

Revision Strategies

The techniques contained in this booklet are based on proven methods to help you remember more in examinations.

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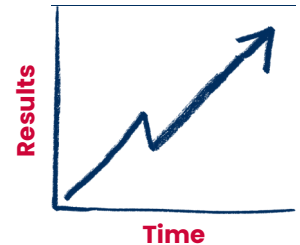
Developing revision habits

Habits are incredibly powerful in helping you succeed. If you have the mindset of wanting to be a better pupil and build the habits to become the person you want, the results will come.

It is great to have targets on what you want to achieve as they give you a goal and direction.

However, it is your habits which allow you to best make progress, exam success is the product of daily habits not one of sudden transformations.

Get 1% better everyday over a long period of time is the best way to revise.



Creating habits

Developing revision habits is hard and it takes time for them to stick but if you stay with them you will reach both your goals and new identity.

There are 4 principles around building effective habits whether this be your goal to read or exercise more or revising for your exams. These principles are called the Habit Loop and each phase is important to or building new habits.

Making it obvious



- Revise in one area, so you relate the area to work
- Leave your revision materials out ready to start
- Write a revision contract to schedule your revision
- Stack habits together, so go for a walk and listen to revision, podcasts or revise then tidy your room!

Make it attractive



- Revise with friends, attend revision classes together
- Do something enjoyable once you complete revision
- Write a revision contract with your family agreeing to revise specific days and times, they can keep you on track.

Make it easy



- Start small - 10 minutes a night and build up over time
- Reduce distractions when you revise
- Ask your family to encourage you and get them involved
- Create a revision timetable - place on your wall

Make it rewarding



- Start successful by easy tests and quizzes but make sure you are challenged
- Reframe your identity, think that 'I'm a hard worker'
- Track revision progress and never miss revision twice



Create an effective system

Whilst it is important to have clear goals for your exam results, having these goals aren't enough, it is the systems you set up which is what enables you to achieve your goals and improve over a lifetime.

Revision spaces

We know that your working memory can only hold a small amount of information at once. Therefore in order to revise and learn effectively you should use techniques which stop your working memory from becoming overwhelmed.

One way that you can free up space in your working memory is by working in an environment which is free from distractions - therefore creating an effective revision space is essential.

Find a quiet, tidy room with minimal distractions - your bedroom, library or classroom

Put your revision timetable, exam timetable and other documents visible on the wall

Make sure you have a drink and snack with you staying hydrated and full is important



Make sure to put your phone in another room - it is too much of a distraction.

Loud music is a distraction, if you must listen, it needs to be low tempo without lyrics.

Have all your revision materials and stationary on your desk ready to go - make it obvious

Put the phone away

Whilst phones are a brilliant invention, research has found they have a **negative impact** on revision and learning.



Having your phone out reduces concentration impacting working



It impacts your sleep especially the bright lights and distractions



It produces FOMO (fear of missing out) which reduces your motivation to revise



Having revision apps on your phone increases the chance of going on others

Sleep your way to success



Whilst we encourage you to work hard before your exams, sleep is equally as important and it is essential you get enough sleep. Research shows that sleep duration and quality improves memory and recall, helps your concentration and aids creativity. So it makes sense to prioritise good sleep!

Have regular bed time - this keeps your body clock in a routine, aim for 8-10 hours a night

