



Woodlane High School
Achieving success in a nurturing environment



Supporting pupils with their GCSEs



Thousands of pupils across England, Northern Ireland and Wales have started preparation for their GCSE exams, marking the beginning of what can often be a stressful and anxious time for teenagers and parents alike.

We as a school, have been building you up to this moment since you started in Year 7. We believe that you have all achieved many different things individually through the years and the focus now is on your academic success.

Using this guide, we hope that you will see a number of revising techniques and strategies to help support your own mental health and well-being as exams ap-

When should I start revising?

Start revising as early as possible. This will eliminate some stress, anxiety, panic and of course lower grades.



How well you do will depend on how much effort you put into your classwork, controlled assessments, homework, revision and exams.

Ultimately your exam results will be a reflection of the amount of time and effort you put in now.

How can parents support exam prep?

Motivation:

- Try to explain why exams can help, for example, having qualifications can show employers what you have knowledge in, and what subjects you are good at.
- Keep your child feeling positive with praise especially when they are putting in effort to revise.

Revision:

Encourage your child to think about what works for them, makes them feel most comfortable and able to absorb information. This could include:

- Creating a study timetable
- Their ideal time to study
- What environment they work best in
- Whether to study alone or with a friend
- Which strategies they feel works best for them (e.g//visual strategies/memory aides)



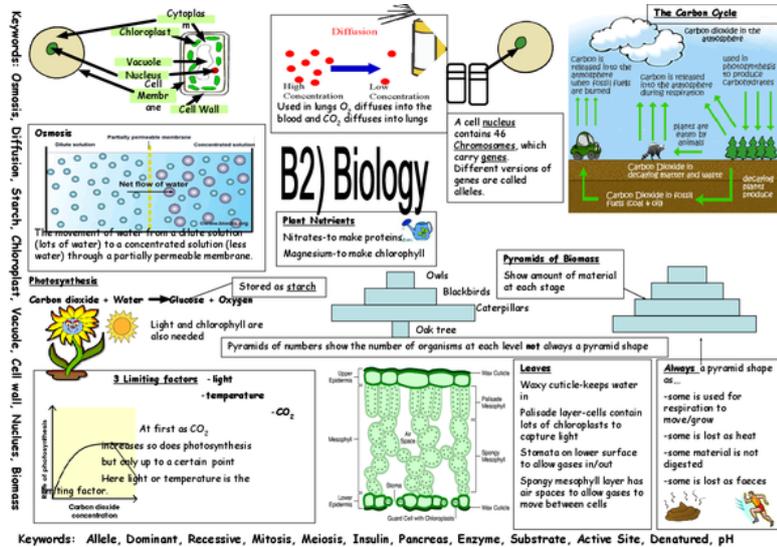
Preparing for exams:

- Talk to your child about when they will have exams and what to expect
- Encourage your child to take part in physical activity as this can reduce stress levels
- Display your child's exam timetable somewhere visible
- Make yourself available to offer support during exam times
- Encourage your child to revise but in a positive and motivating way, it shouldn't be an argument

Study techniques

Strategy 1- Make a poster

A poster is a really effective way of presenting a summary of important information. You should make your poster as colourful as possible and include a range of visual symbols or acronyms to help you to remember.



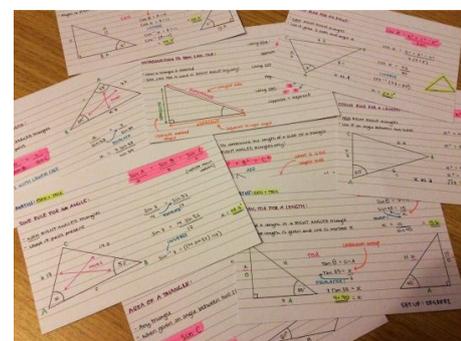
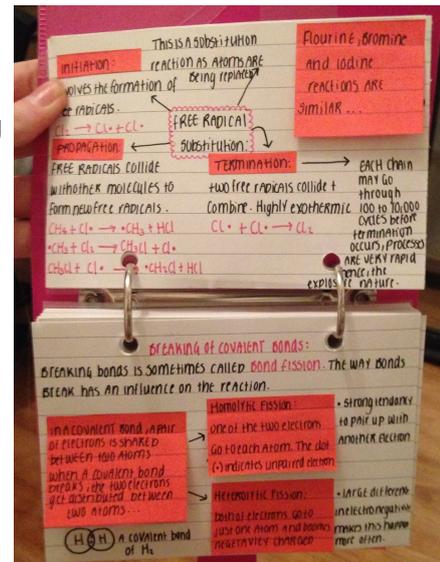
You should put the posters up in places where you can be sure that you will see them a few times each day over the course of the exam period.

