

Introduction

This booklet has been put together to offer some practical advice about your revision. It should be used as a guide to reinforce all the good practice you have been taught. The advice in this booklet should be used in conjunction with the study skills booklet that you were given at the Study Skills day in September. You have now received your exam timetables so you can set out a specific revision plan aimed at thorough preparation for each examination. If you have not already done so, I urge you to print off the revision timetable you have produced at school and stick to it.

REMEMBER: This booklet is only useful if you read it carefully.

The Year 11 teachers and I wish you all the best in your preparation for your GCSE exams.

Mrs Sue Knight
Head of Year 11

Relieving Stress

It is not unusual for students to experience stress at this time of year but remember you are not alone. All over the country Year 11 students are realising that time is short and the exams are not far away now. **Do not panic** because you still have time to revise all the required material and ensure your grades are the ones you want.

In PSHE this year you have discussed some of the ways in which you can cope with this stress and it is imperative that you now follow the simple but effective advice you have been offered. The best way for you to deal with stress is to be in control and do some positive things. Do not put off that revision any longer; do not blame someone or something else for your lack of revision to date: you just need to get on with it!

Each subject has offered some specific advice about what and how to revise in this booklet and if you follow it your efforts will be rewarded. As I have said all year, you will achieve the results that you deserve to achieve and only you can control the outcome.

Five key actions will ensure that stress is kept to a minimum.

1. Eat well
2. Regular exercise and physical activity
3. Sleep well
4. Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated
5. Enjoy the challenge and the work

Revising

The essential thing is to plan your day so that your revision is exciting, stimulating and not boring. You will not learn very much if you are bored. As you already know, long periods of note taking, A mapping, list making and reading is not the most productive way to learn and revise. Plan your sessions into short periods of about 45 minutes with a 15-minute break in-between. Try to move around the room as you revise so that not just one place is associated with the revision. It can be fun and will certainly be rewarding if you revise properly. Remember to use the strategy of review which we went through in a lot of detail on your study skills day and is on page 32 onwards in your study skills booklet.

The goals for your revision are:

- To learn your work
- To allow you to answer questions in the best way to gain the most marks possible
- To review areas that have caused confusion

Revision is designed to enable you to achieve your best and allow the doors to open for you in the future. Enjoy the challenge and hard work you have ahead of you.

The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you are willing to work.

Starting your revision

There are four basic questions that you need to answer

1. Where should I revise?
2. What should I revise?
3. When should I revise?
4. How do I revise?

Where should I revise?

This is crucial to any successful revision plan. The room must be well equipped for you to work in with all your revision guides, notes, past papers nearby and access to the internet should you need it, but only for revision. Your desk and chair should be such that good posture is maintained; you do not want a serious case of back ache in the holidays! It is vital that you can control the light, ventilation and heat so that the atmosphere is comfortable for you and there must be no distractions.

As you were told on your Study Skills day background music can be soothing and does assist some learners. **However**, any music with lyrics is a distraction and **must not** be used when you are revising.

What should I revise?

It is vital that you have all the class notes that you need. If necessary, you should copy/photocopy notes from a friend if you missed work through absences. You should have a good idea of the full syllabus for each subject so make sure your knowledge covers everything you have been taught. Carefully study the appropriate subject advice later in this booklet if you are not sure what to revise by now!

When should I revise?

Since September the word revision has been mentioned constantly to you. So the earlier you start, the better and those who started before the mocks as advised, should find their levels of stress are very low compared to those who are trying to run this marathon as a sprint. Everyone is different so you should revise during the period of the day when you are most alert; for most of us this is the morning. Your revision timetable is planned already and takes into account what you are like. If you are really not a morning person then plan for revision to take place in the afternoon and early evening. You should be aiming to revise for the equivalent of a full school day nearly every day. Remember your brain works best for periods of 40 – 50 minutes so take plenty of short breaks in between and do not forget to eat and drink plenty of water.

How do I revise?

After the study skills in September you were told to check what type of learner you are. By now you should know your preferred learning style (visual, kinaesthetic or auditory) and know which approach from the study skills booklet is best for you. Below, there is a brief reminder of all the techniques discussed. It is always best to keep your revision varied by adopting a few different strategies. Remember you do not want to get bored so find your favourite two or three methods of revising and stick to them.

