



HECKMONDWIKE  
GRAMMAR SIXTH FORM

# Exam Ready: revision at HGS Sixth Form

## **Revision and music**

- Students who revise in quiet environments performed over 60% better in an exam.
- Students who listened to music without lyrics did better than those who listened to music with lyrics.
- It makes no difference whether you like the music or not!

## **Sleep**

- A good night of sleep is 9- 9.5 hours for teenagers.
- A good night of sleep before learning makes learning more effective.
- Less than a good night of sleep hinders your ability to commit information to memory.
- Less than a good night of sleep increases negative emotions and increases the likelihood of forgetting positive events and memories.

## **Breakfast**

- Students' attention dips as the morning wears on. However, eating breakfast reduces this dip by 50-65%.
- Students who had not eaten breakfast achieved 12% less on a test. Those who had a sugary drink instead of breakfast achieved 27% less. Having breakfast enhanced test scores 3-5%.
- Eleven year olds who eat breakfast were twice as likely to achieve an above average score on a test.

## **Mobile phones**

- Revising with a mobile phone near a person reduced their scores on a test by 20%. Researchers say it is because it diverts attention from the task to be remembered: even if the phone is just there and not being used.
- Schools which banned mobile phones received a 6.4% increase in exam results.
- Being on a phone or tablet for an hour a night hardly impacts on sleep. Using one for 2 hours before bed results in 20% less melatonin being released in your brain (the thing that makes you sleep). One study found that those who used a screen for an hour before bed were likely to get less than 5 hours sleep.

## **False Confidence**

- The majority of people vastly over estimate how much they know about a topic. Research says that the less expert you are at something, the more likely you are to overestimate how good you are at it.
- You MUST work out how much you know about each topic before you begin to revise it. Begin your revision with what you know least about.
- Rereading, copying out and highlighting makes you feel confident about a topic but that does not mean you will remember it.
- Remembering something in the short term does not mean you will remember it long term!

## **Be positive**

- You are more likely to work hard and be positive if you are near people who are working hard and being positive.
- Negativity and nerves spread. So does positivity! Surround yourself with positive people and be a positive person for your friends. Ask for help from teachers if you do not feel positive!

## **Electronic note taking**

- Taking notes by hand aids memory more than taking notes on a computer.

# TOP TIPS FOR PREPARING FOR REVISION:

1. Make sure you are well equipped. Make sure you have a Syllabus (a list of what you need to know in each subject), targets and marked work from teachers, practise exam papers for subjects, exam mark schemes, exercise books, text books and revision guides.

Plus, you will need stationary: coloured pens, paper (lined and A3!), post-its and flashcards. Remember, you will also need files, blu-tac and sticky tape as it is important to keep everything neat and to create displays on your walls.

You will also need a clock, watch or timer. Do not use your phone or PC for this!

2. Start revising now! Revision is a long process; the more you do and the earlier you begin, the better your outcomes will be.

3. Make yourself a revision timetable and stick to it (more details on this are below). This should plan for what you need to revise and also when you need to revise. Make sure you are sensible with your time and you do not do too much or too little in a session. This website will help you plan one:

<https://www.examtime.com/revision-timetable/>. This website has some good advice for revision timetables: <http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Revision-Timetable>.

4. How long to revise for? Imagine each non-school day is split into 3 sessions of about 3-4 hours. It is good to revise for 2 of these 3 sessions.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
MORNING	Revise	Revise	Free
AFTERNOON	Revise	Free	Revise
EVENING	Free	Revise	Revise

Break each of these Revision sessions into 25 minute slots, then take a 5 minute ACTIVE break. Walk about, dance about, walk the dog, run around the garden, walk about on the phone – something that is not sitting around. It will help you remember.

5. Work out at what time of the day you study best (morning, afternoon or evening?) and use that time to work!

## Creating an effective revision timetable

- Start with the specification – use the exam board websites
- Keep it simple and be realistic
- Add boxes for exactly what you want to achieve in each session
- Prioritise and be clever (Maths for Physics later)
- Fit in time to continually revise what you have learned; don't schedule everything just once – build in testing time too as well as time to revisit areas that you are struggling to recall
- Approach subjects in different ways, using different methods as appropriate
- Use colour coding
- Consider where you are going to revise; can it be in different places for different subjects?
- Print it off, ideally in a bigger size so that you can add notes to it and annotate it
- Be flexible; it should be a working document

