

Trinity School

YEAR 11

Supporting
Success @ Trinity



**REVISION ADVICE AND INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS/CARERS AND STUDENTS**

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Section 1: Introduction

The most common frustrations for parents.

I didn't even do GCSEs – how can I help him?

He always leaves everything to the last minute – one moment he has all the time in the world – the next it's all stress and stopping because it has to be in tomorrow and he hasn't got the stuff he needs to do it.....

I don't understand all this controlled assessment, levels and exams – it's completely different from when I was at School!

I can't stand the arguments and stress when I tell him exams are important and try to make him work – it always ends up with him saying it's his life and slamming the door.

She's always got an excuse – I don't know what to believe.

There's a million websites to help but how do you know which are any good?

She's always panicked in exams – when I try to help her it always ends in a slanging match – it always seems to end in me making her more stressed.

Surely she shouldn't be going out **again** when she's got exams coming up?

How can I make a difference?

You can help you son or daughter by encouraging them to:

- Take responsibility for their own learning and asking when they do not understand
- Develop their abilities to overcome frustrations, and strategies for persisting when they are learning material that they find challenging
- Organise themselves, notes, hand outs and information for different subjects, and different topics within these
- Complete more work at home, independently, organise and plan their time over longer periods for example to complete a coursework project
- Understand the exam structure and the relative importance of each piece of work to their final grade
- Plan and carry out revision, perfecting exam techniques, preparing for controlled assessments
- Attend school very well and understand the importance of making the most of lesson times

Your role may include some or all of the following:

- Support in school - going to parents' evenings, asking questions and finding out how you can best help your child at home
- Provide the tools for homework and revision - a quiet space, a 'workbox' of pens, paper, files, revision guides and other necessities
- Helping with homework (but not doing it), testing them when they ask you
- Help your child to break tasks down so that they are manageable, keeping an eye on progress and celebrating achievements, and seeing a positive way forward when things go badly.
- Project manager - agreeing the rules for homework or revision (they won't work if they are imposed), helping them to make a realistic timetable, balancing work against the 'fun stuff' and revising the plans as necessary.
- Information provider and interpreter - finding copies of old exam papers, searching out websites and finding out about the subject.

Good exam results - What is the secret?

There are a number of stages in the process of achieving exam success. The secret of good results in exams is about getting things right (and being aware of what can go wrong) at each stage of the process. The broad stages are:

Stage 1: Learning the content first time round

The process of revision (literally 'looking at something again') does assume that the content of the subject has been learnt in the first place - every lesson counts!

Stage 2: Revision.

Even the 'perfect student' who has attended every lesson and paid attention throughout the exam years needs to revise to achieve their potential. For the rest of us the need for revision is even greater. Revision can be done in many ways, some of which are more effective than others. The booklet offers a way of planning revision as well as tips for using the most effective techniques

Stage 3: The exam itself

Even with the first two stages successfully achieved things can still go wrong. There are three sets of skills involved in taking exams - knowing the subject matter, organisational skills and 'exam technique'

Parental support is eight times more important in determining a child's academic success than social class, according to a new study. Your involvement during this period can make an enormous difference between success and failure.

A degree of stress is normal and actually necessary for successfully tackling exams. If your child is stressed try to encourage them to take time away from work, doing something that they enjoy.

If your child misses an exam or does not do as well as hoped due to illness or serious adverse conditions or unable to prepare or sit controlled assessments or complete coursework for similar reasons the most important thing is to make the school staff aware immediately. Examinations boards may give special consideration in these circumstances.

What can go wrong!

