



Catholic School & Sixth Form College

*A Learning Community Guided by
Gospel Values*

Mock Exam Preparation Booklet

Contents

A photograph of two students in a chemistry laboratory. They are wearing maroon school uniforms and safety goggles. The student on the left is using a pipette to transfer liquid into beakers. The student on the right is holding a test tube over a Bunsen burner flame. In the background, there are posters for 'TITAN', 'ENCELADUS', and 'EUROPA'.

November Mocks
Intervention Timetable
The Importance of Revision
Revision Tips
Plan Time Neat
Revision Techniques
Managing Your Wellbeing
Prayers

November and March Mock Exams

Your mock exams will be taking place in November (Mock 1) and March (Mock 2) of Year 11. These exam periods are your opportunity to show your teachers what you are capable of and are important steps towards your ultimate success in the summer term. It is vitally important that you use your time preparing yourself well for your mock exams.

This booklet should provide you with all the information that you need to help you plan your revision and organise your time enabling you to feel relaxed and confident going into these exams.

All staff at St John's are here to support you. Please speak to someone if you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

Managing Your Well-Being

Exams are stressful for everyone

1. You won't be alone in feeling under pressure about exams.
2. A small amount of stress can be good for you - it can motivate you to do better or help you focus on overcoming a difficult situation.
3. It is important to recognise the signs of stress so you can do something about them.

Signs of Stress

- **Loss of appetite**
- **Struggling to sleep**
- **Feeling emotional**
- **Difficulty concentrating**

There are ways to help with stress...

1. Go outside for exercise and fresh air - it will help you clear your head.
2. Set aside time to meet up with your friends.
3. Build in relaxation time to your revision timetable.
4. Keep up the hobbies and activities you enjoy.
5. Eating well and sleeping well can also help to reduce stress.

...And there are ways to make it worse

1. Do not revise late into the evening—this will affect your sleep and make you tired.
2. Not taking adequate breaks will make your revision time less effective.
3. Do not set unrealistic targets or you will always disappoint yourself.

Talk about how you are feeling!

Talking to friends, family and teachers can really help you air out your anxieties and come up with a way to deal with your stress. If you don't feel comfortable talking to people you know, there are support services and helplines who you can talk to confidentially.

The Importance of Revision

Why do I need to revise?

66% of what you learn is forgotten within 7 days

88% of what you learn is forgotten within 6 weeks

Only 'reading over your notes' leads to a 10% retention of what is learnt

Research shows that students who attain top grades spend on average **20 hours per week** revising outside of school hours. Much of that work is **independent study!** You should be trying to complete 2 hours of revision per GCSE subject per week, which includes your intervention sessions in school and any homework you are set.

How do I motivate myself?

Starting to revise is the hardest part. Rather than thinking about stopping old habits – the trick is to think of it as starting a new habit. You can use the 3 Rs of habit to help you.

Reminder
Routine
Reward

Reminder: Using a revision planner, set an alarm on your phone of when you will start revising and stick to it.

Routine: Set a routine of working, use a revision planner and put it on your wall. It does not matter how you start it just matters that you start. When you find it hard to start, use the 10 minute rule. Aim to work for 10 minutes. Once you get going it is often easy to work for longer.

Reward: Reward yourself for your hard work. You could reward yourself with a cup of coffee, listen to your favourite song, go to see your friends or watch TV. It is essential that you give yourself these rewards after your work is completed to motivate yourself to work in the future.

Revision Tips

1. **Make a revision timetable.** If you need a blank revision timetable, ask your tutor. Use a revision timetable to plan which subjects you will revise on specific dates and identify which topics you will focus on.
2. **Short bursts of revision** (40-50 minutes) are most effective. Your concentration lapses after about an hour and you need to take a short break (5-10 minutes) before starting again.
3. Find a **quiet place** to revise - your bedroom, school, the LRC - and refuse to be interrupted or distracted.
4. Make sure you don't just revise the subjects and topics you like. Use your mock analysis or speak to your teachers to identify and work on your **weaker areas**.
5. **Make your own revision notes** because you will remember what *you* have written down more easily. Stick key notes to cupboards or doors so you see them every day.
6. **Use different techniques.** Make your own learning maps, use post-it notes to write key words on, create flash cards. Use diagrams and pictures. Read your revision notes out loud. Ask friends and family to test you. Use highlighter pens to mark important points.
7. **Practise on past exam papers** or revision tests available from your teacher. Initially do one section at a time and progress to doing an entire paper against the clock.
8. **You will need help at some stage;** ask parents, older brothers and sisters, teachers or friends. Only revise with a friend who is serious about their work. Use websites specifically designed for revision.
9. **Eat** properly and get lots of sleep! Reward yourself from time to time.
10. **Believe in yourself and be positive.** If you think you can succeed you will; if you convince yourself that you will fail, that's what will probably happen. Do not compare yourself to others. **Do your best!**

