

Success in Year 11

**How to make revision and exam
preparation effective**



Contents

Section 1: Getting Started

Section 2: How do I revise?

**Section 3: How do I know my
revision was effective?**

Section 4: Exam Preparation

1. Getting Started

Revision and exam preparation are a long journey, but the sooner you start the easier it is. There are some important questions you need to ask yourself to make sure you are ready to start your revision. Ask yourself the questions below and if you don't know the answer, follow the suggested action, so that area is covered.

Revision Question	Suggested Action if you cannot answer this question
<i>Do you know what exams you have?</i> Do you know when your exams are?	You will receive a statement of entry for your summer examinations and an exam timetable. If you lose them, go to the Exams Office for a replacement.
<i>Do you know the different subtopics that you need to revise for each subject?</i> Do you have a revision list for each subject?	Each subject will provide you with details of exam boards, papers you will be sitting and what is on each paper. If this doesn't make sense, speak to your class teacher.
<i>Do you know what you know a lot about and what you don't have a clue about?</i>	Go through your revision list and colour code each subtopic (Green=Fully Understand, Yellow=Partially Understand, Red=I do not have a clue about this!!!). Be honest with yourself, you are not saving time by lying about your current understanding.

Revision Question	Suggested Action if you cannot answer this question
<p><i>Do you know what the exam will look like?</i> Do you know what exam board you are doing? <i>Do you have past exam papers?</i></p>	Your teacher will be using copies of past exam papers and questions, so you can see how you need to use your knowledge in the exam.
Do you have all the resources you need to help you revise?	This is personal to you but it could include folders, paper (A3 or A4), flash cards, coloured pens, post-its, or ways to record your notes (audio or video). If you don't have them, go out and buy/borrow them before you start to revise.
<p><i>Have you made a revision timetable?</i> Have you allocated enough time to each subject and subtopic?</p>	You can make your own or use the example in this book. Remember that your timetable should include your social and relaxation time as well so you aren't revising 24/7. This timetable should change as well as you go through your revision. Plan a week at a time. This should be a quick task.
<i>Do you have an area set aside for revision?</i>	This should be an area conducive to learning and away from the distractions (not the lounge or near a TV and definitely away from your phone).
<i>Are your notes from the last two and half years good enough to revise from?</i>	If they are, great, use them as a starting point. If they aren't get a revision guide/book to fill in any gaps. Remember though, buying the guide is not doing the revision.

An example revision timetable. This will change every week depending on what exams you have coming up

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7.00	Sleep In						
7.30	Sleep In	Walk Dog	Walk Dog	Walk Dog	Walk Dog	Walk Dog	Walk Dog
8.00	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	
8.30	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
9.00	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
9.30	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
10.00	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
10.30	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
11.00	Sleep In	School	School	School	School	School	Football
11.30		School	School	School	School	School	Football
12.00		School	School	School	School	School	Football
12.30		School	School	School	School	School	Football
13.00	Science	School	School	School	School	School	
13.30	Food	School	School	School	School	School	English
14.00	General Studies	School	School	School	School	School	Science
14.30	English	School	School	School	School	School	Watch Football
15.00		School	School	School	School	School	Watch Football
15.30	Retest	Science	Art	Spanish	General Studies	History	Watch Football
16.00	Retest	Maths	Science	English	English	Spanish	Watch Football
16.30	Retest	English	Maths	Science	Maths	Art	Watch Football
17.00		History	English	Maths	Science	Food	Maths
17.30		Watch TV	Play X Box			Go out	History
18.00		Watch TV	Play X Box	Football Training		Go out	
18.30			Play X Box	Football Training		Go out	
19.00			Play X Box	Football Training		Go out	
Notes							

2. How do I revise?

This is the big question and unfortunately there isn't an easy answer. Revision is a personal thing and you have to find the best method that suits you. There are, however, some golden rules:

