



PENKETH HIGH SCHOOL

HOW TO REVISE

FOR GCSE EXAMS AND BEYOND



Study Skills & Revision Toolkit

Everything you need to know from your teachers at Penketh High School to ace your exams!

Contents

Homework

Do we really need to do it	P3
Three types of homework	P4
Reading	P6

Revision Top-Tips

Motivation and Procrastination	P9
Organisation and Planning	P10
Setting Targets	P11
Your Revision Environment	P12
Your Exam Environment	P13
Coping with Stress	P14
Well-Being	P15
Self-Care	P16
Sleep and Diet	P18

Revision Timetables

How to make one	P21
Are you ready to revise?	P24

Revision Techniques

Learn, Revise, Test Yourself	P26
Condensing Your Notes	P27
Drawing Mind Maps	P29
Making Flow Charts	P31
Using Flash Cards	P33
Other Tips	P36

Resources

Teachers Top Tips	P38
Blank Exam Timetables	P52
Subject Checklists	P55
Blank Revision Timetables	P71

Homework!

Do we really need to do homework???

The short answer is YES! And here's why.....

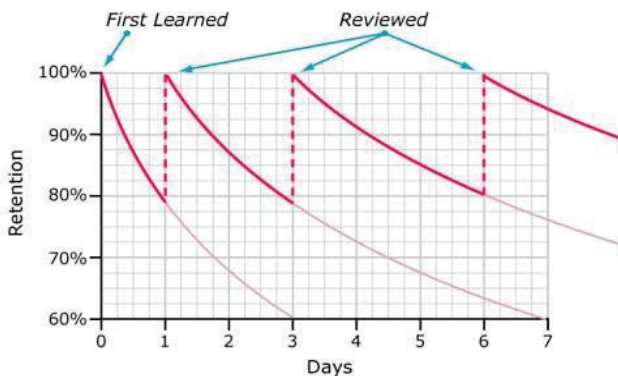
A key part of learning and demonstrating your understanding is to have the building blocks readily available in order to construct answers, arguments or solutions to problems.

These building blocks are the bits of knowledge that you need to be familiar with across each unit, module and subject area.

Your lessons in school are well planned and interleaved (which means you keep coming back to topics) to ensure that we revisit subject content across each key stage in order to build that knowledge piece by piece.

This helps you to cement this knowledge into your long term memory so that when you need to access it in a test or exam it is there waiting for you.

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



The school's homework plan is designed to support this knowledge retention and retrieval with a view to making sure that you can all make the most out of classroom learning by having the knowledge available to tackle classroom activities more effectively.

The purpose of the homework we will set you will make sure you can all;

- Continue learning away from the classroom
- Consolidate learning
- Develop independent learning skills
- Have opportunities to work with parents and demonstrate your understanding at home

There are three different types of homework you can expect to get:

1. Knowledge Organisers;

You will be provided with a knowledge organiser for the units that you are working on in class in each subject. Knowledge organisers are documents that contain powerful knowledge, key facts and key vocabulary that you can and should learn to aid retrieval and application of knowledge during classwork or assessments. In order to maximise the use and the impact of the organisers all pupils will receive guidance on activities that you can undertake to make the best use of knowledge organisers. These are activities that you can undertake as independent learning or whilst engaging with your parents that can serve as extra activities beyond what your teachers specifically direct you to do, for example;

- You can read through this work independently or explain the information to your parents, learning this information will help consolidate your understanding.
- You can convert the information into flash cards (**Mr Farrar's Top Tip!!!**) mind-maps or to post-its on display that you can review regularly.
- Parents can test your knowledge, spellings or definitions.
- You can make your own glossary, noting the definitions and see how many you get right
- Record a reading of the knowledge organiser and listen to this around the house, in the car etc.
- Parents can read the knowledge organiser out to you or ask you to fill in the gaps.

Subject teachers will use “Do now” and other assessment opportunities to test your understanding of the key knowledge across the term. Similarly, knowledge organisers also available in subject unit booklets in class, can be used to support you in class too.

Your teacher may ask you to do a quiz on teams linked to the knowledge organiser so make sure you make the very most of the information you have to get top marks!

For those of you new to the school this may seem a little strange because you need to more independent. There will never be a time where you don't have homework because you can always be learning this key information to make you an even better student than you already are!

2. Pre-reading;

As a school we are really investing time and resources in you to develop your literacy skills as we know that the ability to operate as an “expert reader” supports your ability to perform well in class and in exams.

Apart from a dedicated reading curriculum, it's essential that we provide opportunities to read about the specific topics and subjects that you study so that you can engage with subject specific content and vocabulary whilst extending your wider understanding of the content and links between areas.

One key feature of the reading strategy in terms of homework will be around pre-reading, providing you with text to engage with at home to inform your understanding before you complete the lesson in school. This will make sure you get the most out of your lesson that day.

The purpose of pre-reading is to build knowledge of the subject prior to the lesson, support language preparation ahead of the lesson and perhaps spark an interest in the content prior to undertaking the lesson. There are number of benefits to pre-reading that include improved interest and comprehension.

If you just take one thing away from this paragraph it is this; the better you are at reading the better you will do in exams and that is a fact!

3. Other homework

Other, more practical subjects might focus on the use of knowledge and of practice to consolidate knowledge. This might mean a different approach to homework, for example, in Maths pupils undertake a stepped booklet of practice questions that represents their current working level.

Departments may also set additional homework tasks as appropriate – for example, pre-reading as mentioned above, or activities that are appropriate to the delivery of the curriculum at any given point.

Frequency and notification

Homework tasks should be set weekly for each class in each subject and departments will have their own approach to setting homework. Your homework should be recorded on Arbor each week so that you and your parents can keep a track of assignments that have been set and the deadlines for completion.

The notification that you and your parents get will be on the Arbor app, the actual homework and/or knowledge organisers will live on your class page on Teams so it is important to make sure you know your login details. The best thing to do is have the Arbor app and Teams app on your phone so you always know what is expected and when whilst at home.



Reading

There is no doubt that being a good reader is a huge advantage in life. A recent study has linked your ability to read to your success in your GCSE exams in Year 11. The findings show that while there is a significant connection between reading ability and success in all GCSE subjects, the link between good reading and good grades is actually higher in maths than in some arts subjects like English literature and history.

What that tells us is that reading not only makes you a better English student, it also, and crucially, makes you a better mathematician, a better scientist, generally a better student all round.

At Penketh we know that reading is absolutely crucial which is why we have invested so much into what we offer you. From reading whole novels in form time to the reading curriculum lessons you have, everything is carefully chosen to give you the best opportunities to be better readers.

Then there is all the reading you do in lessons, all the articles and texts you see in your History booklets, in Geography, Science, Languages.....the list goes on and on.

