



Year 11 Exam Preparation Booklet



What is this booklet for?

As our Year 11 students are fast approaching their final examinations in the summer term, it is vital that they are fully equipped with all the necessary knowledge and skills.

A large part of this success will be down to how effectively they manage their time, and implement an effective revision programme, in the run up to the summer examinations. Learning how to revise effectively is a key part of this.

This is where we all come in. Working together to support the students with their revision. Parents/Carers may find it difficult to support their children through this time. This booklet provides you with advice, tips, key dates and techniques that may help you with this support.

Formal GCSE written examinations begin on 9th May 2025 and run until 18th June 2025. Nationals contingency date 25th June. Details regarding the final dates and expectations of students during this period will be sent out at the beginning of the summer term.

What is Lostock Hall Academy doing to support your child?

- Taught lessons that cover the syllabus
- Intervention and support/catch up lessons
- Study skills sessions (revision timetable planning)
- Pastoral support (Year 11 lead is Mr Doyle)
- Resources bought in (online)
- Practice examination papers
- Work closely with teachers to support behaviour
- Monitor attendance and punctuality
- Tutor time support
- Study revision skills assemblies (led by Mrs Williams)
- Email/contact home via School Synergy or phone call.

What can you do to support your child?

The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in any of the subjects your child chooses to make a real difference. You also don't need to give up your life and other responsibilities – you just need to know how best to spend the time you do have.

One of the hardest demands on students is that of understanding the long-term importance of doing the best they can, and learning to shelve short-term fun at times in the interest of long-term benefits (not easy even for adults). Children will also differ in their levels of maturity, their ability to take responsibility for their learning, organisational skills and levels of motivation.

This is where parents come in. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the academic and organisational demands of the exam period.

Keeping the motivation for Parents

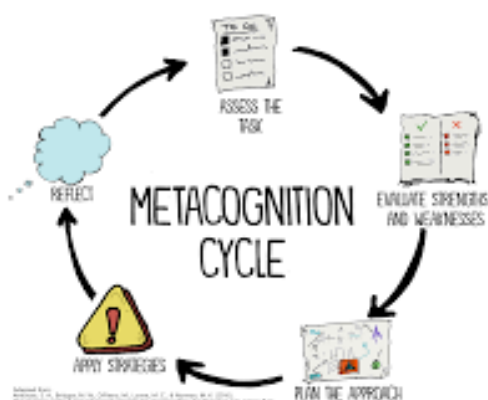
1. Agree the balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement. Again, flexibility is the key – if a special night comes up, agree that they can make up the work at a specified time.
2. All students fall behind, feel demotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social, work and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, berating and threatening them will have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings and adopt a sensible attitude in wanting to find a solution.
3. Be flexible – use the 80/20 rule. If your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they will be doing alright.
4. If your child asks for your support, encourage them by helping them to see the difficulties in perspective. Teenagers often take an all or nothing ‘catastrophic’ approach to difficulties – “I’ve messed up this essay, I might as well give up!”.

Hints for an Ideal Revision Area

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



What is the key to success?



Resilience is going to be a key ingredient in your preparation strategy. Resilience allows us to bounce back and fulfil our aspirations and dreams. Planning for our exams is the next key ingredient. The diagram shows how we need to take time to reflect on what we need to do, work out what we know or don't know, create a plan or work out what strategies we can use to help us find out the information we don't know and then apply them. We can then reflect on whether we now know that information, or whether we need to try different strategies.

Revision Strategies for Students

1. Plan ahead and start early to avoid freaking out

Start early to avoid cramming later. Once you've got your trial exam dates, work backwards to plan your revision well ahead of time. The longer you give yourself the less pressure you'll be under throughout the exams and you'll have time to focus, get help and go over all you need to know. Remember with most of the examinations at the end of the course, students will need to constantly revisit material and not rely on 'cramming' at the end. Start now with 2 x 20 minute periods of revision each evening (with a 5-10 minute break in between) and a reward at the end. You can build these sessions up to 4 or 6 sessions as you get into the swing of things.

