

Queen Elizabeth High School
Ysgol Uwchradd Y Frenhines Elisabeth



Study Skills



“
SOME PEOPLE
DREAM OF
SUCCESS WHILE
OTHERS WAKE
UP AND WORK.
”

This study skills guide has been created to give you the support and help that you may need to reach your full potential in your exams. This guide includes advice, hints and tips about revision strategies and getting organised for revision.

Study skills are critical to success in school. They are considered essential for acquiring good grades and are useful for learning throughout one’s life. There is an array of study skills, which may tackle the process of organising and taking in information, retaining information, or dealing with assessments/exams.

In this document, you will find the following information:

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Getting Organised

Where?

Before starting your revision, you need to decide on a suitable revision space that will keep you focused. That may be your bedroom, kitchen or even a local library. Wherever that may be, it should be a suitable environment that encourages you to work.

Some things you should consider are...

Is everything you need there?

Does your revision space have all the equipment and resources you need?

Do you have easy access to water and snacks?

Is the environment suitable?

Is the space comfortable, clear, organised, and free from distractions?

Is it quiet, airy, and well-lit? Are there suitable people close by that may also encourage you to work?

Resources you may need:

Pen
Pencil
Rubber
Ruler
Calculator
Highlighters
Paper/Card
Books/Booklets
Computer
Water/Snacks

Here are some other things to consider...

Fuelling

Eating and drinking junk food can negatively affect your mood and concentration levels.

Keeping hydrated is extremely important (drinks plenty of water).

Ditch stimulants like coffee and energy drinks.

Sleep

Don't forego sleep for revision.

You might spend longer revising but your recall (remembering what you've learned) will be worse.

Most teenagers need about 8-10 hours sleep a night.

Avoid using technology before you plan to go to sleep.



When?

Something else you will need to plan is when you revise and how long for. Some people work better in the morning and some work better at night. You need to find out what works for you.

You also need to consider how long you will revise for. It is often more productive to revise for shorter periods, with short regular breaks in between, rather than revise for hours on end without a break.

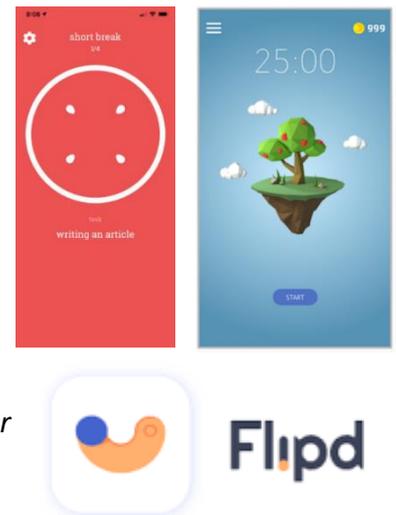
Consider using a technique such as the Pomodoro technique as shown in the diagram.

If you struggle to set or stick to limits you've set for yourself, there's plenty of technological help to get you into good habits.



Some useful apps:

- ❖ **Tomato timers** – *timers with the pomodoro method.*
- ❖ **Plant timers** - *encourages you to stay on task by growing a tree, all while you leave your phone alone.*
- ❖ **FLIPD** - *allows you to temporarily block apps from your phone which would otherwise distract you (social media, games) for a set period of time. You can also set study groups, encouraging each other to revise.*



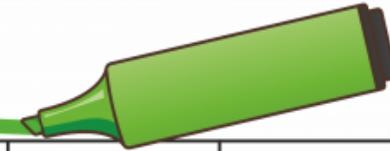
Finally, you need to have a plan of what you will revise and when. This can be done by creating a revision timetable. A template for a revision timetable is included below.

When creating a revision timetable, it is important to consider the following:

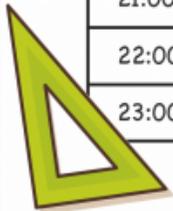
- When you sleep
- When you eat
- Other things you may do (including breaks)
- When you work best
- Revision for a range of subjects

Finally, make sure that what you set out is realistic!