Learning the content first time round

- A lack of interest in the subject
- Finding work difficult and giving up
- Deciding they are no good at the subject
- Poor attendance – particularly in the final months
- Getting behind with homework

Revision

- Leaving it all until the last minute
- Not doing any!
- Not having a plan
- Not being sure what to revise
- Being unrealistic
- Becoming overwhelmed
- Not making the most of revision sessions offered
- Suffering from stress and anxiety

The practicalities of the exam

- Getting the wrong time or place for the exam
- Arriving late
- Finding out they have revised for the wrong exam
- Being unfamiliar with the exam structure
- Not having the correct materials
- Panicking during the exam
- Answering the wrong section or questions
- Not reading the questions carefully
- Spending too long on one section

Section 2 – How to Support

Key questions to ask

- What do you see are your child's strengths and weaknesses?
- How focussed are they in lessons?
- Do they meet deadlines for homework?
- How much do they contribute in lessons?
- How have they done in assessments so far?
- What can I do to support them further?
- Are they revising yet?
- Are they accessing all the extra things that are available at school?

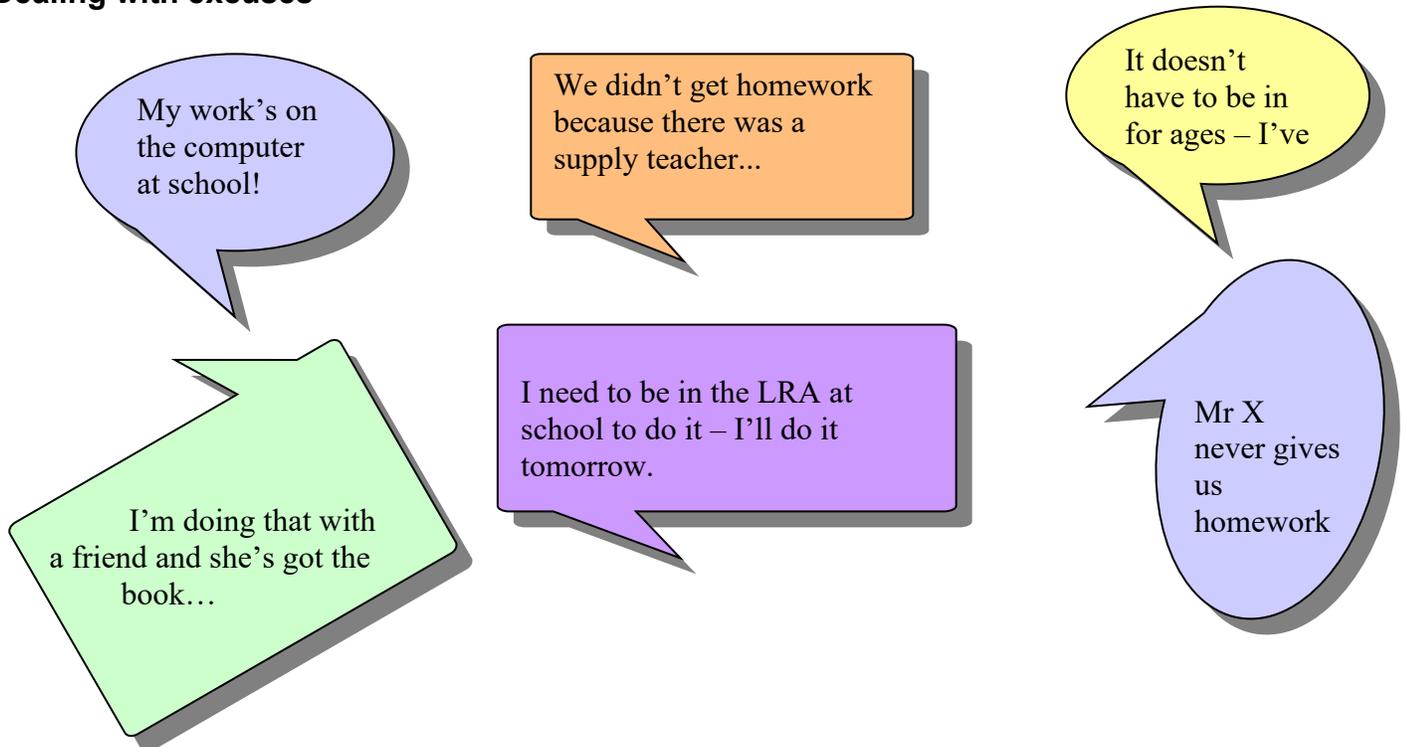
Maintaining Motivation & Encouraging

- Agree a balance between work and social life and stick to the agreement but be flexible, if a special night comes up agree they can make up the work at another time
- When your child feels de-motivated or struggles with the balance of work and school demands, talk to them about the issues and offer encouragement and support
- Help them prioritise and talk to teaching staff about rescheduling deadlines if possible
- Consider using a reward system to motivate your child
- Do not berate or threaten them, this will just demotivate them
- Use the 80/20 rule, if your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time they will be doing alright
- Make sure they have a revision schedule and encourage them to stick to it
- Warn your child about the dangers of copying chunks of text from the internet this is plagiarism and is usually punished by disqualification
- Take an interest in their subjects, talk to them about what they are learning and their homework research
- Put key dates and deadlines in your diary so that you can offer support as they date approaches
- Find out if there are any TV programmes, museums, exhibitions or theatre productions relevant to any of the GCSE courses your child is following which would be worth

visiting and see together

- Let your child's tutor or teacher know if your child is experiencing difficulties they will have strategies to help

Dealing with excuses



A strategy for dealing with excuses...

- Keep a track of the 'excuses' (they won't be able to!), writing them down with the date and subject
- Agree or suggest a solution - e.g. that he or she brings the work home and shows you the next day
- Follow up without fail
- In the last resort, explain that you are concerned about the problem for example 'that the teacher isn't giving you homework' and that you will need to contact them
- Remember the aim is to get the work done, not win the battle. Let your child save face, as long as they agree to do the work and stick to it

Section 3: Revision

