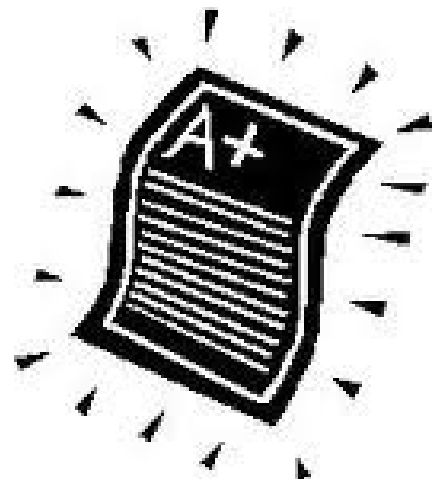
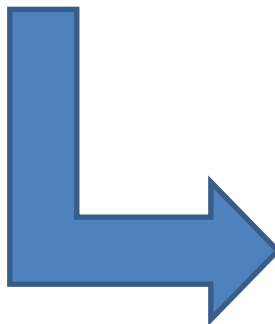
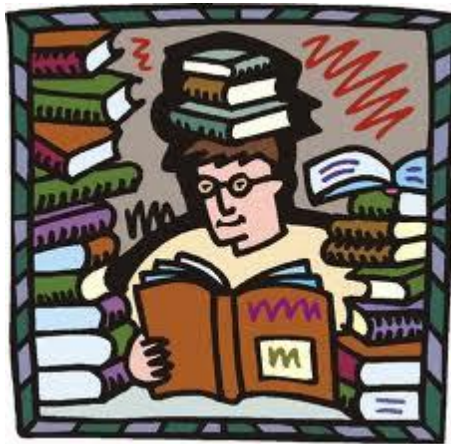
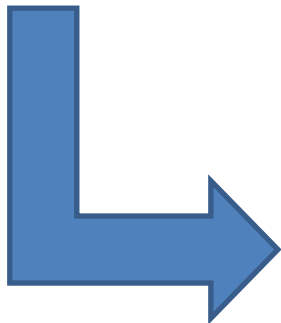


# Year 11 Study Skills

Preparation for GCSE, College and Beyond



## **Introduction - Why do we need a study skills programme?**

The aim of this book is to hopefully make your life at exam times easier. Exams are stressful and many of us feel it is all too much.

Gathered together in this book are many ideas to enable you to find a sense of balance so all the stress and nervous energy you have will work for you – rather than inhibit you.

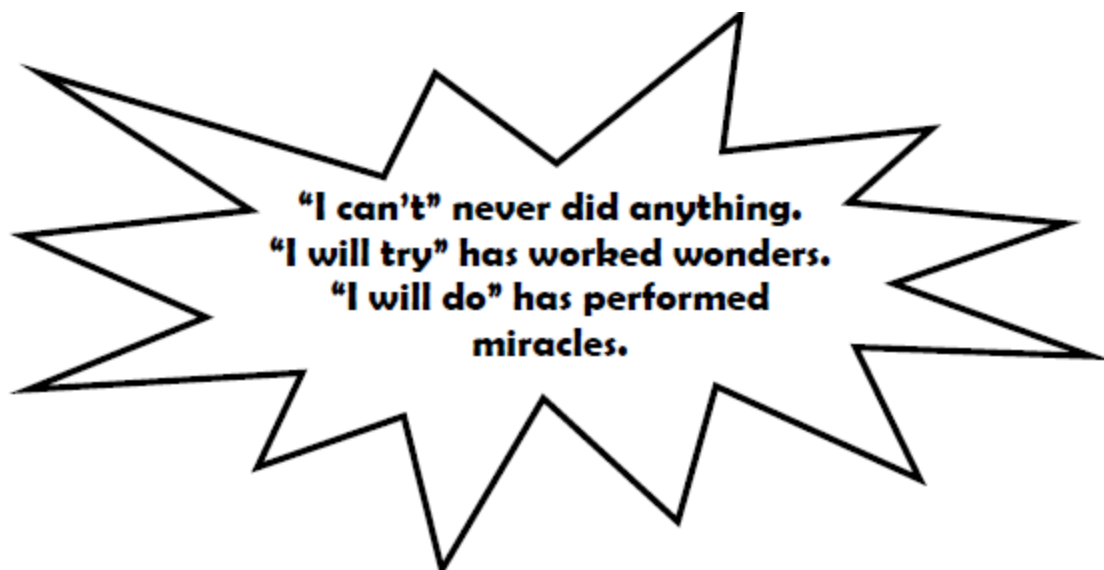
Some techniques will work for you – others will not. Find the one that works for you and use it. The point is not to give up.

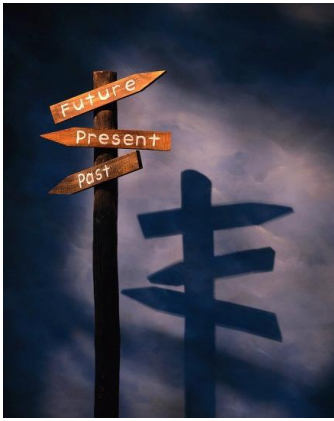
Exams always look bigger when they are before you. If you are organised and well prepared you can accomplish anything.

