



holy
family 6th

Revision
guidance and
advice

Do's and Don'ts

DO

Make a list of all the topics you need to revise

Each subject that you are studying can be broken down into its smaller parts, with main sections, subtopics and supporting details. A very useful start is to list out all the topics on the course according to this hierarchy and use this as a 'revision checklist' for the subject. Tick topics off as you've learnt them.

Create a realistic schedule

Block the waking part of each day into three portions. Allow yourself one portion a day off and allocate subjects and topics to the remaining two. Put the schedule on display so that your family can see when you are available. It will also reassure your parents that you are in control.

Plan by working backwards

By using revision checklists in your various subjects, you should know what quantity of material has to be covered over the coming months. Start from the final date (end of May) and divide your revision up week by week, allowing some flexibility for unforeseen delays. Surprise yourself by being ready in time! Use the learning plans created by your teachers to help guide your revision.

Sleep, rest and eat

Your body cannot function without being rested and fuelled. This does not always mean sleep but research demonstrates that a lack of sufficient sleep can negatively impact on your cognitive abilities (think back to Mr Riley's assembly). Rest should also mean giving yourself rest days/evenings. It is beneficial to give yourself a day off school work to focus on your hobbies, socialising and the things you want to do.

DON'T

Just keep going!

The body and the mind need regular 'time-outs'. When you're tired, concentration is more difficult, you get distracted easily and learning and memorisation is less effective. There comes a point in an evening study session when it is counter-productive to stay at the desk — nothing is going in and you are only tiring yourself further. Use breaks effectively, particularly after completing a task.

TOP TIPS ON EXAM STRATEGY



Success in exams involves two ingredients: having a thorough knowledge of the subject matter AND making the most of your knowledge in the exam through effective answering technique. Two students with identical knowledge and attainment levels can sit the same exam and their final grades can differ by as much as 25%. The difference is down to having an effective strategy and exam technique.

Here are four golden rules to apply to all your exam papers:

1. Allow time to read the paper carefully.

The importance of reading the paper carefully and choosing your questions wisely cannot be emphasised enough. It's natural to want to start writing immediately and launch into a favoured topic. Resist the urge. Take your time. Be smart and size-up the paper before answering.

2. Stick to your game plan

An overall strategy should have emerged from your revision and exam preparation in each subject. This covers the areas you will tackle, the topics you will avoid if they appear on the paper, the sequence in which you tackle the various sections, the style of answering you will employ in each subject, the amount of time you will allocate to answering each section. In some cases, this plan will work like a dream but there will always be surprises to deal with in some papers. Don't get flustered. Stick to your game plan, trust your judgement, and move on.

3. Sweep up any mistakes

In the pressure of the exam hall, it is easy to make basic errors. These will sometimes have the potential to lose you a lot of valuable marks. Misreading the instruction on a question can render an entire answer invalid. You might have known the correct answer, but you didn't put it down. A simple miscalculation can lose you valuable time as you try to figure out the balancing item. Be disciplined with your time. Always leave a few minutes at the end to tidy-up errors.

4. Attempt all questions

It is amazing how many exam scripts are handed up unfinished. Every year, capable students who just didn't get time to finish the paper lose easy marks. Don't fall into this trap. Work on the basis that you will get an answer written for the required number of questions. Remember that it is much easier to get the first 20% of the marks for any question than the final 5%. You can always polish an answer further but, if there is no attempt made at part of a question, you can't get any marks. But if the instructions on the front of the paper tell you to answer a certain number of questions – stick to this – don't answer too many!

6 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

1. Spaced practice

For more effective and deeper learning, study must take place in smaller chunks over a longer period of time (as opposed to 'blocked practice' which involves cramming in as much learning and revision as possible in a shorter block of time).

2. Retrieval practice

When students leave some time in between learning topics, the brain forgets some information. However, the effort involved in retrieving the forgotten learning helps embed information more securely in the long-term memory. It may seem counter-intuitive, but it is an extremely effective learning technique.

3. Interleaved practice

A more traditional way to learn is to practice a skill over and over again, repeating until mastery has been achieved. Whilst repetition is extremely important, the most effective learning and revision involves mixing our practice with other skills. This means rather than completing 5 essays on characters in Macbeth, write one essay, then focus on a Physics problem, do some History, a quiz on Geography, before returning to Macbeth.

4. Self-testing

Lots of low stakes testing and self-testing is a very effective learning and revision strategy. Quizzes, vocab tests, technical terminology reviews, tests on assessments objectives and exam requirements can be very helpful for this. Team up with a 'study buddy' and quiz each other on a shared revision topic.

5. Elaboration

Some learning involves the simple recall of facts and information; however, to achieve the highest grades students need to demonstrate higher order thinking skills by asking open-ended questions and making connections between topics, adding specific details and evidence as they do so. This can be best achieved when explaining a topic to someone else.

6. Dual coding

This is the process of combining verbal and visual materials by using techniques such as timelines, infographics, diagrams, graphic organiser or even cartoon strips. When reviewing your prior learning, find visuals that support and illustrate the written information.