What is revision?

It means literally re-looking at information you have learnt previously. The aim is that you know the information you will be tested on and can remember it for the exam. Knowing something depends on understanding it.

The aim of revision

The aim is to reduce the amount of information relating to a subject to a series of key-points, any of which you can expand upon in an exam answer. The key-point, phrase or word prompts your brain to retrieve the information stored in it. At the end of your revision for each topic or sub-topic, aim to end up with a card or A4 sheet with the Key- points for that section.

Good revision techniques

- An aim for the session 'By the end of this two hour revision session I will understand and be able to answer questions on e.g. 'photosynthesis'
- Thinking about what you know already and identifying the bits you need to spend more time on (usually by doing some sort of self-testing - many revision aids include opportunities for self-testing)
- Breaking down each topic into 'do-able' chunks. Revise each section - not just reading the information but doing something active with it
- Producing notes (shorter each time you revise a particular area) noting key points phrases or words
- Testing yourself to see what you have learnt
- Ticking off the subject on your 'overall list' so that you can see regular progress
- Revisiting your notes briefly after one day, one week and one month, as well as just before the exam - **THIS REALLY WORKS!**

The key to effective revision

Useful revision involves doing something with the information you are trying to learn. This is essential to allow your brain to learn and make connections.

Different people find different activities useful and you need to find out how you revise best.

The aim is to reduce the amount of information relating to a subject to a series of key points. Key points will prompt your child into remembering information relating to it. Knowing the information your child will be tested on is dependent on understanding it.

Ideas for revision

- Drawing 'spider maps' on large pieces of paper - to show how different parts of a subject hang together
- Use pictures and big flip-chart sheets and colour to make posters with key points and display these on the walls or where you will see them regularly
- Put revision aids up around the house - especially for any 'rote learning' - chemical or mathematical formulae, French verbs - read them when sitting on the loo, brushing your teeth or eating your breakfast
- Record yourself making 10 key points about a particular topic, then play it back when you are travelling, running etc.
- Highlight key areas of notes or books (if yours), picking out the key points or summaries
- Listen to tapes of e.g. books and plays and discuss them with another person
- Watch revision DVDs but don't just sit back passively - pause them and make notes of key or difficult areas, test yourself or get someone to watch with you and test each other
- Read a page and shut the book - what can you remember?
- Tell someone about what you have learned - explain how the heart works over a meal (or perhaps stick to something less gory)
- Get people around you to test you on 'rote knowledge' - have a family quiz.
- Use online platforms such as GCSEpod, Doodle, Educake, BBC Bitesize.

