

## Setting Yourself Up For Revision

- Buy (or get your parents to buy you) a set of files especially for your revision—one for each exam you will take (for many subjects you will take two or more separate exams).
- File handouts and information from lessons in the relevant files at the end of each day.
- Start revision **early**—allowing at least 2 weeks for each exam. The sooner you start, the less you will have to do each day and the less stressed out you will be.
- The most important thing is to make a realistic **revision timetable** that you will stick to. Allow plenty of time for setting up your **revision plan** (at least a day) and rope your parents into helping you—it's the best investment of your, and their time out of everything in this section!
- Get one good revision book, or aid for each subject as well as downloading apps on your computer or phone. These do much of the initial work for you by breaking the subject matter down into 'do-able' chunks and key facts. Be selective about which you buy—check with your subject teacher for the best ones for the level of exam you are taking.
- Keep everything you need – hole-punch, paper, pens, calculators etc. In one place so you don't waste ten minutes of each session searching for a pen.

## Doing The Revision

- Go to all lessons and make them work for you - especially the ones you don't like or find harder. In the past your work might have depended on how much you liked the teacher—but now you are working for YOU. Make the most of their knowledge about the subject, revision and exam techniques.
- Find out about good and bad revision techniques and try them out—find out what works for you. The key thing is to reduce the notes you work from to a single A4 page by the night before the exam—look briefly at the notes you make a day later, a week later, and just before the exam. This WORKS!
- Match the revision notes you make to the sort of questions you will be asked in the exam. Get hold of old papers from your school or from the net.
- Have a clear and specific goal for each revision period, for example—'at the end of this two hours, I will be able to label a diagram of the heart and answer a question on how the heart works'.
- Have a start and finish time and stick to them.
- Get into the routine of following your revision plan—if you really don't feel like it tell yourself you will do it for fifteen minutes and then decide whether to carry on. At least you

will have done fifteen minutes. Set your aim for the session and get right on with it—ignore the impulse to suddenly tidy your room for the first time in three years.

- Clear your head before you begin—give yourself 2 minutes to write down anything on your mind and tell yourself you will deal with that later.
- STOP and take a break if you are becoming frustrated, angry or overwhelmed. Put aside the problem. When you have had a break and feel less stressed, think about what issue is causing the problem and talk to someone about possible solutions.
- Don't waste time struggling—note down anything you are finding hard or don't understand when you are revising and take it into your next lesson.
- If there are one or two things that you can't 'get' leave them out (unless you are aiming for an A\*).
- Don't be influenced by friends who talk about how little work they are doing and get your head down—your results don't matter to them, but they will be crucial for you. Tell yourself it's not for long and think of that long summer holiday!

## **Last-minute revision**

- Yes it is worth it! By the day before the exam, your revision notes should be short enough to read through in one session. The final read-through will help key words and concepts to stick in your mind.
- Focus on revising your notes for one or two key areas immediately before the exam.

## **GOOD & BAD Revision**

**If you read nothing else, READ THIS!**

### **What is revision?**

It means literally 're-looking' at information you have learnt previously. The aim is that you know the information you will be tested on and can remember it for the exam. Knowing something depends on understanding it.

### **The aim of revision**

The aim is to reduce the amount of information relating to a subject to a series of key-points, any of which you can expand upon in an exam answer. The key point, phrase or word prompts your brain to retrieve the information stored in it. At the end of your revision for each topic or sub-topic, aim to end up with a card or A4 sheet with the KEY points for that section.

### **The structure of revision sessions**

Good revision techniques always include:

- An aim for the session, e.g. 'By the end of this two hours revision session I will understand

and be able to answer question on photosynthesis’.

- Thinking about what you know already and identifying the bits you need to spend more time on (usually by doing some sort of self-testing—many revision aids include opportunities for self-testing).
- Breaking down each topic into ‘do-able’ chunks. Revise each section—not just reading the information but something active with it (see below).
- Producing notes (shorter each time you revise a particular one) noting key points, phrases or words.
- Testing yourself to see what you have learnt.
- Ticking off the subject on your ‘overall list’ so that you can see regular progress.
- Revisiting your notes briefly after one day, one week and one month, as well as just before the exam—THIS REALLY WORKS!