We even set aside time to introduce you to new words and what they mean and also when you would use them.

What can you do to give yourself an even better chance?

To really maximise your reading ability you need to read engaging, appropriate and challenging texts. Mrs Curties has made lots of reading lists on the website [Love Reading4Schools](#) and if you click on this link you reach this page:

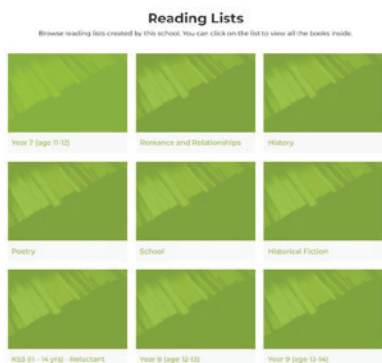
School Page Password *

Your Email Address *

The password is P3NK3TH

Just type your own email address in and set up your account in 3 simple steps

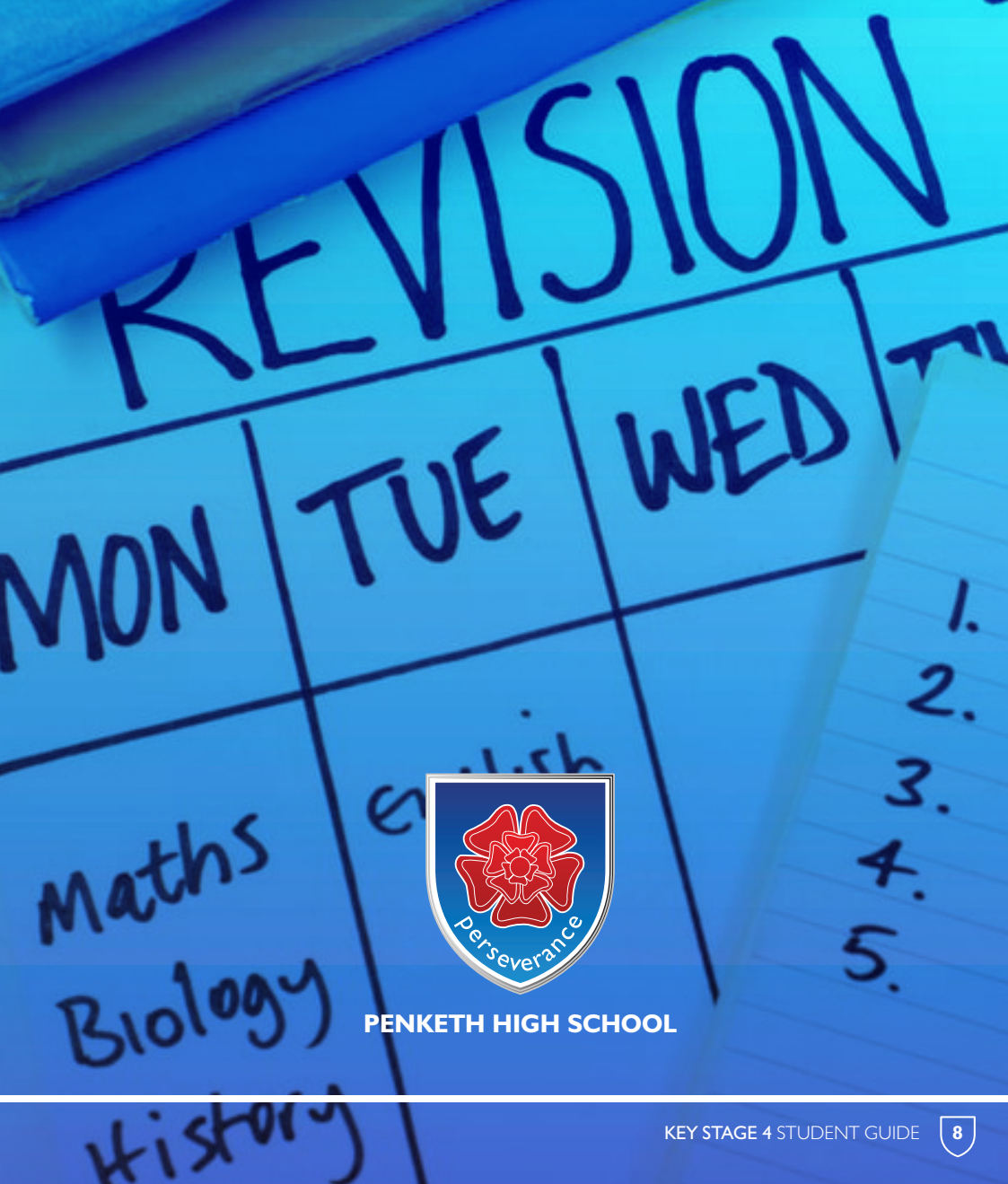
This takes you to this page:



Here you will find lists of suitable books and you can read an extract of nearly every book to see which ones really grab your attention. Mrs Curties will update these lists throughout the year and make sure that you have access to the very best and most suitable books for your age and also for your reading age

Picking up a book and reading it is just about the best thing you can do to make sure you pass all of your exams with flying colours!

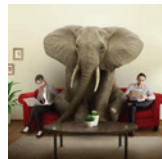
Revision Top Tips



PENKETH HIGH SCHOOL

Motivation and Procrastination

Let's address the elephant in the room – you'd probably rather be doing anything other than revising (or even reading about how to revise like you are right now!) But thinking about how revision can help with your future goals may (just may) make it all seem a bit less terrible!



Knowing **WHY** You're Revising Can **MOTIVATE** You

- 1) Think about *why* you want to do well in your exams. It may be:
 - to get into the *college* you want to go to after Year 11
 - to help you one day to get your *dream job*
 - to *prove to yourself* and others that you can do it
- 2) Whatever your goal, it's best to *start* revising as *soon as possible*
- 3) Be *positive* about revision – it can be tough, but it will *really help* when the exams arrive
- 4) Focus on *your goals* and *don't compare yourself* to other people.
- 5) Do it now for your *#futureself!* Remember that you need to make sure the 25-year-old version of you is doing *exactly what you want to be doing!*

Five *Top Tips* For Staying Motivated

1. Set *small targets* with *rewards* (see page 9).
2. Remind yourself of your *long term goals*.
3. Plan *a big treat* for after *your exams*.
4. Use a *topic planner* so you can see the *progress* you have made.
5. If you're *dreading* a particular topic, start with some *easier topics first*.



Procrastination **Wastes Valuable Time**

- 1) Procrastination means *putting off a task* that needs doing
- 2) You need to *avoid procrastination* to make the most of your revision:
 - Turn off your *phone, TV, XBOX* and other distractions
 - Give yourself *regular breaks* – it will help you keep *focussed* when you're revising
 - Break up your revision into *small chunks* so it is not an endless slog!
 - *Start* with something *small* – this will ease you into focussing on your work.