Techniques

Memory - Find out what helps your child to remember. Some ideas are: **Acronyms** (using the first letter of each word to make a word to prompt your memory) e.g. you may find it hard to remember this sentence 'Wholly Inadequate Needless Dammed Outrageous Waste of Space'. However, turn it into an acronym and it becomes much easier: WINDOWS.

Picture stories - Get your child to think of a strong visual image to associate with each word and linking them together in an unlikely and silly story) e.g. you may find it hard to remember the facts in this sentence simply by reading it through,

Mnemonics - Are also useful – make up a silly sentence to help them remember the order of something e.g. Never Eat Shredded Wheat (North, East, South, West).

Review - Take time occasionally to ask them how well their revision techniques are working for. How much have they covered? Have they stuck to their timetable? Are they ending up with notes they can use for last minute revision? Congratulate them for all the subjects you have covered.

Practice - When they have revised and revisited each topic, get them to have a go at some old exam questions. Make sure you set the appropriate time limit, and make them work under exam conditions. Do not do this too early

Revision Top Tips

- Encourage your child to make a start however much they don't want to
- Remind them to take short breaks and do frequent short exercises
- Give them plenty of water to drink and keep the temperature cool
- Give them 'brain food' - avoid sugar and have lots of healthy snacks
- Do not let them leave the difficult bits to the end
- Allow them to do something relaxing between revising and bedtime and take a day off
- Ensure they STOP and take a break if they start feeling frustrated or overwhelmed
- Make them focus on what they have done, not all the things that they have not
- Give little rewards after each session - a favourite TV programme or seeing friends.
- At the end of each session, get them to file away their notes and clutter so that their work area is clear for next session.

The best revision plan in the World!

Tasks and time

Allow your child two or three hours for this step. For each exam, have them list the topics that have to be revised. Make sure they are looking at the right exam – check the name, number and exam board. Ask the teacher for advice.

A revision timetable (One example to help students organize their revision)

			4pm*	5pm*	6pm*	7pm*	8pm*
	AM.	PM.					
MONDAY	SCHOOL		Maths	English	Visiting Friends	Visiting Friends	
TUESDAY	SCHOOL		EVENING OFF				
WEDNESDAY	SCHOOL		History	Drama	Maths	French	
THURSDAY	SCHOOL		EVENING OFF				
FRIDAY	SCHOOL		Football training	English	History	Drama	
SATURDAY	DAY OFF						
SUNDAY	Time off		French	Science	Time off	Maths	

- It is important they build in breaks!
- A student should aim to have 15 minutes off every 30 minutes! (This helps the revision to be most effective)
- Time off is important (days, hours etc.)
- Students must build in rewards to keep themselves motivated (e.g. a big bar of chocolate or a favourite TV programme for completing a section of revision)

