more than 1 way. The following will help you identify your child's learning style:

Learning Styles

This chart helps you determine learning style; read the word in the left column and then answer the questions in the successive three columns to see how you respond to each situation. Your answers may fall into all three columns, but one column will likely contain the most answers. The dominant column indicates your primary learning style.

When you..	Visual	Auditory	Kinesthetic & Tactile
Spell	Do you try to see the word?	Do you sound out the word or use a phonetic approach?	Do you write the word down to find if it feels right?
Talk	Do you talk sparingly but dislike listening for too long?	Do you enjoy listening but are impatient to talk?	Do you gesture and use expressive movements?
Concentrate	Do you become distracted by untidiness or movement?	Do you become distracted by sounds or noises?	Do you become distracted by activity around you?
Meet someone again	Do you forget names but remember faces or remember where you met?	Do you forget faces but remember names or remember what you talked about?	Do you remember best what you did together?
Contacting people	Do you prefer direct, face-to-face, personal meetings?	Do you prefer the telephone?	Do you talk with them while walking or participating in an activity?
Read	Do you like descriptive scenes or pause to imagine the actions?	Do you enjoy dialog and conversation or hear the characters talk?	Do you prefer action stories or are not a keen reader?
Do something new at work	Do you like to see demonstrations, diagrams, slides, or posters?	Do you prefer verbal instructions or talking about it with someone else?	Do you prefer to jump right in and try it?
Putting something together	Do you look at the directions and the picture?	Do you prefer verbal instructions or talking about it with someone else?	Do you ignore the directions and figure it out as you go along?

Study Skills For Students (and Parents) – getting work patterns right:

1. Where to study

Create good conditions that help you study

- Find a quiet place to study.
- Make sure it is well lit.
- Keep background noise to a minimum
- Avoid studying in an area where there will be distractions (like television!), music can help some learners, especially auditory learners.
- Have everything you need to do your revision to hand before you start

2. How to study

There is no 'right way' to revise, as long as the method you choose enables you to gain a solid grasp of key facts and strengthen your knowledge. Some students are happy to read their classroom notes from start to finish, others prefer to simplify the information as much as possible, turning everything into skeleton notes, or diagrams. In practice, most students find that mixing techniques suits the varied nature of the subjects being revised, and provides essential variety when studying. Know how long you can concentrate – if it is 30 minutes, then take a short break after 30 and then come back for another 30 minutes – lots of short blocks may be better for you than a wasted 3 hours.

- Turn your notes into revision tools;
 - make sure that you know exactly what has to be learned – do not waste time on things that will not be examined – check with your teachers
 - write ideas and facts on to cards to use as 'prompts' - what you write you will have to learn so make sure that you get the main points only
 - create memory aids such as diagrams, initial letters to make a word you need to remember or SMART objectives: (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Targets). These will help you remember key facts
 - write key facts/notes out and display these around the house where you will see them
 - record yourself reading notes to listen to
- Study with a friend and test each other's knowledge, but remember you are meeting to revise rather than to chat!
- Work through past question papers – and use a watch to time them so that you can practise timing your answers
- Choose study and revision guides sensibly. It's not hard to find help with revision – as well as established published revision guides, there are hundreds of websites offering help and advice. You will need to judge which is the best one(s) for your needs. Save valuable time and get recommendations from your teachers and/or friends. Make sure that you tell us about the good ones you find
- Remember course notes are also a valuable source of extra help

- Keep yourself more alert by changing revision methods during a session. For instance, try switching from note taking to memorising; from reading to asking someone to test you
- Attend any revision classes that your teachers may be running at school and get their advice on revision methods
- Look after yourself – Sometimes revision can become a competition – who stayed up latest, who worked longest, who's worrying the most. But the more tired you are the less efficiently you'll work. You need to rest as well as study, eat well, drink lots of water and make sure you pace yourself
- If you find you are losing concentration, stop, take a break and come back when you are ready to concentrate

Revision Plan/Timetable:

Our top tip - make a plan to avoid wasting precious revision time.

Our top tip - start your revision at least six weeks before your exams begin. It is helpful to look at your exam dates and work backwards to the first date you intend to start revising.

- List all your exam subjects and the amount of time you think you will need for each one. It is unlikely that the amounts will be equal. Many people find it advisable to allocate more time to the subject or topics they find the most difficult
- Draw up a revision plan for each week – think carefully about the times in the day when you concentrate best – put new or more difficult topics in these slots. You will get more done at weekends – plan to use these
- Fill in any regular commitments you have first and the dates of your examinations
- Use Revision Checklists for each subject as a starting point. Look at what you need to know and try to identify any gaps in your knowledge. (A good way of doing this is to look at past papers or tests you have worked through)
- Divide your time for each subject into topics based on the units in the revision checklist, and make sure you allow enough time for each one

- Plan your time carefully, assigning more time to subjects and topics you find difficult
- Revise often; try and do a little every day
- Plan in time off, including time for activities which can be done out in the fresh air. Take a 10 minute break every 40 minutes, go for a short walk or make a drink
- You may find it helpful to change from one subject to another at 'break' time, for example doing one or two sessions of maths and then changing to Geography, or alternating a favourite subject with a more difficult one. It helps to build in some variety
- Write up your plan and display it somewhere visible
- Adjust your timetable if necessary and try to focus on your weakest topics and subjects
- Positive thinking is important! There will be times when you are not in the mood or it just is not sticking. Don't panic! Take a break...keeping thinking about the next task rather than everything. – all the bits will come together at the end
-
- Keep drinking water

Last-minute revision tips:

Try and prioritise; do what you can.

- Use your revision tools (prompts, diagrams etc) to check final facts
- Keep calm and consolidate your existing knowledge rather than trying to learn new topics
- Don't stay up all night revising; being overtired will not help you to do your best

Revision Resources:

With all additional Revision Resources it is important to know the Exam Board and Syllabus that has been taught – the subject teacher will be able to supply this information.

- A Revision Timetable Template is available:
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/planners

- There are many web sites available to help with GCSE revision, eg:
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/
- Past Papers and Answers can be found on Exam Board websites: OCR -
www.ocr.org.uk/pastpapermaterials/ AQA –
www.aqa.org.uk/admin/qp-ms_library.php EDEXCEL
– www.edexcel.org.uk/quals/
- Revision Books can be found in any bookshop Letts Revision Guides are always popular, but again the subject teacher will be able to advise the best for their subject.

And finally, Good Luck, we look forward to working with you and most importantly we look forward to that day in August when we will see, with pride, the fruition of everyone's hard work.

Dr Karon Buck

December '07