

SPALDING GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Examinations and Revision

Guidance and advice for **parents** of students approaching formal examinations

This booklet forms the focus of our annual Examinations and Revision Guidance and Workshop

WELCOME

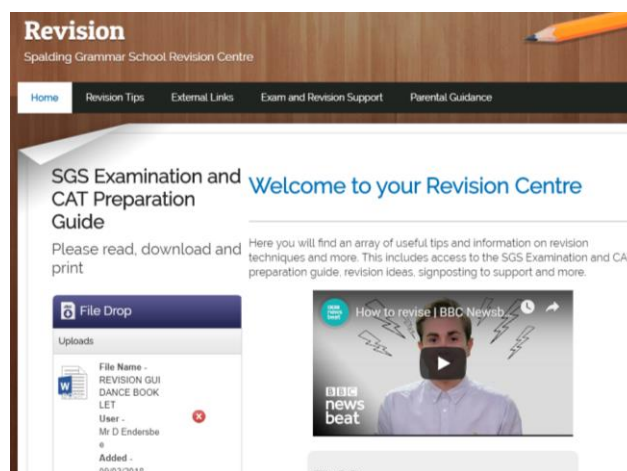


Welcome to our Examinations and Revision Guidance Workshop; a session during which we hope to provide you as parents with the tools to support your children throughout the examinations period.

We will work through this booklet as the workshop unfolds. Please complete the tasks and record any additional information in the notes page (towards the rear) that you might find useful to refer back to in the coming months.

Remember, should you or your child have any queries about revision, we advise you visit the Revision Centre on the School's VLE page ('Subjects' > 'Revision'). Here you will find a wealth of revision advice, ideas and resources, including the School's revision advice booklet for students.

For any examination-based queries, please contact Mrs Kirkwood, the School's Examination Officer.



I emphasise the importance of using each other as a support network too; discussing ideas and problems with other parents can be an excellent way in discovering methods to support your own child.

I look forward to working with you during this workshop, and hope you find it useful.

Mr Endersbee
Assistant Headteacher, Spalding Grammar School

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SECTION A: SUPPORT FUNDAMENTALS

Examinations are as stressful time for students. As parents, you are desperate to do whatever you can to make this period easier for your child. However, this is not always easy.



Task 1:

What are the **top five** pieces of advice would you give another parent to support their child through examinations?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Task 2:

Having had the opportunity to share these advice points, are there any more you would now give? Record these below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

***TIP: Keep this page visible for the next few months
– perhaps make these your '10 commandments' to abide by?***

1. Wellbeing

Amongst the stress and strains of the examination period, it can be easy to forget the most important foundation of your child's success; and that is to maximise their wellbeing.

As parents, you cannot prevent the wellbeing balance being disturbed during this busy period, but you can take actions to ensure the balance is not tipped too severely to the detriment of your child:



SLEEP

In recent studies teenagers and their sleeping patterns have been looked into. There's no doubt that their bodies and minds are in growth mode and need sleep to help that, but good studying needs sleep too. Check your child's bedroom. Is their bed comfortable? Do they have blackout curtains? But most of all what pre-sleep routine do they have? Getting them into a good routine sets them up for good results and for the rest of their life. Late night food binging, distractions, arguments and too much screen time before bed can cause sleeplessness. So encourage them to eat well, and get ready for bed at a reasonable time with the right routine.

Rest and relaxation...

...is a good habit to encourage. It may not seem probable but is possible for teens to over work for exams! During the busy pre-exam season especially, just staring at books for hours isn't being productive. In the last few weeks, just weeks from their GCSE exams my twin daughters have been watching TV, seeing friends, going to youth group and doing fitness classes too, it's good to encourage exercise and breaks as much as work. The two feed each other. In fact I'm just writing this section after spending an hour having a coffee with my wife. I needed a break, and now I'm being more productive again. Encourage them to timetable fun/ rest/exercise onto their revision/exam timetable too.

COACHING OUR TEENS
GETS THE BEST OUT OF THEM.
WE BECOME AN ENCOURAGER
NOT JUST A NAGGING VOICE.

COACHING PHRASES TO USE WHEN TALKING TO YOUR TEEN:

"HOW DO YOU FEEL TODAY?"

"HOW DO YOU FEEL YOUR REVISION
IS GOING?"

"WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM ME AT
THE MOMENT?"

"YOU'LL BE FINE, YOU'LL MAKE IT, WE'VE
JUST GOT TO GET THROUGH THIS TIME
TOGETHER."

"IT WON'T BE LONG NOW, JUST GET
YOUR HEAD DOWN FOR A BIT AND KEEP
ON GOING, YOU'LL MAKE IT"

"AND THEN AFTERWARDS YOU'LL ENJOY
MAYBE ONE OF THE LONGEST HOLIDAYS
IN YOUR LIFE!"

Nutrition: Top Tips

1. More **calories** than normal are required to provide brain with energy - meal structure should include 3 'in-between' meals to provide sustained energy
2. Wholesome **breakfast** most important to give foundation of sustenance on which to build
3. Include **complex carbohydrates** (rice, pasta, breads) which provide slow and sustained energy release
4. **Avoid** too many **sugary snacks** that provide spikes and lows making them hungry again soon. These should be limited. Healthier alternatives can be sought to snack upon (e.g. seeds, nuts, fruit, vegetables) as these contain vitamins and minerals which increase efficiency of various body systems
5. **Avoid fried/fatty foods** which encourage lethargy and weight gain
6. **Water is essential** - more than normal to keep brain hydrated. Minimum 2 litres (7-8 glasses) per day. Use sugar-free cordial to add taste
7. **Limit caffeinated drinks**. Students often resort to these to keep them up later. Avoid post-sunset to avoid disturbed sleep, anxiety and headaches

Signs of stress

If your child is not coping, they may demonstrate signs of exam stress, which might include sleep deprivation, loss of appetite, weight loss or gain, anxiety, difficulty concentrating or emotional behaviour.

Sources: Collins4parents: 'Preparing for GCSE 9-1 Exams' / doctor.ndtv.com: 'Diet for your child during exams'


2. Environment

Having a positive environment to work in really does boost the quality work completed and the motivation of children towards completing it.



