



# EFFECTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

How to maximise the learning from revision



# What to study when.....

Making a plan takes time but it's a very important part of revision

- ✓ Plan to work in small 'chunks' of time (15 min, 5 min, 20 min, 5 min, 15 min)
- ✓ Plan which subjects and which topics you will study on which days
- ✓ Build in definite breaks – and when they finish
- ✓ Don't try to cover too much, too fast – be realistic, small chunks are best
- ✓ Keep half and whole days when you don't revise – so they are available for emergencies
- ✓ Don't forget to include the dates of exams on your plan
- ✓ Remember to build in time to revisit each subject briefly after a day and a week as well as just before the exam

Student Life GCSE monthly revision planner - April 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 <i>Chemistry Water</i>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/studentlife/revisionandskills/>

[bbc.co.uk/studentlife](http://bbc.co.uk/studentlife)

## Struggling to get started?

Divide the number of hours available by the number of subjects you are taking and then allocate topics within each subject area.



Don't forget to tick off subjects on your revision timetable as you go along so that you can see regular progress

## **Where to begin.....**

### **1. Be organised;**

What resources, equipment will you need to revise.

### **2. Where are you going to work....**

Is in front of the window / computer really a good idea?

### **3. Am I away from easy distractions?**

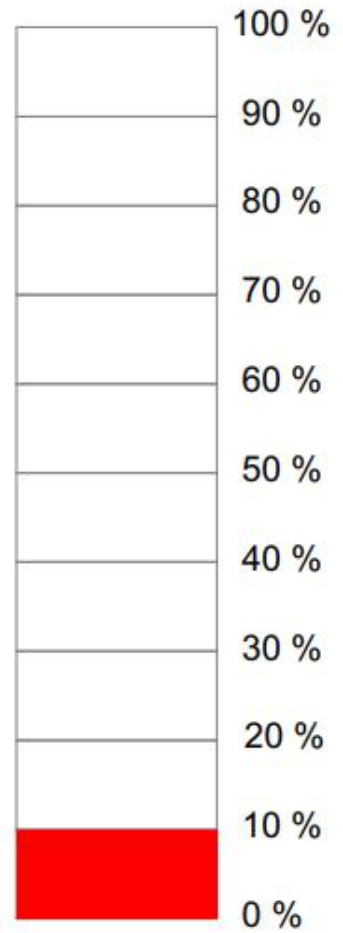
e.g. Turn off your mobile phone

Don't have Facebook open

Use checking these as "treats" in your allotted breaks

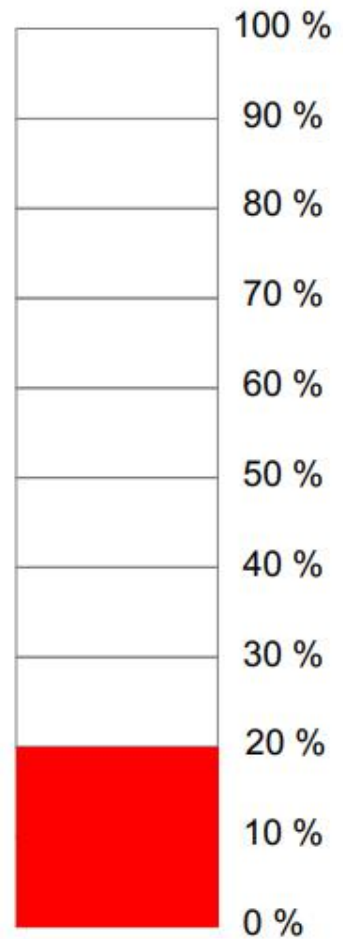
# “We Learn.....

10% of what we read



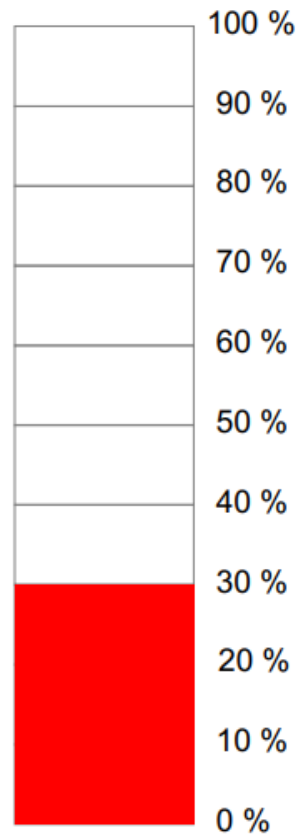
# “We Learn.....