Strategy 2- Use revision cards

Revision cards are a really effective way of processing and using the information which you need for the exam.

The cards can be used in a variety of ways but are especially good for highlighting key information and quick facts and figures you need to remember for the exam.

They are also good for clumping information together. For example: parts of the body may be in pink while environmental ecosystems in blue.



Strategy 3- Mind maps

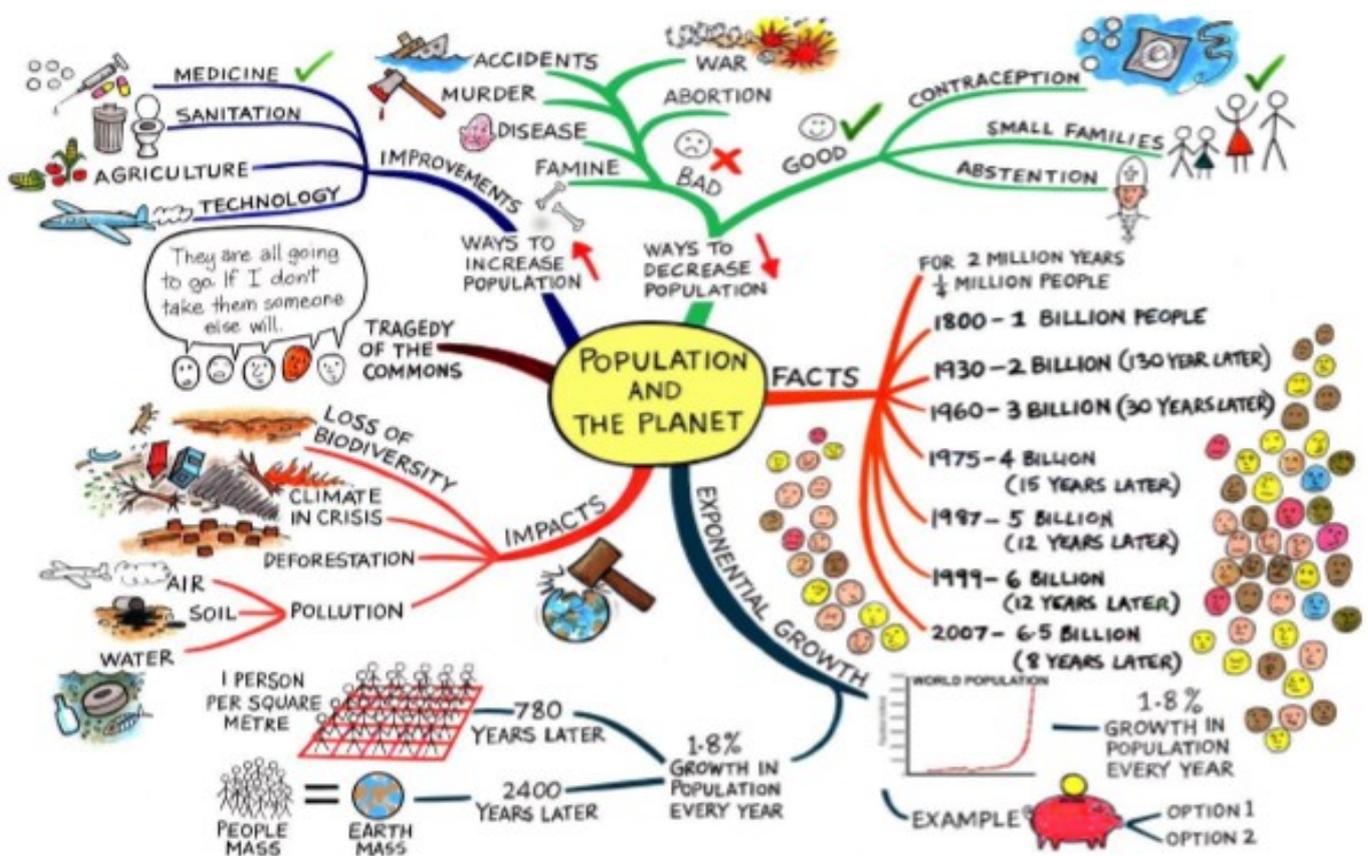
Mind maps are an excellent tool for effective learning. Used correctly, they reflect the way the brain naturally organises information.

