

Alder Community High School GCSE Revision Guide for Parents



KEEP
CALM
AND
REVISE,
REVISE, REVISE



A GUIDE TO REVISION AND STUDY SKILLS FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

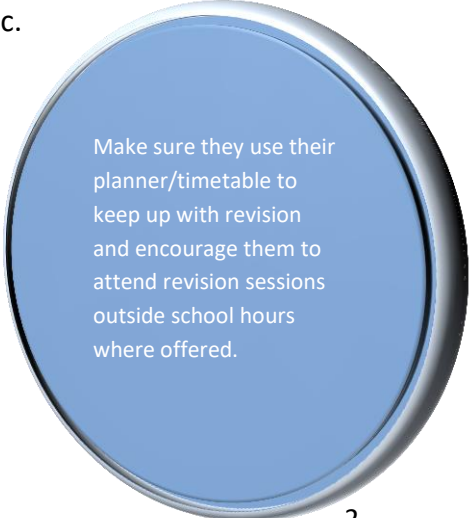
With the final examinations only months away, we offer this guide to revision and study skills to our Year 11 students and their parents. It may be that part of what follows is already understood and practised by you. Nevertheless, the value that we all place on the partnership between the students, the home and the school is strengthened when we share a common approach to important issues.

Why encourage your child to revise?

- 1) It can reduce panic – gives them control and confidence.
- 2) It means examinations reflect what they can do, not what they didn't bother to do – to show what they know!
- 3) It can help them to identify problem areas.

Where to start? When to do it?

- 1) Help them work out how much time they have, be realistic.
- 2) Get them to take into account their ideal time of day to work – work out when they will revise.
- 3) Break it down to make it seem manageable. 'Revising for GCSEs sounds like too much hard work. 'Revising key French verb endings' is do-able.



Make sure they use their planner/timetable to keep up with revision and encourage them to attend revision sessions outside school hours where offered.

Should I help with revision?

Research and experience shows that children whose parents/carers take the opportunity to be frequently interested in their child's learning make most progress.

Revision should be used to fix the learning beyond the classroom. It can provide the opportunity for learners to reflect on their understanding and to extend skills and knowledge in a particular area.

Also you will get to know your child's particular strengths and difficulties and find out what they are studying. Helping your child with their work is not the same as doing it for them; discussing their work with them strengthens their understanding.

***"It's what parents do [with their child],
rather than who they are, that counts"***

Sacker (2002)

We learn:

10% of what we read

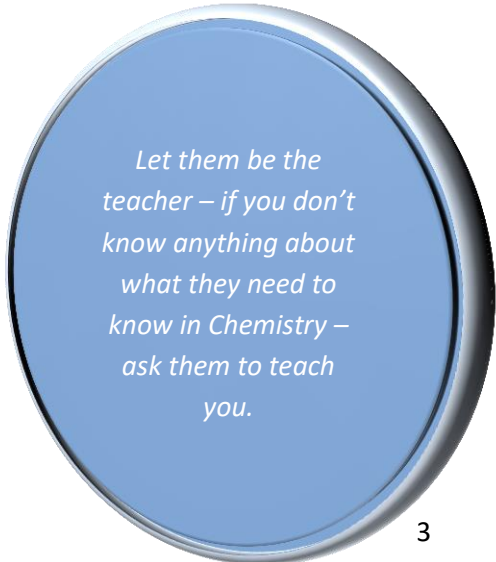
20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

40% of what we see and hear

70% of what is discussed

95% of what we teach to someone else



*Let them be the
teacher – if you don't
know anything about
what they need to
know in Chemistry –
ask them to teach
you.*

Helpful things you can do

- 1) Encourage without pressurising.
- 2) Take an interest, without asking what everyone else in the class does.
- 3) Offer drinks and snacks, surprises or treats to break up revision.
- 4) Encourage them to attend revision lessons, Food 4 Thought, Revise and Relax.
- 5) Know which examinations they are sitting and when, and get them ready in good time on examination days.
- 6) Help them to keep life in perspective.
- 7) Help to plan revision, if appropriate.
- 8) Above all, keep calm yourself!

Help your child by asking the right questions:

- 1) When is your examination...?
- 2) What are you likely to be tested on...?
- 3) What do you need to take on the day...?
- 4) What strategies are helping you most..?
- 5) You've been studying... What can you teach me...?
- 6) What support do you need...?

KEEP IN TOUCH ...

If your son/daughter is worried about a subject, suggest they see their tutor or the subject teacher. If the problem continues ask the school for extra help; a couple of sessions is often enough to boost flagging confidence.

Make sure the school knows about any problem by which your son/daughter is being affected, especially in cases of illness. In extreme cases, like bereavement or serious illness, alternative arrangements can be made to sit examination papers. A medical certificate is essential in the case of illness.

Teachers always provide revision notes, and all departments provide revision details (see the school website for a summary). In addition there are special after-school revision sessions for specific subjects. Please encourage your son/daughter to attend.

Give them space to control their own work. Let them find their own solutions as much as possible.