### **The key to effective revision**

Useful revision involves **DOING SOMETHING** with the information you are trying to learn and remember . This is **ESSENTIAL** to allow your brain to learn, make connections and remember. Different people find different activities useful, and you need to find out how you revise best. Some ideas are:

- Drawing ‘spider maps’ on large pieces of paper—to show how different parts of a subject hang together.
- Use picture and big flip-chart sheets and colour to make posters with key points and display these on the walls or where you will see them regularly.
- Put revision aids up around the house—especially for any ‘rote learning’ - chemical or mathematical formulae, French verbs—read them when sitting on the loo, brushing your teeth or eating your breakfast.
- Record yourself making 10 key points about a particular topic, then play it back when you are travelling, running etc.
- Highlight key areas of notes or books (if yours), picking out the key points or summaries.
- Listen to tapes of e.g. Books and plays and discuss them with another person.
- Watch revision DVDs but don’t just sit back passively—pause them and make notes of key or difficult areas, test yourself or get someone to watch with you and test each other.
- Read a page and shut the book—what can you remember?

- Tell someone about what you have learned—explain how the heart works over a meal (or perhaps stick to something less gory).
- Get people around you to test you on ‘rote knowledge’ - have a family quiz.

## Memory techniques

Find out what helps you to remember stuff. Some ideas are:

### Acronyms

Using the first letter of each word to make a word to prompt your memory - e.g. You may find it hard to remember this sentence ‘Wholly Inadequate Needless Damned Outrageous Waste of Space’. However, turn it into an acronym and it becomes much easier: WINDOWS.

### Picture stories

Thinking of a strong visual image to associate with each word and linking them together in an unlikely and silly story - e.g. You may find it hard to remember the facts in this sentence, simply by reading it through,

‘The great Plague struck London in 1665, followed by the fire of London in 1666, starting in the shop of the baker to King Charles II in Pudding Lane’

**Try this out:** get a picture (for example) of a large rat (the plague) running around before being burnt (plague year before fire) in a bread oven (bakers shop) with the flames curling up around it like curls of the numbers 666 (1666), and then being put into a pudding eaten by two King Charles spaniels. Go through the picture sequence a couple of times, then see if you can remember the 7 facts in the sentence. Ask someone to test you, and see if it works for them. It’s magic!

**Mnemonics** are also useful – make up a silly sentence to help you remember the order of something e.g. Never Eat Shredded Wheat (North, East, South, West).

**Review.** Take time occasionally to ask yourself how well your revision techniques are working for you. How much have you covered? Have you stuck to your timetable? Are you ending up with notes you can use for last minute revision? Congratulate yourself for all the subjects you have covered. Change your timetable plan if necessary.

**Later on.** When you have revised and revisited each topic, have a go at some old exam questions.

Make sure you set the appropriate time limit, and try to work under exam conditions. Don’t do this too early (although it’s worth looking at them early on to get an idea of the sort of question you will be answering—essays, multiple choice etc.). Do these in plenty of time so that your teacher can mark them.

## Quick Tips For Revising

- Make yourself start however much you don't want to—the hardest bit is over with then!
- Build in short breaks.
- Do frequent short exercises—stretches, neck and shoulder rolls, walking around etc.
- Drink water and get fresh air. Keep the temperature cool.
- Eat 'brain food' - avoid sugar and have lots of healthy snacks around to eat little and often.
- Take a day off and do something completely different.
- Don't leave the difficult bits to the end.
- Do something relaxing between revising and bedtime.
- STOP and take a break if you start feeling frustrated, angry, overwhelmed. Make a note of the problem to take to your next lesson, and move on to something else.
- Focus on what you have done, not all things that you haven't—every little helps.
- Promise yourself little rewards after each session—a favourite TV programme, reading a trashy novel or going out with friends.
- At the end of each session, file away your notes and clutter so that your work-area is clear for the next session.

## Tips For Parents

### Supporting your child in setting themselves up for revision

- Talk to your child about how you can support them and what they would find helpful.
- The simple things often get in the way of starting revision - weeks can be lost while pupils 'are going to get some folders soon...'. Get around these by simply providing the files, dividers, wall-charts etc. Your child will need for the revision period.
- Encourage your child to empty their bag and file handouts and information from lessons at the end of each day. They won't seem important until they need them, at which point they are likely to be lost under a mountain of random papers... And yes, I have done this for my children on occasions!
- Support your child in choosing one good revision guide for each subject—it's the best investment you will make. There are lots around so check with the teacher yourself if you are not sure which is best.

- Help your child to plan their revision timetable. It will take an investment of your time (probably several hours), but it is the single thing that will make the biggest difference to the effectiveness of the revision, and therefore the outcome. Children vary in the amount of support they need at each stage of the process.
- Contact with your child's subject teachers immediately if you have any concerns.
- It is important to maintain communication between home and school at this key time in your child's education if they are to achieve their full potential.