# TOP TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE REVISION

## SESSIONS:

1. Have a specific and clear goal for each revision session. E.g. 'by the end of this session, I will...'. And then stick to it!
2. Reward yourself when you reach your goal! Ensure it is something you like or enjoy that you use as a reward. Time spent on a phone, tablet or games console would be ideal.
3. Don't spend hours on anything that you are struggling with. Write down what you find difficult and ask a teacher or a friend who will know.
4. Don't listen to friends or classmates who tell you they are not working or that you do not need to work. Don't let them influence your results even if they do not seem to care about their own! There are many secret workers out there.
5. It is a real mistake to focus on what you already know and miss out the bits that you find difficult – but that is an easy trap to fall into!
6. Avoid distractions! Make sure you do not have your phone, Facebook, Twitter or anything else near you – revision needs your full attention. Use these things as a reward.
7. Where you work is important too. You should use a desk somewhere which is warm and well lit and has a proper chair. Don't listen to loud music or people talking – whether from real people or from the radio - as this will distract you.
8. Often the hardest bit of revision is getting started! Start with 15 mins of work and then you will be into it.
9. Revise the same work again after 10 minutes, then again after 1 day and again after 1 week. This method will fix the work quite firmly into your long-term memory.

10. Listening to the wrong sort of music can prevent you from learning, but the right sort of music can help! Any music above 80-120 BPM will prevent learning. Music with singing and words is also counter-productive. Try Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Vivaldi or film soundtracks like Hans Zimmer's Gladiator soundtrack or John Williams' Schindler's list soundtrack. Spotify has a playlist or two to help!

## Advice for parents when supporting your child's revision:

Exam and revision periods can be a tough time for parents as well as students! Here are some ideas for how to support your child through these times.

- Make sure they have all of the correct equipment before they start. This can involve being a bank or an auditor! They will need the correct stationary as well as all of the exercise books/revision guides/textbooks that they have been using at school.
- Make sure there are plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge and try to provide good, nutritious food at regular intervals. Encourage your child to join family meals, even if it's a busy revision day - it's important to have a change of scene and get away from the books and computer for a while. Also encourage your child to take regular exercise. A brisk walk around the block can help clear the mind before the next revision session.
- Help them plan and stick to their revision timetable. Be firm with this.
- Call school/teachers if your child needs something but does not feel they can ask – for whatever reason.
- Ensure they are working at a pace which is normal for students at exam time. Cramming late into the night is unhelpful. On the flip side, no Year 11 student should regularly spend evenings after school not working. If they do not have homework, they should be revising for around 2-2 ½ hours an evening.
- Praise! Revision periods and exams are stressful for young people and they need to know they are doing well when they are doing well.
- Do not heap unnecessary or difficult to attain expectations on them. They need praise for hard work and preparation more than outcomes. The offer of rewards for certain outcomes can add to the fear of failure, add pressure or intensify negative feelings if they do not get the results they want.
- Be flexible and allow them some 'downtime'. Be willing to negotiate if they want to go to a party or go out with friends, as long as they catch up the time with working.
- Remember that exam time is a time of extreme highs and lows for students. Celebrate the good times with them but also remind them that when they have a bad day – with revision or with exams – that it is not the end of the world and help them focus on the positives of all the good work they have done, not what they haven't.
- **Read the 'Top Tips' for revision section and help them stick to it.**

Useful websites:

<http://www.leighacademy.org.uk/project/uploaded-media/the-parents-guide-to-exam-revision.pdf>

<http://www.bushfield.co.uk/files/Parents-Guide-to-GCSE-Revision.pdf>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/SchoolCollege/Pages/exam-stress.aspx>

### **Bribes, treats and rewards**

Some children are 'bribed' to do well in exams and are offered cash or gifts to achieve good grades. However, bribery is not a good idea as it implies that the only worthwhile reward for hard work is money and that you don't trust your child to work hard. Negative messages like these will affect your child's sense of self-worth.

Encourage your child to do well for his or her own sake rather than for money or to please you. Explain that exams aren't an end in themselves but a gateway to the next stage of life - to another Key Stage or to GCSEs, A levels, university, college or work. Good results are themselves the best reward for hard work and will make your child proud of his or her achievements.