Task 1:

Fill in the boxes below with the factors you think are key to having a positive working environment:

	Ideal Revision Environment 	

Task 2:

Having had the opportunity to share these points, are there any more you would now add to the 'ideal' revision environment?

Task 3:

Reflect upon the 'ideal' revision environment above – and the 'current' environment for your child. List below the actions you will take to help move from 'current' → 'ideal':

3. Organisation

Having all of the correct resources in the right place, at the right time is essential to maximising revision effectiveness. This is an aspect parents can have a big influence on in the following ways:



Examination Timetable:

It is important for everyone in the household to know when each examination is; the student themselves, but also parents and siblings to create a real 'team effort' and to spread the burden. Electronic diaries, poster on fridge door and regular discussion are all good ways to keep informed of these key dates.

Mrs Kirkwood has already sent out initial personalised examination timetables to students and parents by email. Some details are subject to change if there are 'clashes', but the majority will be as it states. Immediately after the Easter break, confirmed timetable will be sent out again.

Resources:

If your child has the required resources to their disposal, then they are more likely to use them (and less likely to make excuses!). This may involve a shopping trip to your favourite high-street stationers – and doing this together is also a great way to build teamwork. Your shopping list might include:

To write on A4 Lined paper A3 plain paper Flashcards Post-it notes	To write with Biros Coloured pens/pencils Highlighters Pencil
To keep organised Folders Plastic wallets Dividers Box files	To be creative Glue stick Scissors Sticky labels Coloured paper/card

Task 1:

Complete the shopping list with resources you and your child need to acquire to maximise their revision. This may include some from the list above, or from discussion with others in the room:

Shopping List

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Promo-Winestore.com

Examination-Based Resources:

- ✓ It is essential to have access to all **subject specifications** to know exactly the topics being assessed – paper copies are best.
- ✓ Printing **past papers**, **mark schemes** and **examiner reports** also help with practice. Although specifications have changed recently, old materials are usually still useful.
- ✓ Most subjects have a **revision guide** available. Subject teachers can help with this. For all of these resources, you need to ensure you and your child know which exam board is being studied.



Please use the additional printout of each subject at Y11 and 13 – giving the specification code and recommended revision guide.

Revision Timetable:

Arguably, the most important document in this entire process. A good revision timetable maps out exactly **what** will be studied and **when**, and can help students (and parents) maintain a sense of control. It is an excellent activity to do together to build trust and teamwork. Steps to creating a strong revision timetable:

1. Map out every day from now until the end of the examination period
2. Block out times during which no revision can take place (immovable commitments)
3. Have topic lists for each subject **RAG (red, amber, green)** rated to help prioritise which topics need more/less time (specifications can be used for this)
4. **Apply the 8/8/8 model** – averaging 8 hours of sleep, study, and leisure per day
5. Concentration spans are usually 20-40 mins max (age dependent). Build in breaks that are 5-10 mins long – refill your drinks, get some fresh air, have a quick chat with someone. Like everything, concentration improves with practice
6. Review the timetable on a weekly basis together and re-schedule any topics that were missed.

Downloadable revision planners can be found online to map out longer-term plans. You can use the week planners (found in the appendices of this booklet) for shorter-term plans.

A	B	C	D	E	F
		REVISION REQUIRES 1 Print Specification - highlight as you complete revision 2 Notes complete & summarised to make recall easier 3 Past paper questions/mark scheme/examiner report 4 Practise recall	Perhaps number each element Flashcards/mindmaps/tables Use mark old spec where relevant Covering up notes/with peers	ADAPT THIS FOR YOUR OWN REVISION PLAN UP TO THE EXAM TIPS TO GET THROUGH THE WORK EACH DAY 1 TRY TO LEAVE WHAT YOU ENJOY MOST UNTIL LAST each day 2 IF YOU CAN'T GET STARTED, START WITH WHAT YOU ENJOY MOST FOR A WHILE THEN SWITCH OVER	
DAY	DATE	Subject 1 Psychology - example 3.1.3 Attachment - Stages of attachment 3.1.3 Attachment - Role of fathers	Subject 2 Biology - example 1.1.2 Cell Membranes 1.1.3 Cell Division, Cell Diversity and Cellular Organisation	Subject 3 Economics - example 4.1.1.2 The nature and purpose of economic activity	Subject 4 Maths - example C2 - 3 Sequences and series
DAY	DATE	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4
Saturday	09-Feb				
Sunday	10-Feb				
Monday	11-Feb				
Tuesday	12-Feb				
Wednesday	13-Feb				
Thursday	14-Feb				
Friday	15-Feb				
Saturday	16-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Sunday	17-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Monday half term	18-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Tuesday half term	19-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Wednesday half term	20-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Thursday half term	21-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Friday half term	22-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			
Saturday	23-Feb	Intensive revision over half term - 8 hours revision/8 hours sleep/8 hours your time			

Make the revision timetable a priority. Creating it this week maximises the time available; every day that passes is essential hours of revision lost. Do not allow any ostrich time!!!!

Task 2: schedule in a time to complete the revision timetable with your child (and review points too – weekly?) You could write this in the notes page or schedule it in your diaries.

4. Mindset

Without a doubt, there will be times your child will struggle. “I can’t do it”, “revision is so boring”, “what’s the point?” or “I’ve done enough for today” are all phrases you are likely to hear. Helping your child develop a positive, growth mindset during this period can really help them build confidence.



See Carol Dweck's book on *Mindset* for more fantastic information on this topic

Cartoon 1: Considering approaches to independent study



However, be cautious: it is common for children to take the path of least resistance during such periods. This may manifest itself through deflection, avoidance or 'normalising' their behaviour based upon others around them.



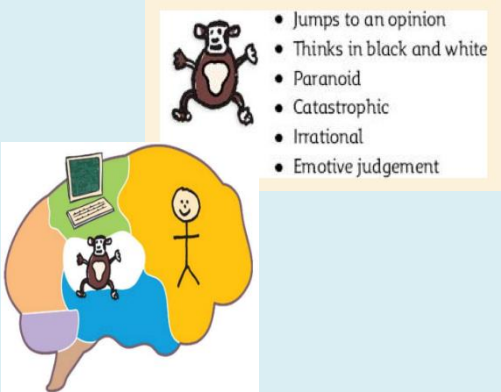
Task 1:

What can you take from the image opposite?