20% of what we hear



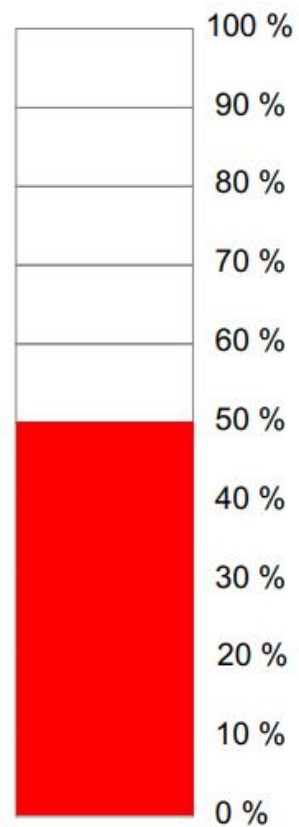
## “We Learn.....

30% of what we see



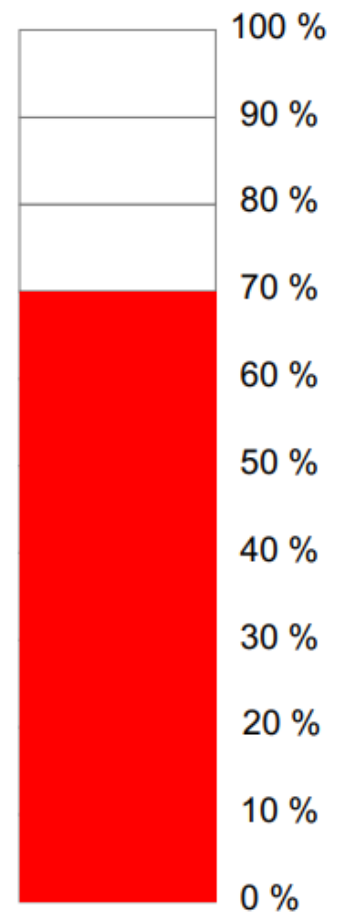
## “We Learn.....

50% of what we see and hear



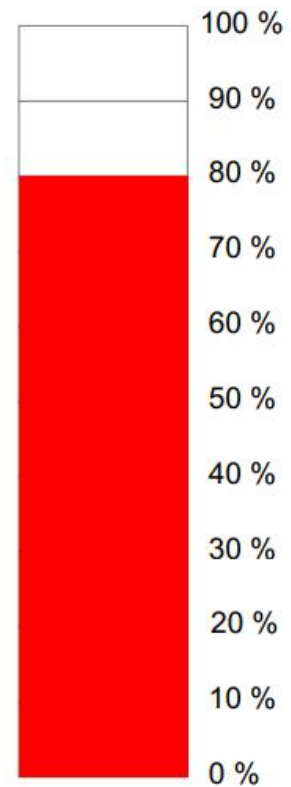
## “We Learn.....

70% of what we discuss



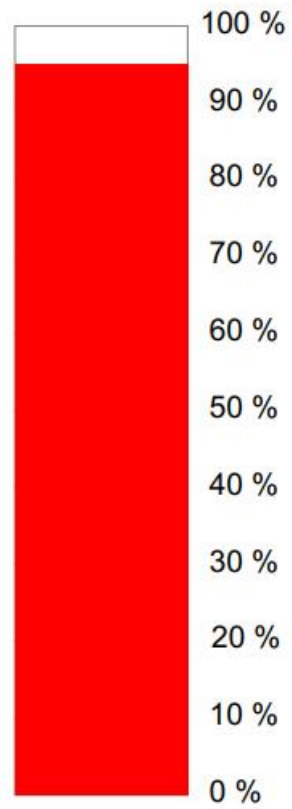
## “We Learn.....

80% of what we experience



## “We Learn.....

95% of what we teach others



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## Stuck in your room.....what can you do?

### 1. Break information up

- Scan the information and highlight the headings/subheadings
- Under one heading, scan the passage and highlight the keywords
- Only once you have done this tackle reading the whole passage

### 2. Summarise the material under headings on index cards / revision cards

### 3. Make a conscious effort to commit the information to memory

.....do this at least three times

### 4. Test yourself

Use the material to answer a question or address a problem not previously tackled.

### Extra hints;

*Don't waste time struggling.* Note down anything you can't do and take it to your next lesson. Similarly if there are just one or two things that you just can't get then leave them out (unless you're aiming for an A\*).