GCSEs are the most important exams of your life. They are the key to unlock the door to the future.

Universities are telling us, work places are telling us and teachers are telling us that students are too reliant on being told what to do. They need to learn to be independent learners. Students, who perform poorly in GCSEs miss homework and coursework deadlines, forget their notes and folder, don't interact in class and cram in revision in the last weeks before their exams.

The information in this booklet will help you to make a good start to your revision and journey to success. Remember:





## MOTIVATION

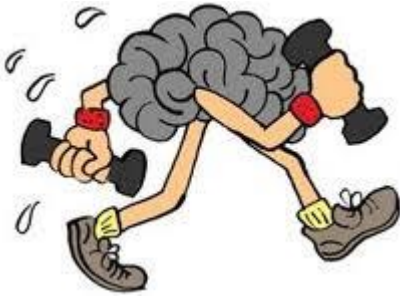
Attitude is very important to learning. Positive feelings help brain cells connect more easily and so your learning improves. Knowing why you are here at school will help you to stay motivated.

Your brain learns valuable data faster – if it's important - so ask yourself -

“What’s in it for me? “WIIFM”

What is your motivation?	Y	Sort of	N
I want opportunities to care/give service to others I want to work with others I like competition and challenge I want opportunities to learn and develop I know my reason/purpose for studying I want to prove I can do it myself I want to prove I can do it to my family and friends I want to go to university I want to have more free time, so I want to work efficiently I want to be in control of my future I want to catch up on what I missed out on I want to occupy my time positively I want to be more confident I want to improve my life skills I want career opportunities			

**YOU ARE GOING  
TO WANT TO  
GIVE UP.  
DON'T.**



## YOUR BRAIN

Your brain is a muscle and like all muscles it gets weaker if it is not used effectively.

The brain is split into two hemispheres, left and right.

The right side of the brain deals with colour, shape, 3D pattern, rhythm, meaning/experience, awareness and prefers to look at the whole picture.



The left side deals with order, sequences, logic, numbers, words, language and prefers a step by step approach

Often people have a preference for one side, but if you use both at the same time it increases your ability to learn and remember. We learn through our senses – Visually, Auditory, Physically/Practically and also through taste or smell. You will naturally have a preference for one way of learning or learning channel. Each time you work in a different way you will strengthen your brain cell connections and memory BUT if you use all 3 ways you will learn 3 times as fast, 3 times as easily.

### Which is your preferred Learning Channel?

Rate each suggestion in each row in order of importance 1 – 3. 1 = most like me, 3 = least like me.

	Visual (see)	Auditory (hear)	Practical (do)
1. When you want to know the news do you	Read the newspaper thoroughly	Listen to the radio	Flick through the headlines/glance at the Internet
2. When you can choose how you dress do you aim to	Look cool	Dress practically	Dress for comfort
3. When you read novels, do you	Enjoy the descriptive scenes	Enjoy the dialogue and hear the characters talk	Prefer plot and action to scenes and dialogues
4. When you spell an unfamiliar word	Try to visualise it	Sound it out	Write it down to see if it looks right

5. When you are angry do you	Clam up and say nothing	Say how you feel	Storm off and want to hit something
6. If you have free time would you prefer to	Watch TV, go to the cinema or read	Listen to music or radio	Do something active like for to the gym, play a sport
7. When you forget a situation do you	Forget names but remember faces	Forget faces but remember names	Forget names and faces but remember what you did
8. When you need to discuss something important do you prefer	Face to face meetings or writing a letter	A telephone conversation	Talk it through while doing something like going for a walk
9. When you relax do you prefer	Art exhibitions	Music	Dancing
10. When you talk do you	Talk little but dislike listening for too long	Enjoy listening and talking	Gesture and use a lot of expressive movement
11. If you go to a meeting do you	Come prepared with notes	Enjoy discussing and listening to others	Wish you were somewhere else and spend time doodling
12. When you try to guess what someone is thinking do you	Look at their facial expressions	Listen to their tone of voice	Watch their body movements
13. When you visualise do you	See vivid pictures	Think in sounds and words	Have images that involve movement
14. How might others interpret your mood best? – through your	Facial expressions	Tone of voice	Your body language
15. When you concentrate what distracts you most	Untidiness	Sound and noise	Movement
16. When you receive praise, do you prefer	Written comments	Spoken comments	A pat on the back or a hug
17. When you are inactive do you	Look around and watch something	Talk to yourself or others	Doodle or fidget
18. When you are learning do you prefer	Demonstrations, diagrams, posters	Listening to talks and verbal instructions	Activities like role plays
19. When you go on a new journey do you prefer	Getting the route from a book or the internet	Listen to the information	Make your own plan from a map

Now add up your total score for each column



**VISUAL**  
SEE IT 

**AUDITORY**  
HEAR IT 

**KINESTHETIC**  
DO IT 

The highest number indicates your preferred learning style. However, most of you will have similar numbers in each style, if you take a multi-sensory approach you are more likely to learn more and remember more thus using your time more efficiently.