Organisation and Planning

Some things are best when you dive straight in – revision is not one of those things. Making a plan means you can spend more time revising and less time worrying you've forgotten something important.

PLANNING Will Make You Feel In CONTROL

Spend time on a *solid revision plan* but don't spend so long that you don't have time to revise

Reasons to Plan

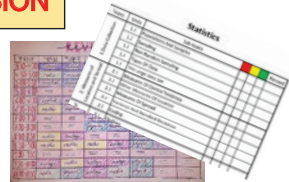
- You know you *have time to cover everything*
- You *won't forget* any topics
- You can *prioritise* early exams or tricky subjects
- It *reduces stress*
- It's *more efficient*

What Happens Without A Plan

- You'll *waste time* deciding on what to revise each session
- You might *not* allow *enough time* to revise everything
- You *can't easily check* what you've already revised
- You may *forget* some topics

TIMETABLES Can Help You Plan Your REVISION

A revision timetable and topic planner will help you schedule your revision and see how you're progressing. You can find handy versions ready to fill in at the back of this book from page 49



Being ORGANISED Will SAVE TIME

- 1) Organise your *notes and books* for each subject to make it easier to *find information*.
- 2) Write a *to-do list*, then *prioritise* which tasks need to be done first.
- 3) Make sure you have all the *stationary you need* (lots of paper, pens, a calculator etc.) so you can crack on with your revision, without a fuss



Setting Targets

Knowing what you want to achieve in each revision session is important – it keeps you on track.

Make Targets **SMALL** and **REALISTIC**

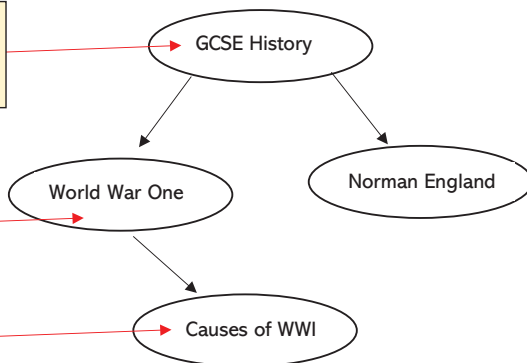
EXAMPLE:

Imagine you are revising GCSE History. Here's how you could set targets for your revision session.

A target to revise all of GCSE History is too large – split it into smaller chunks so it's easier to track your progress

This is still too big – it's too much to revise in one go.

Set yourself manageable targets, e.g. by the end of today I will learn the causes of World War One



TIME FRAMES Can Help You to be Efficient

- 1) Setting a time frame to achieve your targets helps with *motivation*.
- 2) You need to be *realistic* though. For example:

- Two weeks for fractions – this is *too long* on a *small topic*
- An hour for all of Chemistry – you'll either have *too little time* or *rush* through it.

- 3) Generally, it's better to give yourself *slightly more* time than you think you'll need.

REWARD Yourself For **HITTING TARGETS**

- 1) An incentive could *encourage* you to work hard to hit your targets.
- 2) You might plan a reward for finishing a *tricky topic* or doing a *practice paper*.
- 3) Your rewards should be *simple* and *help you relax* – e.g. some TV, phone time or time with friends
- 4) Plan a *large treat* for after your exams as something to really *look forward to*.

Your Revision Environment

To be productive, it's important to know what environment you revise best in. Some of you may need to lock yourself away in your room, some of you may need friends to work with, others may work better in a library etc.

DIFFERENT PLACES work best for different people

There's no one right place to revise. Based on how you *work best*, you'll find some places make you feel *more productive* than others:

Library	Bedroom At Home	Friends
<p>Lots of books about subjects you're revising</p> <p>Access to the internet and a PC for research</p> <p>Fewer distractions than at home or with friends</p> <p>It may be busy and hard to get a desk</p> <p>It can involve travelling time</p>	<p>You can set up your study space as you want</p> <p>You can shut yourself away for privacy</p> <p>It's easy to get snacks and drinks</p> <p>You may get distracted by your family</p> <p>TV and games are easy to distract yourself with</p>	<p>You can discuss revision problems with your friend</p> <p>You and your friend can test each other</p> <p>You and your friend could distract each other</p> <p>You may become disheartened or stressed if your friend seems to know more than you.</p>

A TIDY STUDY SPACE is important!

You'll find it easier to revise if your study space is free of clutter. Here's one we made earlier:



Your Exam Environment



There is no doubt that the exam hall can be a little overwhelming and that is why we make sure you have had lots of experience in there by the time you get to May of Year 11.

It is important that you feel comfortable in here to make sure you can get the very best results possible so here are a few tips to help.

Being PREPARED for your exam calms NERVES

Preparation is always the key to success. Before you even set foot in the exam hall make sure you have done the following:

- Wake up early so you are not rushing around – eat a healthy breakfast too!
- Make sure you have all the equipment you need – spare pens are a good idea too
- Make sure you know your seat number – this can add to your stress if you are unsure
- Get to Riley yard in plenty of time, unexpected events can happen at any time!
- If people are panicking or being silly avoid them – neither does you any favours.
- Go to the toilet before you go into the hall – sounds silly but needing the loo in the middle of an exam can be a real distraction
- Last minute cramming won't help do don't bother – just try and breathe and be calm!

ENTRY to the EXAM Hall

Once you are on your way in you are in exam conditions and must adhere to these guidelines:

- Line up and enter the exam hall in silence
- Make sure your phone is switched off or on silent and place it in the plastic wallet
- Once you find your seat make sure you face the front – don't turn around
- Listen to the exam invigilator who is giving instructions – they are important and for you
- In Maths, Science and MFL check your tier of entry is correct. Are you doing Foundation or Higher

Once the exam has started make sure that you:

- Fill in all the details on the front of the exam paper correctly in black ink
- Keep an eye on the time – don't spend too long on a question, make sure you finish!
- **STAY CALM** – if you panic just stop for a minute and breathe. Then go again – you've got this!!

Coping with Stress

Exam periods can be stressful and it's normal to feel some nerves when you have an exam approaching. Luckily there are ways to cope so stress doesn't affect your revision or your health

Exams are stressful for **EVERYONE**

1. You **won't be alone** in feeling under pressure about exams – it's likely **your classmates** are also finding this time stressful.
2. A **small** amount of stress can actually be **good** for you – it can **motivate** you to do better or help you **focus** on overcoming a difficult situation
3. However, **too much** stress can **negatively** impact your **health**. It's important to **recognise the signs** of stress so you can do something about them

Signs of Stress include:

- A **loss of appetite**
- Sudden **weight loss** or gain
- Feeling **anxious**
- Difficulty **concentrating**
- Feeling **emotional**
- Struggling to **sleep**

There are ways to **HELP** with stress....