They can be used to:

- Record large amounts of information in a small space;
- Generate new ideas and organise them at the same time;
- Presents information in a quick overview;
- Ties information together;
- Improves visual memory.

Everyone can create their own personal style of mind mapping. Use these rules as a guide to help you find your own personal style.

- 1) Have a central image which attracts the eye
- 2) Spacing- leave lots of space so you can add to the mind map
- 3) Images- easy to remember and the eye takes in images more quickly than words
- 4) Colour- use different colours for each branch of your map



Strategy 4– Question and Answer pairs

Write out a series of difficult to remember facts or dates on a set of sort cards. Then write out a series of questions or prompts which are related to each fact. Use the question cards to test your knowledge before looking at your answer cards. These can also be used when working with a study group or asking your friends/parents/carers' to help you study.

Where are chromosomes found - the cytoplasm, nucleus, ribosomes or vacuole?

The chromosomes are located in the nucleus of the cell. Both plant cells and animal cells have chromosomes within their nucleus, and every chromosome is comprised of a single molecule of acid and proteins.

Strategy 5– 30 words

Summarising information is a really useful way to reduce your notes down to a manageable size. Take any topic and describe it in fewer than 30 words, making sure that you cover the main points of the topic.

Example: A Christmas Carol Summary

Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly creditor who overworks his employee, Bob Cratchit. At night, Scrooge's former partner Jacob Marley, dead for seven years, visits him in the form of a ghost. He has come to warn Scrooge and perhaps save him from the same fate.

The Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge scenes from the past that trace Scrooge's development from a young boy, lonely but with the potential for happiness, to a young man with the first traces of greed that would deny love in his life.

The Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge several current scenes of Christmas joy then shows him the Cratchit household. The Ghost informs Scrooge that unless the future is changed, the Cratchit's crippled and good-hearted young son, Tiny Tim, will die.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come replaces the other ghost. He shows Scrooge several scenes of people discussing someone's death; no one seems pained by the death, and most are happy about it. Scrooge does not know, however, who the man is. He learns that Tiny Tim has died, but the Cratchits maintain their unity and love. Scrooge finally discovers that he is the one who has died and whose death has only pleased people. He expresses the hope that these scenes of the future can be changed, and vows to incorporate the lessons of the past, present, and future into his adoption of the Christmas spirit.



Strategy 6– Bullet points

There's no way you can remember everything that you have written into your book or folder over the course of two years. You therefore need to summarise the information in your notes before you start to revise from it. By deciding what to include and what to forget you will be processing the information and improving your chances of remembering it.

Example: What is photosynthesis?

- Plants make their own food using photosynthesis.
- The food produced is the sugar called glucose.
- Food produced by plants is important, not only for the plants themselves, but for other organisms that feed on the plants.
- Algae can also make their own food by the process of photosynthesis.
- Plant biomass will increase as a result of photosynthesis.
- During photosynthesis, plants produce glucose and oxygen from carbon dioxide and water, using light energy from the Sun.

Strategy 7– Reading

There is more than one way to read! Different texts can be read in different ways for different purposes.

- a) **Skim-reading**- Quick 'skim' reading to get a general impression. This can mainly be used to assess the relevance of a piece of text or sort out which texts might be worth reading in detail later on.
- b) **Scanning**- Similar to 'skim' reading but with the purpose of finding specific information. For example, using the index to find a word and then locating the given page in a book.
- c) **Receptive Reading**- Reading at a steady speed from start to finish as you would read a story. It is useful to get a good, general idea of the contents.