If your learning style does not match the teacher's learning style then YOU have to change the information given to you to a way that suits you.

There are some ideas for doing this for each learning style on the following pages.

## VISUAL

- Use pattern notes/mind maps/posters/leaflets
- DVDs/YouTube
- Pictures/Diagrams
- Visualisation of information and outcomes
- Highlighting
- Transform information into cartoons
- Subject specific vocabulary / key words on cards
- Computer – revision sites like [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)
- Use key words – display key words and key information around your room just above eye level
- Attach pictures or images to keywords/information to improve memory
- Covert text/key information into a picture or a diagram

## AUDITORY

- Any activities involving reading AND listening or speaking
- Group discussion/debate
- Describe out loud what you are doing as you do it
- Describe something either in writing or orally, in your own words
- Make rhymes, jingles, songs etc.
- Use mnemonics (see memory page)
- Discuss your plans/ideas/answers with a partner
- Report back / present / teach someone else what you have learnt
- Use podcasts, record yourself speaking and listen to them whilst on bus etc.
- Use rhythm to learn key information e.g. spelling
- Put key words to a familiar or popular tune – e.g. Happy Birthday, favourite song
- Write poems
- Create your own questions and use these for quizzes, bingo, nought and crosses and board games.

## KINESTHETIC

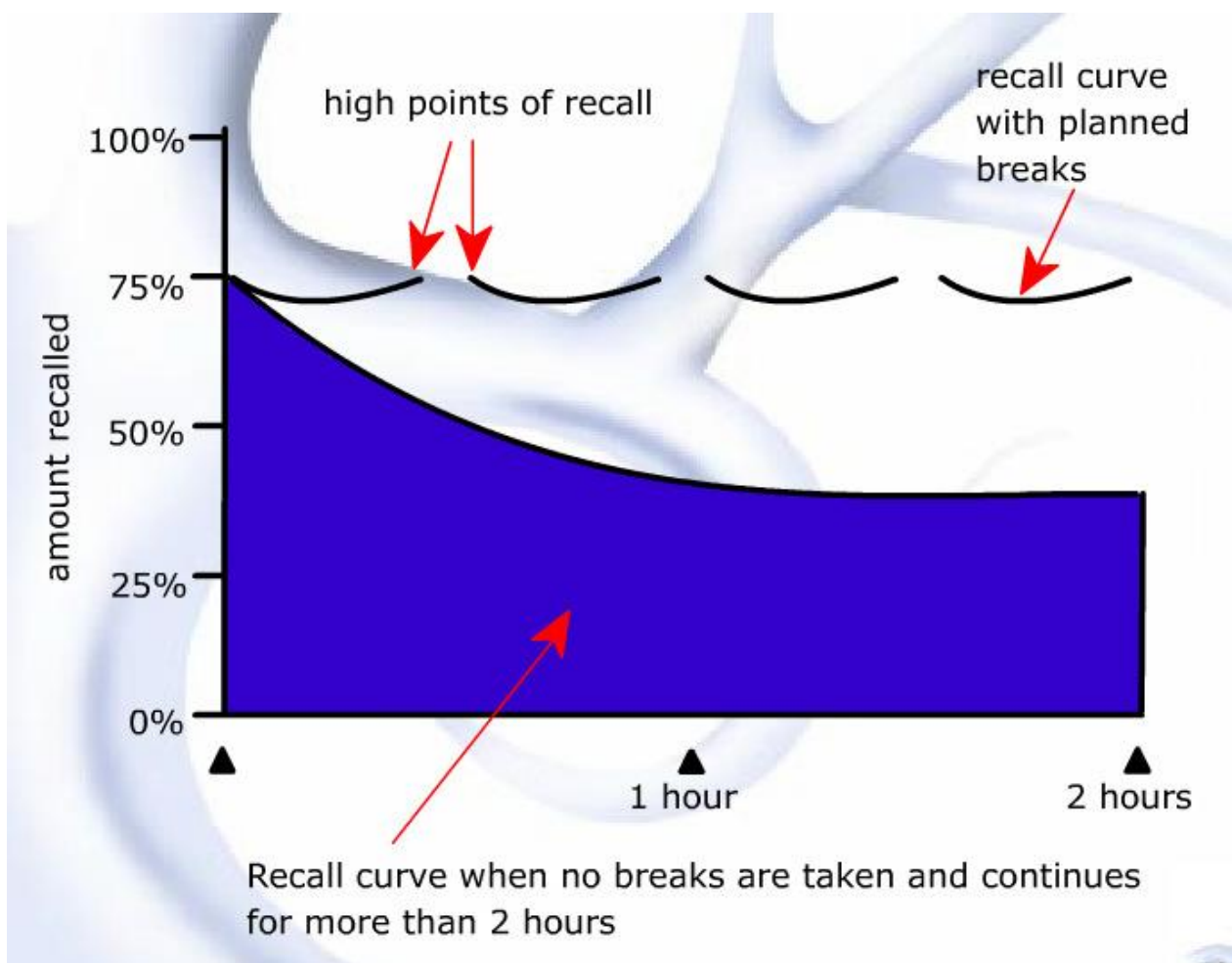
- Use role play, re-create or re-enact an event,
- Use models – create a model of the human heart, plan a battle etc.
- Use paper based activities – write notes/key words on post its, post cards or scrap paper then use to arrange, organise, plan, sequence, classify and prioritise or turn into pattern notes/mind maps
- Use movement – walk, dance, run while listening, reading, talking out aloud
- Games: bingo, noughts and crosses, pairs
- Fiddle with blue tack, ball etc. to keep yourself in appropriate learning state or to energise/relax yourself.