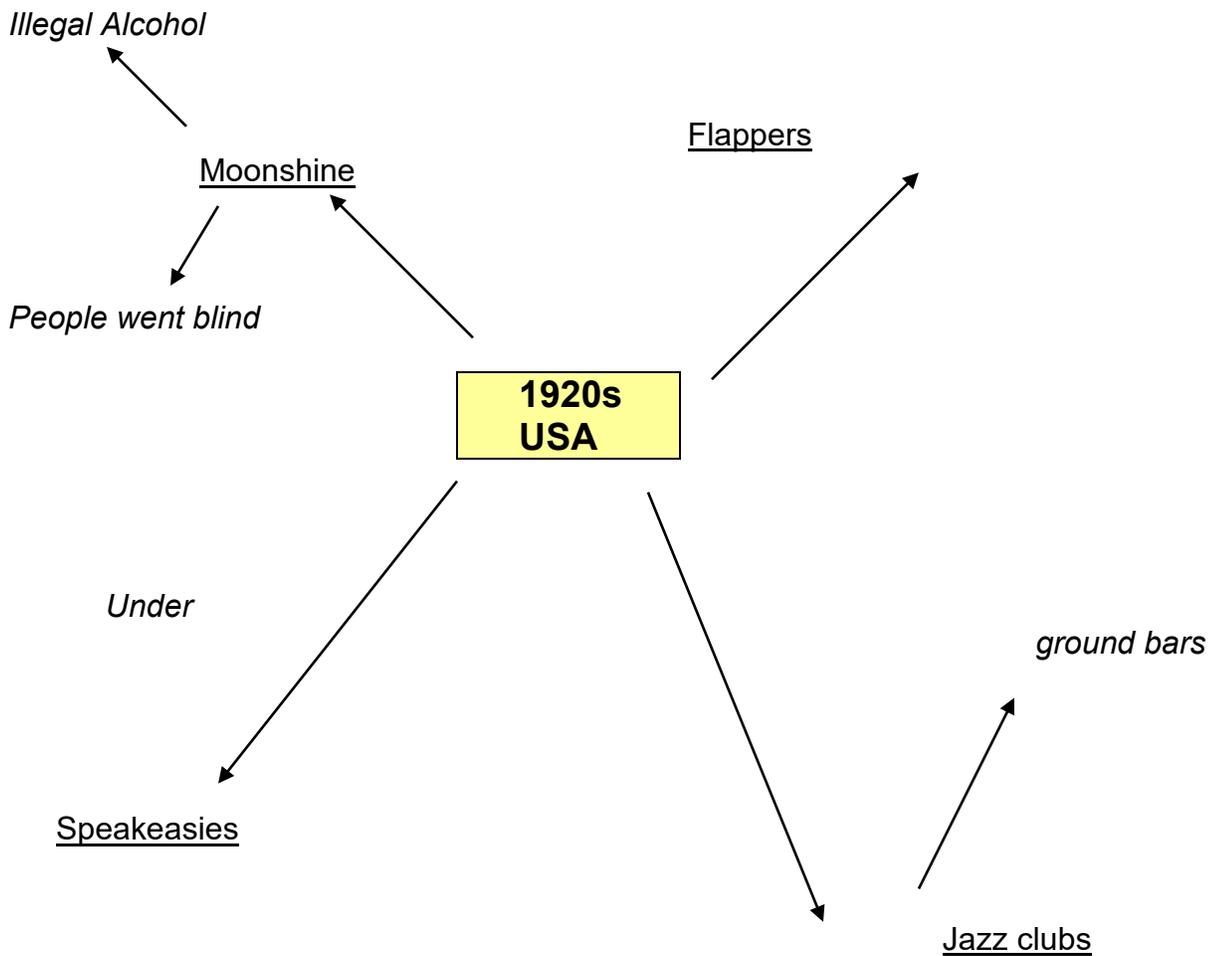
Flash cards

Once the student has identified key topic areas buy a set of blank cards (available from W H Smith, Stationery Box, Staples etc).

Have a least one card for each topic area.

For example:

History - The Roaring Twenties



Section 4: Useful websites

Exam boards

www.aqa.org.uk the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)

www.Edexcel.org.uk Edexcel

www.ocr.org.uk Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)

www.wjec.co.uk the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC)

Coursework and revision

www.gcsepod.com

www.doodle.com

www.kerboodle.com

www.bbcbitesize.co.uk

www.s-cool.co.uk

Section 5: What's on offer at school?