1. Go outside for **exercise** and **fresh air** – it will help clear your head
2. Set aside time to **meet up** with your **friends** when you're not revising
3. Give yourself **relaxation time** – listen to music, watch TV or go for a walk
4. Keep up with your **hobbies** and do activities that you enjoy
5. **Eating** and **sleeping well** can also help with reducing stress (**see page 16**)

11:45am – 12:45pm
12:45pm – 1:30pm

Lunch - with Molly and Jack	Maths - algebra
--	--------------------

Talk about how you're feeling

Talking to **friends and family** can really help you air out your anxieties and come up with a way to deal with your stress. If you don't feel comfortable talking to people you know, please come and **talk to your teachers**. We can really be useful you know. Plus we have lots of contacts with **support services** who you can talk to confidentially.

....and ways to make it **WORSE**

1. Don't **revise late** into the evening – this will affect your sleep and make you tired.
2. Not taking **adequate breaks** will make your revision less effective. (**see page 18**)
3. Don't set **unrealistic targets** or you'll always disappoint yourself.

Looking after your wellbeing

It is normal to feel a bit worried about exams, exam stress can cause you to feel [anxious](#) or [depressed](#), and this might affect your [sleeping](#) or [eating habits](#).

If you [recognise](#) any of these [feelings](#), or are [worried](#) that exam pressure is [taking over](#) your life, you are not alone, and there are things you can do, here are some tips from Young Minds:



Let your trusted friends and family know if you are struggling

so they can be there to support you, encourage you and offer a listening ear. You don't have to go through this alone. Keeping it all in will only make things worse in the long run, so don't be afraid to open up.



Ask for help. Think about all the practical support you need

and be honest with yourself about it. You are allowed to ask for help. Talk through your concerns with your teacher/tutor who can let you know what support your school, college or uni can offer you. They will have spoken to lots of students before who are going through similar things.



Try finding a study group, or start your own

Working through problems with other students can be a nice way to keep your social life going and boost your morale.

The importance of self-care

Self-care is the little things we can do to **look after our mental health**. If you are **worried** about your exams, you might find it hard to find time for self-care. While it is important to revise, if you don't take time to take care of yourself and find time to do the little things that you enjoy doing, you will **find it harder** to do your revision. Make sure you factor in self-care as part of your revision plan, **you deserve it!**



Self-care is the little things we do to look after our own mental health

The important thing with self-care is not what it looks like, but what it does for you and how it makes you feel. When it comes to self-care it's not one thing, it's your thing.

If you are **struggling** with the **pressure** of exams, it is important that you **speak up**. There are lots of avenues of support available to you. You can speak to **any member of staff**, this could be your form tutor, Head of Year, PD Coach, Mr Farrar or a teacher you have a good relationship with. You can also speak to Mrs Smith our Designated Mental Health Lead or any other member of staff you feel comfortable with. If you are unsure who to speak to or do not feel confident to do this in person you can email worrybox@penkethhigh.org

If you do not want to speak to staff then you can **speak with parents, carers or friends and family**. Also remember there are lots of great **support services** in the area and online too such as **Kooth, Young Minds** and **Shout**. You can find a full list of wellbeing apps and websites on the school webpage under "Safeguarding, "Mental health and wellbeing."

33 Self-Care Ideas

to nurture yourself

- Take a walk
- Read your favourite book
- Workout
- Nap
- Take a bath
- Watch your favourite movie/show/Netflix series
- Go out for brunch
- Buy yourself flowers, a cactus or succulent
- Get a manicure, pedicure or facial
- Journal
- See a show or concert
- Spend time with someone special
- Go to an art gallery or museum
- Meditate
- Sing
- Bake donuts
- Say no
- Shut down technology and take a social media break
- Do something crafty
- Diffuse essential oils or light some candles
- Spend time with animals
- Go to a farmer's market and make a nourishing meal
- Phone/Skype/Facetime a friend
- Play
- Make an awesome playlist and have a dance party
- Enjoy the sunshine/rain/stars
- Make a pot of tea
- Colour
- Go to your favourite coffee shop and have the best warm beverage
- Hang out in nature or near water
- Learn an instrument (or practice that one you used to play)
- Go for a bike ride
- Breathe

dancingthroughlifeblog.com

Sleep and Diet

If we're honest these are two of the greatest things in life – snoozing and food! Getting a healthy amount of both of these things will keep you in peak condition whether you're revising or working hard in class. It will also make it easier for you to take in new information.

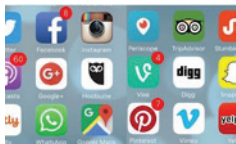
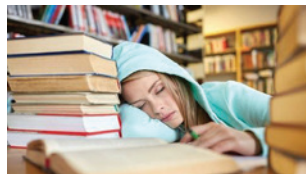
1. *Don't skip sleep* to revise!

Sleep helps you process what you've learnt.

Without enough sleep that information will be lost!

2. Do something *relaxing* before bed!

Avoid caffeine, (and don't even get me started on energy drinks) strenuous exercise in the evenings and don't be looking at your phone immediately before bed.



3. Keep your *phone away* from your bed!

Those snapchat group message notifications are just too tempting to look at when you are trying to get to sleep

4. Eat plenty of *fruit and veg!*

Yes, even broccoli!! (Honestly you'll grow to like it!) The nutrients in these foods are crucial to your development.

5. Don't *skip meals!*

It makes it really difficult to concentrate. Think of your body like a car and your food as the petrol. If there is no petrol in the car it's not going anywhere is it!?

6. Get plenty of *protein!*

Oily fish is the absolute best such as salmon, mackerel and tuna. Protein is a key building block for your brain and body and can also be easily found if you are vegetarian or vegan!