Revision Timetable



Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
07:00							
08:00							
09:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
13:00							
14:00							
15:00							
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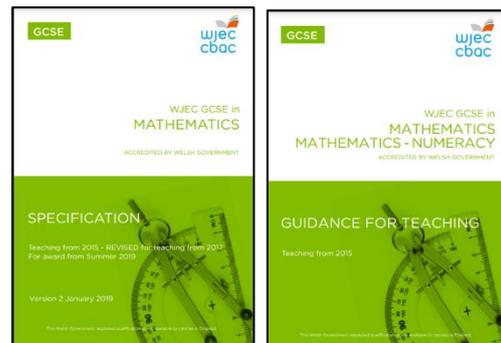


What?

When working out what to revise, there are some useful resources that you can refer to that will help you work out exactly what you need to learn. Those include:

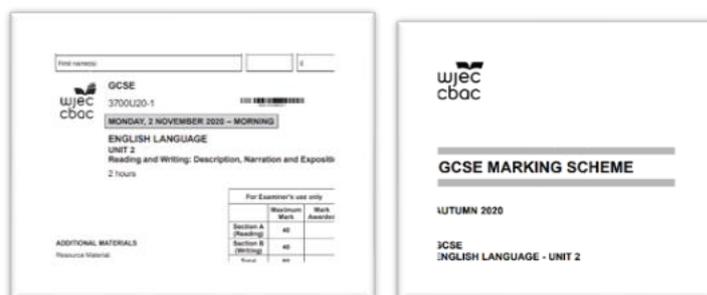
1. Specification/Teacher Guidance

These can be found on the exam board's website and will include a list of statements about what you need to learn for the exam. Teacher guidance provides even more detail than the specification and the exam will be based around the statements given. However, when looking at these documents, make sure that you are using the correct one!



2. Past Papers & Mark Schemes

Past papers can be found on the exam board's website, along with the mark schemes. Past papers can be used to test your current knowledge and mark schemes can be used to check your answers.



It can also be useful to use a mark scheme to fill in a past paper, so that you can see the exact answers that an examiner would be looking for.

3. Notes/Booklets from School

Your school notes will contain the information that you need for the exam, usually with additional detail and examples to aid understanding. Make sure that you are organised and have all the resources from school and that they are fully filled in before you start your revision.

4. Textbooks/Online Information

Textbooks and websites are often published/produced specifically for a particular exam board. If you decide to use any of these types of additional resources, make sure that the content is correct for the exam you will be sitting.



Revision Strategies

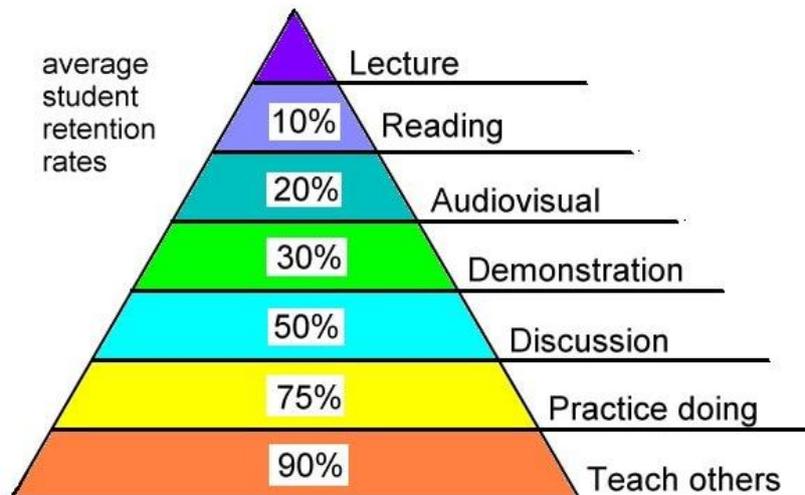
Once you are organised and have a plan, good revision space and all the resources you'll need, the next thing to do is start revising.

There are various techniques that you can use to revise. The most important thing that you need to do, is work out which revision strategies work best for you and help you to remember what you need for the exam. This section will cover some of the different techniques that you could try/use.

Learning Strategies

Active learning strategies are known to be more successful than passive learning strategies. Examples of active learning strategies are discussion, practising something or teaching others. Examples of passive learning strategies are listening to someone, reading or watching/listening to a video, presentation or demonstration.

The learning pyramid shown below shows different techniques and the percentage indicates how successful students are in retaining and understanding information.



As you can see the success rates are much higher for active learning strategies.

When revising, try to use strategies that are active, which means that you are working actively with information.