2. Create a Revision Timetable

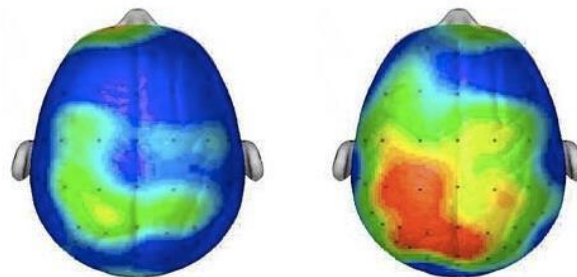
Building a revision timetable can add structure to your revision and help you **identify which GCSE subjects you need to prioritise to get better marks**. Creating a revision timetable is a great way to organise your study time, plus it also helps boost your motivation to revise for your exam.

DAY	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
School revision session						10-11am	10-10.30am 10.40-11am
3-4pm							
6-6.20pm							
6.40-7pm						1-2pm	1-2pm
8-8.20pm							
8.40-9pm						5-6pm	5-6

3. Take Regular Study Breaks

Do you feel **stressed, tired and that no new information is entering your head**? There is no point forcing yourself to study for hours upon hours as this will not result in a positive outcome. Taking regular study breaks and exercising is proven to engaging your brain in studying and improve your exam performance in the long-run. Just make sure you're not taking breaks all the time, or no information will be going in! Find the balance that works.

Composite of 20 student brains taking the same test



After sitting quietly After 20 minute walk

4. Make use of the Apps that are available

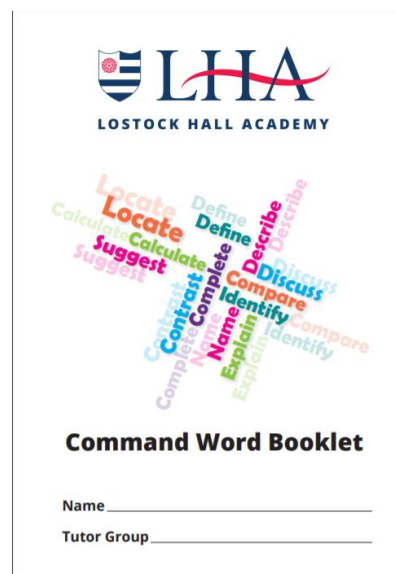
There are lots of apps available on both iPhone and Android phones and tablets that can help you to get organised, track your progress on revision and subject time.

You can revisit these by checking the list of links at the end of this booklet.



5. Know your command words and how they are used differently in different subjects.

You need refer to your blue command word booklet and have it handy when you are revising. Remember that those command words require you to do something specific when you are answering a question – but that how you answer in one subject may be different to how you have to answer in another.

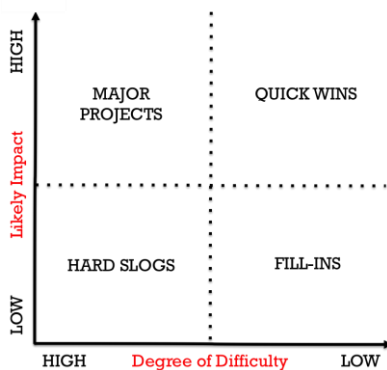


6. Find your most productive time

Figure out when you're most productive and schedule your revision then. It will vary from person to person, but you will find it easier when you're at your height of production than when you're feeling tired or low.



7. Prioritise



Organise your revision time so that you focus more on your troublesome topics and tough subjects first. You don't need to waste time going over areas that you already know inside out.

8. Know the syllabus

Make sure you know exactly what it is you'll be tested on. For the same subject there may be various exam boards and even various exams offered by the same board so it's not always straight forward: You don't want to be revising for questions and topics you'll never be tested on! If in doubt, ask your teacher or tutor.



Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are learning processes (ways of working) that you or the teacher select to **help you learn and revise effectively**. For example:

- Mnemonics
- Knowledge organizers
- Post it notes/cue cards
- Mind maps
- Visualisation /Dual Coding (using images and words)
- Scanning to find information
- Highlighting clues in a text (making inferences)
- Summarising and making notes
- Completing review questions
- Using past papers and mark schemes
- Using technology to record podcasts/video blogs/FaceTime friends for study sessions etc.
- Self –assessment activities (and purple pen response)

You won't use all of these strategies, and some of these won't be appropriate to use in specific subjects. Use the space after each subject in the box provided so that you can identify which strategies work best in which subject.