7. Only have *sweets and chocolates* as an occasional *treat!*

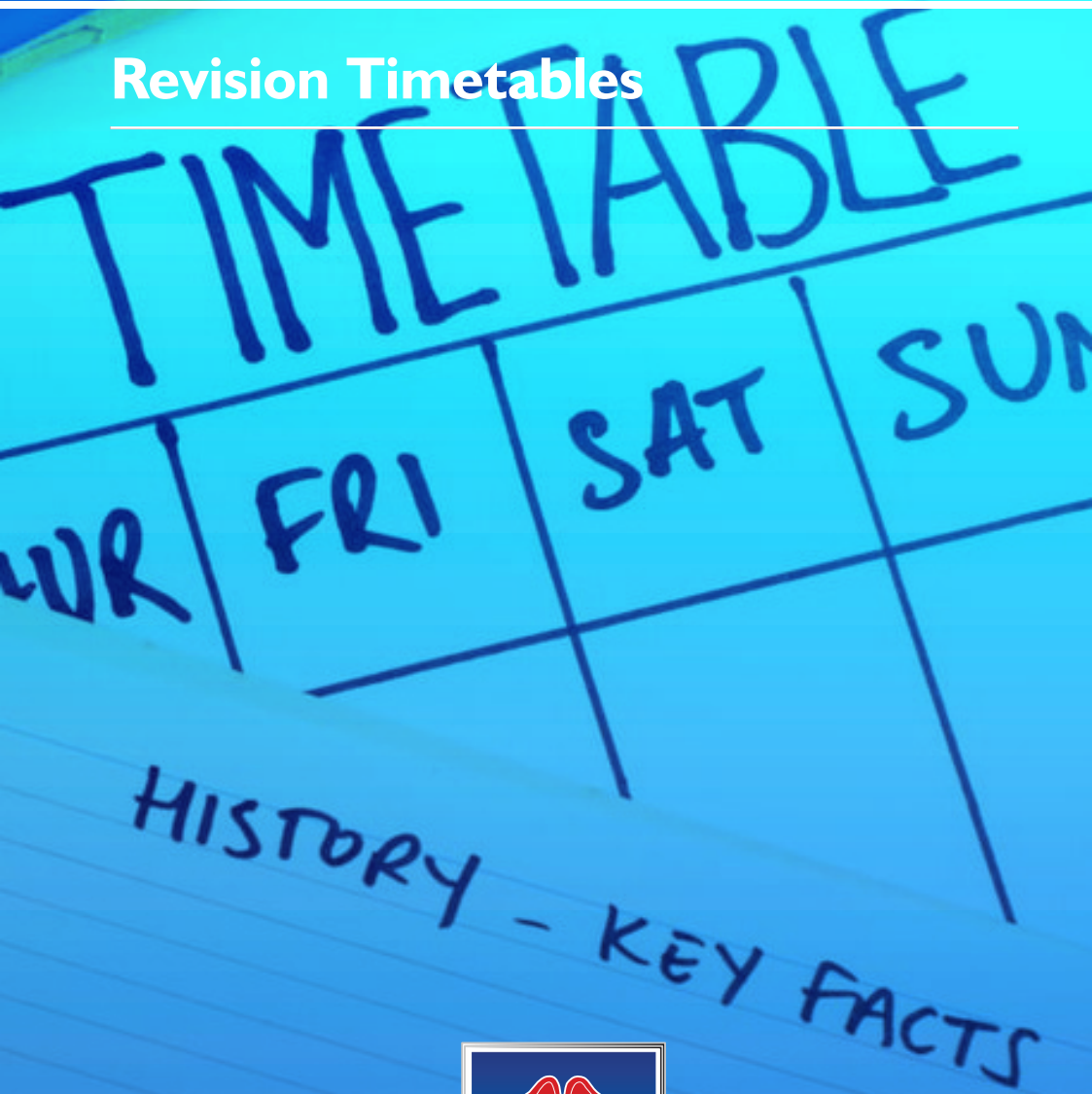
The sugar crash you get from these items can be a real motivation killer and you need to keep this train going!!!



8. Drink lots of *water!*

Try for a minimum of 2 litres per day – have you ever seen a plant that hasn't been watered??

Revision Timetables



PENKETH HIGH SCHOOL

How to make a revision timetable

The last part of this book is a revision planner. It will help you get organised and as ready as you can be for all your homework and revision.

Your revision planner and timetable can be found on pages **?????** of this book. There are spaces for you to fill in all of your exams, other commitments and planned revision sessions.



1) WRITE DOWN when all your EXAMS are

- The first step is to fill in the [Exam Timetable](#) on page 52
- You should refer to this [regularly](#), so you can see at-a-glance which exams you've got coming up. It will help you [stay focussed](#)

EXAMPLE

Exam Timetable – Term 2

Subject	Paper	Date	Time
Maths	Paper 1 – non-calc	May 15 th	9am
Biology	Paper 2	May 17 th	1pm
French	Listening	May 22 nd	1pm
English	Lang 1	May 23 rd	9am
History	Paper 3	May 26 th	9am

2) BREAK each SUBJECT DOWN into TOPICS

- Fill in the [Subject Checklists](#) on pages 55-70 for each of your subjects (see below)
- Look at the [exam board specification](#) for each subject to find a list of topics, or [ask your teachers](#)
- Put a [tick](#) in the [correct column](#) to show how [confident](#) you are with each topic. Throughout your revision, [update](#) the table and watch those ticks turn from [red to green](#).
- Make sure you do enough revision and practice so that you are [happy](#) with each [topic](#)

Don't worry if you're unsure about a lot of your topics at first. The whole point of revision is that you get more confident as you go on

EXAMPLE

Subject Checklist: Biology

TOPIC			
Cells	✓		
Microscopy		✓	
Cell Differentiation and Specialisation			✓
Stem Cells		✓	
Chromosomes and Mitosis	✓		
Binary Fission			✓
Culturing Microorganisms			✓

3) Start filling in your REVISION TIMETABLE

- Start by filling in all your commitments and the things you like to do. You can't **revise all the time** and you need to have some **down time**
- **Go through** your revision timetable and add in things like
Clubs and regular exercise *Holidays and Birthdays*
Time with Friends and Family *Hobbies and pass times including X-BOX/Netflix*
- It is also a good idea to **keep some time free** in your plan in case something **unexpected** comes up. There may be things that you can't plan for, so if there's a few **gaps**, it'll make it easier to **adapt**.

Revision Timetables

Month:		Weeks to go:				
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Date:						
Monday	GYM	GYM				
Tuesday			At Dad's for tea			
Wednesday						
Thursday				swimming		

4) ADD YOUR SUBJECTS

Decide **how much time** you'll need to spend on each subject by thinking about:

- Which you find the **hardest**
- Which has more **stuff to learn**
- Which exams **come first**

Add your subjects into the timetable you should do **2 per night** in the week and **3 sessions** on a Saturday and Sunday.

Remember that revision sessions should be **45 minutes in length** maximum followed by a **15 minute break**.

Make sure you allow **enough time** for each subject and **space them out** over the time you have to make sure you cover all bases.

Revision Timetables

EXAMPLE

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Date:					
Monday	Gym	Gym	Maths		Biology
Tuesday	English Lit	History	At Dad's for tea		
Wednesday	Chemistry		Geography		

Colour-coding your timetable makes it clear what subject you are doing and when.

Also don't put Science – make it clear if you are doing Biology, Chemistry or Physics. The same for English Lit and Lang

5) ADD YOUR TOPICS

- For each subject, look at the topics in your topic planner – think about which you should prioritise and do those first
- Aim to include topics multiple times to give you a chance to revise them thoroughly and make sure that they stick!
- Make sure you leave plenty of time and space for all of your topics.