Therefore, be prepared to take what your child tells you at face value; that is not to say they would intentionally lie to you – they may be lying to themselves or '**normalising**'. Part of a healthy relationship with your child during this period is to play devil's advocate.

Task 2:

Using the images and information below and Dr Leadbeater's address, write down any reflections or useful 'nuggets' of information that you may wish to revisit:

<h3>Self Talk</h3>  <p>Self talk is the most powerful form of communication because it either empowers you or it defeats you.</p>	<h3>Study Buddy</h3> 
<h3>The Chimp!</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jumps to an opinion• Thinks in black and white• Paranoid• Catastrophic• Irrational• Emotive judgement	<h3>Motivation: To Reward or Not To Reward....</h3> <p>Motivation to revise is extremely important, but very difficult to achieve. Offering rewards can help motivate, but it is essential that your child develops <u>intrinsic</u> motivation (reasons from within themselves) rather than rely on extrinsic rewards (external or material things).</p> <p>"If-then" rewards, as cited in <i>Drive</i> by Dan Pink, are contractual, set in advance and can help build momentum in student attitudes or give a bigger goal to aim for. However, if used inappropriately or too often, can actually lower motivation and lead to rewards becoming meaningless (plus more expensive for you!).</p> <p>"Now that" rewards, given after the event and not expected, can be far more effective.</p> <p>Pink and Dweck both advise rewarding effort, not attainment. An important distinction between the two will enable students to feel good about their levels of exertion, not about the end result (which applies more pressure and encourages fixed mindset).</p> <p>When we take things back to basics, one of the best rewards a student can receive during this period is your genuine time, interest and affection. In today's busy society this is not easy to afford, but makes the biggest difference.</p>

Remember, that you know your children best, so apply what works best for them!

5. The 'Big Day'

The preparation is done - now it is time for the big day. You probably feel more stressed than your child. What should you do?







Task 1:

What are the **top five** pieces of advice would you give your future self in this situation?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Our advice is to follow exactly the headings of the past four sections. Use the information from this part of the workshop to give yourselves and advice list under each of the headings:

Wellbeing 	Environment 
Organisation 	Mindset 

SECTION B: REVISION

1. The Theory of Revision

Our brains contain 100 billion neurons. Every time we learn something for the first time, a **neural pathway** is formed.

The more often we use this pathway (by remembering this information), the longer it remains open.

If this pathway is not revisited for some time, it can close, making it difficult or impossible to remember the original information.



Task 1:

List three pieces of information you can always remember:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Have you ever thought why you can remember these, but not other information?

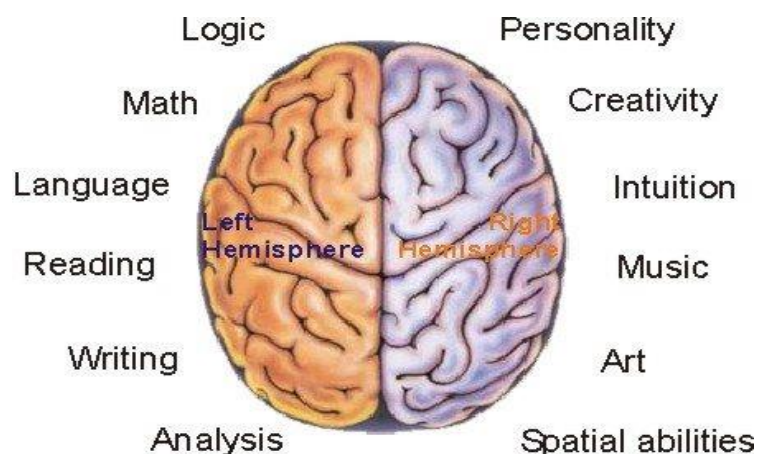
Comprehensive research suggests we are more likely to remember something if we:

- a) Revisit the information regularly (i.e. revision)**
- b) Engage both halves of the brain (i.e. stimulation)**

The brain halves both tend to carry out specific functions, as shown in the diagram opposite. If we rely solely on revising from bland written notes, we are only engaging the left brain. If we add colour, sound, diagrams, movement etc to our revision, it can help engage the right brain too, thus maximizing the number of neurons being utilised.

For example – how many times do you recognise a tune of a song, but do not know the lyrics? How often can you picture someone's face, but be able to name them?

Therefore, ensure your child uses revision methods that utilise both halves of the brain. This booklet and workshop will provide you with plenty of ideas and examples.



2. Developing Student Independence: The Parent's Role

What is your role as a parent during this crucial time?

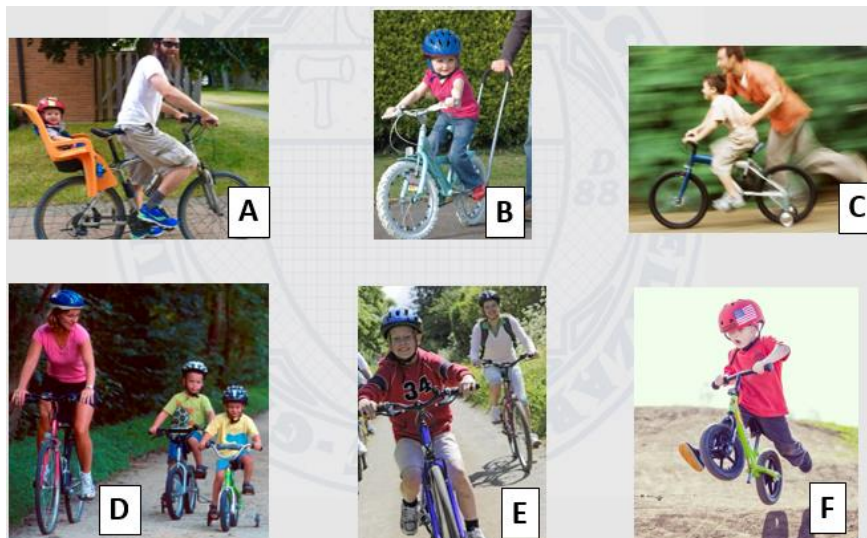
Task 1: To help you decide your role, it is important to consider what aspects are within your control, and which are not. Complete the boxes below with your initial thoughts:



My role is....	My role is not....
Aspects within my control are...	Aspects out of my control are...