## THE BEST WAYS OF WORKING

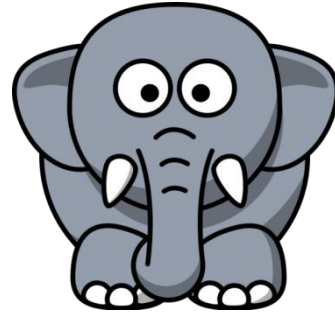
The best way to remember is to keep:

- Starting (when memory is good) and
- Finishing (when memory is good) and
- Cut down on the middle (when things aren't so well remembered)

Studies suggest that the optimum time for working is 45 minutes followed by a 5-10 minute break (a complete change of activity).



You will have lots of different pieces of information to remember as your course progresses. In order to use your time effectively you need to employ effective memory techniques which can be used when note taking or revising.



## MEMORY TECHNIQUES or SMASHING SCOPE

Your memory works best when it associates a piece of information with something memorable – see examples below:

**SENSES** – Use all your senses – vision, smell, hearing, taste, touch/movement (all learning styles)

**MOVEMENT** – move images around, walk or space out the thing to be remembered

**ASSOCIATION** – link the information to something that is already stable in your mind – make up a story

**SAUCY** – we all have almost a perfect memory of things that are a bit “saucy” or that have sexual connotations

**HUMOUR** – the more funny, ridiculous, absurd, and weird you make your images, the more memorable they will be

**IMAGINATION/IDEAS** – Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge”. The more you apply your imagination and memory, the better your memory will be – Use it! For example Mnemonics are often a useful way to remember. Take the first letter of each keyword and make up a silly phrase. E.g. to remember the points of the compass in the right order Never Eat Shredded Wheat = North, East, South, West

**NUMBER** – numbering adds efficiency to order and sequence

**GOALS** – remind yourself WHY you need to remember e.g. to pass exam, get into university, get a job etc.

**SYMBOLS** – use symbols (signs, pictures, graphs) instead of words – your brain remembers pictures much more easily than words

**COLOUR** – most people find colour helps make things more memorable

**ORDER** and/or **SEQUENCE** – in combination with other techniques it allows for more immediate reference

**POSITIVITY** – the brain tries to shut out negative feelings or memories so be positive to open up your brain and memory bank.

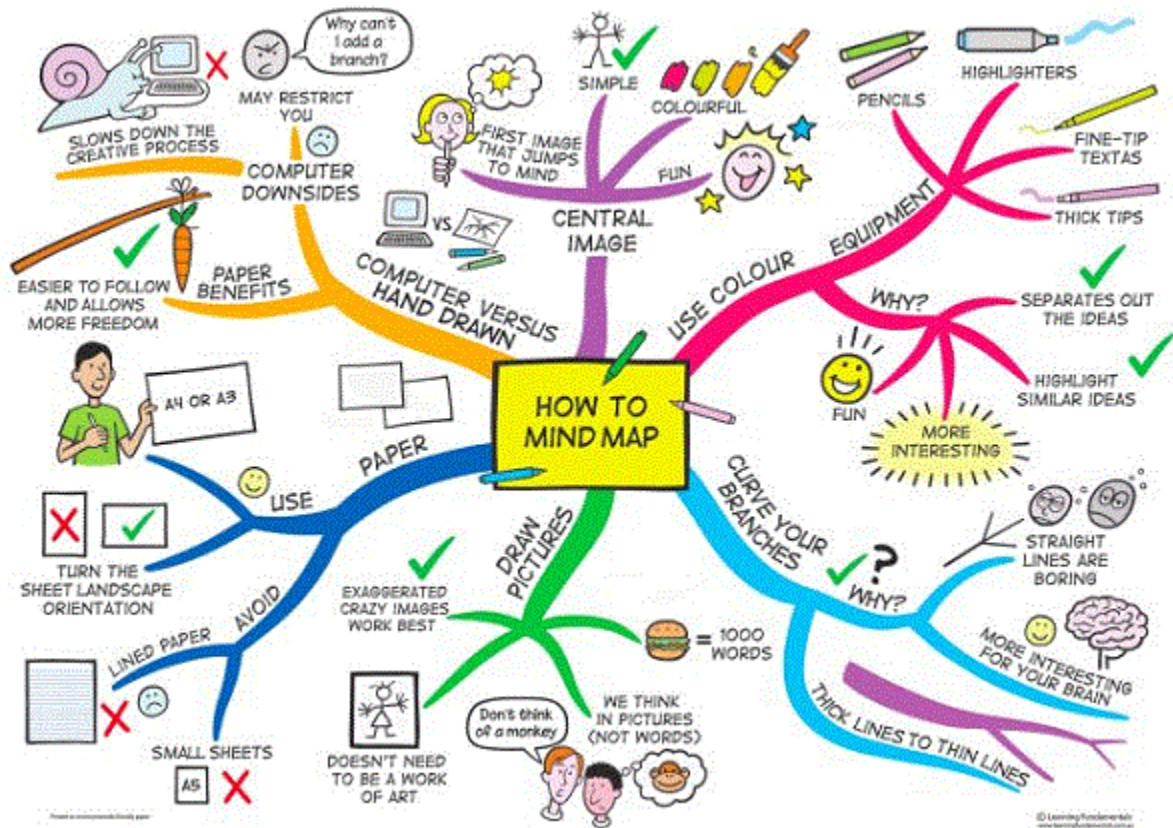
**EXAGGERATION** – in all your images exaggerate the size and shape

