

SPALDING GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Examination/CAT Revision Guide

Guidance and advice
for Year 7-13 students and parents

This guide is predominantly designed to offer support for formal examinations, but can also be applied to preparation for CATs

STARTING POINTS



1. Work out how much time you have

How many days until your first exam/CAT? When is your most important? Work backwards from these points to calculate how much time you have to prepare.

- How many study hours in a normal weekday?
- How many hours can you study at weekends/during school holidays?
- What subjects are you weaker in or are a higher priority, and therefore need more time?



Your preparation period must be realistic and flexible. You must still allow time to socialize with friends and partake in hobbies, and don't forget other homework or coursework. Get the balance right.

Set a date for each subject by which you will have reduced all your revision to summary sheets.

Every week, check if you are on track – then adjust your plan accordingly.

Be honest - if you miss sessions, make up for them elsewhere. If you do extra sessions, reward yourself time off. Each time, discuss with your PARENTS

2. Complete a revision timetable

For formal examinations, students are sent a revision template to help you map out your long-term plan of revision. Alternatively, you can create your own, or try this online version:

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

Weekly plans should also be used to ensure you set short-term goals (see appendices). The will also be useful to help prepare for CATs.

When completing your timetable, remember:

- Block out all non-moveable commitments first. Work around these
- Priorities topics to be revised more/earlier (usually weakest or first exam/CAT). You can do this by 'RAG rating' work topics (giving them a **Red**, **Amber**, **Green** rating based upon your confidence. Focus on the red topics the most).
- Build in short slots (c10 mins) to review the learning (studies show that if not reviewed you can lose up to 80% of learned content in 24 hours and up to 98% in seven days)
- Concentration spans are usually 20-40 mins max (age dependent)
- Breaks should be 5-10 mins long – refill your drinks, get some fresh air, have a quick chat with someone. Like everything, concentration improves with practice
- During term-time you should aim to do at least one revision session per night
- During weekends/holidays you should aim for at least three sessions per day
- Let your family know your timetable (perhaps stick a copy in the kitchen?) so they don't ask you to do other things. **Be HONEST** with them about what you have achieved – they CARE!



3. Create the right environment

You need space away from the distractions that will allow you to focus. This includes:

- **Remove distractions** – PHONE (put it on charge downstairs?), TV, computer etc.
- Plenty of **water** and **healthy snacks** to keep you hydrated and energized during revision – brain usage burns energy!
- Comfortable **desk and chair**
- Good **light** and comfortable **temperature**
- **Storage** to keep your space tidy
- **Revision timetable**/planner (perhaps a spare copy you keep at home?)
- Revision kit:
 - Coloured pens, highlighters, pencils
 - Paper, dividers, folders, post-its, note cards
 - Textbooks, exercise books/folder, dictionary, thesaurus
 - Topic list (preferably 'RAG rated')



4. Get a 'study buddy'

Working with a 'study buddy' means you can mutually motivate and bounce ideas, questions and answers off each other. You can also share any resources you create with each other, thus maximising time. Study buddies can also help explain particular concepts to each other.

Advice for working with a study buddy:

- Pick someone who is reliable and that you trust
- Plan in advance what you are going to work on and when
- Share your resources, ideas, mnemonics and other tips
- Ensure you avoid distractions (see section 3 above) – a study buddy is not an excuse to sit and chat!
- Try to find areas to work on in common, but also be prepared to support them with an area that is less important to you – they will reciprocate to help you back



HOW DO I REVISE?



What kind of learner are you?

Finding this out will help you plan revision methods that suit you best.

Tick the statements which best describe you, your actions and the things you say/think:

- 1) I see what you mean
- 2) That sounds right
- 3) That feels right
- 4) When relaxing, I like to watch a film or movie
- 5) When relaxing, I like to listen music
- 6) When relaxing, I like to do something active (e.g. sport, gym etc)
- 7) I prefer to talk to people face to face
- 8) I prefer to talk to people on the phone
- 9) I prefer to talk to people whilst I am doing something else
- 10) I get impatient when I listen to others
- 11) I like listening to others talk
- 12) I wave my hands about a lot when I am talking
- 13) I forget people's names, but I remember their faces
- 14) I don't forget people's names
- 15) I shake hands or hug people when I meet them
- 16) If I'm lost, I prefer looking at a map
- 17) If I'm lost, I prefer to be told where to go
- 18) If I'm lost, I prefer to be shown the way
- 19) When I'm bored, I doodle
- 20) When I'm bored, I chat
- 21) When I'm bored, I fidget or fiddle with objects
- 22) When I'm angry, I seethe and say nothing
- 23) When I'm angry, I have an outburst of shouting
- 24) When I'm angry, I clench my fists, grind my teeth or storm off

RESULTS OF SURVEY – WHAT LEARNING STYLE(S) SUITS YOU BEST?