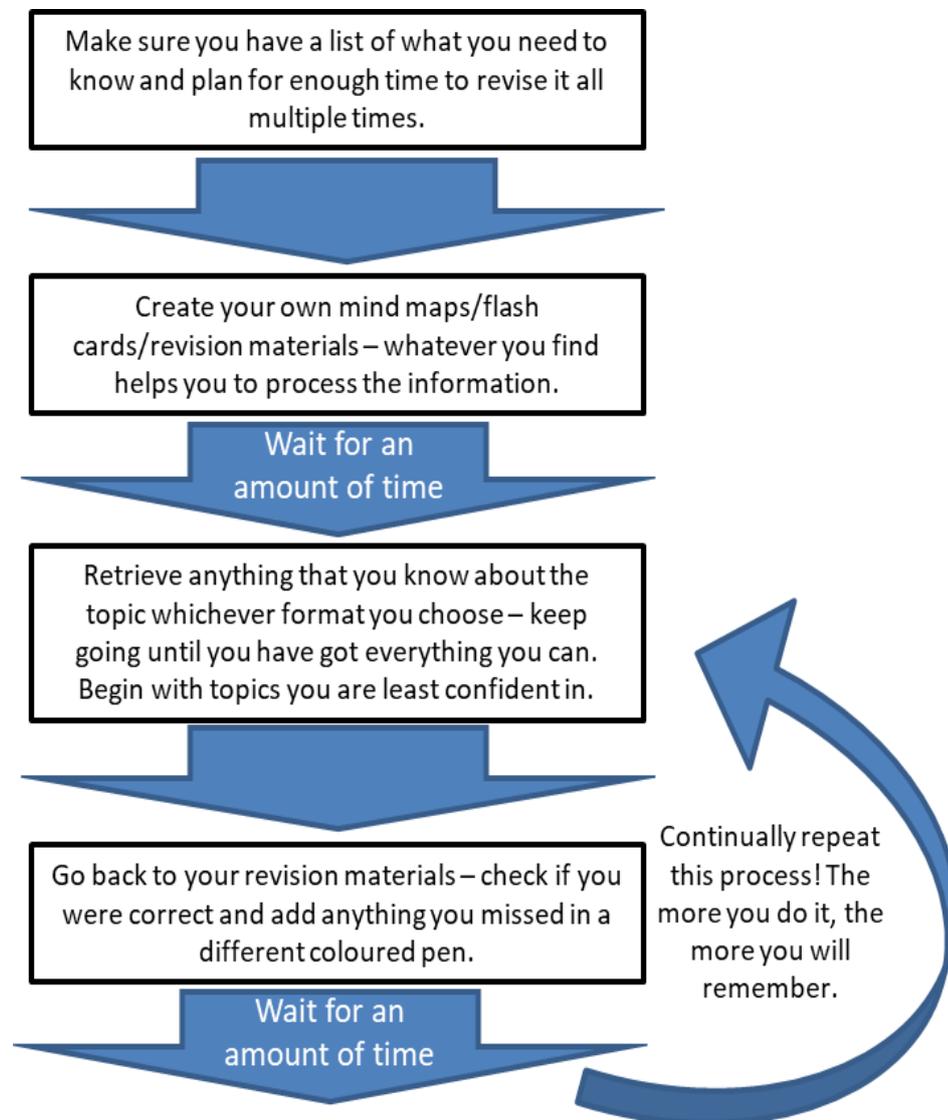
Make sure your child knows you're interested in their work and that you'll be proud if they do well. Although bribery isn't advisable, it's fine to provide small treats by way of encouragement - perhaps a piece of cake or some biscuits after a chunk of revision has been completed. The end of exams can be celebrated with a treat that everyone can look forward to, such as a meal out or a trip to the cinema.

## **Before the Exam(s)**

As a parent or guardian, you can help prepare the night before an exam by making sure that:

- Your son/daughter gets a good night's sleep before the exam.
- They have all the equipment they need:
  - a few pens, pencils and rubber;
  - a watch but not a Smart watch
- Some exams may require special equipment:
  - Maths equipment - calculator, compass, protractor, ruler ...
  - Art equipment - paintbrushes, paint, pencils ...
  - Technical drawing - compass, rulers, pencils, protractors ...
- They know the location and start time of the exam(s).
- You wish them well.
- You ask them how the exam(s) were that day and get them to then concentrate on those coming up.

# Finally...Follow this structure and you can't go wrong!



- Copying, highlighting and rereading feels good because it is easy! They are the least effective ways to revise. The more you work your brain, the more you are likely to remember.
- Creating revision materials is important but is only the beginning!
- Keep testing yourself and then going back over things you did not remember
- Ensure before you start that you fully understand
- Focus on what you find hardest not what you find easiest!
- You continually forget things so keep going back to everything.
- Just because topics feel good or familiar in your head doesn't mean you remember the specifics!