Task 2:

Use the bicycle analogy and information presented, work out where your starting point is and what your role is during this period. It may not be identical for everyone – it is very much case-by-case depending on the variation of dynamics.



Notes space:

3. Revision Techniques and Ideas



What makes a good revision task? What should revision look like?
What should be avoided?

Task 1:

Based upon the session so far, try to write a basic list of **dos** and **don'ts**

Revision: Dos	Revision: Don'ts

One difficulty with revision is that it is **individual** – what works for one student might not work for another. However, some key principles should be stuck to when carrying out revision:

Task 2:

Note down the key principles that resonate most significantly with you:

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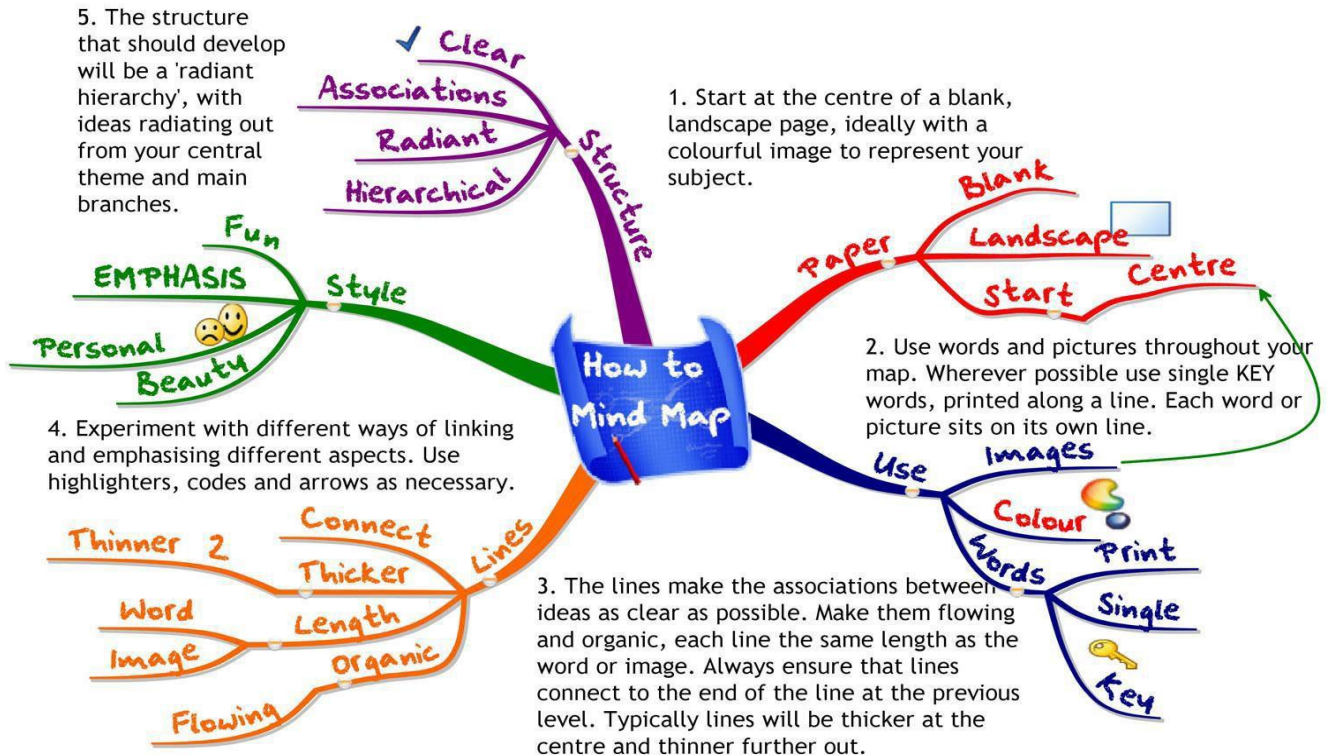
On the following pages are a wealth of ideas that you can encourage your child to use. Depending on the learning style of your child and the nature of the subject, some will work better than others

a. Revision ideas for VISUAL LEARNERS

Visual learners work best from SEEING – making information visually stimulating is the key



- Make use of colour coding (coloured pens or highlighters) to differentiate between topics, themes, key terms etc.
- Trace words in the air or on a blank page
- Write out key information obtained from your notes (condensing each time – challenge - can you get a whole topic onto a post-it note?)
- Draw mind maps (more on this on page 17?????)



- Make flash cards (e.g. 3 by 5 inches) of terms that need to be learned.
- Limit the information on each card so your mind can take a 'mental photograph' of it
- Experiment with diagrams
- Funny mental picture (e.g. entertaining mnemonics) will help you remember things
- Use chronological list of events or process flow charts
- Use split lists to compare/contrast similarities and differences
- Use tables to help map out topics logically
- Copy your notes onto a computer – use fonts, colours, images to emphasise points and then print them
- Place notes in highly visible places –mirror, bedroom wall, fridge, bathroom door etc.

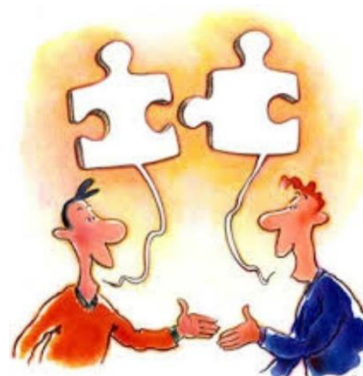


a. Revision ideas for AUDITORY LEARNERS

Auditory learners work best from HEARING – making information sound stimulating is the key



- Read out information aloud
- Underlining interesting points and quotations
- Make up word games and mnemonics to help you. Persuade someone to test you on these
- Explain to someone what you have learned
- Work with others to revise – use constructive discussion (about revision, not your social activities!)
- Read texts aloud, paying close attention to the way it sound. Now try repeating it under your breath
- Record your narrations on a mobile phone or dictaphone. Save these in organised sound files, and listen to them when out walking, on way to school, whilst lying down in your room etc (especially useful for languages)
- One minute mastery – write a script for a topic and recite it in under a minute without hesitation. Record this and play it back over and over
- Make up questions about topics and ask someone about them (study buddy?)
- Talk aloud to recall what you have just learned
- Go somewhere peaceful and read your notes aloud
- Impersonate someone whilst learning different subjects, for example Peter Kay does Science or David Beckham does PE. Maybe impersonate your teachers (politely, of course!)
- Experiment with different ways of saying keywords out loud (emphasise different parts of the word)
- Reason through solutions and justifications by talking out loud or to a partner
- Make up a funny rhyme or mnemonic to help you remember topics
- Mirror speak – talk to yourself in the mirror about topics
- Create songs, raps, jingles and poems about information to help remember them