1. Mnemonics

Mnemonics help you to remember a sequence or a list of things by using a rhyme or poem. The image can be used for Chemistry or the colours of the rainbow can be remembered as:

Richard
Of
York
Gave
Battle
In
Vein

Reactivity Series

P	OPPLE	Potassium	K
S	AY	Sodium	Na
L	UCY	Lithium	Li
C	RABTREE	Calcium	Ca
M	ET	Magnesium	Mg
A		Aluminium	Al
C	RAZY	Carbon	C
Z	ULU	Zinc	Zn
I	N	Iron	Fe
T	HE	Tin	Sn
L	AST	Lead	Pb
H	OURS	Hydrogen	H
C	OVERAGE	Copper	Cu
S	SILVERSTONE	Silver	Ag
G	RAND	Gold	Au
P	RIX	Platinum	Pt

Diatomic Elements

H₂ → Hydrogen
N₂ → Nitrogen
F₂ → Fluorine
O₂ → Oxygen
I₂ → Iodine
Cl₂ → Chlorine
Br₂ → Bromine

Fractional Distillation

R	EAL	Refinery Gases
G	UNS	Gasoline
N	EVER	Naphtha
K	ILL	Kerosene
D	IEB	Diesel
F	IRING	Fuel Oil
B	ANANAS	Bitumen

Reaction Mnemonics

MASH
Metal + Acid → Salt + Hydrogen

BAWS
Base + Acid → Water + Salt

CAWCS
Carbonate + Acid → Water + Carbon Dioxide + Salt

Oxidation
Loss of electrons

Reduction
Gain of electrons

Have No Fear Of Ice Cold Beer

2. Knowledge

Organisers

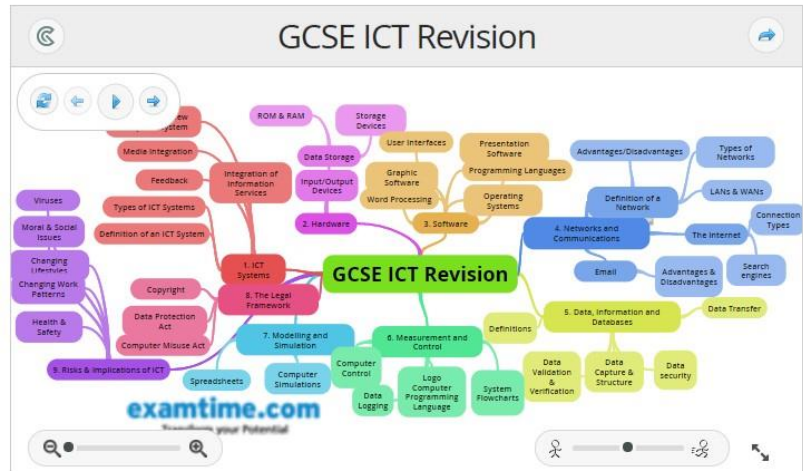
These are sheets of paper or worksheets which show all the pieces of information that you need to know and remember for a specific unit of work. They are set out in an orderly manner and allow you to summarise the content from your book or revision guide into a short memorable piece of information.

3. Post it notes and cue/flash cards

- There are lots of different ways to use post it notes to help you revise. Different coloured post it notes can be used for different topics. They can be organised into different patterns on your wall. Each time you pass you can look at the facts. The colour and pattern can help you remember what was written on them in an exam.
- They can also be used to test yourself. You can write a question on the front and an answer on the back. Stick them in places such as the back of the toilet door/round the bathroom mirror. When you're in the bathroom brushing your teeth, you can read the questions and test yourself.
- You can use a piece of A3 paper to write your facts on and cover them over with post it notes. In a similar manner to testing yourself, you can lift to reveal the answer, but you can also add additional information and link ideas further down the line. It also allows you to have a piece of paper per topic/unit.
- Cue cards can be used for friends or family members to test you. Write the question on the front and the answer on the back. When you are fairly confident that you know the information for that unit of work, get them to test you.