## And what can you do to help as a parent?

- ✓ Share the strategies we have discussed with your child when you get home
- ✓ Encourage your child to keep to the revision plan but be flexible to a degree
- ✓ Provide a quiet uncluttered area for study away from distractions e.g. siblings, chatter etc
- ✓ Ensure that they have everything they need – equipment, revision cards, revision guides etc (remove any excuses)
- ✓ Make sure they take their allotted break and don't over do it
- ✓ Make sure they still take exercise and eat well
- ✓ Probably don't keep asking "How's it going?" "What have you learnt today?"  
..... Try and trust them !



# How to Help Your Child Revise

Exams can be extremely stressful for students and parents wanting to help their children revise and manage their time effectively. We have put together some advice to help you help your child plan and execute their revision schedule as productively as possible.

## 1. EXAM & REVISION PLANNING

There are many ways in which you can help your child plan their exam revision:

- **Get a printed copy of your child's exam timetable.** As simple as it may sound, some children will go through their exams without a printed copy of their timetable and solely rely on their friends to tell them when is their next test. Having a physical copy is more practical and is easier to visualise and plan from.
- **Help them plan out a revision schedule.** However, remember that you are merely supporting them and that it is up to your child to outline their schedule. This will also give them the opportunity to take responsibility and learn to prioritise their work.
- **Plan realistically.** There are limits to how much work can effectively be done in a day, in order to be able to balance leisure and revision and be as productive as possible.
- **Timing revision sessions.** We recommend that pupils aim to revise a particular subject for around 2 hours in order for them to remain focused yet get enough time to go into a certain level of depth. Ideally, you would want your child to focus on a maximum of 2 subjects on a school night and a maximum of 4 to 6 subjects during weekend days.
- **Plan for breaks.** Also remember that your child needs regular breaks or else could become worn out, which would affect their productivity. Ideally, plan a short 5-10 minutes break every one and half to two hours, longer ones for meal times. When setting a revision timetable, remember to also reward them with break days or “cheat” days.
- **Boundaries.** You need to respect your child's boundaries when helping them revise, if you push or interfere too much, they might not come to you for help as easily.

- **Establishing specific location to revise.** Having a number of study places is as important as having specific locations where your child can sit down and focus solely on their revision. This is essential to their concentration and thus productivity.
  - Somewhere quiet. Whether it is at school, a quiet room at home or some other study room, your child needs a space to study. We recommend having various study spaces to choose from as one could not be available one day requiring to have another option at hand.
  - Avoid the bedroom. Although very tempting, revising in their bedroom is often not the most productive alternative, due to the many distractions surrounding the student.
  - Take breaks outside of study spaces. Similarly, ensure that your child takes breaks away from their study space. A study place should ideally only be for studying.



## 2. REVISION TECHNIQUES

Before your child can start revising, they need to know how to revise and what method works best for them. Do they revise best through reading textbooks? Doing worksheets? Taking mock tests? Maybe using online quizzes?

Your child needs to try and assess from past experience what revision techniques work best for them, which might also vary depending on the subjects and the learning materials they were provided with.

Some useful questions to help them figure this out are as follow:

- Does he/she prefers studying through visual aids such as graphs, diagrams, and charts?
- Does your child learns best through interacting and discussions?
- Do they tend to revise best reading through notes and textbooks?
- Does your child prefer revising through doing questions and examples done in class, quizzing themselves and practicing mock exams?

Some subjects might require additional effort if students don't feel as comfortable with the syllabus, for which it could also be a good idea to consider after school revision classes, which are short, concise and intensive.



### 3. REVISION RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

**Preparing for exams: What resources should pupils use?**

You can't be expected to put up a shelf without a hammer, so why would you expect your child to be successful in their exams without the right resources to help them revise and prepare for them?

- **Supplies & resources.** Make sure your child has everything they need for their revisions. Besides the usual school supplies, ensure they have the correct and up to date textbooks for their subjects. They need to be able to be comfortable with the various tools required and be able to use them competently in their exams.