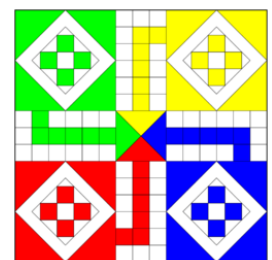
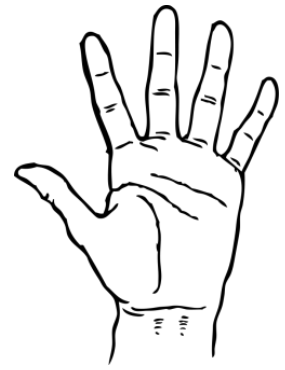


a. Revision ideas for KINAESTHETIC LEARNERS

Kinaesthetic learners work best from MOVEMENT

– linking information with movements is the key

- Walk backwards and forwards with your notes, reading the information aloud
- Jot down key words, draw pictures or make chart to help you remember your notes
- Make flash cards (3 by 5 inches) for every step of a sequence
- Put words, symbols or pictures on your notes
- Use highlighter pens/colours to emphasise important points
- Create cards for key words and practice laying them out in a correct order or sequence
- Copy key points on to a chalkboard, whiteboard or large piece of paper. Make up actions to go with the key words
- Write down key words on post-it notes and assembly them into areas/themes on a wall, table or large piece of paper
- Use the computer to reinforce learning by touch – re-writing notes by typing can help
- Use graphics, clipart, tables and databases to organise material to be learned
- Listen to your notes on topics whilst exercising, washing up, walking to school or walking the dog
- Position notes in particular areas of the house, moving to each area means you are changing topics
- Apply revision to everyday games – for example
 - snakes and ladders - you must answer a question correctly to climb a ladder or avoid sliding down a snake
 - chess – every piece taken results in defining a key term
 - ludo – rather than roll a 6 to leave home, you must answer a question correctly
 - Quiz shows (e.g. *The Chase*, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* etc)
 - Connect 4 – answer a question right to place a token
- Create your own games – e.g. pairs (matching definitions and key terms).



b. Generic Revision Ideas

These ideas help utilise both sides of the brain, and tackle more complex skills and Assessment Objectives (AOs).

DEFINITIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On a small piece of paper/card write down a term from a topic On the reverse, write three definitions; one correct, the other two false. Test other people/yourself 	IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a key term at the top of a page. Imagine life without that term - list as many consequences as you can think of.
ODD ONE OUT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide a piece of paper into four equal quarters. In each quarter, write a key term from a topic Come up with as many reasons as you can as to why one of the terms is the odd one out. 	MAP AND RAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a flow chart that outlines the stages of a process or event On the reverse, write a rap, poem, story or mnemonic to help you remember this process
WORD TRAIN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down any term associated with a topic. Next to this, write down another word from the same topic – but it must begin with the last letter of the first word (e.g. RED → DOT etc). Keep the word chain going for as long as possible. 	WHAT AM I? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a key term from a topic onto a post-it note Give it to the player on your right to put on their head (without looking at it) Ask one 'yes/no' style each to try to guess what term you are Repeat the process until you guess your term
CARD LINK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down many key terms from a topic on cards Each player takes 3 cards. Place a 'neutral' card in the centre of the table Players take it in turns to lay a card next to another one – but each time a link must be identified between the two terms Take a new card every time you lay one (to keep 3 in your hand) 	QUESTION CREATOR <p>One of the best ways to learn exam technique is to act as an examiner!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create your own exam-style questions (with correct mark schemes). Swap with study buddies to try each other's questions Mark them using the mark schemes – discuss any answers you disagree on (this is healthy!)
ARTICULATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down lots of key terms from a topic Fold them and place in a hat or tub Take it in turns to draw one and describe the key term 	ONE-MINUTE MASTERY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarise a whole topic into key points. Write these down as a script Recite this information confidently in under a minute. No hesitation. Film/record the recital, and save to listen back to
IF THIS IS THE ANSWER, WHAT IS THE QUESTION? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down a key term from a topic Imagining this term is the answer - come up with as many questions as you can 	AO GRIDS/PADS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a topic, write down the key terms (usually AO1) In the next column/ring, write down AO2 information to expand the AO1 point In the next column/ring, write down AO3 information. Repeat this process until you exhaust all ideas

*Each activity can be made easier or harder by allowing notes, applying time limits etc.
You can also include other people (e.g. study buddy) to increase the challenge or interest level*

Quality Spider Diagrams

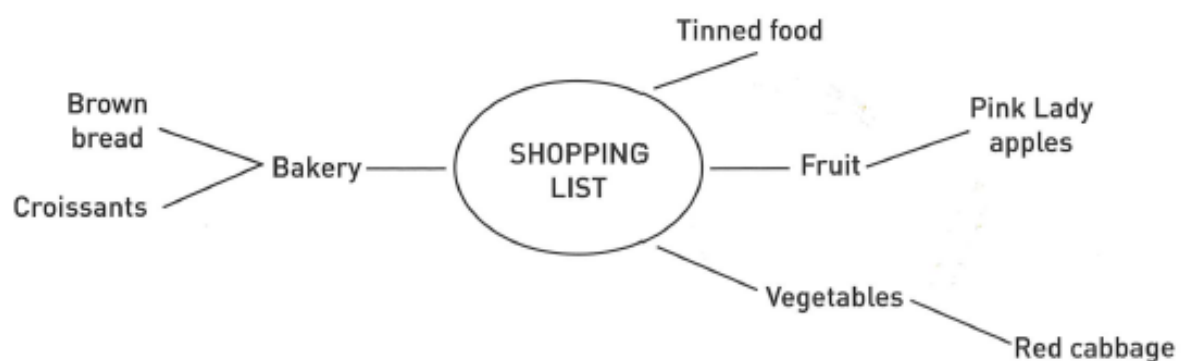
One of the most common and useful techniques to revise from, spider diagrams can help condense entire topics into a stimulating and concise format.

