

Planning Your Revision

Review your course

- List the topics included in the course.
- Decide on your priorities for revision.
- If you don't understand a topic ask your teacher for help.



Get hold of past examination papers/questions

- Your teacher may be happy to lend you past papers.
- They are usually available to buy online.
- Revision guides often contain these.

Draw up a revision timetable

- What is your concentration level? Most people need to take a break of 10 minutes after about 45 minutes of study.
- Decide how long you need to spend on each topic and draw up a timetable.
- Try to revise different topics in each revision session, e.g. one topic in the morning, another in the afternoon. Concentrating on just one topic at a time is less effective for most people.
- Think about which revision techniques suit you the best.
- Leave time to relax and socialise.

The Practicalities of Revision

- The place where you revise should be comfortable and not too hot or cold.
- Prepare for revision sessions. Have a snack and a drink **BEFORE** you study.
- Make sure you won't get disturbed - tell family and friends that you are working.
- Take care of yourself by eating regular meals, taking regular exercise, having leisure time and learning to control stress.

Thinking about the Exam

Remember that examinations are not designed to catch you out, but to find out what you know, what you understand and what you can do. If you have prepared well, you have nothing to fear.

Exam Skills - Preparing for Exams

A Month Ahead

Check your exam timetable

- Do you know the time and place of each exam?
- Put your exam timetable where you can see it every day.
- What equipment will you need to provide in the exams?

Put your revision plan into practice

- Begin to follow your revision timetable.
- Change your revision timetable if it isn't working for you.
- Make up the time if you miss any revision sessions.

2 Weeks Ahead

Focus your revision

- Begin to target your revision at a particular exam, on a particular day.
- Focus on 'key ideas'.
- Practise answering questions against the clock.
- Use past papers to practise your exam timing.
- Talk over any problems with your teachers.

A Few Days Before

- Go through your revision notes, reminding yourself of the key points.
- Do not try to learn entirely new work.
- Get all your equipment ready - pens, pencil, calculator - and SPARES. Check that everything works!
- Keep to your usual routine - do not sit up all night revising.

When the Day Comes

Before the exam

- Give yourself plenty of time.
- Avoid last-minute revision.
- Clear your mind.
- Don't be late.
- Be positive - don't panic!

Exam Skills - Doing the Exams

Duration 2 hours

This paper contains SEVEN questions, ALL of which should be answered. Write your answers on this paper - no others will be accepted. Answers must be written clearly and neatly - otherwise marks may be lost.

1. (a) Look at the following extract and then answer the question below.

At the Start of the Exam

- Read the instructions.
- Read all the questions.
- Look at the mark allocations for the questions.
- Circle/underline/highlight the key words.
- Allocate the time needed per question.

During the Exam

- Answer the questions you know the most about first - this will give you confidence.
- Respond to and include key words in your answer.
- Write neatly.
- Don't assume the examiner knows what you mean - state the obvious.
- Watch the time - move on. Don't waste too much time on one question.
- Use diagrams, where appropriate, to support what you're writing about.
- Use the last few minutes for going back to unfinished questions or for correcting your answers.

After the Exam

- Don't listen to others.
- Don't worry about it - forget it - your mark is decided as soon as you put your pen down.
- What have you learned from it for your next exam?
- What can you do to be better prepared next time?

Common Errors and How to Avoid Them

Not reading the question correctly

Examiners say that this is one of the most regular and fatal errors. They call it the 'triggered answer'. You have your pre-prepared answer ready but you don't look at the exact wording of the question and therefore supply the wrong information in your answer.

Not finishing the paper

Mismanaging your time within the exam can easily cost you a full grade. The biggest exam 'crime' is to leave straightforward questions unattempted. Make sure that you don't spend too much time on any question.

Ignoring the marking scheme

You must take the marking scheme into account when you allocate time to each question or part of a question. If the marks allotted to a question clearly indicate that a few sentences are sufficient, do not write an essay on the subject!

Repetition

Make the point once. There are no extra marks for repeating facts, even if you phrase them differently.

Missing part of a question

Sometimes, part of a question can be carried onto the next page and, in the pressure of the moment, you don't see it.

Copying out the question

There are no marks available for simply copying out the questions or writing out the questions again using different words. Put all your effort into answering the questions.

Feeling hungry

Make sure you have eaten before each exam. Feeling hungry or thirsty may affect your exam performance.

Examiners do want ...

to give you marks!

Exams are intended to give you the opportunity to show what you know.

you to answer the question that is set.

Don't interpret the question to be something you would like it to be.

to be able to read your work.

Don't rush to the point where your writing is illegible.

all the questions to be attempted.

Manage your time carefully.

short, simple, direct answers.

Unless it's a longer extended answer.

opinions to be backed up.

Use relevant statistics and facts to support your answers.

standard English.

Use technical vocabulary when possible.

you to answer the question immediately.

There is no need for you to write an introduction - just get on with the answer.

a structured approach to your answer.

This could be something as simple as a beginning, a middle and an end.

Examiners don't want ...

to catch you out.

If you are prepared for the exam there is nothing to fear.

waffle and bluffing.

Try to stay on the topic of the question. Don't go off the point and fill two sides of paper with irrelevant information.

a messy paper.

Don't make it difficult for the examiner to mark your paper.

extra questions to be attempted.

This will not gain you any extra marks. You will be wasting valuable time.

fancy words just for the sake of it.

Know your vocabulary and use it well, but don't over-elaborate.

opinions without explanations.

If you say, "I think," or "I believe," make sure you back it up with facts.

you to use slang.