Strategies for Understanding

Make sense of information – You need to make sense of any information you'll need to learn, this will then make it easier to remember.

Use your own words - When writing revision notes, use words that you understand (along with key terminology) as this will help you understand.

Think about the information – Think about how the information links to what you already know and/or other topics.

Explain the idea – If you are able to explain something to a friend or family member, this shows that you really understand the information.



Organise the information – Organise information in a way that is easy to remember. This should cover the most important points and break down large bits of information.

Make information memorable – Create revision sources that include colour, images, diagrams or even sound to help you remember it.

Strategies for Rote Learning

Rote learning involves learning facts. There are a number of strategies that you can use to help you learn facts that you'll need for your exams. It is worth trying different techniques to see what works for you. You may also find that some techniques work better for different topics or subjects.





Past Paper Practice

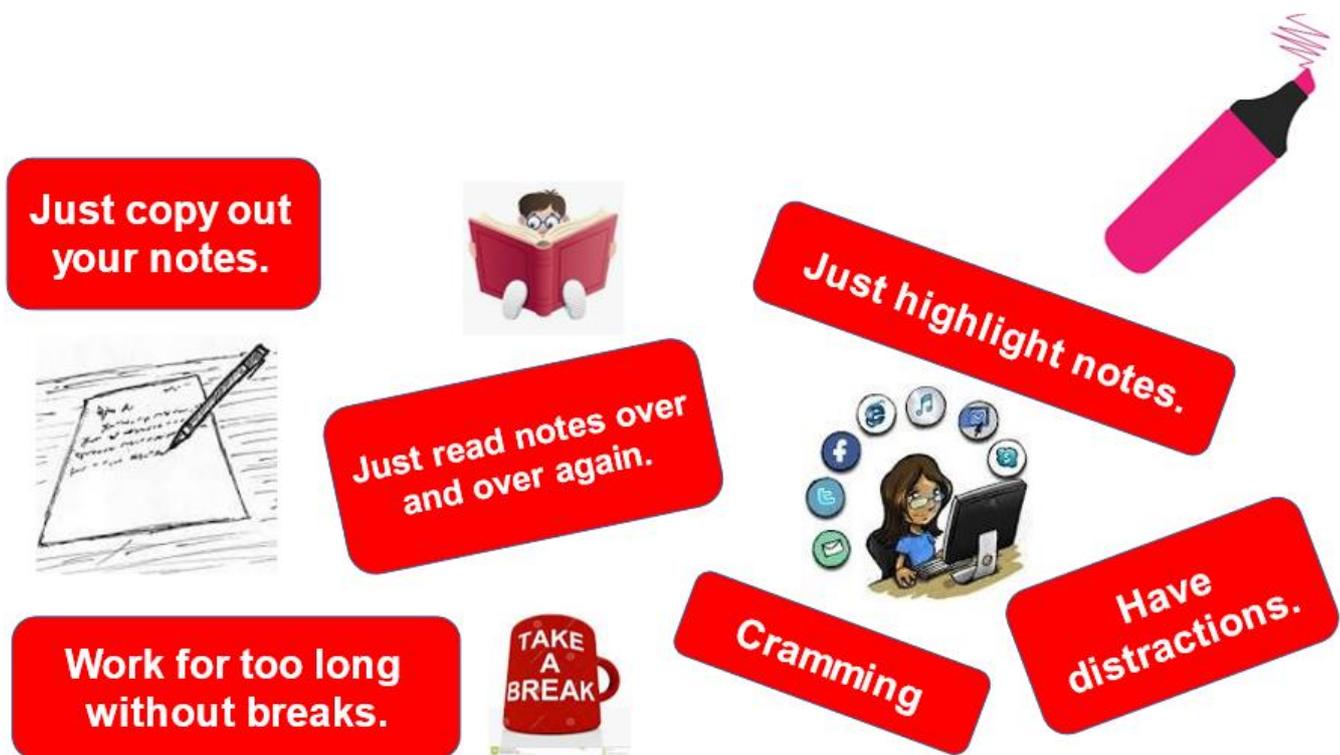
Make sure that you use past papers as part of your revision once you have understood and learnt the information you need. Past papers help you understand the layout of the exam and what to expect. You will also see patterns in the types of questions that are asked and can use mark schemes to see the answers that they expect, which often are similar from year to year.