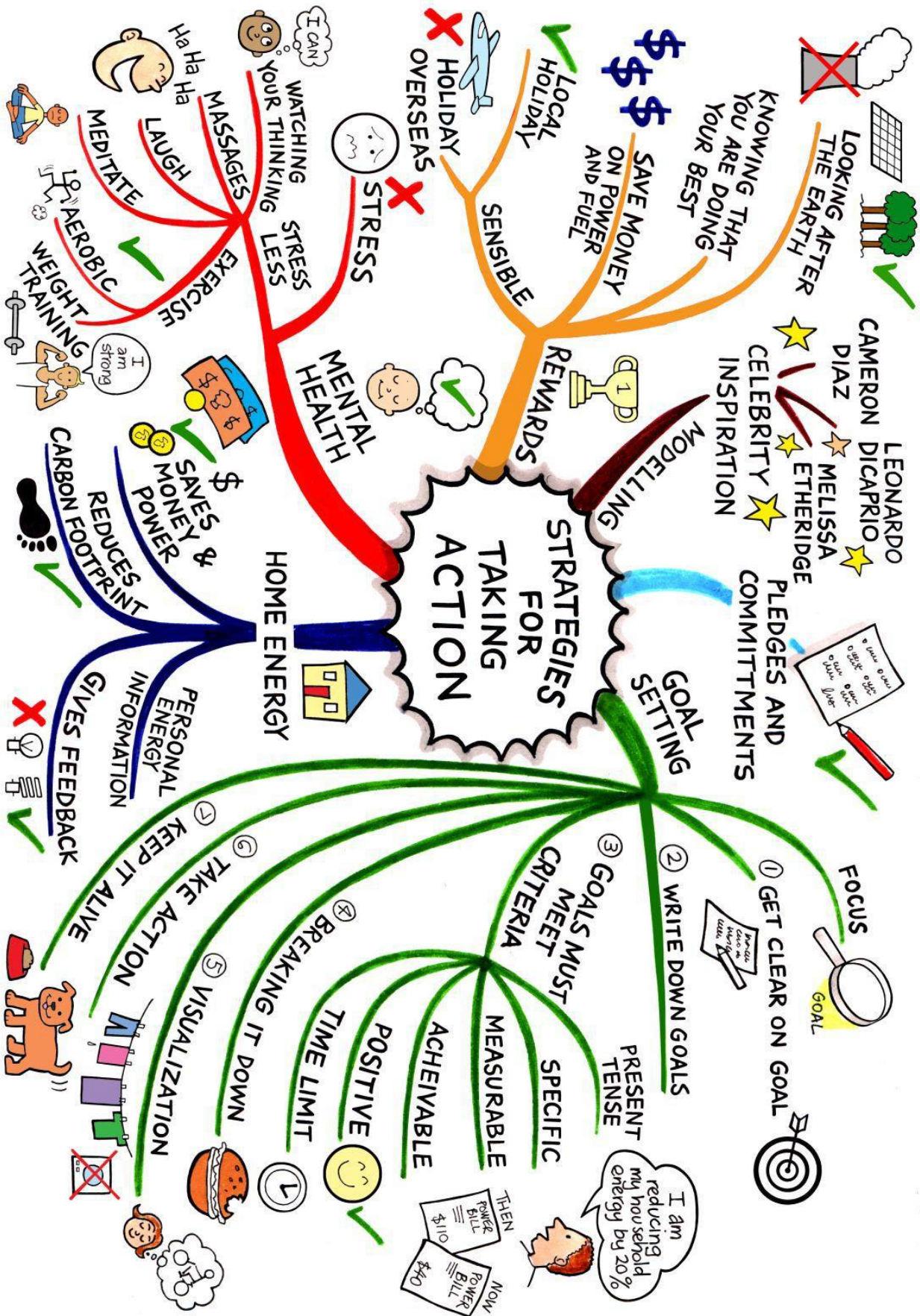


- Advantages of Mind Map**
1. You only need to write down what's important
  2. You can easily show how things link up
  3. All the information you need is on one page
  4. When you have made a pattern, your brain will remember the whole shape of the topic.