- **School worksheets.** Throughout the year, make sure your child keeps various handouts, worksheets, mock tests, and answer sheets provided to them by teachers and tutors. Their teachers are the best people to ask for mock exams to help them revise with or alternatively, experienced private tutors would also have plenty of revision material to guide and support them.
- **Ask the teacher.** If they are missing some important material, whether notes, lessons, or practice exams, encourage them to ask for it, notably as teachers are likely to appreciate that they care about their revision by asking rather than missing out on some material important to their understanding of the subject.
- **Tutoring and study groups.** Revising can seem to children like an extremely solitary task. Yet this doesn't need to be.
  - If your child has proven to work well with certain friends or knows people who do well in particular subjects, encourage them to reach out to them or maybe form a joint study group.
  - Alternatively, having a tutor could benefit your child greatly. Whether they are working one to one with their tutor, or as part of a small revision group, these two options could provide your child with more support and structure they might need to excel. In addition, they can also offer expert advice, show them what to look out for and what the examiners expect from their answers.

These are our key steps to helping your child plan their revision effectively in order to them the best opportunity to get the grades they want on their exams.

## Command Words – Based around the skill of evaluation

1. **Evaluate** – This requires you to draw conclusions, make judgements or make recommendations. To do so effectively you must be able to justify your answer
2. **Justify** – This normally applies to decision making questions. When you have made your decision you must justify why that course of action was better than the alternatives. You must explain why your chosen course of action is better than the options you rejected
3. **Assess** – This is asking you to weigh up the importance of the subject. This means there are a number of possible explanations. You need to be able to say how important your explanation is compare to the others. It is OK to give your opinion on something as long as it is justified.
4. **Recommend/Decide** – This is the same as justify. Remember to make a decision or recommendation!
5. **Discuss** – Usually you are expected to build up an argument about an issue and to present both sides (using evidence and supporting examples). Try to give a balanced answer. You must then reach a conclusion from your arguments.
6. **To what extent** – Agree and disagree (for and against). There are a number of possible explanations so give these. Then say which you favour and why.
7. **Consider** – What are the different options that exist to solve/resolve/defeat/correct the situation you have been given. Explain which is the best option and why
8. **Suggest** – Make a judgement and give support or reasons for your suggestion

## Command Words – Based around knowledge and understanding

8. **Identify/State** – You must name the main points or point. No explanation or further detail is needed
9. **List** – State the factors. No explanation is needed
10. **Name/Give** – Pick some key factors and name them. No need to give explanations or write in full sentences
11. **Describe** – This is one of the most widely used command words. On its own it means to give a full account of something – the main features. However, describe is often part of a command phrase such as:
  - **Describe the characteristics of** – this means what does the feature look like?
  - **Describe the changes in** – this is often used with a graph or a series of graphs. You should try to use accurate words like rapidly, steeply, gradually.
  - **Describe the trends in** – this means to give an overall picture. This is often used when you have been given some data such as a table or graph. Do not give a blow by blow account of all the information – select the important information
  - **Describe the differences between** – this means only differences are required. Do not give similarities or descriptions of the terms
  - **Describe the relationship between** – this means only the links between the two items are required. You must identify and establish the link clearly.
  - **Describe the effects of** – this means give a factual account of what has occurred after or as a result of whatever the question has identified
12. **Outline** – Give the main features of something
13. **Define** – This means you should write a relatively short answer, usually one or two sentences, where the precise meaning of a term or phrase is identified.
14. **What is meant by** – This is the same as define. In this case providing an example to support your definition is sometimes useful
15. **Annotate** – Add labels

## Command Words – Based around the skill of application

1. **Apply** – you must use your knowledge in a particular situation. You need to relate this knowledge to the situation you have been given
2. **Demonstrate** – Show you understand your knowledge in the context of the question or task you have been given
3. **Show how** – describe but with relevant examples or methods

## Command Words – Based around the skill of analysis

1. **Analyse** – This skill can mean different things in different subjects. It could mean you need to provide a detailed comparison of the causes and effects of how something happened/developed or the advantages and disadvantages of a particular part of the subject. It could mean you need to select information text, tables, graphs, diagrams or drawings and then put this information in an order to make sense of it. You would need to be able explain what the information is showing
2. **Calculate** – This normally requires specific knowledge of, say a formula. It is best to show each step of working out the answer.
3. **Compare and contrast** – This means you have to identify similarities and differences. If the command word only says compare you are only looking for differences. Try to use comparative adjectives like larger than, smaller, more deeply etc.
4. **Explain** – Give reasons or causes. Show an understanding of why something has occurred. Description is not enough.
5. **Examine** – Give both a description and an explanation
6. **Interpret** – Bring out the meaning of .....
7. **Distinguish** – Identify and explain the differences between two or more factors