Revision Timetables

EXAMPLE

Month:				Weeks to	
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Date:					
Monday	Gym	Gym	Maths Factorise		Biology Stem cells
Tuesday	English Lit Romeo	History The great depression	At Dad's for tea		
Wednesday	Chemistry Required Practicals		Geography Brazil		

Adding topic details under each subject really takes your revision to the next level!

Are you ready to revise?

Right, before we move on we want to make sure you get this timetable idea! So before you run off all excited to make your shiny new timetable just spend a few minutes checking that you get all the steps to success.

CHECK your Timetable

- Run through the checklist below and compare each point with your timetable
- If there's anything missing, go back and fill it in
- Tick each point if you are happy

- 1) Have you included all your exams for every subject?
- 2) Have you added topics under your subjects?
- 3) Have you double checked the dates of your exams?
- 4) Does your timetable cover a mixture of subjects each day?
- 5) Have you planned in regular breaks?
- 6) Have you included things that you enjoy?
- 7) Have you left a few gaps in case you need them?

STICK to your Timetable but.....

It's all well and good making a great timetable, but it's no use unless you follow it.

One final and important tip is this:

If you miss a session or even a whole day DO NOT TRY AND CATCH UP! It doesn't work, you end up with too much to do and the whole thing falls down and you stop revising.

Instead of trying to catch up just be honest with yourself. Why did you miss the session? How can you avoid that next time?

Then just move on to the next day with a renewed determination to succeed.

Revision Techniques

7 study techniques

THAT WORK FOR ANY SUBJECT

1. Condensing



- useful for information-heavy, essay based subjects
- Reduces temptation to mindlessly copy everything down

HOWTO: CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO SUMMARISE A PARTICULAR CHAPTER / TOPIC / PAGE WITHIN A LIMITED SPACE, SUCH AS A SIDE OF A4, OR A CERTAIN NUMBER OF SENTENCES. REPEAT AND SEE HOW FAR YOU CAN CONDENSE THE INFORMATION

- Use here to remember information & understand difficult concepts!



2. Flashcards



- Great for remembering definitions, dates, facts etc.
- If stuck, give yourself a few minutes to think about the answer before checking
- MAKE THEM YOURSELF OR USE A WEBSITE SUCH AS QUILT

3. Memory maps

- This is essentially taking notes without any guidance

HOWTO: Write down a few lines on a plain sheet of paper. THEN, SET A TIMER AND WRITE DOWN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AROUND EACH HEADING, MAKING LINKS AND NOT USING ANY RESOURCES. ALTERNATIVELY, DO THIS W. OUT A TIMER AND SIMPLY WRITE 'TO FAILURE'



* ADD VISUAL ELEMENTS TO FACILITATE MEMORISATION!

4. (Pretend to) teach someone

→ THIS IS THE ULTIMATE TEST OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- If none of your friends / family willing to be volunteers, simply pretend to teach a class or an audience.
- Try to find a person who is unfamiliar w. your subject / topic

5. Practice questions and essays

- APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. Get your hands on past papers / questions and practice in exam conditions when you can.
- Get someone else to mark your work OR practice now when doing it yourself.



7. Visualisation / association

- Associate difficult concepts with familiar objects or words.
- THE JOURNEY: assign facts, arguments etc to different points in a real or imagined journey



- FACILITATES RECALL OF ABSTRACT INFORMATION

6. Pomodoro technique

- developed by Francesco Cirillo
- work for 25 minutes; 5 minute break

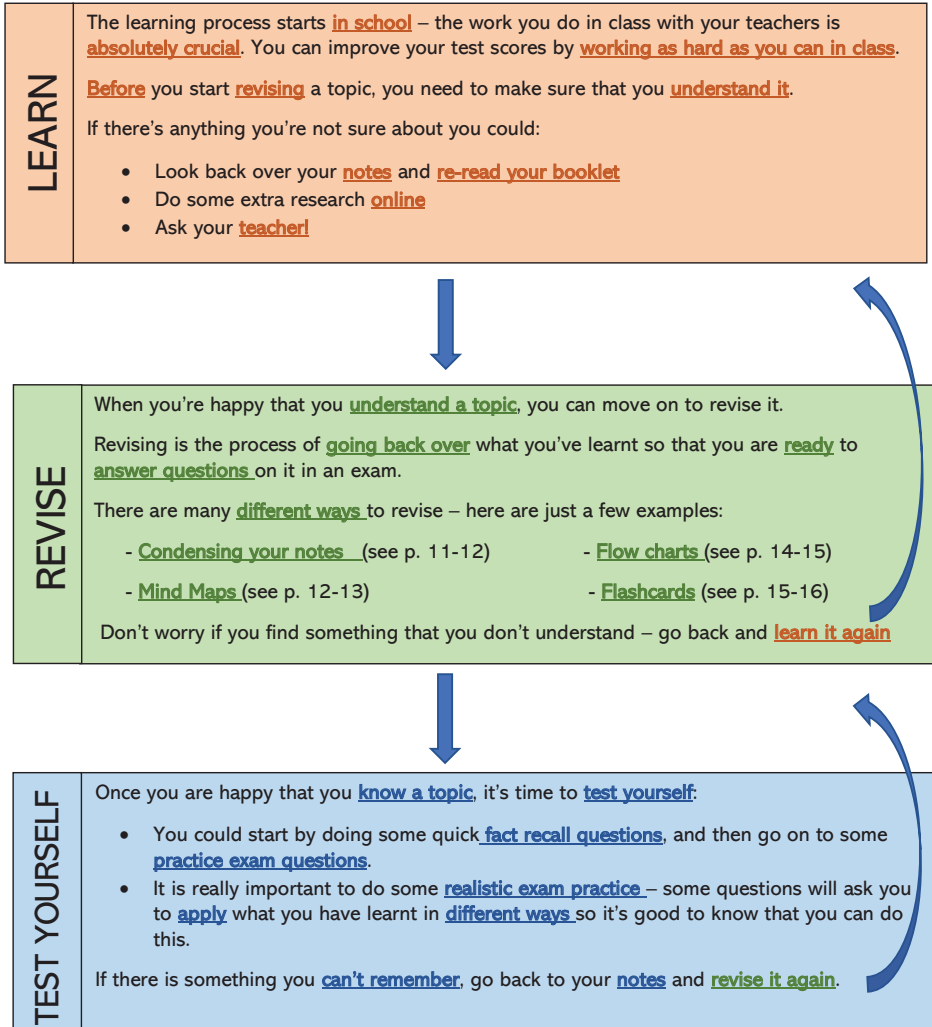


REPEAT x4 BEFORE TAKING A LONGER BREAK (25-30 minutes)

- Try this if you struggle w. procrastination and getting stuck on hard task

Learn, Revise, Test Yourself

This process is super important. You can't revise what you don't understand, or practise what you don't know, so don't skip out any steps. There is no shortcut to success!