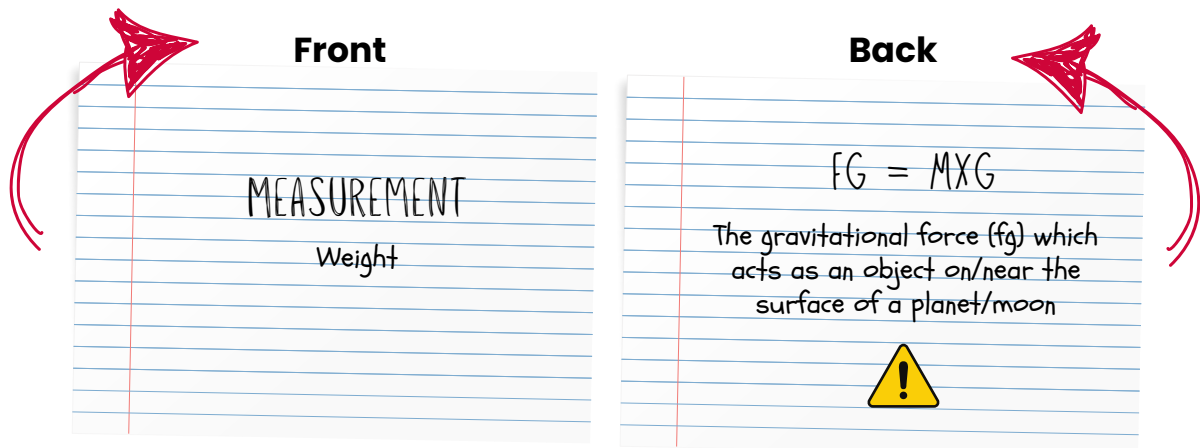
Help sleep arrive - tire yourself out by exercising, put away your phone, stop gaming 30 minutes before bed

Can't sleep? - don't go on your phone but read a book or something that occupies your brain

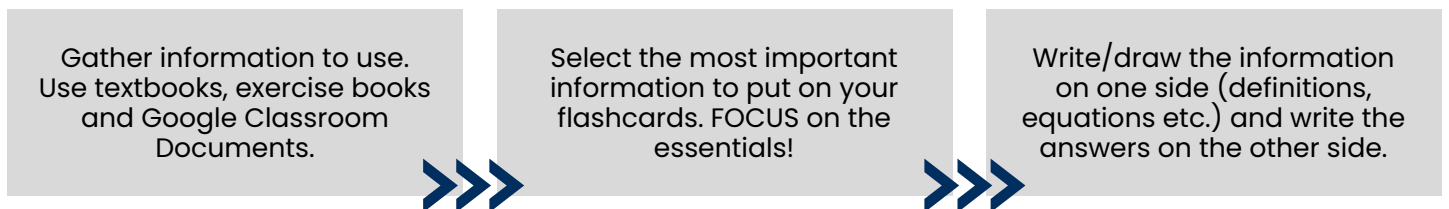


Strategy – Flashcards

Flashcards are small sheets of card with information on either side. They are a useful tool for learning facts and allowing you to quickly check whether you have remembered something correctly.



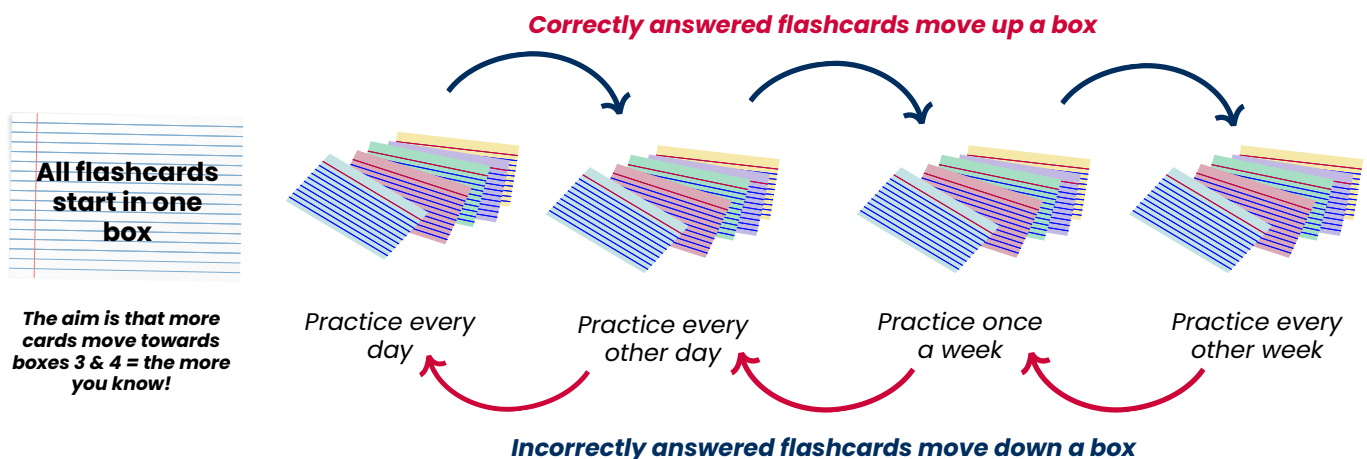
Creating flashcards



Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put a single piece of information on each flashcard. Sort your flashcards according to your confidence on the subject. Create Decks for each topic - use different colours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend more time making flashcards than using them Put lots of information on each flashcard. Revise the flashcards in the same order every time that you use them. Only read through flashcards - Test your memory!