### **Supporting your child in doing the revision**

- Support your child in sticking to their revision plan and keeping to the start and finishing times they have agreed. Praise them when they do it, and if necessary agree a reward structure. Don't make treats dependent on certain results—it will only add to their feelings of disappointment if they don't do as well as expected.
- Quietly top-up the 'workbox' with pens, rulers, paper pads etc. Don't get wound up about lost items if you can help it—motivation is hard enough to find for revision, and arguments about a 50p pen just aren't worth it.
- Provide favourite snacks and water for revision periods.
- Be flexible—if they want to go out to a party on a revision night, agree when they will make the time up.
- Be sensitive to the pressure your child is feeling—let them know that if they are really not up to it on odd days, it isn't the end of the world—let it go when it really matters to them, and remind them of all the good work they have done, and will continue to do. It's the big picture that will count in the end.
- Keep up with regular 'check-ins' and don't nag in between times. Show and interest in how the revision is going, talk through any difficulties and be prepared to help them reschedule their planning as necessary.
- Keep thing in perspective—your child may not be doing things the way you would do them, or as often as you would like, but they are doing the best they can in the way that works for them at the stage they are at.

## **Useful Websites And Resources**

More information about the sites listed is given in the relevant chapters. Information correct at time of going to press.

### **Making GCSE Choices**

[www.connexions-direct.com/whichwaynow](http://www.connexions-direct.com/whichwaynow)  
[www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u](http://www.connexions-direct.com/jobs4u)

### **General Support For Teenagers**

[www.childline.org/uk](http://www.childline.org/uk)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/schools](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools)  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) (Tel: 0800 111111)  
[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)  
[www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

### **General Parent Support**

[www.connexions-direct.com/parentcarer](http://www.connexions-direct.com/parentcarer)  
[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)  
(Also a confidential helpline for parents on 0808 800 2222)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/)

### **Exam Boards**

[www.aga.org.uk](http://www.aga.org.uk)  
the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

[www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)  
Edexcel

[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)  
Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

[www.cbac.co.uk](http://www.cbac.co.uk)  
Cyd-Bwyllgor Addysg Cymru (CBAR)

[www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk)  
The Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

**Staff Contacts**  
**Coursework and Revision**  
(Please read notes on the use of essaybanks in 'Revision')

[www.coursework.info](http://www.coursework.info)

[www.studentcentral.co.uk](http://www.studentcentral.co.uk)

[www.essaybank.com](http://www.essaybank.com)

[www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com)

[www.gcseguide.co.uk](http://www.gcseguide.co.uk)

Use the 'bookshop' option to see what revision guides are available in each subject area.

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize)

[www.gcse.com](http://www.gcse.com)

[www.s-cool.co.uk](http://www.s-cool.co.uk)

[www.educlinks.co.uk](http://www.educlinks.co.uk)

[www.schoolsnet.com](http://www.schoolsnet.com)

[www.technologystudent.com](http://www.technologystudent.com)

[www.mr-dt.com](http://www.mr-dt.com)

## **Subject-Specific Resources**

### **English**

[www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)  
[www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)  
[www.podcastrevision.co.uk](http://www.podcastrevision.co.uk)  
[www.englishbiz.co.uk](http://www.englishbiz.co.uk)

## **Maths**

www.mymaths.co.uk  
www.mathswatch.co.uk  
www.gcsebitesize/maths  
www.samlearning.com

## **Science**

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize  
www.s-cool.co.uk  
www.byrchall.wigan.sch.uk/revision

## **MFL**

www.bbc.co.uk/languages  
www.linguascope.co.uk  
www.thislangauge.com (Y11 only)

## **PE**

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/pe  
www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/pe.Ltml  
www.revisionworld.co.uk/gcse/pe  
www.teachpe.com/gcse.plp

## **Geography**

GCSE Geography Exam Revision Notes- Jane Ferretti and Brian Greasley , Phillip Allan Updates- ISBN No 086003 441 0.

GCSE Geography for WJEC B Revision Guide, - Stuart Currie Hodder Education. -ISBN No 978-0-340-98796-4

Also all case study material is on the school website at [www.byrchall.wigan.sch.uk/revision](http://www.byrchall.wigan.sch.uk/revision)— pupils then search for Geography.

## **Dance**

www.aqa.org.uk/gcsedance/keymaterials

## **Apps**

Remember, you can download apps on your phone or computers to help with revision too. See your subject teachers to find out which are the best ones to use.

[KJohnson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:KJohnson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Progress Leader Y11)  
[DAbbott@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:DAbbott@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Progress Coordinator Y11)  
[KMacey@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:KMacey@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Progress Leader Y10)  
[CBaker@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:CBaker@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Progress Coordinator Y10)  
[LRobinson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:LRobinson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Progress Coordinator Y10/11)  
[TWilkinson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk](mailto:TWilkinson@byrchall.wigan.sch.uk) (Assistant Headteacher)