If you greatly desire something, have the guts to stake everything on obtaining it.

Revision Techniques

Memory

As you are all well aware, the key to all of the revision you do is memorising it. The quote from your study skills book on page five is:

“You have not learnt anything until you have memorised it”

In order for you to memorise something, whatever type of learner you are, you need to have the right attitude.

1. Relax stress is not conducive to memory.
2. If you think you can or think you can't....YOU ARE RIGHT!!

If you have a good positive attitude, then three steps to remembering facts are essential to your revision

1. Link the information together so that a story develops with each step triggering the next.
2. Use your imagination; it is easier to recall images, movements, colours etc so use the skills for memory that we learnt in September to help you.
3. Review – read this section carefully in the study skills booklet. Keep going back over notes, A maps etc to ensure the information stays in your long term memory.

Remember it is easier to learn things that you understand so check through your notes carefully and ask questions if there are any grey areas for you.

Mnemonics

This is a way of remembering information using first letters, visual or rhyming triggers. The more imaginative you are the more likely you are to be able to recall the information.

First letter triggers are very good to help you learn lists of words. Simply take the first letter of each key word, use it to make up an imaginative sentence that you will remember and then learn it. The trigger is the letter that you should associate with the word that you need to remember.

Visual triggers are very useful but require practice and real imagination. For example, to try and remember how to spell simile, you could image two similar smiles.

Rhyming triggers are great fun and help keep information in your brain. You can learn by using rhythms and music that you like and then ensure you remember all the information, for example,

In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue

These techniques work but you have to put the information together first and keep it personal to you.

Loci

This is when you associate locations with information that you need to remember. Think about putting the bones of the body in an order around your room and then remember the position of the sticker and what it is associated with. You will be amazed at how easy it is to remember lots of information. The more imaginative the posters, post its or sheets that you put up, the more likely you are to remember the information. You should aim to have a single piece of information on these or a bold fact.

Peg Words

Similar to loci but you remember with places and numbers. Check that you link to a rhyme with the numbers. This was how you learnt the start of the periodic table on the study skills day:

One – Gun – Hydrogen etc

Throughout your revision you should keep returning to the basis of all revision and learning.

- 1. Understand it.**
- 2. Condense it.**
- 3. Memorise it.**
- 4. Review it.**

Hierarchies

All information is organised into an order of importance (hierarchy). Your main ideas should all link together to form a logical progression of ideas. This was how we learnt about Greg's day. See page 18.

Notes

All subjects should be condensed into note form. You need to write brief notes on essential topics and use headings and sub headings to highlight key points that must be remembered.

Highlighters

Use these to highlight passages of importance, key points and formulae that need to be learnt. It is a good idea to use different colours to help you to memorise the work and be able to recall it in the exam.

Key Words

As with peg words, you should make lists of key words that you can memorise using one of the techniques you have learned and then develop into a full story or detailed answer, whatever the subject.

Diagrams

Using diagrams is a superb method for learning and memorising material in many subjects. You should use A maps as you were shown and try to condense all the material about a topic onto one sheet of A4. You then just need to keep reviewing the A map rather than all of your notes. This is an excellent way of memorising sub plots and characters in English Literature for example.

Questions and Answers

This method of revision is excellent for many subjects. Produce long lists of detailed questions full of facts that require only a single word answer. You will remember the information as a question and be able to answer with many details in the exam. Keep adding to these during the revision period and review them regularly with a friend or family member. You should read them and also have them read to you.

Flash Cards

By producing a series of these small cards which can be filled with important facts, dates, formulae etc you can carry them around with you and go over them whenever you like. You could keep them in a bag and read them when you are on a train, a bus, in the car or sitting in the garden enjoying some sun. This method of condensing helps your revision to be portable and therefore you will not get bored in one position in your house.

Model Answers

You have lots of past exam questions so keep practising writing model answers in the time allowed for the question. The key to this is being able to spot the vital command words in any question and plan an appropriate response.

Remember that if at first you don't succeed; try, try again