How to use flashcards?

The Leitner System is a simple but powerful method of using flashcards, it uses **spaced practice** to test you and allows you to easily see what you do and don't know. Over time it will build your knowledge and confidence.

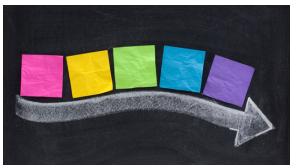




Strategy – Dual coding

What is dual coding?

- Dual coding is the blending of words and pictures
- Research suggests that combining words and images increases your learning by visually representing information in two different ways, it cements it deeper into our long-term memory.
- You can use dual coding in a variety of ways to support revision.



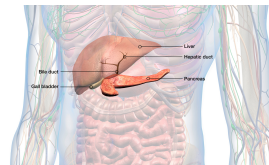
Timelines

These can show the events that happen in a sequence, and the links between these events.



Mind maps

These allow you to group information in branches from a central theme.



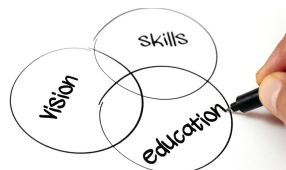
Diagrams

Diagrams to annotate key information e.g. biological features about the body.



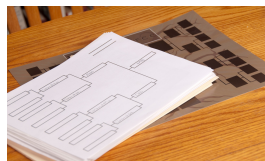
Story boards

These can help you remember the key parts in a story or an event.



Venn diagrams

Useful to compare change/continuity in history or characters in English



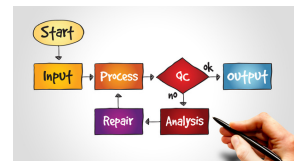
Graphic organiser

These can chunk any aspect of a topic; hierarchy, process, cause and effect etc.



Concept maps

Use to highlight links between themes, concept and ideas



Flow diagram

Use flow diagrams to highlight cause and effect, input/output and processes

Using dual coding

Gather information to create; use textbooks, exercise books or knowledge organisers



Pick a style to represent the topic e.g. a timeline for key dates in migration



- Plan out before you start your design
- Categorise your information in themes
- Draw images to represent key terms
- Look for links between ideas

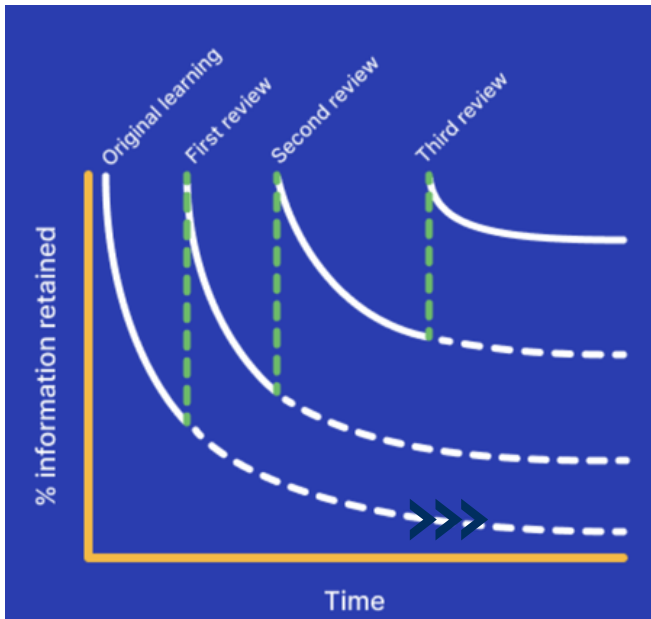
Advice

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to eventually recreate your designs from memory- build up to it and reduce the detail to the basics • Choose a style that supports what you are revising • Verbally explain the contents as you go through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't spend ages making it look pretty - it's a waste of time. Remember our focus is being effective • Draw images that are irrelevant or confusing



Strategy – Retrieval Practice

Retrieval practice is the act of recalling learned information from memory. Every time you retrieve something from your memory (e.g. a fact), it becomes deeper, stronger and easier to access in the future. It enhances your learning.