Year 11 Supporting Success

Year 11 is a very demanding and challenging year for all students, and our aim at Trinity is to support each and every student in the best way possible to ensure that they reach their full potential. This year we are continuing the 'Supporting Success' initiative, students have heard about this during assemblies and through their tutors. The aim of the 'Supporting Success' initiative is to offer a wide-ranging number of interventions and support sessions to help your son or daughter make the most of this crucial examination year and achieve their full potential.

What is involved in the 'Supporting Success' initiative?

- Revision and catch-up sessions within different departments both during lunchtimes and after school – tailored to different groups at different times.
- Masterclasses - For different groups of students in English, Maths and Science – students will be invited to these sessions – they are a superb way to boost those grades!
- Tutor support - To help plan revision timetables, offer support and guidance with next steps, revision and dealing with Year 11 pressures, they will also help you look at where you need to focus your time in the coming months.
- Skills Carousel
- A range of sessions during assemblies and tutor time to help deal with;
 - Time Management & Organisation
 - Dealing with Stress & Anxiety
 - Planning ahead & Careers
 - Revision & Exam Techniques
 - Peer Support & Mentoring
- Guest speakers - Talks from people who know how to inspire and motivate! The 'Art of Brilliance' www.artofbrilliance.co.uk
- Personalised support in Maths and English and the use of the 'Learning Curve' for groups of students who require specific support in these subjects.
- Rewards - All Year 11 students will receive a supporting success booklet, this will have details of academic targets and approach to learning grades as well as being a record of attendance at ANY revision/intervention session - all signatures count and the more signatures = greater the number of rewards. We will also look at achievement and behaviour logs, attendance and punctuality with the highest achieving form winning a trip in the summer term!

Section 6: Revision advice for students

Revision techniques - tips for students



Revision isn't challenging or difficult, it is just time consuming and a little dull; which is why starting early is important. Within lessons, many may well have been set revision tasks without knowing it, but now is the time to begin a systematic, targeted revision programme. This section focuses on good study habits for successful revision.

Creating a Revision Timetable

The typical story of students taking a week to design a timetable, realising they now have 1 week less time and then making a revised timetable is one we may all have heard but it is rooted in some truth.

You should have a long term plan which identifies when individual exams are and what subjects are the priority for each week alongside a weekly plan which identifies what will be done each day and when.

Using a weekly planner, you should block out the times that they already have commitments such as lessons, music or sports practise, family commitments etc. Then schedule half hour blocks where each half hour is either a different subject or a different part of the same subject; the maximum for a subject each day should be an hour. Mix up different subjects, placing ones you enjoy alongside ones you find less interesting. Be honest with yourself and prioritise those that need the greatest work. You should consider at the start what you hope to achieve that week, but make this realistic as you need to feel success

Don't overdo it, you are not going to be able to revise 24/7 and you will be very ineffective if you try to revise for hours on end. Use the blocked out sections as natural breaks and then plan revision so that you do no more than an hour and a half without getting up and moving away from where you are revising. Plan time to get a cup of tea, to socialise with friends and to take part in some physical exercise as these all help your brain to relax and make it more receptive to your revision activities.

Share your timetable with everyone at home so that they can support you and feel part of what you are doing; this will reduce stress for everyone. The latest research suggests that approaching the hardest topics prior to going to bed gives your brain chance to work on it whilst you are asleep.

Remember that when you are tired, you will not be able to work as effectively as when you are refreshed, therefore sleep is important. It also means that late at night is not a time to revise; instead, use this time to organise all the materials and resources you will need for the next day's revision so that you are not wasting time when you are fresh.

School have created an electronic version for you to adapt to your own situation. A paper copy of this is attached on the next page, but if you obtain the electronic version from the website you can change the timings by adding rows to the spreadsheet.