Trust them. Don't find excuses to knock on the door to see if they're really revising or just talking on the phone (unless you can hear them)! If you are worried, check their progress with the school.

REVISION: ORGANISATION IS HALF THE BATTLE

Help your son/daughter to find a quiet, comfortable place to work - somewhere to write and file materials conveniently.

Keep things quiet if that's the way they like it. But if your son/daughter learns better with background music or lying on the floor, respect that too.

Box files, folders and plastic wallets are useful organisers.

'Post - its', dotted round the house, can help too. So can revision cards, especially if they're colour coded or in diagram form.

MAKING REVISION EASIER

Revise for an average of 1½ hours per night, over the course of a week.

Short bursts of revision (20 - 30 minutes), with short breaks (5 - 10 minutes) make best use of our concentration spans.

See that your son/daughter spends an evening, soon, sorting their revision notes out - this helps save last minute panic.

Encourage your son/daughter to revisit topics regularly. This helps move ideas from the short term to the long term memory.



Hints for an Ideal Revision Area

providing some of these will go a long way to helping your child...



Suggest variety in revision, like cassettes, CDs, going to the Library, computers, TV or even going for a walk.

Make sure that the rest of life gets a look in! Build in time for socialising, exercise and plenty of sleep.

Ensure that the school's practice examination questions, revision guides and revision sessions are used.

Offer help with testing - and test in imaginative ways.

21 Ways to Revise

- 1) Brainstorm a topic using a spider diagram
- 2) Make a chart to fit the information
- 3) Put key words onto Post-It Notes; stick them around the house to learn
- 4) Make up tests to try later
- 5) Put notes onto revision cards
- 6) Make your own flash cards – questions one side/answers on the back
- 7) Create a Mind Map (see later section)
- 8) Use different colours to represent different things
- 9) Use Mnemonics for difficult spellings/sequences
E.g. **R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain – colours of rainbow)
- 10) Make a flow chart
- 11) Make a timeline
- 12) Use pictures to represent key ideas
- 13) List two sides of an argument
- 14) Identify similarities/differences
- 15) Plan an examination answer and write the first paragraph
- 16) Create a dictionary for each subject
- 17) Turn headings into questions
- 18) Fill the bedroom walls with posters for key ideas
- 19) Make up cartoons
- 20) Label pictures
- 21) Record key quotations/foreign language vocab