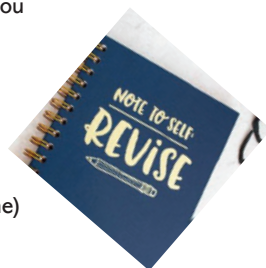


Condensing your Notes

Now you know how to get started, it's time to get cracking. The first step is to get your notes into order – you can't learn every word you've ever written so you need to condense them

START with your NOTES

1. You'll need to start off with some **high-quality** notes, including:
 - You **notes** from **class** (booklets or exercise books)
 - **Revision guides** (you can buy these from school cheaper than online)
 - Text books
 - **Revision sheets** from your teacher
2. **Read over** them and make sure you've **understood** what you've read – simplifying a topic into **key points** won't help you if you don't understand the original notes



Condense them into your OWN WORDS

1. You need to **simplify** and **summarise** your notes into **key points** so they're easier to revise from.
2. Aim to get **each topic** onto a **single page**. **Cut** the **waffle** and pick out the **good stuff**!
3. Try to **reorganise** the material in some way e.g. by **grouping** it differently or **linking** topics together
4. How you present your notes might depend on the subject. For example, you could make:
 - Labelled diagrams in Science
 - Timelines for History
 - A page of key quotes for English Lit
 - A table of formulas and rules for Maths
5. Condensing topics makes your revision **interactive** – it's better than just re-reading your notes again. Plus you're more likely to remember your **own words** than something someone else has written.

Don't make these MISTAKES

The following things have been **proven** to **not work** and are actually a **waste** of your **valuable time**

1. Only reading your class notes or textbooks – **this does not work** and you **don't retain** any of the **information**
2. Copying out all of your notes into a **new notebook** – this can **take hours** and makes you think you are revising well because you are busy and it looks nice! **It doesn't work**

One proven way to condense your notes is to use the Cornell Method – (follow this hyperlink to an article about the correct technique of using [Cornell Notes](#))

To use the Cornell Note Taking method, you need to first divide your single A4 page into three or four sections. There can be an optional small section at the top of the page for the title, and there should be a similarly sized space at the bottom, where they can summarise your notes.

The rest of the page should be divided into two vertical columns, with the left-hand column taking up around 30% of the width and hence the right-hand column taking up the remaining 70%.

HOW TO TAKE NOTES USING THE CORNELL METHOD
by @Inner_Drive | innerdrive.co.uk

CUE COLUMN
Key words
Ask questions
Prompts for revision

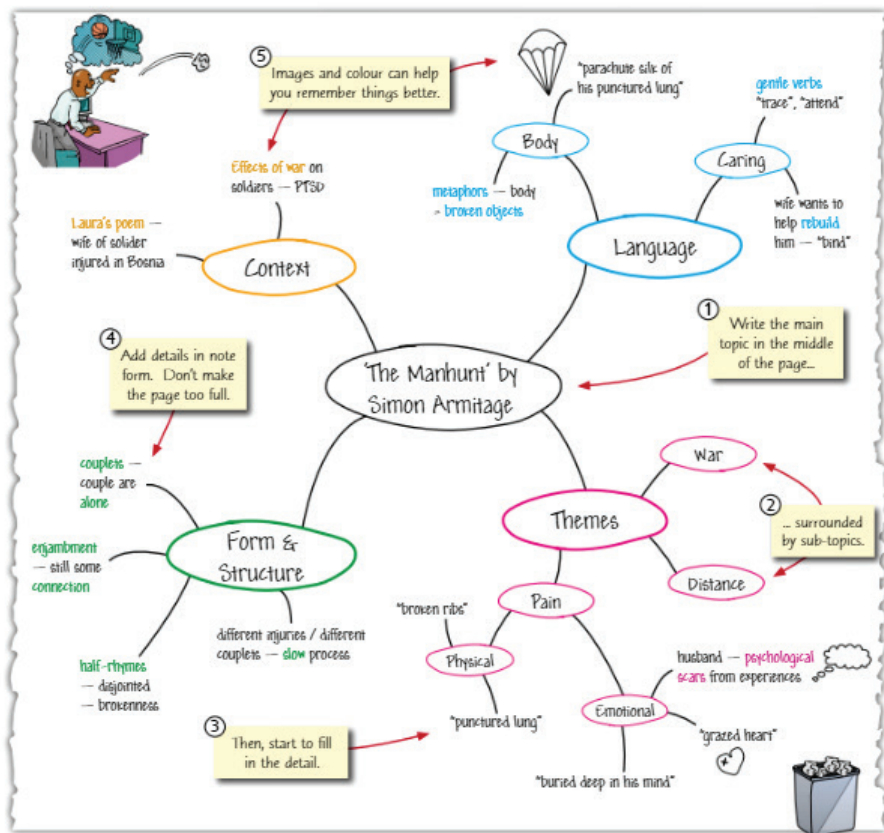
NOTE COLUMN
Make notes
Summarise concepts

SUMMARY
Review what you learnt

The infographic illustrates the Cornell Method on a blue background. It shows a diagram of a note page divided into three sections: a narrow orange 'CUE COLUMN' on the left, a wide green 'NOTE COLUMN' in the middle, and a wide orange 'SUMMARY' section at the bottom. Handwritten notes in cursive are visible in each section. Blue arrows point from the text labels to their respective sections on the diagram.

EXAMPLE:

Here is an example of a mind map for the poem 'The Manhunt' by Simon Armitage. It isn't complete, but it gives you an idea of where to start.

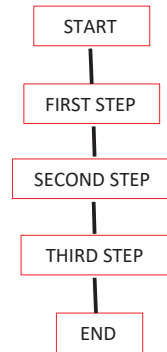


Making Flow Charts

Flow charts are really useful for when you need to remember things that are in a specific order or sequence.

Flow charts take topics **STEP BY STEP**

1. Flow charts are a type of **diagram** that show a **process** from **beginning to end**.
2. They **organise information clearly** – you can see both **words** and **images** to show what happens when.
3. It's tempting to spend ages making your flow charts look perfect but as long as they are clear and **easy to use**, they don't need to be fancy.



START at the **START**

1. It might sound obvious, but **order** is really important in **flow charts**.
2. Write the **first step** in the process at the **top** of the page and **work downwards**.
3. Flow charts highlight the **main steps** in a process, but if it helps, you can add **key points** about the different steps to jog your memory – keep them **short** and **to the point** though.

They are really useful for **LOTS OF SUBJECTS**

Flow charts show how different stages or events are linked together, so they're useful for subjects that include sequences or processes.