The benefits of retrieval practice

- As we know, retrieval helps break the forgetting curve, it helps knowledge stick!
- It allows you to clearly identify gaps in your knowledge.
- It helps you learn more, and apply your knowledge to new information.
- Regular testing builds your confidence over time.

Revise a specific topic using a strategy like flashcards, making or summarising notes



Complete a retrieval activity (see examples below)



Review your practice – compare your result to your notes and previous quizzes. Make any corrections and add missing info.

Advice

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test on the areas you struggle on and need to improve. • Use topic checklists or revision guides as a way to monitor you have completed retrieval practice on everything. • Move beyond recalling simple facts to detail, analysis, quotes and methodologies. • Get other people to test you on your flashcards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just test yourself once or twice – it's repeated testing that will ensure you remember • Throw away your quizzes or brain dumps. • Avoid testing yourself on tough topics

Examples of retrieval practice

Below are several examples you use retrieval practice to support your revision

Mind maps

Write out everything you know about a topic under timed conditions.

Then use your notes to make any corrections or additions with a different coloured pen.



Graphic organisers

Complete a pre-made graphic organiser from memory such as Round the Clock revision or Cornell Notes.

These allow you to structure your answer, providing opportunity to apply your knowledge.

Elaboration

Explain a narrative to someone who has the notes so they can check the answer. Create a visual guide to help you.

Self quizzing

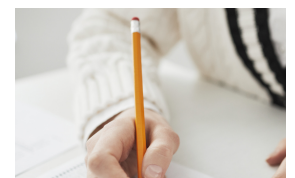
Answer questions on a topic, fill a diagram or complete gap fills, all from memory.

Use notes to make any corrections using a coloured pen.



Exam questions

Answering exam questions from memory is a useful method as it requires you to draw multiple pieces of knowledge and skills together at once.





Strategy – Deliberate Practice

Practice is essential, you can revise all you like but without practice it is wasted. Daniel Willingham says “Memory of the residue of thought, you remember what you think about!”

The Memory Clock

The Sandringham Memory Clock is a great strategy to utilise deliberate practice. This strategy is built around spending 60 minutes of revision on a specific subject focusing on three important areas:

Review – Spend time revising a topic, utilise the existing strategies you have

Practice – The essential step, where you put your revision into action

Check – This important step review your practice, gives you feedback and guides you on what to do next

Refocus your revision

What you need to focus on next

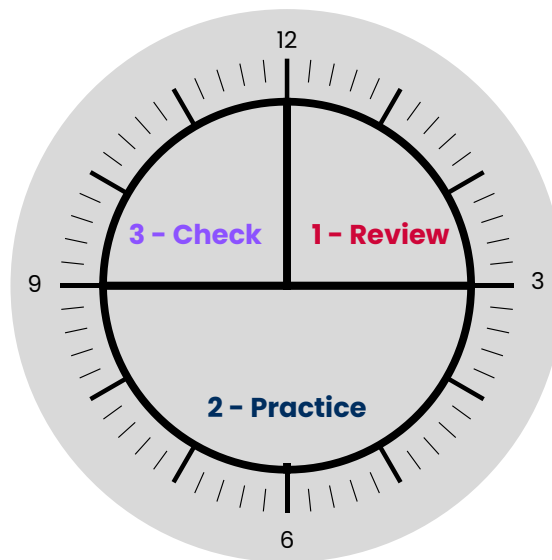
Redraft your answer to make improvement

Compare your answer to your notes or the mark scheme

Set a timer and stick to it

Put your revision into practice

– Complete an exam paper, task or specific area of focus



Pick a specific topic to practice, be precise!