- 1) The most important thing is that you are revising **ACTIVELY** (that doesn't mean you have to run around whilst doing it, but for some people that may help). Don't just read a textbook or your notes, do something with the information so you have to think about it.
- 2) Little and often is the best way. Revise in short bursts and return to the information regularly to check it has been retained. It is better to revise for 2 hours every day than have a 14 hour revision day every Saturday.
- 3) Find a method that suits you. There are some suggested revision techniques below, but the following question may help you decide which one(s) will work for you. **If you asked someone for directions, how would you want them to give you that information?** If you want them to write down the directions, writing notes may be a good revision technique for you. If you want them to draw you a map, making diagrams, pictures and mind maps may be a good technique for you. If you are happy with them telling you the directions, making your own revision podcasts might work. If you want them to walk you there, making a revision journey may work for you. If you are unsure, try a range and see what works best.
- 4) Check that what you have revised has been retained. If it doesn't stick, you haven't revised it, don't kid yourself that you have. Test yourself at the end of every revision session.
- 5) Think about the events you remember from your life. You remember your first day at school or an exciting holiday not doing housework. Memory is created by emotion.

Active Revision Techniques

- Rewriting your notes in a shorter format – Put them into your own words, don't just copy. Keep repeating this process until you have condensed a whole subject down to a few flash cards
- Creating mind maps on A3 paper – a whole subject should fit on one A3 sheet
- Creating a song or mnemonic that helps you remember processes and information
- Changing the words of a favourite song to fit the subject you are revising
- Fitting your revision to a journey you do regularly, like your walk to school. Certain roads can represent parts of your revision
- Recording a condensed version of your notes on to an MP3 or making a video of them. The process of selecting and making it will help you go through your notes.
- Doing past exam questions. What do you need to answer it? Can you do it off the top of your head?
- Creating a quiz on a subtopic for a classmate. Can they answer it? Can you mark it without looking at the answers

These are only a small selection, but if you still can't find a way that suits you, speak to your teacher. Doing something that doesn't help you will get you nowhere. You need to change what you are doing. If you are doing nothing, you will get nothing out of it.

Below is a suggested outline of how a 30 minute revision session should go. This provides an opportunity to revise, but also to test and check your revision was effective. Revise each subtopic for 30 minutes at a time and no more, any longer than 30 minutes and the quality of your revision will suffer. **Do not try to cram your revision into marathon late night sessions, it won't work.**

20 minutes	Revise a subtopic of a subject using an active revision method that suits you, in an area away from distractions
10 minutes	<p>Test what you have revised. Good ways to do this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking a blank piece of paper and filling it up or recreating the mind map you have just created. • Giving your notes to a friend or family member who can ask you random questions about them, so you have no idea what they will ask. • Do a practice exam question • Do an online quiz using a website like BBC Bitesize or MyMaths (make sure it is for the correct course and exam board) <p>If the test doesn't go well, the revision was not effective.</p>

Make sure that you complement your revision with regular exercise, relaxation time, lots of sleep and by eating healthily and regularly. Breaking up revision by having a meal or a walk will mean that you are not trying to revise when you are tired or fatigued. Revising when you are tired will not help the information go in and stay in. Try to take a break in between sessions. The longer you revise for in one go, the less effective it will be. Don't revise for more than two hours (4x30 minute sessions on different subjects) in one go.

