

## Revision Guidance Week 2

Last week we spoke about there being no one right way to revise, the key thing being that you're revising, but this week we're going to explore three possible ways you could revise.

For lots of subjects one of the most important things to do is ensure that your knowledge of that subject is embedded. The simplest way to do this is to re-read the relevant information and make your own notes again, the action of having to hand write about it making it more likely it sticks. One format for doing this is the Cornell note system where you're encouraged to identify key information alongside your notes and summarise them at the end of each page. A quick google search will show easily how to do this and you can even buy notebooks set out like this already (although I prefer to just draw my own!)

Another good way to revise is to try and make sure you understand something by being able to clearly explain it to someone else. You might ask a (hopefully) willing relative to listen to you while you explain a key topic. If you can explain a topic clearly enough so that someone who doesn't know anything about it can understand it then this would suggest you understand it yourself really well! Of course, you can also talk to people who do have a good understanding of the topic like a classmate. This can be really useful if you're studying for a subject you need to present an argument in, working out ahead of time what arguments you could write about and testing your opinions and thoughts with someone else.

The other good way to revise that we'll explore this week, and one that's of central importance, is of course to do past questions from other assessments. All your teachers will share these with you and, for example, you could attend the Maths revision sessions after school on Wednesdays to check you're completing them well. However, the important thing when doing past questions, especially for subjects that require longer written pieces, isn't to get them marked and receive feedback, although that's helpful, it's to go through the process of actually writing them. You don't want the first time you write a really long essay to be in the assessments themselves.

By now everyone in Year 11 and 13 has done a range of assessments and it can be hard to keep your motivation up. When you're in the middle of it all it can feel like it's never ending. However, this is a marathon and not a sprint so it's important to keep pacing yourself. Build in mini-goals and rewards to your revision programme, don't overdo it now and run the risk of burning out. All of this process *should* feel hard and difficult at times. If you think of the people you admire for their achievements, I can guarantee none of them simply woke up one day able to do whatever they wanted. Every successful business person, every successful sports star, every successful musician, every successful person had to work hard to achieve what they've got. They will all have faced moments when they felt like they couldn't succeed but all persevered and showed true grit and right now that's the key element in defining yourself as a success in this process but maybe even more importantly as an individual with the qualities that everyone admires.

### Revision Guidance Week 3

At this stage in the assessment process, halfway there, the key to continued success is maintaining the motivation to revise. This is all about mindset: you can decide how you want to think about what you've already achieved and the lessons learnt to the final three weeks.

It's possible that at this stage in the process you're feeling unhappy about your performance so far and tempted to give up. However, it's important to remember that the grades you will receive in August are holistic, meaning they take into account a variety of different things, not just your performance on one assessments. If you're someone who's always found school "easy" it can be hard when you meet something you can't just effortlessly do, and the temptation is to bury your head in the sand or blame a range of other factors as to why you can't do your best right now. Instead, you need to approach this not as a process in which you must get 100% in everything you do and anything else is a failure, but a process you can learn from, something you can work on to achieve a standard of performance that reflects your ambitions.

For many of you'll be thinking that the assessment process has gone really well for you so and the temptation is now to sit back and take it easy over the course of the last few weeks. This is, of course, a mistake and potentially a significant one. The same factors that mean if anyone has found the first three weeks hard also apply here – there's still time to turn things around but in either direction! Don't let years of hard work come undone just because you think the first three weeks of the assessment process have gone well and you can't find the inner strength to keep it up for just three more.

The majority of people however, if asked to reflect on the first three weeks of assessments are likely to think that some things have gone well, others less so. This is normal. Are you able to identify why? Is your preparation for some subjects different to others and is this having an impact? Now is the time to use what you've learnt in the last three weeks in terms of effective strategies and effective preparation and apply these lessons to the final three weeks. Were you always clear on the types of questions being asked, how long the assessment would be, how best to structure your answers? Mastering these details ahead of time is important so when you're in the middle of the assessment that's not what you're thinking about, and you can just focus on the questions themselves.

Grit and determination are the key to the final three weeks, staying fully focused so that the rewards you've promised yourself at the end of this process are well deserved. To be a success is to work hard at something, to accept that not every aspect of the process will be amazing but that the whole thing will be worthwhile, that the sense of euphoria when you cross the finish line at the end of the marathon will be worth the early morning runs. Joy cometh in the morning and the morning is almost here.