During Your Exams

Plan

- Highlight important instructions on the front cover of your exam paper.
- Highlight key words and the marks for each question.
- When you have completed the question, tick off the highlighted key words to ensure you have answered it fully.
- Tick off the number of available marks to check that you have written in enough detail to gain the marks.
- For long questions, neatly write a brief plan inside the examination paper. Just use trigger words to plan and get your mind thinking. Only spend about 30 seconds to a minute on this (unless advised to spend longer by your subject teachers)

Time

- Ask your teachers for advice on how long you should be spending on each question and stick to this.
- During your exam, keep checking the clock to ensure that you stick to time.
- Note down what time you started the question next to it.
- If you find that you are stuck on a question, move onto another question and come back to this if you have time. Don't panic.
- Remember to factor in time to check your work at the end.

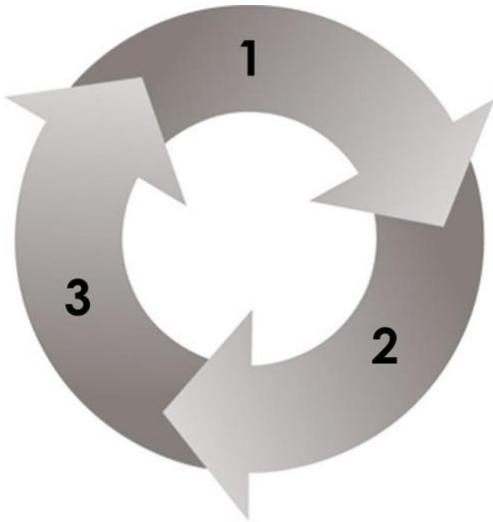
Neat

- Examiners cannot award you marks for your answers if they cannot read them! Make sure that your handwriting is neat and not too small to read.
- Any drawings or diagrams should be completed with a pencil and ruler.
- Your work should be easy to follow and well-organised.
- Ensure that your spellings are correct, especially key words.
- Use capital letters when suitable.
- Use correct punctuation – full stops, commas and paragraphs.

Revision Techniques

Most students revise **passively** by reading their notes and highlighting keywords. This is not a useful revision technique and is a waste of your time!

Instead you should be revising **actively** by following the three phases below.



Active Revision Cycle

Phase 1: Learn the Content

Phase 2: Test Yourself

Phase 3: RAG Rate your knowledge

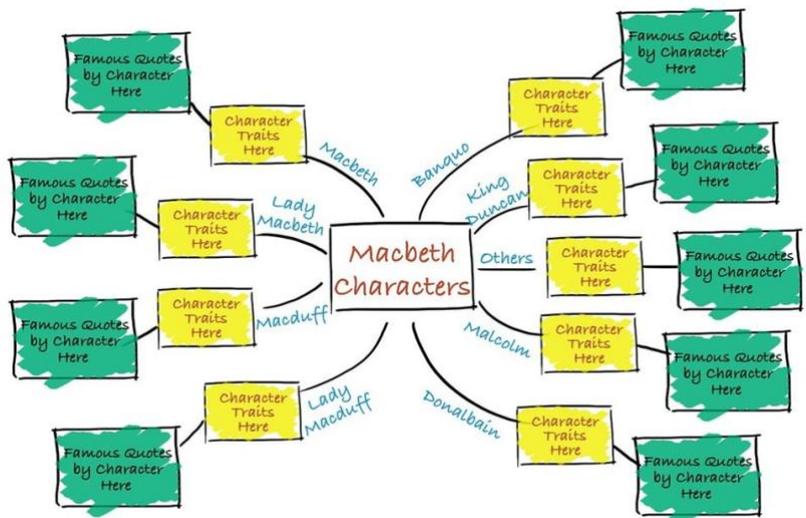
Repeat cycle

Phase 1: Learn the Content

The first phase of your revision cycle involves learning the content from a previous lesson. The majority of what you learn in a lesson you will forget within 6 weeks so it is important to review this. You can do this following these three techniques:

Technique 1: Mind Maps

- 1) Use your notes and other resources to draw a mind map of a topic.
- 2) The name of a topic goes in the middle, with sub-topics and further detail added around the outside.
- 3) Organising material visually can make it easier to recall in an exam.
- 4) A good mind map uses colour and images. Put bubbles and boxes around points to make them stand out.
- 5) You can put this mind map up in your room.