Task 1: Complete the spider diagram activity below

Now we are going to learn how to use bullet points to design a spider diagram that adds more detail to each of your key points. Below is a shopping list. The spider diagram has been started for you using the key **TYPES** of food as **MAIN** bullet points such as dairy, bakery, fruit, vegetables, canned food. For each type of food add **EXAMPLES** or **MINOR** points. **EXAMPLES** for bakery would be bread. **MINOR** point for fruit would be **APPLES** followed by an **EXAMPLE** such as Granny Smiths.

Complete the spider diagram that has been started for you

Brown bread
Carrots
Croissants
Bakery
Cheese
Milk
Dairy
Tinned food
Butter
Apples
Fruit and vegetables
White rolls
White cabbage
Red cabbage
Granny Smith apples
Pink Lady apples
Tin of Tuna fish
Tin of Baked beans



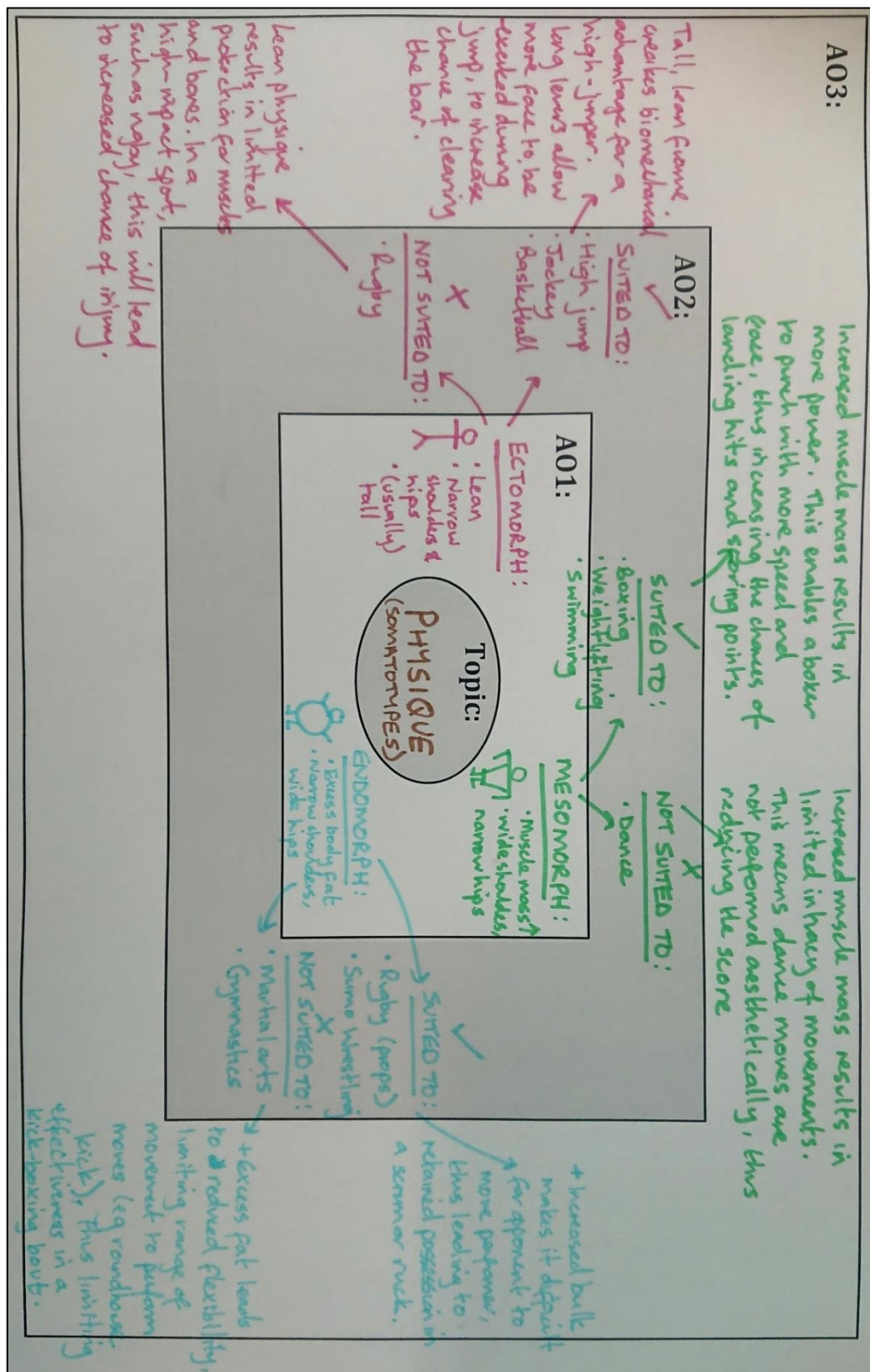
How could you improve the spider diagram further to make it more stimulating?

Final Step: once the mind map is drawn, is to practice drawing it from memory until it comes naturally – then you know the information has stuck!

Assessment Objective (AO) Pads

Like a spider diagram, but as the branches move out, so do the Assessment Objectives (AOs). In this PE example, AO1 is knowledge of each somatotype, AO2 is applying each on to sporting examples, and AO3 is the impact each somatotype could have on performance.

This can be used for a variety of subjects, in which knowledge (AO1) is required to be applied (AO2) to situations and developed (AO3).