Revision Techniques

1. Make a realistic revision timetable

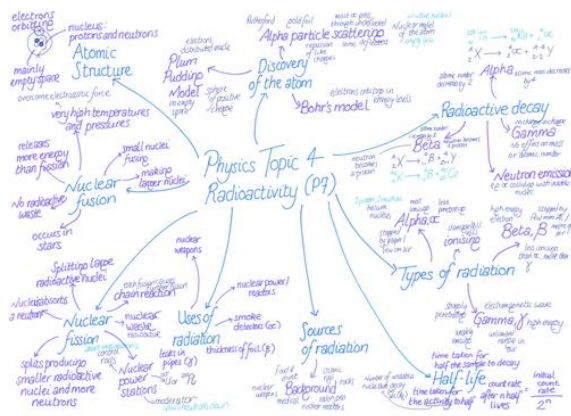
Create a weekly timetable to structure your revision and help you maintain your motivation and effort levels. Your timetable needs to be realistic, so don't plan to revise 3 hours solid, plan for 30-minute revision sessions. Make sure your schedule fits around your lessons, LRC periods and other commitments. Try to balance your revision sessions between all your subjects.

REVISION

* = course if possible
// = no revision/lessons

TIME	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
8:30-9:30	revision	revision	revision	revision	revision	*	*
9:30-10:30	maths	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	//
10:30-11:30	english	chemistry	media	maths	english	maths*	//
11:30-12:30	//	//	maths	english	media	//	//
12:30-1:30	english	english	//	//	//	//	//
1:30-2:30	maths	english	//	//	chemistry	//	//
2:30-3:30	//	//	english	chemistry	//	*	revision
3:30-4:30	//	//	physics	chemistry	//	*	media
4:30-5:00	maths	biology	//	//	history	english	//
5:00-5:30	maths	maths	maths	biology	physics	english	//
5:30-6:00	//	//	//	//	//	//	//
6:00-6:30	english	english	//	//	//	//	//
6:30-7:00	maths	english	//	//	chemistry	//	//
7:00-7:30	//	//	english	chemistry	//	*	revision
7:30-8:00	//	//	physics	chemistry	//	*	media
8:00-8:30	maths	biology	//	//	history	english	//
8:30-9:00	maths	maths	maths	biology	physics	english	//
9:00-9:30	//	//	//	//	//	//	//
9:30-10:00	biology	maths	biology	biology	physics	//	//
10:00-10:30	media	physics	biology	media	physics*	//	//

2. Create mind-maps for the key topics



Mind maps are a useful way to organise information and make links between key information that you are expected to know for each subject. On your mind map make sure that you include the specialist terminology that is required for your subject. You could use different pens to identify different information, for example using green and red pens to highlight the strengths and weaknesses. Don't forget that you can ask your subject teacher to check any mind maps you create.

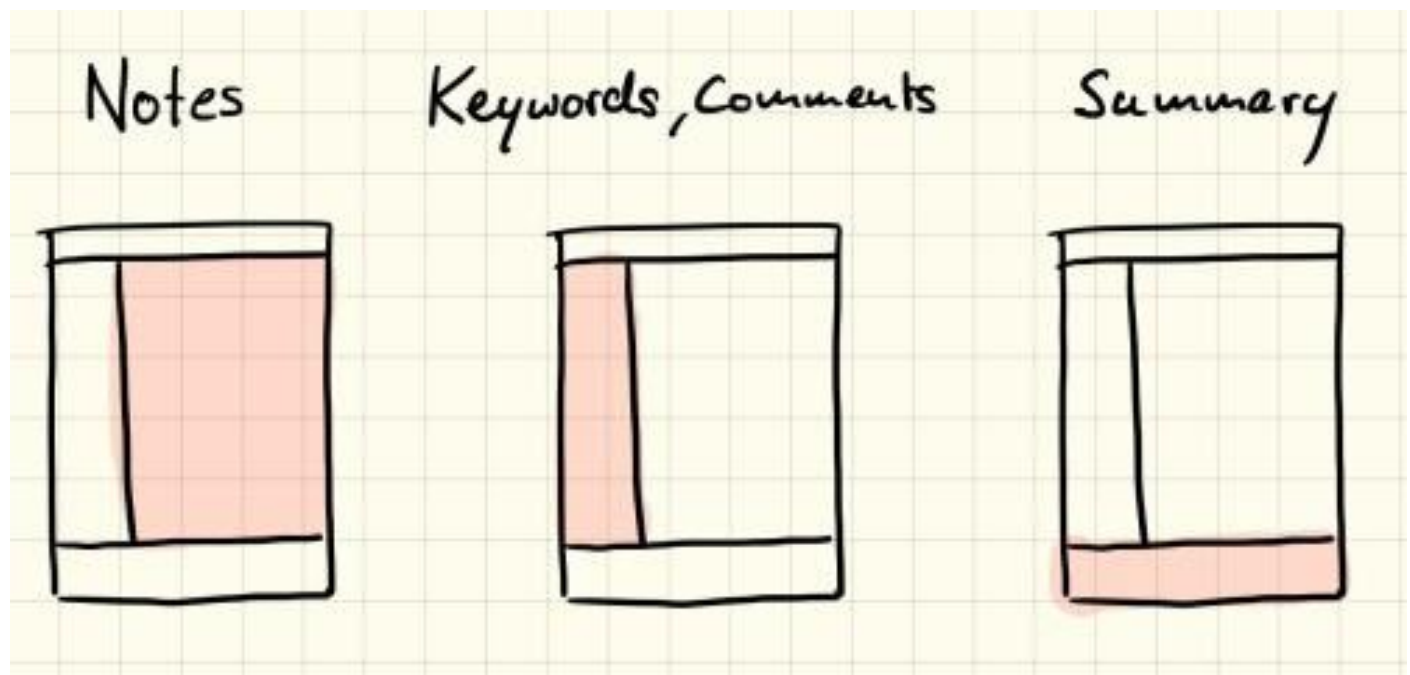
3. Attach new information to old existing memories.

