

Revision and exam top tips



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Exams have a habit of creeping up on us and there never seems to be enough time to cover everything. Most of us wish we had started revision sooner and that we had more time.

So what can you do to ensure that you are ready and that you perform to your best in that exam room? Below are some tips and hints for good revision and exam techniques - it's not too late to learn...

Building up

Start with 10 minutes of studying. Have a 10 minute break and then start again, gradually building up to 20 or 40 minute periods, while keeping breaks to 10 minutes. It works - try it and see! If your concentration holds, then work for longer before that break.

Get smart and grab extra time during the day by getting up earlier or shortening your lunch break. Thirty minutes each school day would give an extra two-and-a-half hours a week, which may allow you to have a night off. Think what an extra hour a day could do, and work from there.

Recreation should be built into your schedule. Make sure you get some but don't let it take over. Use the time between exams wisely and keep your revision on track.

Look ahead

Forget the exams that you have just taken. There is nothing you can do to influence them now - but there is a lot you can do to improve your performance in the ones yet to be taken. That is where your efforts should lie.

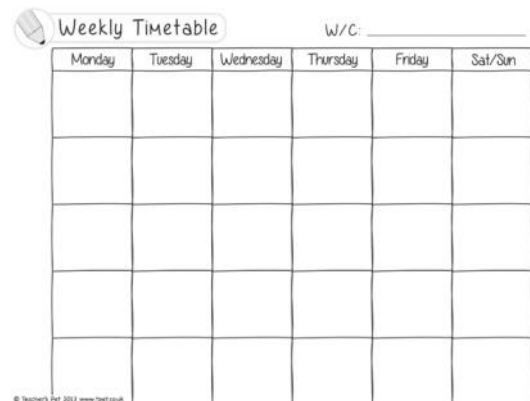
Vary the subjects you revise in an evening, starting with the one you like the least and finishing with the one you like best. You may even get to like that disliked subject as you get to grips with it. When you finish a revision session give yourself a treat. You deserve it, and you will feel pleased in having achieved something.

Don't cram new information in the night before an exam. Relax if you can by lightly reading over your notes for the next day.

Top 10 Tips for Revision

Exams and tests can be a stressful time for most students, but follow these fantastic stress-free tips for revising... and you might find yourself at the top of the brainy class!

1. Study in a **quiet place** that is both light and comfortable, away from the TV and computers etc.
2. Make a '**revision timetable**' and always let your family know when you are revising.
3. **Get help**. Ask friends and family to **test you**. Also attend any teacher **revision classes** – as teachers will know better than anyone what will be in tests and exams!
4. **Record yourself** reading notes **and occasionally listen** to them instead of reading.
5. Take a **5 or 10 minute break** every hour and do some stretching exercises, go for a short walk or make yourself a drink.
6. Allow yourself some fun-time each day to **relax**...and make sure you get a good **8 hours of sleep** each night.
7. **Eat well**. Good brain foods? Wholegrain foods (cereals, wheat bran, wheatgerm and whole wheat pasta). Blueberries. Blackcurrants. Broccoli. Tomatoes. Oily fish. Nuts.
8. **Don't panic** if you feel a bit nervy. A certain amount of **nervousness actually helps you perform** to the best of your ability, producing a rush of adrenaline that helps you to feel alert and focused.
9. Create **summary notes** and anything simple that helps your **memory** – as short notes, drawings and sayings are much easier to remember.
10. **Think positive!** Revise thoroughly and do your best.



Key exam language

Look for the key words in the exam questions, to help you answer in the right way and get maximum marks. For example:

- **Analyse** - Look closely at the detail
- **Comment on** - Give your opinions or point of view with examples
- **Compare** - Say how things are the same and how things are different
- **Contrast** - Say how things are different
- **Describe** - Write about in detail
- **Discuss** - Give the main reasons for and against, come to a conclusion
- **Estimate** - Give a rough idea, with evidence
- **Explain** - Give reasons for
- **Illustrate** - Give examples that make the point clear – it can include diagrams, figures or drawings
- **Interpret** - Explain the meaning in your own words
- **Justify** - Give two reasons to support an argument or action
- **Outline** - Give only the most important details
- **State** - Write briefly the main point
- **Summarise** - Bring together the main points

Key tips for the exam

1. Arrive in good time for the start of the exam.
2. Always read the instructions carefully.
3. As you read through the exam paper, circle or highlight the questions you want to answer or must answer. Don't be afraid to write on the question paper.
4. Do the question you feel most confident about first.
5. Make sure you answer all the questions you need to.
6. Make sure you read through the whole paper *before* you start to write.
7. Check how many marks are given for each question. This gives important information for how much detail is required.

8. Plan a question before you begin to write. You may even get extra marks for this as it shows your thinking.
9. Underline key words in the question. This can help organise your answer.
10. Read through your answers after and check all parts of the question.
11. Make sure that you are dressed comfortably so that you are warm/cool enough in the exam room.
12. Stay calm don't panic. Counting to ten or breathing deeply may help you if your mind goes blank.

Invigilators

If you are not sure of anything about the exam once you have sat at your desk and have the paper in front of you, please don't hesitate to ask for help from an invigilator. They want you to do your best and will help where they can. Just remember to put your hand up very clearly, an invigilator will come to you.

Now, it is time to get your revision planned and started... Good luck!