Act I Macbeth

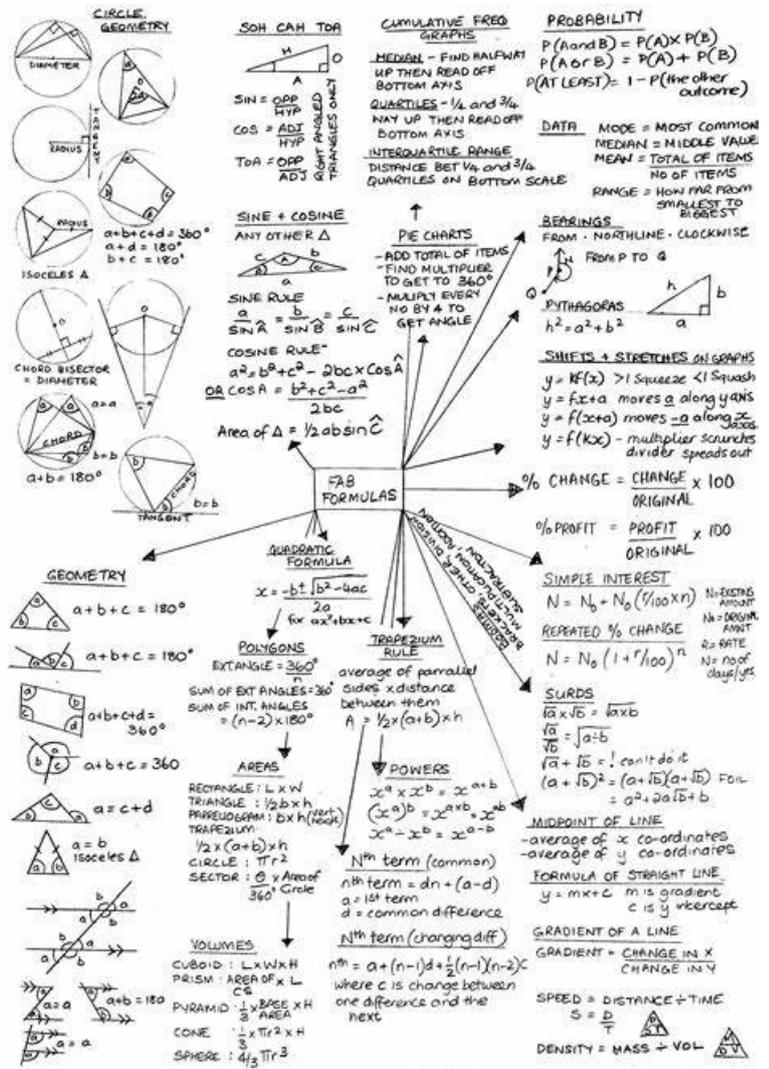
- 1: Thunder & lightning, three witches appear to Macbeth.
- 2: King Duncan asks about the battle against the Irish. He is also told that the Irish generals Macbeth & Banquo fight w/ great courage & violence. Duncan declares the Thane of Cawdor be put to death.
- 3: The witches appear on the battlefield once more and state that Macbeth is coming. The witches say Macbeth will be King one day.
- 4: Duncan hears these reports & also thank Macbeth & Banquo for their generosity in battle. Macbeth realizes Malcolm now stands between him and the crown.
- 5: Macbeth & Lady Macbeth form their plan and Lady assures that the King will never see tomorrow. She tells Macbeth to have patience & leave it to her.

* She will make it look like its the chamberlains fault and frame them.

Strategy 8– Everything you know about...

The aim of this strategy is to get you thinking about what you already know about a topic and, later on, to point out those things that you need to do more to remember.

At the start of revising a particular topic, write down absolutely everything that you can recall about it. Probably the best way to do this is in the form of a mind map. As you continue to study add information to the mind map which may help you identify areas of a topic you need to focus more on.

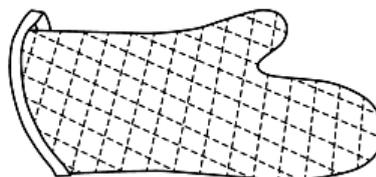


Strategy 9– Exam questions

As you get closer to the exam period it is vital that you begin to practice using the sorts of questions that you will encounter in the actual exam, preferably in exam conditions – so work in a quiet place where you won't be disrupted and stick to the time limit for the exam. You can access past exam papers on most exam board's websites or your teacher will let you borrow some.

(b) The drawing below shows an oven glove.

Example from Textiles exam



(i) Name the stitch technique shown on the oven glove.