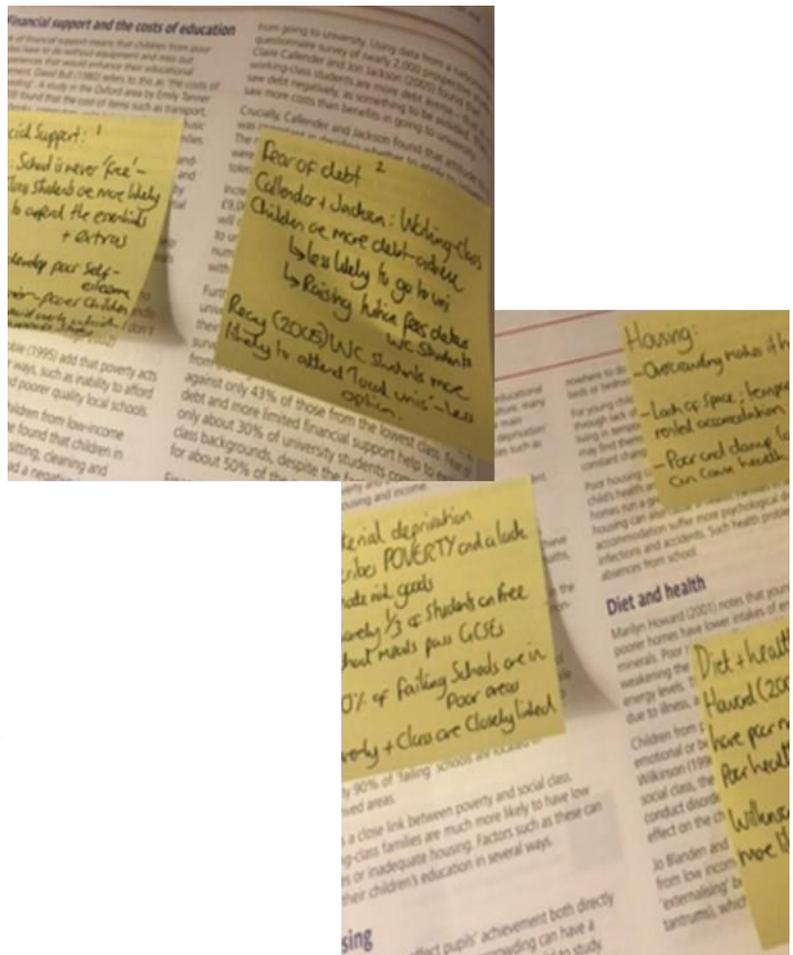


Revision Techniques

Technique 2: Chunking

Rather than taking a knowledge organiser and reading it or copying it out:

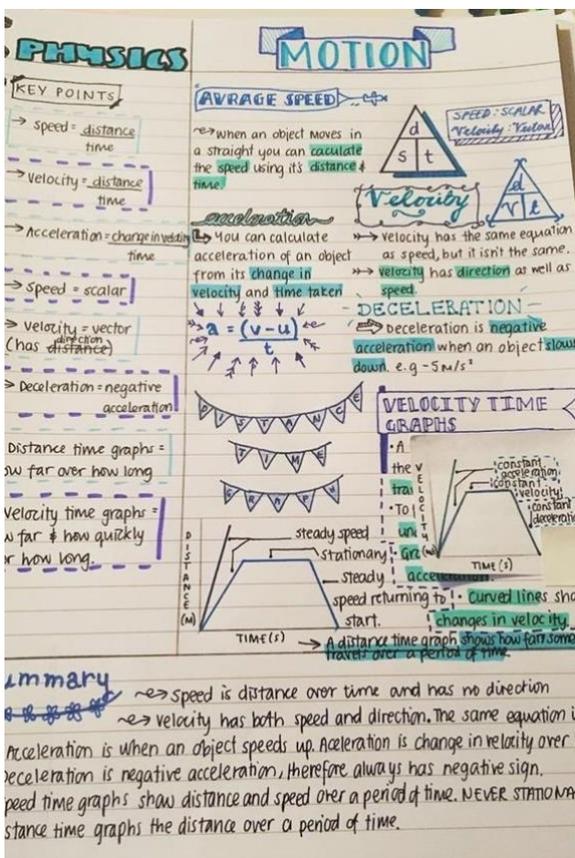
- 1) Reading through a text, making notes in your own words
- 2) Write a post-it summary at the end of each paragraph
- 3) This exercise forces you to extract the key meaning from the paragraph
- 4) Reducing it down to something easier and more memorable.