One difficulty when trying to learn new information in a short period of time is transferring the new learning from your short-term memory to your long-term memory. A technique that you can use to help overcome this issue, is to link the new learning with pre-existing long-term memories. For example, you could associate characters from a book to celebrities, friends, or teachers. You could imagine the key details from a study or an equation and link them to items in your bedroom. A technique that uses this principle is to make your own mnemonics. Attach a key term or name that you are trying to learn to a word that you already know with the same first letter. For example, in psychology ethics = Can Do Can't Do With Participants (Consent, Deception, Confidentiality, Debrief, Protection, Withdrawal). Making your own mnemonics better than using other peoples.

My **M**ERCURY
VERY **V**ENUS
EDUCATED **E**ARTH
MOTHER **M**ARS
JUST **J**UPITER
SERVED **S**ATURN

4. Cornell Notetaking & Recall questions

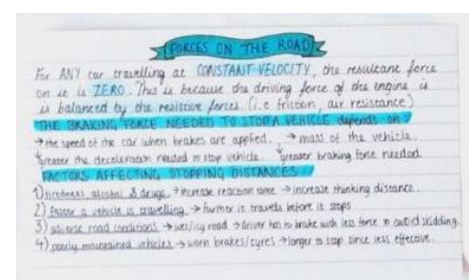
The Cornell note taking system was developed by Prof. Walter Pauk in the 1950's and is named after the university where he worked. The system is scientifically proven to help aid memory recall and preparation for essay-based subjects. Many universities encourage their students to use the system during a lecture and return to their lecture notes to create retrieval questions independently post lecture. The system requires you to split an A4 page similar to the diagram below. In the top box you would write the essay question of topic you are revising. On the right-hand side of the page you write down all your notes or the essay itself. On the left-hand side you create summary points or retrieval questions related to the information you wrote in the notes section. You finish the notes by writing a summary at the bottom of the page.



This technique requires effort which puts many students off, however effort is essential for learning. By creating retrieval questions and a summary you are thinking about the information you are trying to learn on a deeper level, helping transference to your long-term memory store. This is an excellent resource once created, you can test yourself by covering your notes and answering the questions you created on the left-hand side.

5. Flash cards

Flash cards are well-known and a go-to for most students. Flash cards are excellent for recalling key terms, equations, or events in history. Once you have created your flash cards, make sure you continuously return to the cards to test yourself. Try swapping flash cards with another student and testing each other's knowledge.



6. Completing past exam papers

Don't wait for your teachers to provide past exam questions to practice. Use the website of your exam board to access the available papers. Complete the questions using your notes to create model answers. You can ask your subject teacher to double check your answers first. Then reattempt the same questions after a week or so but this time under timed conditions and using no notes. Compare your model answers to the 'test conditions' answers to see if there is any difference. Most exam board recycle questions, often only changing a minor detail. The more you practice, the more familiar you feel with the questions and the exam command words.

Exam board websites:

www.aqa.org.uk / www.ocr.org.uk / www.qualifications.pearson.com / www.wjec.co.uk

7. Create your own podcast

Use your mobile phone to record your own podcast/revision notes for the topics you are revising. Creating the podcast will challenge you to think of the topics in more detail and give you a useful resource to listen to in the future. If you keep the podcasts short (5 – 7 minutes), you can listen to the podcast before lessons and on the way to and from school.



8. Create memes

Create your own revision memes based upon memes that are already in your long-term memory. You can be as creative and as silly as you like, it will certainly help transfer and store the information. You could even get competitive and compare your memes to other students in your class.



9. Use YouTube

YouTube has a whole host of videos created for A level students and their revision. Companies like Tutor2U and 2-minute Neuroscience are excellent short-videos that can make revision more manageable. Create your own revision playlists for the subjects you are revising for. You'll also see several former A level students who give their own advice related to their experience of sitting the exams.

Question:

Revision Questions

Essay

Revision Timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00 – 10.00					
10.00 – 11.00					
11.00 – 12.00					
12.00 – 1.00					
1.00 – 2.00					
2.00 – 3.00					
3.00 – 4.00					
Evening					