You are not texting your friends. Make sure you use fully extended words and phrases.

you to copy out the question.

There are no marks available for this.

a written answer without paragraphs.

The key points need to be easy for the examiner to find.

Exam Skills - The Language of Exams

Calculate: Use the numbers given in the question to work out the answer. Show your working and give units when appropriate.

Compare: Describe the similarities and/or differences between things.

Complete: Finish a task by adding more details to the information given in the question.

Describe: Remember facts about something and write them down accurately.

Evaluate: Use the information given together with your own knowledge to consider evidence for and against something. Build an argument and reach a conclusion.

Explain: Give detailed reasons 'why' or 'how' something happens. The word 'because' would be quite a good one to use!

State: Give a short answer - not an explanation or a description. These questions can often be answered with a word, phrase or single sentence.

Name: Give the name of something only - not an explanation or a description.

Write down: Just write down what you are asked to write. There is no need for an explanation or a description.

Use the information given to ... : You must answer the question using the information given in the question.

Analyse: Break down information into smaller parts and give a detailed description of all the parts including how they relate to each other. You are trying to gain a full understanding of something.

Assess: Make an informed judgement about the importance or value of something.

Consider: Read and think about the given information carefully. Use your own knowledge and give evidence to support your answers.

Comment: Use your knowledge to give an opinion about something.

Discuss: Give the key points and use your knowledge to say which you believe to be the most important ones.

Outline: Set out the key points without going into detail.

Estimate: Give an approximate value for something - there is no need to calculate an accurate answer.

Your own examples:

Exam Skills - Revision Techniques

There are many ways to learn information and revise for exams. It is important for you to choose the techniques that suit you. Try the different approaches suggested on this page, and continue to use the ones that work best.

Discussion: Choose a revision topic and discuss the key points with others doing the same course.

Explain: Test your knowledge about one of your revision topics by explaining it in detail to someone else. The listener could be a friend or family member - they don't need to know anything about the topic! If there are gaps in your understanding, they will soon become evident.

Record: Make voice recordings from your revision notes and play them back to yourself repeatedly. If auditory learning suits you, this technique will work well.

Pictures: Draw mind maps or spider diagrams to help you remember the key points about a particular topic.

Posters: Make summary note posters that you can display on a wall or on the back of a door. Highlight key words, use colour to make things stand out. Keep the amount of writing to a minimum - be concise! Put equations, definitions, quotations, etc. in boxes or bubbles.

Summary notes: Re-write your notes and try to simplify/shorten them as much as possible. Omit things that are obvious to you, and focus on those points you are still trying to remember. Seek help straightaway if you find something you don't understand.

Mnemonics: Make up rhymes or memorable phrases to remember some key facts. A well-known example is:

Richard of York gave battle in vain
(Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet)

Test each other: Work with a partner to revise a topic and then ask each other questions about it.

Flash cards: Make some flash cards with key words from a particular topic. Randomly select them one at a time and try to write down all the important points associated with each key word.

Online quizzes: Look for online quizzes/tests based on the course you are studying.

Exam Skills - Mind Mapping

Everyone creates their own personal style of mind mapping!

Use these ideas as a guide to help you find your own personal style.

1 Paper

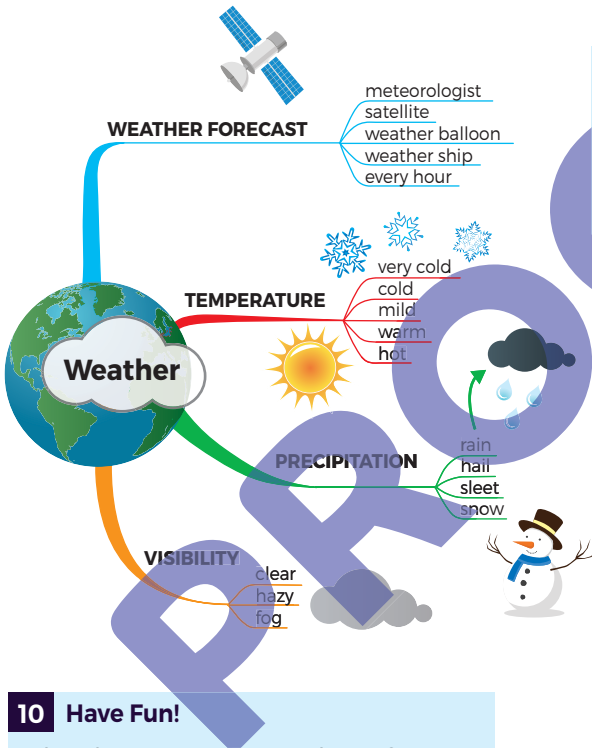
Blank paper. Ideally, landscape not portrait. Use only one side.

2 Central image

Central image attracts the eye.

3 Branches

Main branches thicker to show importance. Curved lines - interest the eye. Length of line = length of word.



4 Words

Only keywords

Main branch word - upper case

Lower branch word - lower case

Vary size relative to importance.

5 Images

Easy to remember.

Attract the eye.

The eye takes in images

faster than words (and

remembers them for longer).

6 Colour

Stimulates the right

hemisphere of the brain.

Use one colour per

main branch.

10 Have Fun!

When learning is fun you learn faster.
When learning is fun you remember it.
Make your mind maps fun.
Have fun doing them!

9 Personal style

This is important. It is your mind map for YOU. Develop your own personal mind map style.

7 Spacing

Leave lots of space so you can add to the mind map.

8 Symbols

Use arrows to guide the eye. Use symbols (create your own).