Mark schemes could be used to check answers that you have written in a past paper, or used to see the key points that you would need to include in an answer. These can all be found on the exam board's website, however your teachers may also provide these.

What not to do!

Some activities have proven to be ineffective or hinder your revision.

Here are some of the things you should **not** do...



Exam Technique

Before sitting an exam, you need to have an understanding of how an exam is set out and how you are expected to answer certain questions. This section will cover the key terminology that you may come across in exam questions.

Here is some of the key terminology that you may come across in an exam paper, and what they mean.

Exam Keywords

State

Say what it is.

Describe

Write a detailed answer that covers facts/characteristics (You don't need to say why!)

Explain

Write a detailed answer that covers the **how and why**.

Summarise

Give a brief statement of the main points.

Synthesise

Bring together a variety of information to make a whole.

Evaluate

Judge based on evidence.
(e.g. -sometimes based on advantages/disadvantages)

Suggest

Present a possible case.

Compare & Contrast

Identify similarities & differences.
(Contrast = just differences)

Calculate

Work out.
(Involves numbers)

It is vital that you understand what the question is asking for. You could know everything for a particular topic, but that will not get you marks in an exam unless you are giving the appropriate information in relation to the question. For examples of these types of exam questions, please see the appendix at the end of the booklet.

Before the Exam

The Night Before

Make sure you know when and where your exam will be. Organise and get ready what you will need to take into the exam hall (e.g. - water, equipment, etc).

Make sure you take a break, have a good night's sleep, and avoid using technology or eating/drinking things that will keep you awake before bed.



The Day of the Exam

Get up early so that you are not rushed. Make sure you have a good meal before your exam. You may want to spend some time having a quick look of your revision, although you may have more time if your exam is in the afternoon.

Make sure you arrive in plenty of time and go to the toilet before your exam is due to start as you'll be seated before the start time. You will then remain in the exam until it ends.

The Exam

When you start your exam, make sure you clearly fill in all the key information on the front before you begin. You will be told when you can begin the exam. Once you start your exam, don't panic!. Here are some **key tips** for the exam:

Read questions/instructions carefully – Read all the information given in the instructions and questions as you may miss something important.

Be flexible - Take your time to answer questions and if you are stuck, move on and come back to a question. You don't have to complete them all in order, although in some exams some questions may be linked.



Timing – Have a quick flick through the paper before starting, so that you know roughly how long to spend on each question.

Annotate the question - Remember, you can use a highlighter and make notes around the questions if that helps you organise your thoughts, but make sure that your actual answers are in the spaces provided.

Check your work – Re-read the questions and answers when you are finished. Check for errors and missed questions. Never leave a question blank, an educated guess is more likely to get you marks than no answer at all.



Finally, remember that all you can do is your best!

If an exam doesn't go as well as you would have liked, don't dwell on it. Put your energy into focusing on the next exam you have.



Good luck!

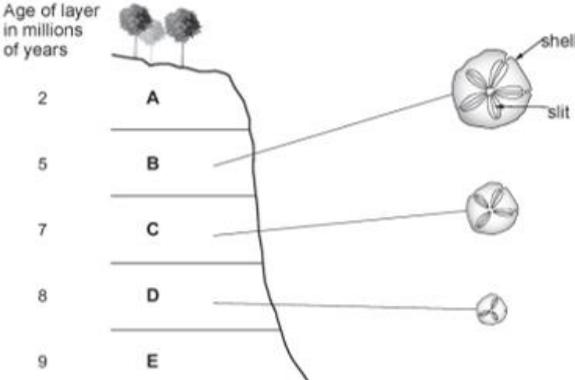
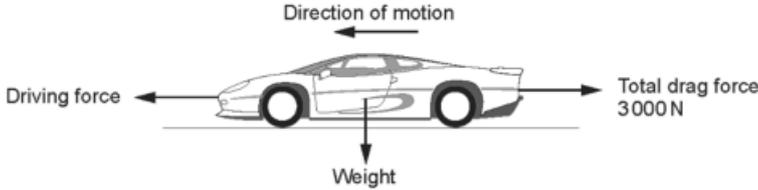
Useful Websites