## MIND MAPS

Why do a mind map? Notes often end up being the book repeated word for word (unless, of course, you have taken good notes using the techniques above). 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.





## REVISION HOW TO

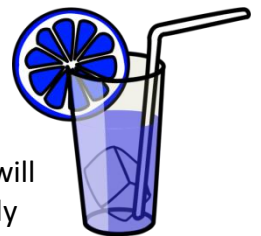
### 1. Organise yourself early

When it comes to revision, slow and steady wins the race. Look at when each exam is due to take place, and then create a revision timetable that prioritises the subjects you'll be tested on first. You should also include your exam dates, times and locations.

By making a plan in advance of the exam period (and sticking to it!), you'll feel more in control of your work - and you can avoid being gripped by last minute panic.

### 2. Get comfortable

Think about where you're going to be revising and make sure it's a space you can truly work in. You'll need plenty of light, plus room to spread out your notes, text books and other resources.



You'll need to avoid revising anywhere noisy or where there are distractions that will affect your concentration - so if you can, try to stay out of areas where other family members will keep coming and going.

Have a drink of water handy as staying hydrated will help you to focus. Also, consider opening a nearby window if you're in a warm place; a breath of fresh air will help keep you alert.

Above all, be honest with yourself about whether or not 'background noise' truly helps you to concentrate. While relaxing music, played softly, is an aid to some people when they're revising, almost nobody can work effectively with the TV or radio on.

### 3. Don't overdo it!

Quality is more important than quantity when you're revising. In other words, it's better to revise effectively for a few hours each day than to be buried in your books 24 / 7.

Nobody's attention span is infinite, and it's impossible to concentrate for much more than an hour without a break. In fact, a subject you're struggling to get your head around might make more sense once you've spent a few minutes away from your desk, stretched your legs or had a cup of tea.

It's important to stay sociable when you're revising, too - spend time with friends and family in the evenings and, if you take part in a sport, try to keep it up during exam time. These activities will help you relax, preparing your body and your mind for more revision tomorrow.

## REVISION STRATEGIES

Simply re-reading your notes is a very ineffective way to revise. According to scientists, your brain will retain less than 10% of what you read, unless you also do something active to boost your brain power.

Re-writing or condensing (simplifying and shortening) your notes, creating posters, drawing mind maps or discussing a topic with friends will help you remember what you've studied far more successfully than reading alone.

### Create key word lists

Making lists of key words and terms, then looking back at them, can be a great way to test what you've learnt about a particular topic.

For example, after a session spent revising the origins of the Second World War, you could try to list its causes as simply as possible: Treaty of Versailles, Weimar Republic, Wall Street Crash, appeasement, and so on.

You can then use the list again, giving it to a friend or family member so they can see whether you remember your key words and terms - and whether you're able to fully explain them.

### Listen to yourself



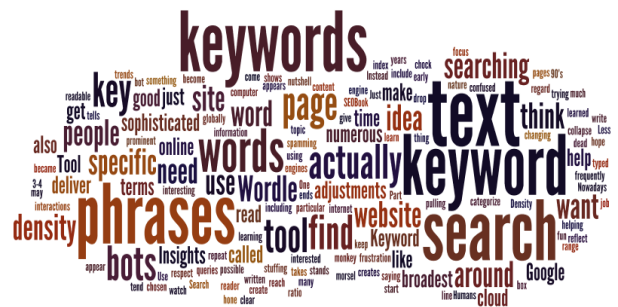
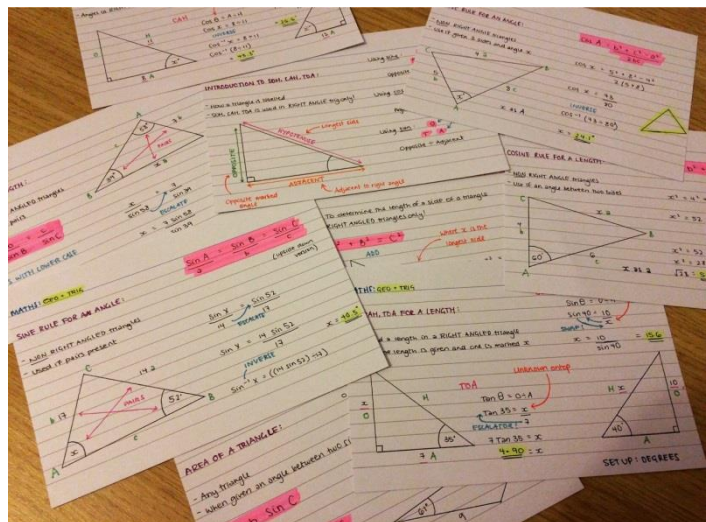
Bizarre though it sounds, some people swear by recording themselves reading their notes aloud and then listening back to the track on a laptop, mobile phone or music player.