Technique 3: Summary Notes

You'll need some high quality revision notes. This could be your revision guide, exercise book or a knowledge organiser.

- 1) Read through your notes to make sure you understand them.
- 2) Condense these notes in your own words.
- 3) Aim to get each topic within a subject to fit on one A4 page.
- 4) You can then condense this down further into just a paragraph.



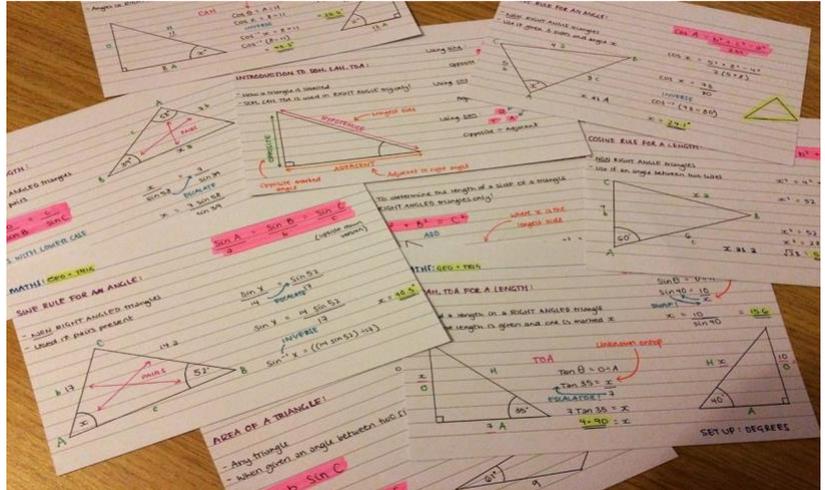
Revision Techniques

Phase 2: Test Yourself

The second phase of your revision should be about testing your knowledge. By testing yourself you are making your revision more challenging and therefore you are working more actively. This is the best way to revise!

Technique 1: Flash Cards

- 1) Write out questions on one side of a flashcard and the answer on the other side.
- 2) You could use the checklists found in your revision guides to help you write these questions.
- 3) Do not just read your flashcards. Ask yourself the questions or ask someone at home to test you.



Technique 2: Cover Copy Check

- 1) You can test yourself on a topic by using a mind map or your summary notes.
- 2) To start with, read through these notes.
- 3) Then turn your notes or mind map over so you cannot see it.
- 4) Now from memory, try to write down everything that was on your mind map or notes.
- 5) Turn your notes over and see what you could and could not remember.

Technique 3: Past Paper Exam Questions

- 1) Ask your teacher for exam questions and past papers to try.
- 2) Find a quiet spot where you will not be distracted.
- 3) Set a timer.
- 4) Read through the paper and focus on command words and allocation of marks.
- 5) When you have finished, review your answers using the mark scheme.

Revision Techniques

Phase 3: RAG Rate

It is so important that you are aware of what you are learning and what you need to do to improve. RAG stands for Red, Amber and Green.

Red: Red are the topics you are least confident in.

Amber: Amber are the topics that you know something about but are not 100% confident in.

Green: These are the topics you feel 100% confident in.

Once you have RAG rated the topics you now need to do the following:

- Focused revision for Red topics
- Practise Amber topics
- Do not just re-revise Green topics because you find them easy

Repeat

The whole point of the active revision cycle is that you ensure you repeat your revision. You must return to topics you have already revised and revise them again.

This is very important as 88% of what you have revised will be forgotten within 6 weeks.

Prayers for Exam Time

Lord, At this moment we can do only the best we can with the knowledge we have. Take away our fear, calm our jumbled thoughts that we may complete these exams with a clear mind and steady heart.

Amen

Your love for us is always with us, surrounding and holding us in every moment. In this time of challenge help us to recognise that you love us as we are. Give us the peace that trusting in you brings.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Lord, We put to rest with you this working day, with its happiness and its troubles. We ask for the peace of your presence and your ongoing help,

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We have finished today's exams, Lord, and offer them to you; the questions we found easy and the ones with which we struggled. Knowing we can do no more about them, we ask that you renew and refresh us that we may begin anew with a calm mind.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