REVISION TIMETABLE TEMPLATE

Revision Timetable

Week Beginning	Weeks Until First Exam		Main Aims This Week				
Times	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
07.00am - 08.00am							
08.00am - 10.00am							
10.00am - 12.00pm							
12.00pm - 2.00pm							
2.00pm - 4.00pm							
4.00pm - 6.00pm							
6.00pm - 6.45pm							
6.45pm - 8.00pm							
8.00pm - 10.00pm							

Creating an effective work environment

This is somewhere relatively quiet, with space to spread out several books, paper etc, with access to highlighters, post-it notes, coloured pens etc. It is important that there are no distractions, whilst many people claim that background music etc. help them to concentrate, the truth is that anything that includes lyrics requires the language centre within the brain to process the words and therefore is reducing the ability to focus upon the revision material.

You won't want to admit it but social media is the biggest problem here. Any screened device running any of the social media brands - Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat etc. etc. should NOT be in the revision environment; the allure of that message ping is too great for even the most dedicated amongst us. In an ideal world, a mature student would recognise the time they spend using their devices and would consider temporarily deleting the applications in the months before the exams. Good luck with that!

It is also worth remembering that many students seem to think it is 'uncool' to say that they are revising so don't admit to the work that they are doing. Ask yourself these questions if you find a friend is belittling your hard work:

Do I want to be friends with someone who wants to underachieve?

Would a real friend really support me in trying to do the best I can?

Is this friend going to be with me for the rest of my life? - Your exam results will be.

How do I work out what to revise?

This is the MOST important part of what you will do. Time is precious, you have spent 2 years or more learning for each exam and you only have a few months to revise so you can't go over everything. Revising something you already know will NOT increase the marks that you get in the exam; you MUST ensure that revision is targeting work that you DON'T know. How you do this will vary for different subjects.

Use the syllabus

The syllabus for each subject is available on-line or from your teachers if you don't already have a copy. In some subjects the learning points for each topic have been put into checklists by teachers for you and all have created revision schedules for you. Exam board websites often have resources to support you to understand what you need to revise. Test yourself against the syllabus to identify the information you need to learn, prioritising the topics where you know the least.

Use past exam papers

Complete a past exam paper and then mark it against the official mark scheme. On the front, write down what each question was about and your score out of the maximum. Revise those topics that you are weakest in. This has a double bonus. Firstly, if are practising your exam technique and secondly, learning the terminology that the examiner is expecting from the mark scheme. You can use your mock exam feedback from all subjects, too.

Use your class book(s)

Look at the headings for the work in you books. Try to recall the information you currently know for that topic and rate your confidence. Begin revision with the topics that you have least confidence in. Pay particular attention to the feedback you have been given and the next step actions/improvements suggested.

Use your teachers' experience

Your teachers will know both you and the exams. They will have records of your marks in particular topics and the importance of each topic in the exam. Ask them what your personal revision priorities should be.

Online resources e.g. GCSE POD, Doodle, Kerboodle, Bitesize etc.

These have lots of materials designed to help students revise, often with mini-quizzes to test you. Look at the topic headings they use to assess your knowledge and give you an overview of the course.

How should I revise?

Revision is a very personal thing with different people preferring different techniques but it is also worth remembering that some techniques are better for particular content even within the same subject. Remember all of the skills you were taught in Learn to Learn and if one particular method does not seem to be working, switch to another. Variety will also help maintain your interest.

The Three Pillars of Revision

1. Factual Content
2. Processing Skills
3. Exam Skills

1. Factual Content

To attain good grades students will need to know by heart as much of the factual content of the course as they possibly can. Whilst it may seem the most obvious, it is the hardest to achieve because learning cannot be 'taught', lesson time is short so material cannot be endlessly reviewed and it is easy to falsely convince yourself you know the material better than you actually do and of course, it takes a lot of time. Detailed suggestions on how to revise factual content are given in the next section.