(1)

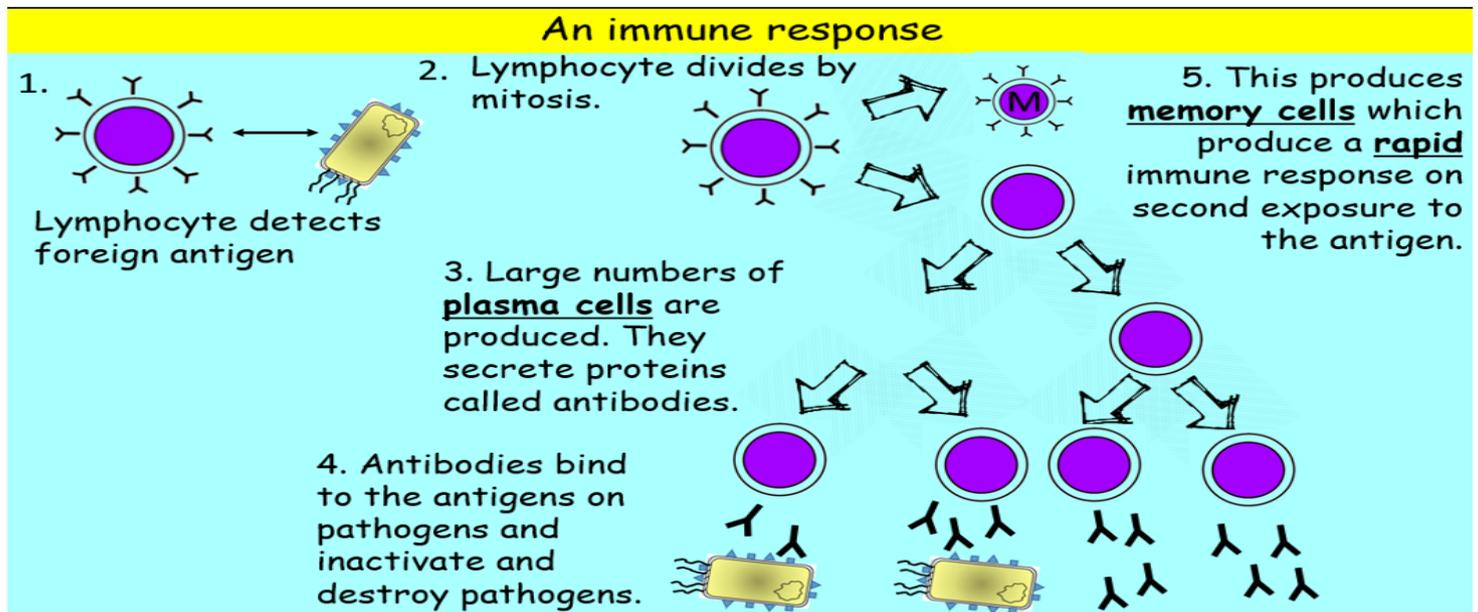
(ii) State one quality control you would use whilst completing this technique.

(1)

Strategy 10– Create a PowerPoint Presentation

Creating a PowerPoint presentation is a really good way of summarising key parts of a topic. In addition to this, PowerPoint has some useful functions such as adding pictures, sounds and animations which will make the material much more memorable. Don't get bogged down in these features though, the main point is to summarise the information you are using.

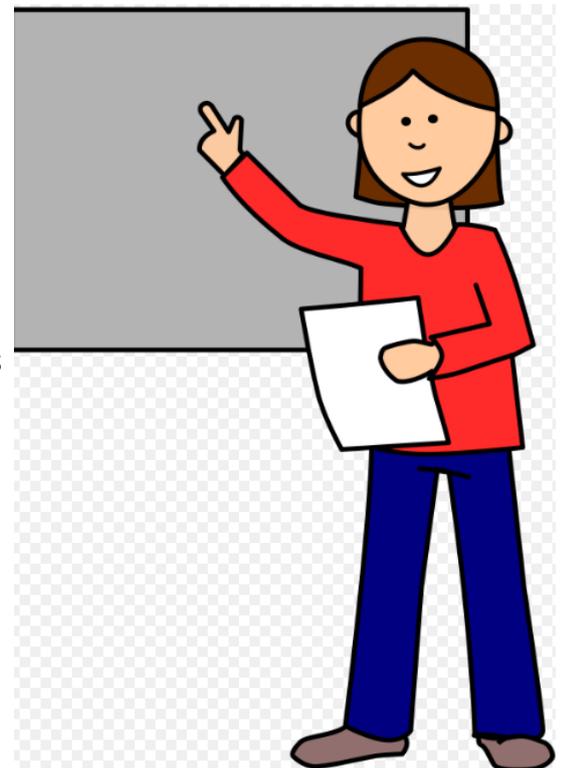
Example:



Strategy 11– Using the PowerPoint Presentation

Once you have completed a presentation you need to actually use it.