A. I ticked of the following questions:
1,4,7,10,13,16,19,22,

C. I ticked of the following questions:
3,6,9, 12, 15, 18,21, 24

B. I ticked of the following questions:
2,5,8,11,14,17,20,23

Now check your learning style:

Mainly A = Visual learner

Mainly B = Auditory learner

Mainly C = Kinesthetic learner

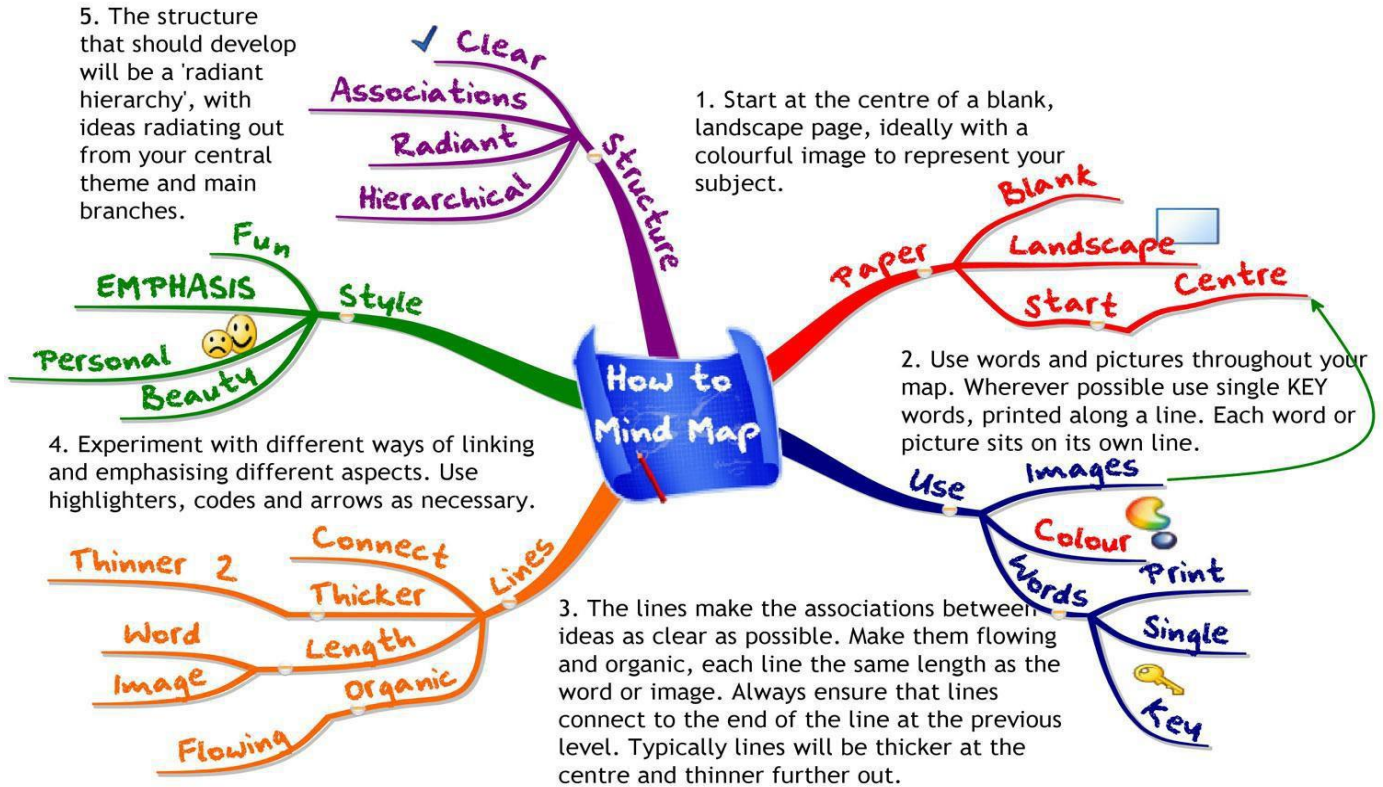
- Advice of how to revise for each learning style is given overleaf.
- PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – it may be that a large number of revision ideas suit you, even if they may suit a learning style that does not match yours.
- Therefore, please stay open-minded with trying a variety

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



- 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.