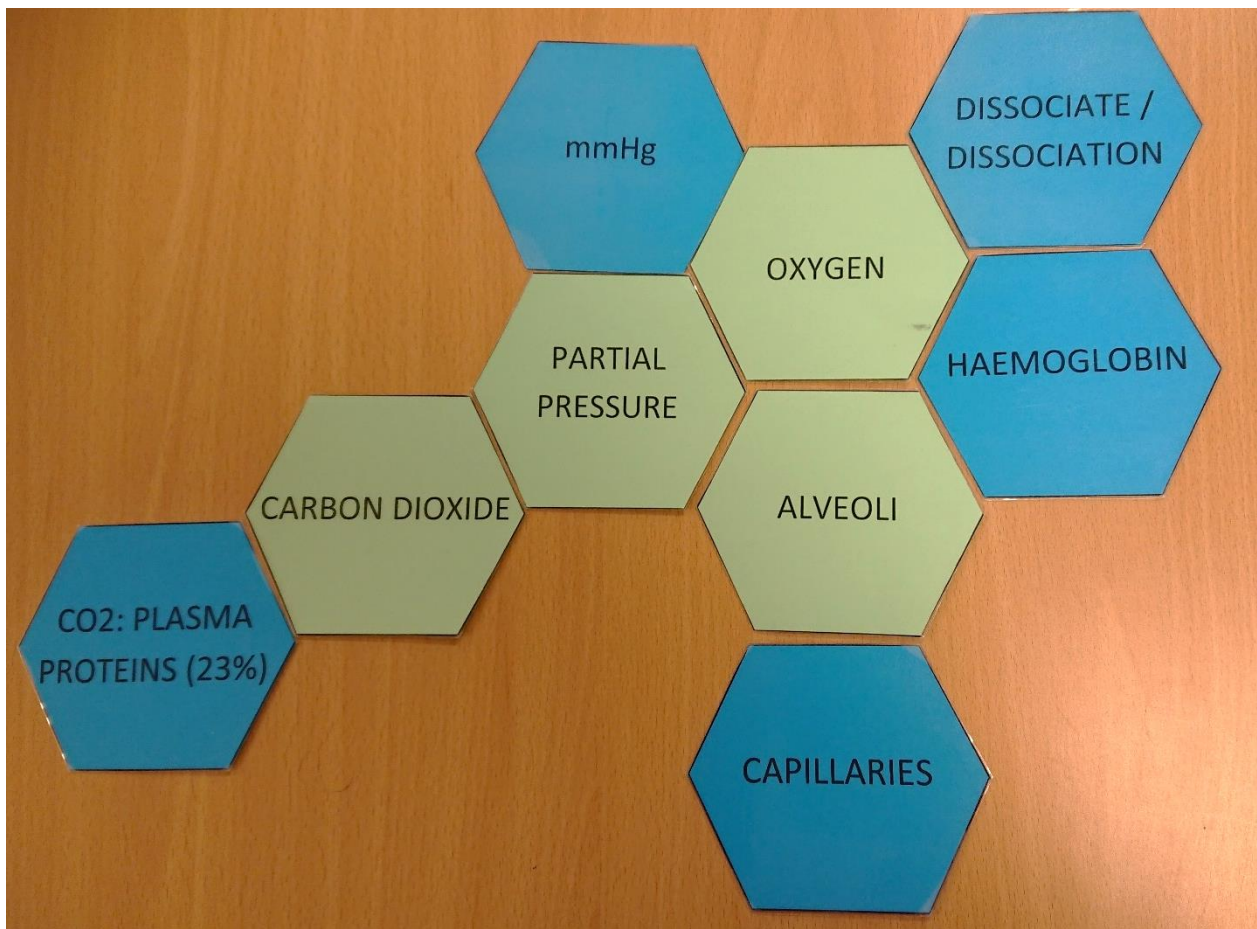
Card Link

Writing out key terms on cards can help improve memory recall. Then using these cards to link them against others can be a fantastic way to explore application and justification (often AO2 and AO3 skills).

This can be done in a game format as part of social revision, which students enjoy due to the competitive nature. Alternatively, it can be done as a lone exercise.

Completing cards in different colours for different topics can also help with synoptic links (i.e. linking more than one topic).

This activity can also be linked with the 'definitions' activity, where definitions can be written on the reverse of each card.



This example shows key terms from PE – the green cards being a respiratory topic, and the blue cards being a cardiovascular topic. Cards have been laid against others where links occur. These cards are hexagonal to allow 6 connection points, but card links can work equally as well on square or rectangular cards

Quality Note Taking

STUDY SKILLS: HOW CAN YOU TAKE EVEN BETTER NOTES?

Read the following

- Note-taking is **NOT** about copying the words somebody else has written on to a page you are writing.
- Note-taking is about reducing the material, so it can be understood and recalled more easily.
- Some students find it very difficult to reduce material to a series of key points e.g. bullet points.
- Bullet points are more easily recalled than entire paragraphs.
- Creating bullet points is an intellectual skill as the **KEY POINT** has to be identified, which is not always very easy. If the key point cannot be identified then it is unlikely the paragraph will be recalled, as it hasn't been clearly understood.

Top Tips for identifying bullet points using **Goldilocks and the Three Bears** as an example!

1. Understand the **BIG PICTURE** about the story / explanation / theory.

A girl called Goldilocks enters the house of a family of three bears without permission.

2. **Underline** or **highlight** the key points as you read – leave out detail, capture the key points only.

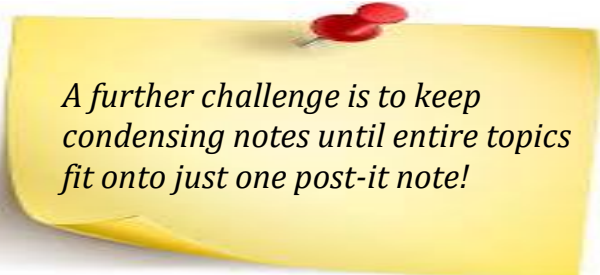
For example, Goldilocks enters the house, tests out three chairs for size, tastes three bowls of porridge, tries out three beds for comfort, falls asleep. The details about porridge being too hot and chairs breaking is extra detail which you would remember from the key point.

3. Follow a **logical order** to aid your understanding.

Place the following in order of sequence that they appear in the story by writing a number next to each point in the order it comes. So, to get you started, place a '1' next to 'Goldilocks enters the house'.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Goldilocks runs out of the house | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks falls asleep on a bed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks is woken up by the three bears - daddy, mummy and baby bear | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks tests out three chairs for size | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks tastes three bowls of porridge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks enters the house | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Goldilocks tries out three beds for comfort | <input type="checkbox"/> |