- You could use it as prompt to deliver a more detailed presentation on the topic.
- You can try and anticipate what information is on the next page before you turn the slide.
- You could present the information to family or friends as a means of practicing and recalling the information.



Strategy 13– In One Minute

This is a useful activity to do in a pair in order to see how much you know about a subject. You must select a topic and then talk about it for one minute, putting in as much detailed evidence as you can.

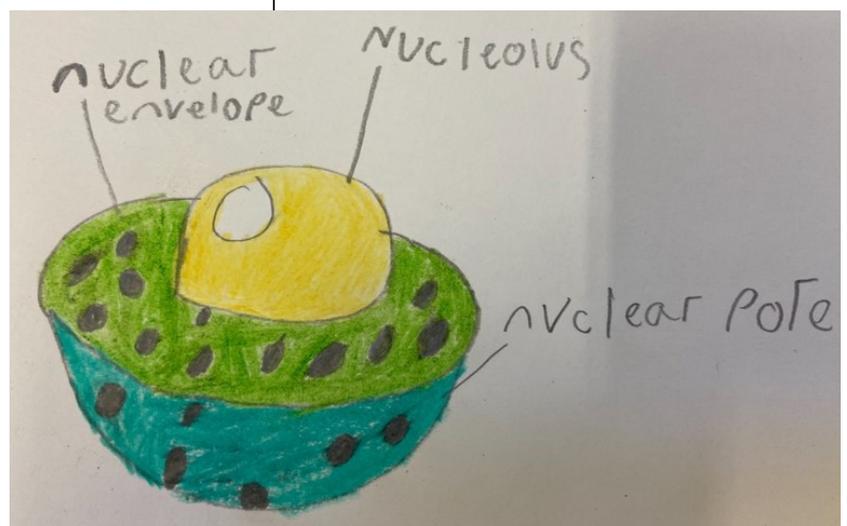
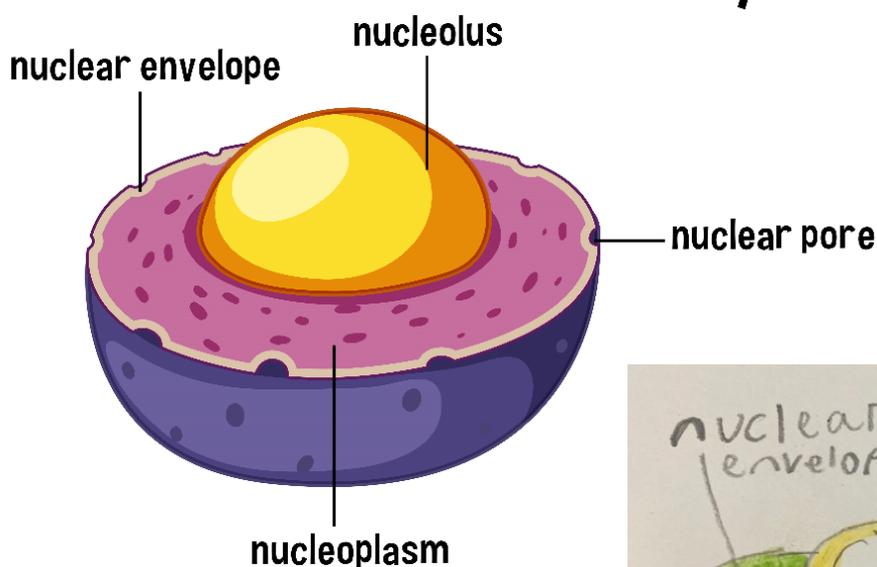
Your friend should then give you a mark out of ten for how well you have explained the topic. The person who gives the mark must explain why they have awarded that mark and be able to identify any important aspects of the topic which you have missed out.



Strategy 14– Draw your own pictures

We know that using a variety of different techniques to study helps our brain process and store information. Try drawing pictures of useful information. For example, in Science it may be the parts of a nucleus or in English, making a cartoon of Macbeth.

Cell Nucleus Anatomy



Tips for in the exam

To pass an exam and do well is more than just studying but also knowing how to use your time wisely once in the exam setting.

1) **Make use of reading time**

Some exams give you 10 to 20 minutes 'reading' time. Use this time to look over questions. You won't be able to start writing yet but if you have a choice about which questions **to answer now is the time to decide which questions you feel most confident answering.**

If there is no reading time you should still start the exam in the same way. Read and interpret the questions and plan your answer before starting to write. You must think about what information is needed to answer the question and get full marks.