B. Revision ideas for AUDITORY LEARNERS

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



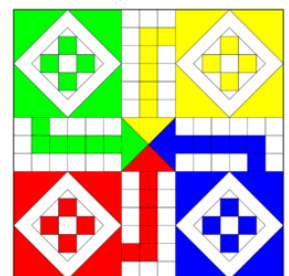
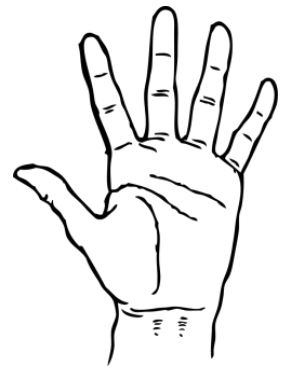
- Read out information aloud
- Underlining interesting points and quotations
- Make up word games and mnemonics to help you. Persuade someone to test you on these
- Explain to someone what you have learned
- Work with others to revise – use constructive discussion (about revision, not your social activities!)
- Read texts aloud, paying close attention to the way it sounds. 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



C. 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).



GREAT 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 One of the best ways to learn exam technique is to act as an examiner! <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
WorWWIF 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a topic, write down the key terms (usually AO1) In the next column, write down AO2 information to expand the AO1 point In the next column, 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

UTILISING YOUR FULL BRAIN POTENTIAL

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.

For example, we all know our name, phone number, e-mail address etc, because we say and write them so regularly.

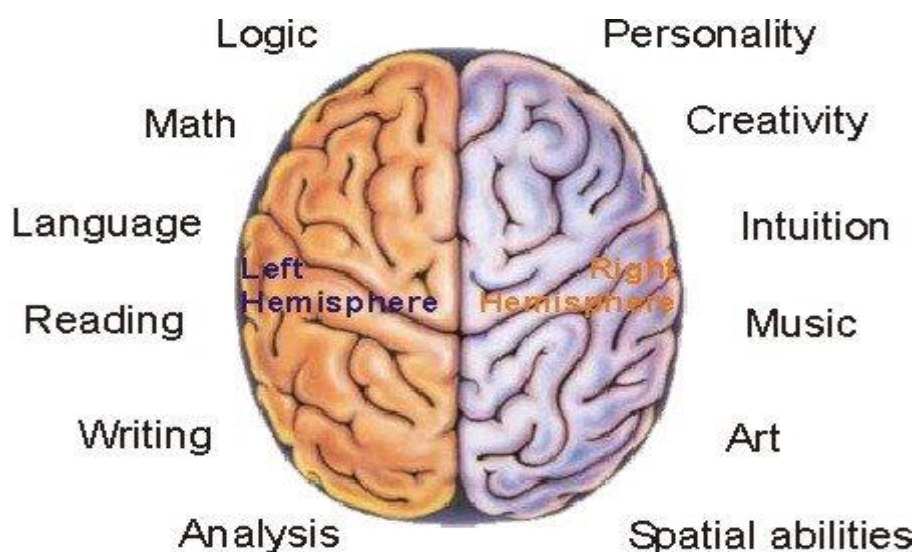
Comprehensive research suggests we are more likely to remember something if we:

- a) Revisit the information regularly**
- b) Engage both halves of the brain**

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 use the right brain too, thus maximizing the number of neurons being utilised.

For example – how many times do you recognize a tune of a song, but do not know the lyrics?

Therefore, try to use revision methods that utilise both halves of the brain, like the ideas given earlier.



TIPS FOR THE EXAMS



- Get a **good night's sleep** before the exam – hours spent resting are more productive than 'cramming'
- Have a **nourishing breakfast and lunch. Drink plenty** of fluids to keep hydrated throughout the day too. Malnourishment can lead to decreased concentration
- **Get to school early** – this will relieve anxiety
- **Be equipped** – clear pencil case with all equipment needed (and spares?)
- **Read the front page** of the exam booklet – whilst everyone is settling down. Check how many marks are required from each section, and work out how long this gives you per section (a mark per minute is usually a good guide).
- **Read each question** – at least twice. Your brain may play tricks on you in exam conditions!
- **Build in planning time** – spend time before writing in full to underline trigger words (e.g. 'define', 'explain') plus any other key words. Jot down key words in margins to remind you later on.
- **Build in review time** – spend time at the end reviewing answers and correcting. Those vital few marks may be the difference between grade boundaries
- **Don't panic** if your mind goes blank – it will all come back to you once you start writing. If you have a big block, move on and come back.
- **Have a plan** – some people answer easier questions first to build confidence. Others tackle longer questions first and revisit them at the end. As long as you have a plan that works - stick to it!
- **Don't over-analyse** – once an exam/CAT is done, physically and mentally pack up your revision notes and move onto to the next exam/CAT.



APPENDICES

- Overleaf you will find two appendices:
 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)					