2. Processing Skills

The processing skills needed will be unique to each subject and will have been practised in class, for homework etc. However, just because students have done them in the past does not mean they can do them now. For example, in English Literature you may need to identify Iambic Pentameter within a poem; in Chemistry process titration calculations; in Spanish, précis a text etc. By reviewing the syllabus, students must ensure they know how to complete each of the tasks within the course.

3. Exam Skills

Students need to practise exam questions and as their revision progresses exam papers to ensure they understand what they are asked and how to judge time. It is common for students to lose easy marks because they miss an instruction, do not read a key piece of information or do not relate what has been done in a previous part of the question to the latter parts. Reviewing the marks schemes and examiners reports from previous exams can also help students to focus upon the important parts needed in an exam answer.

Active Vs Passive Revision

Revision is hard to do, unfortunately this often means students underutilise much of the time they are 'revising'. The most common form of this is reading exercise books, revision guides or randomly using revision websites. Our brain is naturally drawn to what we already know rather than what we need to know.

Active revision involves processing the topic to identify everything that needs to be known, assessing what you currently know, focussing upon the unknown material then re-assessing what you know again.

It is important to set SMART targets for each session - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-related. So for example, having identified that you need

to include more quotes in English Literature you might aim to learn 10 quotes that fit a common question theme; in Maths you might learn the steps for solving an equation or in History to learn the timeline for the development of anaesthetics. You spend 20 minutes processing this information and committing it to memory then 10 minutes testing yourself to identify how well you now know it.

Processing Revision Material to Learn Factual Content

Processing involves REDUCING material, SEQUENCING information and CHANGING its format; ideally it should use the syllabus statements for the topic being revised and result in production of a summary of the information such as:

Learning the Factual Content

You will already have learnt a lot of the material as you have been processing it but the key to improving your grade is focussing upon what you don't know, to gain those extra marks. It is vital that students then focus upon the work that is 'missing' from their memory, rather than what they know.

In general, you are aiming to regenerate the information you have processed from memory and compare this to the original. The material you recreate shows the marks you will now gain, the missing material identifies what you need to target to get the extra marks needed reach the next level.

Potential Revision Techniques

Processing Technique	Learning Technique
Create a flow chart or spider diagram of information and use lots of colours, pictures and labels to help reinforce the learning.	Redraw from memory and compare to the original; use colour shapes etc. to aide recall pathways.
Create posters with key information on and place them around a room or the house.	Redraw or visualise and compare as above
Create flash cards.	Word through cards putting those you get right to the back and keeping those you get wrong at the front so you are always working on the key material.
Create separate question and answer cards and sort them into pairs.	Sort cards and remove those pairs you get consistently right to focus on those you get wrong.
Create Key Term / Word Lists that summarise a topic.	Recall the meaning of each term or the sequence of the list and rewrite those that you are unsure or get wrong.
Sequence events into rhymes or stories as an aide memoir	Test your recall of the rhyme/ story and ensure you can link it to the material it represents. Do you get stuck at the same place each time?
Sequence stages on Post-It notes that can then be placed on a route through your house that you follow regularly.	Anticipate the next Post-it notes content before you get to it. Away from home recall the journey and see where you get stuck.
Record a summary of your work that you can play back to yourself, leaving blank time between each key point.	Again, anticipate what comes next when the blanks come up.
Create songs using the information you are trying to learn - for example the Eutrophication song in chemistry or classification song in Biology.	Sing them in your head or out loud - if you get stuck part way through repeat that bit over and over.
Draw Pictograms, Cartoons or Story Boards to represent information in a diagrammatic form.	Redraw from memory and compare to the original - modify to enlarge the parts you can't recall fully
Reduce work into Cascade notes where the detailed work is on one set of coloured paper, the headings and sub-headings from those notes on a different colour and then on the final colour, just the topic headings.	Take the low level sheet and see if you can recall the mid-level sheet i.e. the subheadings. Once secure do the same from mid-level to high level sheet. Sections you can't recall need re-writing repeatedly etc.