2) **Answer the ACTUAL question**

Read the question over and then read it again. You can use a pencil or pen to underline key words which help you understand what the question wants you to do. Make sure you are answering the question asked of you and not something else.

Failing to answer the question is not just about misunderstanding the question but also going either too much in depth or not enough in depth to receive full marks.

3) **Look at the allocated marks**

Use the allocated marking system to help you judge how much time to spend on a question. It helps you guide your response.

You should spend less time on questions worth 1 mark. It may only require you to use one or two words or sentences to achieve full marks.

More time should be spent on questions with higher marks. If a question is worth 25 marks then a paragraph is not enough writing for you to achieve the results you want.

4) **Start with what you know**

Start with the questions you are most confident you know the answer. Once this is done your brain will be feeling confident to answer the questions you have so far left incomplete. Try to get marks wherever you can.

5) **Show your working out**

In subjects like Maths or Science you may get extra marks for showing your work even if you get the wrong answer. Be sure to make it clear to the examiner which answer is the correct one by circling your final response or crossing out incorrect answers.

6) **Don't leave early**

Don't leave the exam early even if you feel very confident. Use the time to check spelling, grammar, punctuation and presentation. Does what you have written make sense? Does it actually answer the question? Does it make sense?

(b) (i) Smoking tobacco is addictive.

Complete the sentence by putting a cross (☒) in the box next to your answer.

The main addictive substance in tobacco is

- A caffeine
- B carbon monoxide
- C morphine
- D nicotine

Only worth 1 mark

(1)

* (c) The human body prevents blood glucose levels from becoming too high or too low.

Explain how the human body maintains blood glucose levels within a narrow range.

Worth 6 mark

(6)

Study techniques

Plan, plan, plan



1. Start by either writing down all the subjects you have exams for.
2. Decide which exams you think you will need more time to study for.
3. Next to each subject write the date and time of your exam.
4. Use the **revision timetable** enclosed to mark out when you are going to revise for each subject. Fill in the things you cannot change; meal times, clubs, even your favourite time to watch television. This is important so you do not take all fun out of your life while studying.
5. Next make note of when you are really tired and mentally not with it. Don't try to study for your hardest subject during this time. For example, if you're really tired after school give yourself a rest for 30 minutes and do some exercise before starting to revise.
6. Break up difficult subjects with easier ones to give yourself a break.

Before the exam

- Get a good night's sleep before the exam.
- Get to the exam early.
- If possible, take a bottle of water into the exam room.
- Read through the whole paper.
- Don't spend too long on one question.
- Read the instructions carefully. Put a tick next to the questions that you want to do/have to do.
- Look at how many marks are awarded for each question – this often indicates how much detail you should go into.
- Underline the important words in a long question – this will help you to break down the question and check you have answered all parts.



Example weekly study timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5:00-5:45 pm	Science: Biology	English Literature	Maths	Computing	French	10:00-11:00	Science: Biology
						1:00-1:45	English: Literature
6:30-7:15	French	English Language	Computing	English	Science: Biology		
						2:30-3:15	Science: Biology
						4:00-4:45	Science: Biology
8:00-8:45	Maths	DT: Food	Art	Computing	Maths	5:30-6:15	English Language

REVISION PLANNER

Week Beginning: _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9am							
10am							
11am							
12 noon							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							

Online Revision and Apps

1. Flashcard Apps and Quizzlet

Save paper and the pain of trying to decipher your handwriting with a flashcard app. Look for a version like Flashcards+ (iOS), which lets you create your own cards or import existing sets through Quizzlet, a brilliant community site for students to share study notes.



Revision App is another great free option for iPhone, Android and desktop users with over five million flashcards available to download.

2. BBC Bitesize

BBC Bitesize breaks down subjects into handy smaller chunks (there's a clue in the name here..) and lets you revise topics, watch video summaries, complete activities and test yourself as you go. The site covers subjects from Key Stage One to GCSE.



3. Revision Planning Apps

A big part of revision is getting organised and keeping track of your study. The website getrevising.co.uk helps you make a revision plan, record your time spent on each subject and track your progress as you go.