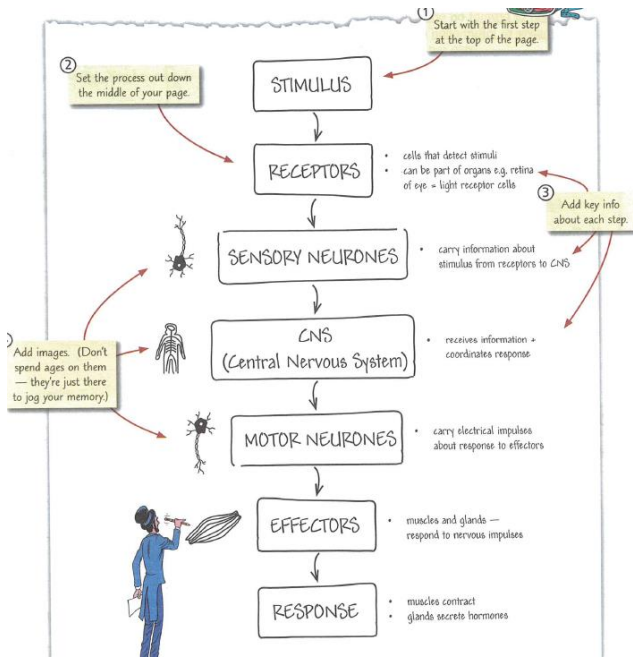
(notice the principle of **transformation** from earlier?)



A further challenge is to keep condensing notes until entire topics fit onto just one post-it note!

Flow Charts

These help map out a **process** in stages, and can help illustrate more simple aspects (e.g. sequences) to more complex factors (e.g. causes and consequences - a common A03 skill).



Top Tips:

1. **Always start at the top** – much of a flow chart is memory of placings on the page, and the eyes will always look there first
2. **Work downwards** to show the next steps. If multiple steps are available be creative in the downward stages
3. **Keep main points concise** – they will be easier to remember ('chunked'). You can always add supplementary notes to the side
4. **Add images and colour** – to add interest and reference points on the page to boost memory potential
5. **Team revision** – great to use with a non-subject specialist (e.g. parents, siblings) – they can test you on next steps

Source: CGP GCSE revision guide

Memory Methods

Boiled down, exams are predominantly memory tests. These methods help boost memory by engaging the right brain as well as the left:

Mnemonics – a way of remembering facts in a certain order.

Use the first letters of a sequence and convert them into a song, sentence or rhyme.

For example, the order of planets

My Very Easy Method Just Speeds Up Naming Planets

Making mnemonics funny, random (or even rude!) can make them more memorable!

Raps/Songs – taking a memorable song and changing the words to it can be a brilliant way to remember it. Or, maybe create your own from scratch?



Exercise – including revision into exercise can help memorise through association with movement (and keeps you fit!) For example, in a keep fit session, answer one question or give one definition in between sets of press-ups or star jumps.



Memory Journeys – links **information** to **landmarks** on a journey. As you repeatedly walk through the journey in your mind, you'll pass the land marks in the correct order.



Write down the key points and assign each point to a **landmark** in **order**.

Make links between them – often the stranger the better (more memorable!).

Source: CGP GCSE revision guide

This can be a difficult method to get to grips with, but a very effective one once established!

APPENDICES

1. Useful Resources

Websites:

Parental advice - general

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/helping_with_exams/

<https://www.thespark.org.uk/tips-for-parents-during-exams/>

<https://doctor.ndtv.com/living-healthy/diet-for-your-child-during-exams-our-expert-recommends-this-1818464>

Revision timetables

netsixthform.co.uk/resources

<http://getrevising.co.uk/timetable/intro>

Creating a suitable study environment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTCSt0gA1Co&safe=active>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXDODZYxjFM&safe=active>

Revision resources/past papers

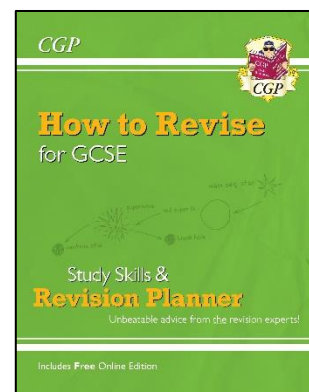
<https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/>

Revision Guides:

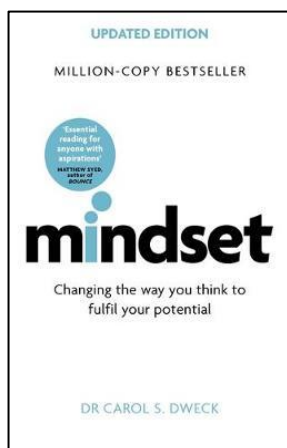
CGP provide a range of revision guides for subjects at GCSE and A-level. Many of our departments recommend/use them.

Specific information can be found in the additional document.

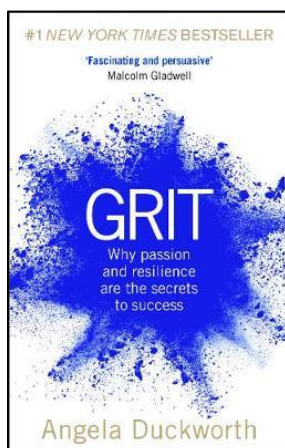
The general GCSE revision guide (shown opposite) also contains useful advice (no a-level version currently available)



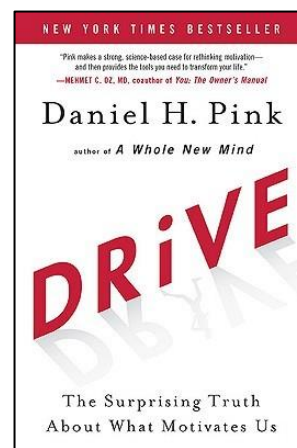
Books: (guidance for parents, teachers and adults on instilling positive mindsets into young people)



Mindset
Carol Dweck
Ch 7 (P176-222)



Grit
Angela Duckworth
(P199-222)



Drive
Dan Pink
P174-184

2. Notes Page



3. Revision Plan Templates

- Overleaf you will find:
 1. Weekly revision planner for a school week
 2. Weekly revision planner for a weekend/school holiday week

Tip: Photocopy these and fill one in at the start of each week to give you specific short-term revision plans

WEEKLY PLAN FOR A SCHOOL WEEK

Time of Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning / Before School / Journey to School?					
Form Period					
Lunchtime					
After School / Journey Home?					
Evening					

WEEKEND/ HOLIDAY PLAN

Time of Day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Session 1 (30-40 mins)					
Break					
Session 2 (30-40 mins)					
Break					
Session 3 (30-40 mins)					
Break					
Session 4 (30-40 mins)					