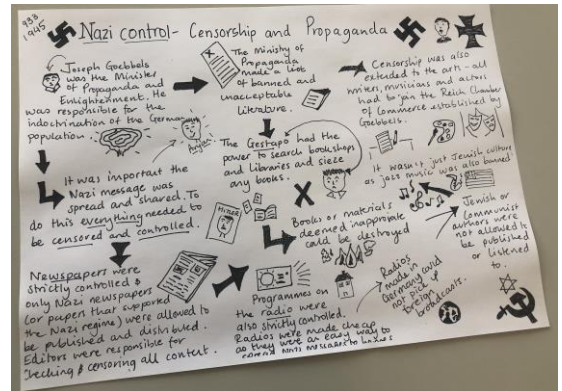
4. Mind Maps

If you find it difficult to remember tons of new study notes, Mind Maps may be the key to improving your memory. The [theory behind mind mapping](#) explains that making associations by connecting ideas helps you to memorise information easier and quicker.



5. Visualisation/Dual coding.

Dual-coding theory is the process of blending both words and pictures whilst learning. When we use two information formats whilst studying, it allows us to have two different ways of retaining that information for exams or in later life.



6. Skimming and scanning

When using skimming and scanning to revise you need to focus on a particular question. Skim and scan through the information to find a keyword linked to the question you are wanting to answer. Read the information surrounding that keyword to make sure it's relevant. Re-read the question to determine whether the answer you have found actually answers the question. If it does – answer the question. If it doesn't, continue to scan the text for keywords. Repeat the process as above.

7. Highlighting clues in the text.

When you start going through your notes or a source it can be tempting to draw bright lines on anything that you think you might possibly need to remember, but this can lead to highlighting practically an entire text.

A simple solution to this is to colour code your highlights! Blue could represent the most vital key points in the source while green could denote important quotations or statistics that you want to include in your exam answers. You can give meaning to these different colours in any way that works for you, the important thing is to make sure that you know what the colours mean to you and stick with them throughout.



8. Summarising and making notes

Before you start making a summary, you should consider if it is a good idea to summarise the course. Not every subject and not every book is ideal to summarise. For example, if your book contains a lot of details and you know there are going to be a lot of detailed questions on your exam, it is a smarter idea to study from your book instead of making a whole summary.

Make sure your summary is very clear, so you have a good overview. Bullet point the key ideas.

While you are summarizing, keep your revision book or exercise book open next to you. If you do this, you'll keep seeing the bigger picture and you will also see everything important.

Only use highlighter on your page when you have written a whole page or until you have finished a paragraph. After that, highlight all the important things. This way, you are forcing yourself to read the summary so you will remember it a lot better. It's also helpful to see if you still understand what you wrote down.

If you have trouble with finding the most important things in your books this tip might help you. In every paragraph, there should be a main point or a main idea. There is something in there that is the most important thing you need to study and understand for the exam. A lot of the times, it's the first or last sentence of the paragraph. Try to look for the main point/idea in every paragraph.

Finally, read your summary on a regular basis. Making a summary is going to help you remember a lot of the information and understand it, but making a summary doesn't necessarily mean that you studied everything. Make the summary, read it often and study it to be fully prepared for your exam.

9. Using past papers and mark schemes.

One of the biggest recommendations that past GCSE students recommend is to **do as many GCSE past papers as you can**. Practising past papers will help you get familiar with the exam format, question style, time pressure and overall improve your ability to retrieve information quicker. At the end of each course breakdown is a link to past papers and mark schemes.



10. Variety is the spice of life!

Mix up your study habits and methods by listening to podcasts, watch videos or documentaries (there is no doubt a YouTube channel dedicated to revision notes on your course!) Study virtually with friends (though make sure you do stay on topic), move to new study area or even something as simple as using different colours for your study notes.

This is different to other GCSE revision tips mentioned here as it encourages you to try a few different things to see what fits for you. Your brain will recall where you were or how you revised for a topic which will help you remember more information. Give it a go!

Finally, it may seem obvious but many students try to study for different subjects using the same study methods. Your GCSE revision should take account of the difference between your subjects and the challenges they represent.

For example, Flashcards are an ideal study aid to help you prepare for a Spanish, History, Geography and exams such as GCSE Science where you need to remember key definitions. An Online Quiz is a great way to test your GCSE Maths skills while you would highly benefit from using a mind map or mnemonics to study English.