It might feel embarrassing, but it's definitely worth a try; some of us are 'aural learners' and absorb information particularly well when we listen. If that applies to you, this could be an easy way to get extra revision time in!

### Try flash cards

Creating flash cards is a great way to condense your notes and revise key topics - and they can also be handy to use with family and friends.

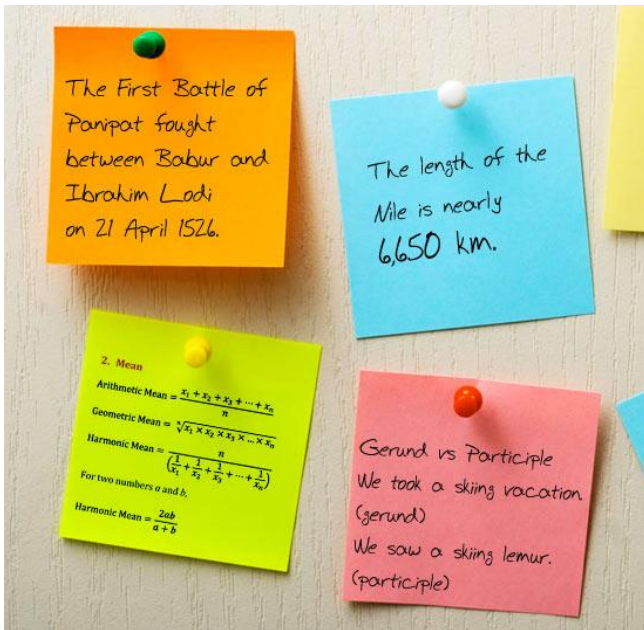
Lined, rectangular note cards are available from most stationers, and can be filled with key word lists, important questions and answers and bullet-point explanations of concepts. They can then



be passed to willing testers who can check how much you remember!

Flash cards are easily portable, too - helpful if you're heading out for a revision date with a friend.

### Put up post-it notes



Using post-it notes can be a fun and powerful way to work on remembering important ideas, facts and definitions. Write single words on brightly coloured post-its and stick them up around the house, placing them on everyday objects such as the kettle, the fridge door... Even the top of the toilet!

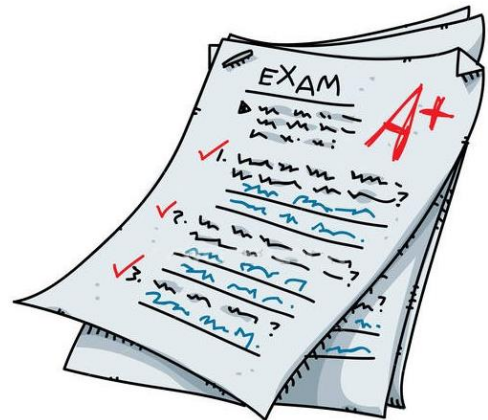
Then, next time you come to use that object, remind yourself of what the word means - whether it's 'mitosis', 'historical context' or 'Industrial Revolution'.

If you can't remember what your post-it note means, look it up before you make that cup of tea, raid the fridge or use the bathroom.

### Use past papers

Past exam papers will be available from your teachers and online from whichever exam boards your school uses. You can use them to test yourself both in timed and un-timed conditions, and to help focus your revision.

Simply planning your answers to questions that require longer responses - such as in English and History - will help you to consolidate your understanding, without the need to produce whole essays.



### Revise exam skills, as well as subjects

Refreshing your subject knowledge is obviously the primary purpose of revision - but be sure to remind yourself of how to approach exam questions while you're working towards your GCSE.

Don't neglect vital skills such as properly reading the question and ensuring you answer it in full. Failing to respond to a question in just the right way could cost you marks - even if you really know your stuff.

When it comes to subjects where you'll be doing lots of writing, make sure you plan your answers to essay questions. If you don't, it's all too easy to drift off the point and write a response that, even if it's good, doesn't directly address what you've been asked - and which therefore won't bring you any closer to a top grade.

If at first you don't succeed...

Try, try again! Re-do questions you get wrong when you test yourself, even once you understand the mistake you've made. Prove to yourself you can do it. The more times you get something right, the more confident you will feel.