4. Spark Notes

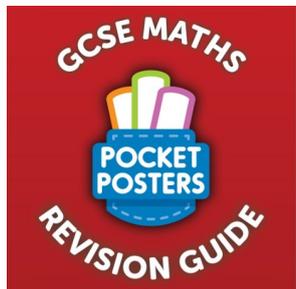
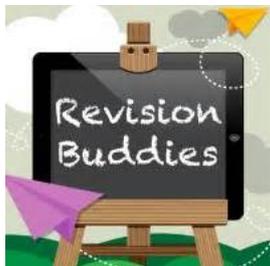
Explore English Literature texts, watch video summaries and study a host of other subjects with popular study notes site Spark Notes. Try out No Fear Shakespeare, which puts the original text side by side with a modern translation to help you pick up the story and translate new words as you go.



5. The Student Room

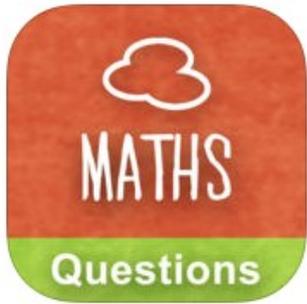
The Student Room has a database of resources for every GCSE subject! An online forum and support o make flashcards, mind maps and other study resources. You need to register but it is quick and easy to use.

Other Apps Include:



Pocket Notes

GCSE Maths: Revision Questions



Exam countdown

Limiting stress and anxiety

Relax and Stay Calm

Prepare well - pace, not race.

Make a list of things that are worrying you and talk them over with someone who knows what you are going through—get help if you are stuck!

Recognise the symptoms of stress: Excessive tiredness, irritability, headaches, increased heart rate and inability to relax may all be clues that you are suffering from stress.

Time Management

Make sure to cover every subject in your revision timetable. Mix your subjects up and try not to spend more than 50-60 minutes on each one. Factor in breaks too.



Exercise

Take time out to get some fresh air, socialise and take part in your favourite sport.



Sleep

Make sure you are getting enough sleep. Avoid computer games and using your phone before you go to sleep as these will not help you to relax.



Eat Well

Avoid lots of fizzy drinks and caffeine; drink smoothies, milkshakes or water instead. Have plenty of fruit.

Have small 'treats' to reward yourself for hard work!



Stay positive and just do the best you can. Staff and family are here to support you as best we can.

Key terms in exam questions...



Term	Explanation
Account for	Explain the process or reason for something being the way it is
Analyse	Explore the main ideas of the subject, show why they are important and how they are related
Calculate	Find out by using mathematics
Comment on	Discuss the subject, explain it and give an opinion on it
Compare	Show the similarities [but you could also point out the differences]
Complete	Finish off
Conclude	Decide after reasoning something out
Contrast	Show the differences [compare & contrast questions are very common in exams, they want you to say how something is similar, plus also how it can be different]
Criticize	Analyze and then make a judgment or give your opinion. You can show both good and bad points [you could also refer to an expert opinion within this question]
Define	Give the meaning.... This should be short
Describe	To give a detailed account
Differentiate	Explore & explain the differences
Discuss	Explore the subject by looking at its advantages & disadvantages [pros & cons, for & against. Then give your judgment]
Distinguish	Explain the difference
Enumerate	Make a list of the points under discussion
Estimate	Guess the amount or value
Examine	Look at something closely
Explain	Describe giving reasons and causes
Explore	Look at something closely or investigate
Express	Put your ideas into words
Evaluate	Give your opinion by exploring both good & bad points, a bit like asking you to assess something, try to support your argument with an expert opinion
Give reasons for...	Use words like because in your answer as you are explaining how or why....
Identify	To recognise & prove something as being certain
Illustrate	Show by explaining and giving examples
Indicate	Make something known by pointing it out
Interpret	Explain the meaning of.. by using examples & opinions
Justify	Giving good reasons of your opinion, or reaching a conclusion
Outline	Concentrate on the main bits of the topic or item
List	An item by item record. This would normally be in note form, without any need to be descriptive
Prove	Give real evidence, not your opinion, which proves your argument and shows it to be true
Summarise	Give the main point of an idea or argument. Leave out any unnecessary details, which could confuse the issue

**You will see this poster outside all
exams.**



**NO MOBILE PHONES, IPODS,
MP3/4 PLAYERS.
NO PRODUCTS WITH AN
ELECTRONIC
COMMUNICATION/STORAGE
DEVICE OR DIGITAL FACILITY.**

Possession of unauthorised items is an infringement of the regulations and could result in

DISQUALIFICATION from the current examination and the overall qualification.

Candidates are advised that mobile phones in particular **must not** be in their possession whether switched on or not.