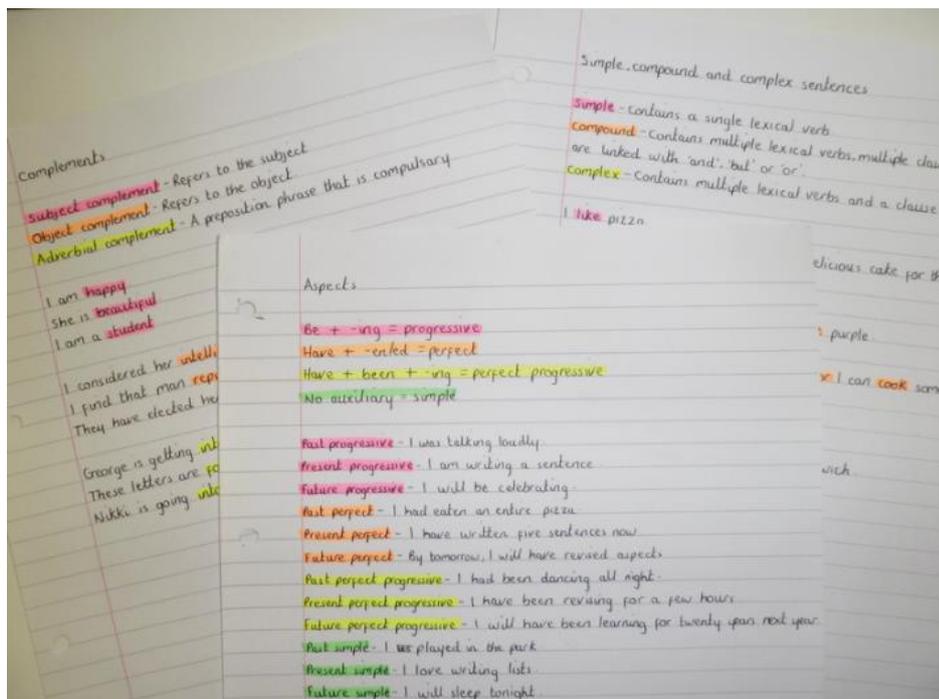
Post it Notes



Using Acronyms and Mnemonics

- **F** = the rise in **FEMINISM**
- **L** = **LAW** changes
- **I** = the rise in **INDIVIDUALISM**
- **T** = the decline in **TRADITION**
- **S** = **SECULARISATION** (decline in religion)
- **S** = **SOCIAL** change

Highlighting and making notes on your notes



3. How do I know my revision was effective?

You will be testing yourself throughout your revision, using methods like the ones in the previous section. However, a good way to check it has stayed in your head for more than a few minutes is to do have retest session every week.

This could be a couple of hours at the weekend where you do some practice exam questions based on what you have revised that week, using your memory not your notes. You can then get your teachers to mark these and give you feedback on what you are doing well/what you need to improve.

This is a good way of checking that your revision is good enough to go into an exam with but also that your answers will get the highest marks. If your answers weren't good enough, go back to what you need to revise again.

You could also go back to your revision list for each subject that you colour coded at the beginning of your revision. Have those Reds and Yellows turned to Green? If they have, your revision has been effective.

Once again, the secret to doing this well is to be honest with yourself. If you don't know something, it is better to know that before you go into the exam rather than have a nasty shock when you turn over the exam paper.

If you are really struggling with a particular section or subtopic, go and see your teacher for extra advice and guidance.

4. Exam Preparation

The night before

- Check the exam start time and venue so you know what time you need to be in school the next day.
- Do some light revision – reading through flash cards, looking at mind maps, doing online tests. Do not try to revise new information or cram in lots of stuff.
- Get your equipment ready – have spares of important equipment that could break, like pens and pencils. Make sure it is all in a see through bag. Make sure you have specialist equipment for certain exams, like calculators for Maths and Science exams.
- Get a good night's sleep – if you are well prepared this is a lot easier and more likely.

On the day of the exam

- Get up in plenty of time and get yourself into school with time to spare before the exam – you can always go to the library to revise beforehand if you are there too early.
- Check and double check you have everything before you leave the house. This includes the correct uniform; you will be sitting exams in isolation if you are not in the full, correct uniform. This is not a great start to the exam that you have spent so long preparing for.
- Take some summary flash cards so you can do some last minute revision before you go in.

In the exam

- When the paper is handed out, familiarise yourself with the instructions on the front of the paper, so you don't waste your exam time looking at them.
- Plan your time and stick to your plan. Also plan to leave some time at the end to check your answers, just in case you have made a mistake.
- Ease yourself into the exam – look through the paper and do the questions that you are most confident in first. However, make sure you don't spend too long on them and make sure you complete all the questions you need to.
- Try to ignore what everyone else is doing or saying before the exam – they may be doing things differently or may be lying about how much revision they have done. Be confident in your own preparation and revision if you have followed the steps in this booklet.
- Read each question carefully TWICE. Make sure you are answering the question the examiner is asking, not the one you think is being asked.
- Think about the command words e.g. Describe, explain, identify. Make sure your answer addresses those command words.
- Look at how many marks the question is worth or how much space is available to write your answer. This should tell you how much and how long you should spend on this question.
- For longer or essay answers, plan your answer so that you only write what is needed and stay on the focus of the question.