Create a revision timetable

**A TYPICAL REVISION TIMETABLE**

	45 Minutes	15 Minutes	45 Minutes	15 Minutes	45 Minutes	5-10 Minutes
<b>MONDAY</b>	Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45	Break 6:45 – 7:00	Subject 7:00 – 7:45	Break 7:45 – 8:00	Subject 8:00 – 8:45	Recap
<b>TUESDAY</b>	Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45	Break 6:45 – 7:00	Subject 7:00 – 7:45	Break 7:45 – 8:00	Subject 8:00 – 8:45	Recap
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45	Break 6:45 – 7:00	Subject 7:00 – 7:45	Break 7:45 – 8:00	Subject 8:00 – 8:45	Recap
<b>THURSDAY</b>	Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45	Break 6:45 – 7:00	Subject 7:00 – 7:45	Break 7:45 – 8:00	Subject 8:00 – 8:45	Recap
<b>FRIDAY</b>	Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45	Break 6:45 – 7:00	Subject 7:00 – 7:45	Break 7:45 – 8:00	Subject 8:00 – 8:45	Recap
<b>SATURDAY</b>	Subject 9:15 – 10:00	Break 10:00 – 10:15	Subject 10:15 – 11:00	<b>RE-CAP 5 – 10 MINUTES THEN FREE TIME</b>		
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>FREE TIME</b>		Subject Eg 6:00 – 6:45			

## EXAM TECHNIQUES

### Knowing your examination

One way of checking that you know what each examination requires of you is to answer the following questions, where they apply to a subject:-

1. How many papers do you have to sit?
2. What time is allowed for each paper?
3. How many questions do you have to answer? How many questions are there to choose from?
4. Do you have to answer questions from particular sections?
5. Are there compulsory questions?
6. Are all questions worth equal marks? If not, which questions are worth more?
7. What is the maximum time you could allow yourself for each question in order to divide your time equally?
8. How long – at maximum – could you allow yourself for preparation in the exam, eg jotting down some outline answers?



#### TECHNIQUES IN THE EXAM ROOM

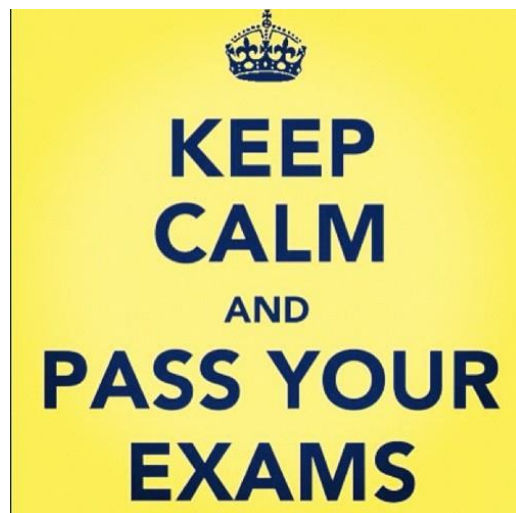
Settle and compose yourself

Read right through the paper

Plan your time

Plan your answers

Check your answers.



## UNDERSTANDING THE TYPES OF QUESTION

Questions in examinations vary in the approach they ask you to take. In every question there are certain key words (a number of these are verbs) which tell you the type of question it is and exactly which approach the examiner wishes you to take.

Two common groupings are descriptive and analytical questions. Below are listed fifteen descriptive and nineteen analytical words and phrases which occur commonly. Each is then defined.

## Descriptive Questions

Define	Set down the precise meaning of a word or phrase. Show that the distinctions implied in the definition are necessary.
Describe	Give a detailed or graphic account of.
Distinguish between	Note the difference between.
Give an account of	Describe in some detail.
How ...	In what way, by what means or method, to what extent.
Illustrate	Use a figure or diagrams to explain or clarify or make it clear by the use of concrete examples.
Outline	Describe without detail, summarise.
Relate	Narrate (the more usual meaning in examinations): to show how things are connected and to what extent they are alike or affect each other.
State	Present in brief, clear form.
Show how	Make clear by what means.
Summarise	Give a concise account of the chief points or substance of a matter, omitting details and examples.
Trace	Follow the development or history of a topic from some point of origin.
What	Of which kind, which?
When	At what time, on which day or year etc.?
Where	At/to what place, in what particular?

## Analytical Questions

Account for	Explain.
Analyse	Make a detailed description and criticism of.
Argue the case for	Back your opinion by reasoning in favour of it.
Assess	Determine the amount of value of.
Calculate	Reckon or compute by mathematics.
Comment upon	Offer an opinion (avoiding the use of "I").
Compare	Look for similarities and differences between.
Consider	Express your thoughts and observations about.
Contrast	Set in opposition in order to bring out differences.
Criticise	Give your judgement about the merit of theories or opinions or about the truth of facts, and back by a discussion of the evidence.
Discuss	Investigate or examine by argument, giving reasons pro and con.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal of the worth of something, in the light of its truth or utility.
Examine	Inquire into, attempt to discover, investigate.
Explore	Approach in a questioning manner.
Explain	Make plain, interpret, account for, and illustrate the meaning of.
Interpret	Expound the meaning of; make clear and explicit; usually giving your own judgement also.
Justify	Show adequate grounds for decisions or conclusions.
Review	To make a survey of, examining the subject critically.
Why	For what reason(s).



I'm not telling you it's  
going to be easy.

I'm telling you it's going  
to be *worth* it.