<u>Website</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Link</u>
BBC	Study Skills	https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/gothedistance/studyskills
BBC Bitesize	Subject revision	https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3
Revision World	Subject Revision	https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision
WJEC	Exam board for GCSE & GCE (A Level). Qualification details, past papers and mark schemes.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/
Pearsons – BTEC National	Exam board for Level 2 (GCSE) and Level 3 (A Level). Qualification details, past papers and mark schemes.	https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals.html
Pomofocus	Online pomodoro timer for revision.	https://pomofocus.io/

Appendix

Examples of exam terminology in exam questions

(Answers also provided)

Exam Keyword	Example
State	<p>Argon is used in light bulbs to prevent the filament from burning. State what property of argon makes it useful for this purpose. [1]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It is unreactive (inert)</p>
Calculate	<p>(e) Calculate $\frac{3}{7}$ of 84. [2]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">$84 \div 7 = 12$ $12 \times 3 = 36$</p>
Describe	<p>Scientists found fossilised shells of one species of animal in the rock layers of each layer (A-E) is shown.</p>  <p>(ii) Describe two ways that the shell evolved (changed) over time. [2]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It became larger. It gained more slits.</p>
Explain	<p>The diagram below shows some of the forces acting on a car of mass 800kg. On Earth, the weight of 1 kg is 10N.</p>  <p>(iv) Explain why the car will eventually reach a new higher constant speed when the driving force is increased to 4200 N. [2]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The horizontal forces acting on the car will become balanced because the air resistance increases.</p>

Compare & Contrast

Subheadings to show where the information is from

Uses words in question

Subheading to signify next text

Comparison connective

A13. Compare what the writers of Text D and Text E say about what a person should do to get a healthy amount of sleep. [10]

You must make it clear from which text you get your information.

Text D says...

People should get "between 7-8 hours of sleep per night" and that getting more than 9 may lead to medical problems. To get a healthy amount of sleep, we should avoid "alcohol", "prescription medicines" and "Caffeine" close to bedtime + they can lead to oversleeping. For a healthy amount of sleep you should "keep the same bedtimes + waking up times". Also, "regular exercise" can lead to achieving a healthy amount of sleep. Finally, a person's bedroom should be "comfortable" to aid them in getting a healthy amount of sleep.

Text E says...

Similarly, text E states "banning TVs from bedrooms" will get a person a healthy amount of sleep, which echoes text D's "comfortable" space. In contrast, this text states: "MP3 players, computers + smartphones should not be used an hour before bed. Conversely, E states: "total daytime screen use should be limited to 4 hours" and to get a healthy amount of sleep we should "limit our use of multiple devices". "Teens who used 4 or more devices were 26% more likely to take 60mins longer to sleep. In contrast, E says "restrict media use in general."

5 quotes from first text

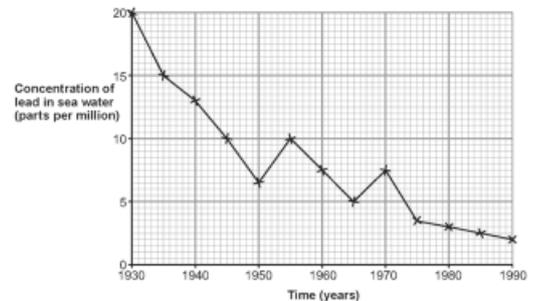
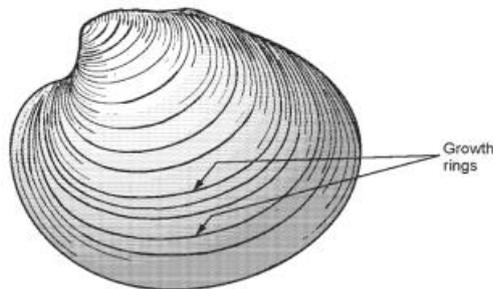
5 quotes from second text

Comparison connective



Suggest

(iii) The drawing shows a 60 year old clam, *Arctica islandica* from Cardigan Bay.



Arctica islandica has growth rings on its shell. Each year, it adds a growth ring made of chemicals absorbed from sea water during that particular year. Scientists at Aberystwyth University have developed a method of analysing the chemical composition of each separate growth ring.

Suggest how *Arctica islandica* can be used to produce the graph shown opposite. [2]

Scientists could measure the concentration of lead in each growth ring.