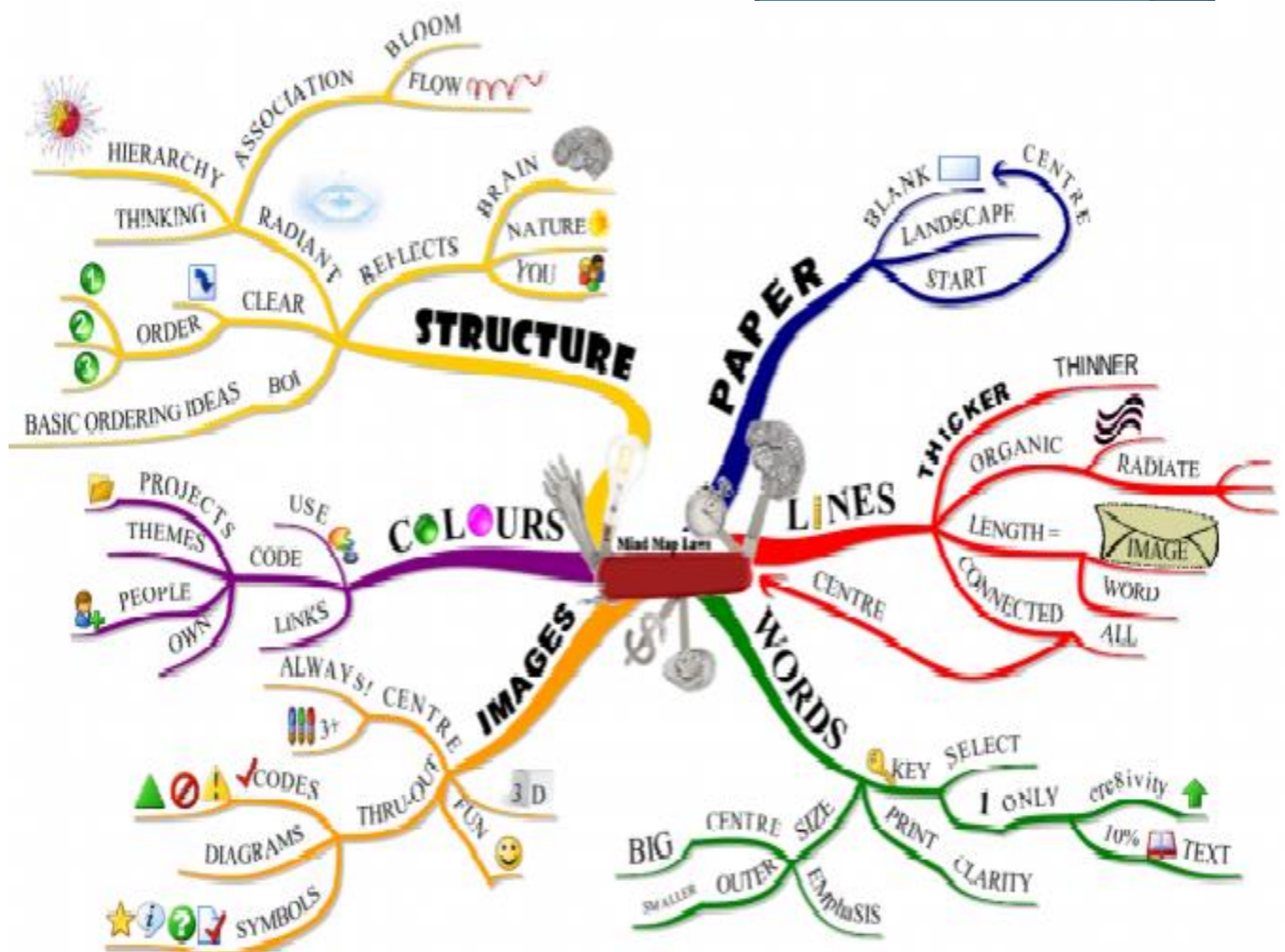
Mind Mapping

Why do a mind map? Notes often end up being the book repeated word for word.

This is an alternative way to make notes because your brain likes colour and pictures which help your memory. A study in the US gave participants 10,000 images to look through. They then added 10 other images. 95% of participants could identify the foreign images. Conclusion? Pictures stay in your brain.

Advantages of Mind Map

- 1) You only need to write down what's important
- 2) You can easily show how things link up
- 3) All the information you need is on one page
- 4) When you have made a pattern, your brain will remember the whole shape of the topic.



Use the Internet

- The internet has an overwhelming amount of resources for revision but needs to be used wisely. You need to remember; just because something is on a web page it is not necessarily reliable information.
- There are many useful sites, as the list below suggests. However, it is important you do not waste time simply reading and scrolling up and down the page.

You can:

Have a pen and paper ready and do the activities which are suggested.

Copy information into a programme of your choice and underline key words, delete less important sentences, cut and paste key words etc.

The emphasis must be on making that information your own in the same way you must make your textbook notes your own.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/ -

A very well regarded site that contains a lot of information and activities

www.mymaths.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife -

School work support. You can talk to others about revision topics and contact teachers to answer your questions within 24 hours.

www.gcse.com

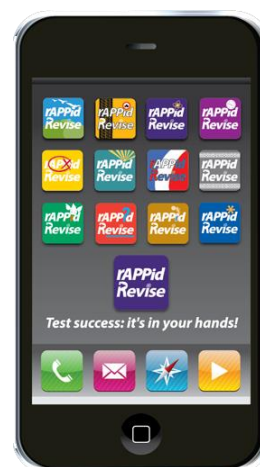
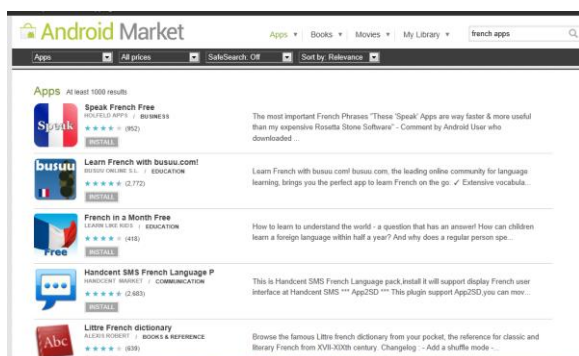
www.s-cool.co.uk

www.examzone.co.uk - This site is run by the exam board Edexcel. It includes model answers, mark schemes and revision notes.

www.revisionaid.co.uk – An access site to other more subject specific materials.

Also you may be able to find 'apps' for Smartphones available which will help with your revision. For example if you search the Android marketplace for French Apps you will see the following:

There are also "apps" for other subjects e.g. Maths.



AND FINALLY...

Your son/daughter, you and the school all want the examinations to be a success, and we all hope that (s)he copes well with the pressures involved. Please feel free to contact the school with any concerns, and may we take this opportunity to wish all of our students the best of luck.

School Uniform

School uniform must be worn for all examinations and extra sessions except during holiday periods. Students will be asked to remove jackets/coats/fleeces etc. in the examination room.

Mobile Phones

Students **MUST NOT** have a mobile phone on their person in the examination room, whether switched on or not.

Only 'see through' pencil cases are permitted on the desks.

All examinations must be completed in black ballpoint pen/ink unless the instructions specify otherwise, e.g. answer sheets for Science modules are completed in HB pencil.

Students need to bring their own pens, pencils, erasers and any instruments needed for each examination - this will help your child to settle down quickly and to stay focused on what they are about to do.

The use of correction fluid/pens/tape is not permitted.

Food must not be brought into the examination room. If absolutely necessary, a drink of water in a clear, screw top bottle will be permitted.