Revise the topic
Use flashcards or graphic organisers to prepare

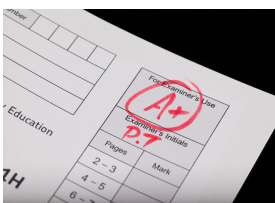
Get yourself in exam conditions – a quiet space with no distractions

Put your notes away! Do it from memory.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend time practising what you will be tested on – whether that is writing, singing or drawing! Practice the areas you struggle on and need to improve. Prioritise areas you have struggled with in previous assessments. Make sure you review your practice. Always mark what you do and complete full MAD time – this is where you really learn! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice areas you haven't revised using notes or flashcards Only practice areas you find easy or do well at. Spend too long on a question – if the question is an 18 minute one, stick to that time in exam conditions. Move on until you have remastered every type of question

What should you practice?

Practice applying the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in your subjects



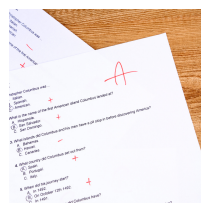
Exam questions

Do whole or parts of the paper and focus on areas of weakness



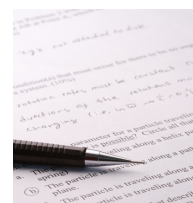
Plan questions

Planning still focuses on the skills and knowledge needed



Specific Skills

Write a history narrative question, practice conclusions, work on specific maths questions





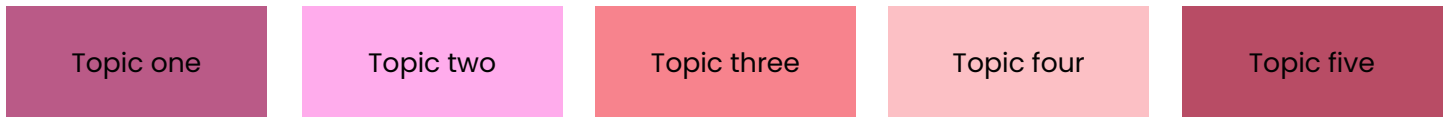
Strategy – Spacing & Interleaving

Spacing refers to revision throughout the course of study, while interleaving means switching between ideas while you learn. Both techniques can help boost your long-term memory and retrieval of information

Interleaving

When you are revising the temptation is to do it in 'blocks' of topics, completing one and moving onto another – this makes you feel like you have completed it.

The research suggests that this isn't the most effective way to revise.



Rather than revising in 'topic blocks' it is better to chunk these topics up and interleave them – space them out and mix them up.

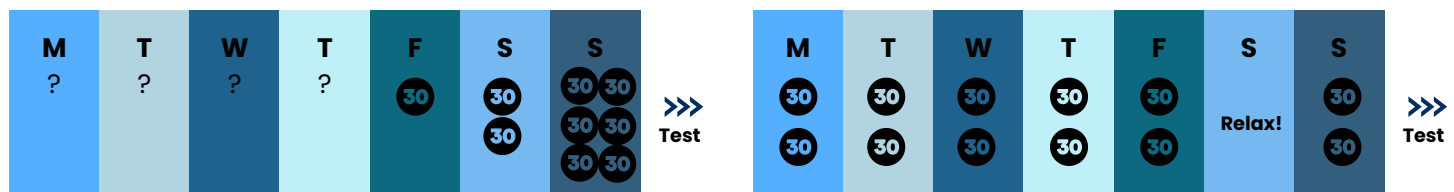


This means splitting up topics within a subject e.g. history where you split up (medicine, Germany, American West and Anglo Saxons) or across subjects like maths, English and science. To **strengthen revision** you can then mix up the order of topics to space things out.

Spacing

There is often a temptation to cram all your revision until the final days before your exam but this is not how athletes or actors prepare. Research suggests this will overload your memory and make you much more likely to forget things.

It is better to spread out your revision in chunks, overtime – start early! 5 hours split across a week is better than 5 hours all at once, do little bits over time than in one sessions. You are much more likely to remember things this way because your brain has to keep recalling the information.



Advice

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Plan out your revision with a timetable, this is essential in maximising spacing and interleaving.Gather the list of topics for each subject to allow you to map out your revision.Make time for breaks and switching off.Force yourself to remember things many times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cram all at once. This never works.Don't worry that mixing up your revision topics feel hard, its meant to – but it will help in the long termSome topics with a narrative are better not interleaved as you can lose the thread.



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