Here are a few examples of when you might use them:

Enterprise & Marketing – to show the different stages within a **supply chain**

History – a **timeline** of the events that saw **Hitler** take **power** in **Germany**

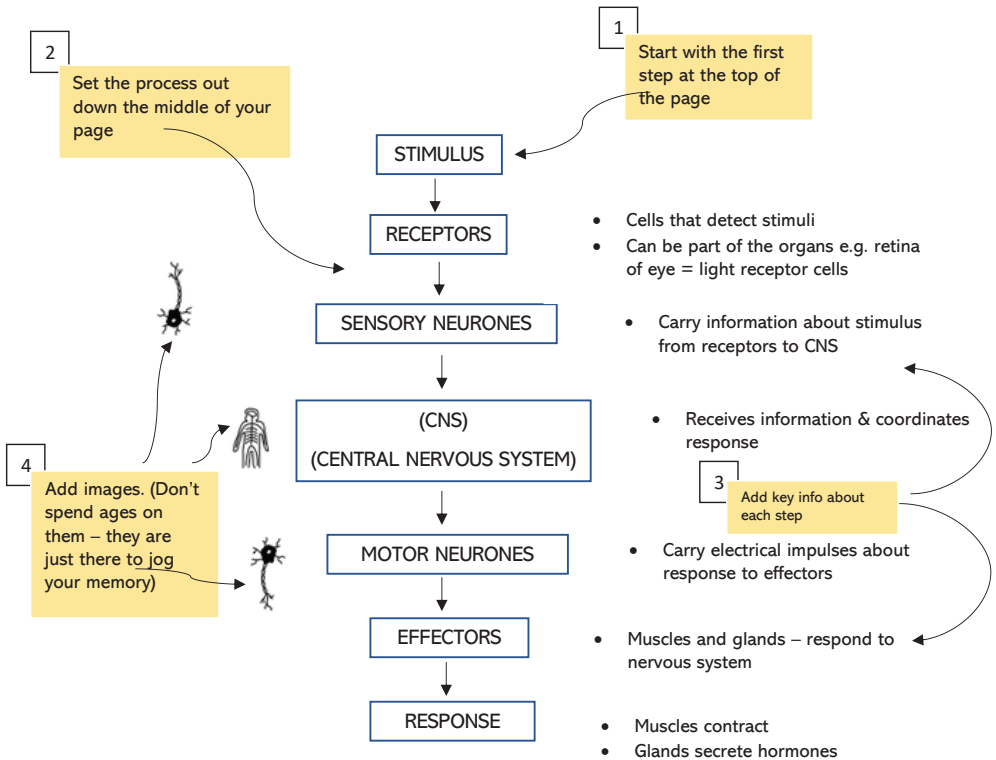
Chemistry – to set out the **required practical**

Geography – to present the different **stages** of **erosion**

Biology – to show how **food** passes through the **digestive system**

EXAMPLE:

This is an example of a flow chart you could make for Biology, showing how the *Central Nervous System responds to stimuli*. It doesn't show everything about the whole topic but it shows you how to get started.



Using Flash Cards

Flash Cards are a great REVISION TOOL

- 1) Flash cards are small cards with a question or prompt on one side, and the answer or information on the other side.
- 2) They're a great way to test yourself and find gaps in your knowledge.
- 3) Flash cards are useful for learning stuff like:
 - Important dates in History
 - Language vocabulary
 - Key words and definitions
 - Formulae
 - Labelled diagrams



Flash cards aren't so good for learning things like processes and more complex information, but they can make sure you know the 'nuts and bolts' of knowledge needed in your exams.

- 4) There are lots of flash cards available online but it's a better idea to make your own. Working through your notes and picking out information is part of the process of revision

Another great way to use flash cards is by filling one side with example questions about a topic, and the other side with the answers. This can be useful after you've revised a topic and want to test yourself on it. We always have a stockpile of flash cards in reprographics at PHS! Just knock on the door and ask!

Use them to TEST YOURSELF

Here are a few top tips on how to use your flash cards effectively:

- 1) Say your answers out loud – this forces you to answer the questions properly
- 2) Test yourself until you get them all correct – make a pile of any cards you get wrong and go over those ones over and over again (see page 32 for more detail on this)
- 3) Make sure you test yourself both ways – e.g. you need to know vocab translations from English to French and from French to English.
- 4) Ask someone else to test you – it removes the temptation to check the other side yourself before answering.

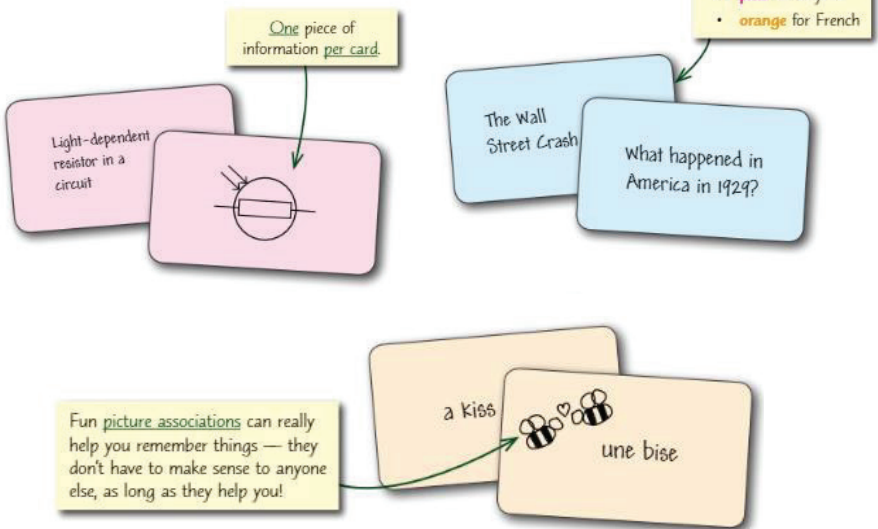
Flash Cards are EASY TO MAKE

Anyone can make good flash cards – here's how:

- 1) Write a **question or prompt** on **one side** of the card
- 2) Add **colour** and any **quick pictures** that might help you recall the information
- 3) **Complete the other side** with the **answer** or **piece of information**
- 4) Keep your flash cards **simple** and stick to **one** piece of information **per card**
- 5) Use them to test yourself **daily, weekly and monthly!**

EXAMPLE

Here are a few examples of some flash cards you could make (front and back). They should be *clear* and *easy to read*:



Flash cards are the **easiest** and **most efficient** way to revise **anytime** and **anywhere!**


Flash cards are so useful because they are **pocket sized** – you **can take them anywhere and test yourself** on the go, really making the most of any time away from your desk or dining room table. Perfect on **journeys in the car** I'm sure your parents will love that!!


Follow this hyperlink to an article about the correct technique of using [FLASHCARDS](#)


This is the very best way to make sure you are remembering more content as the weeks go by. You can test yourself, you can revise with friends, you can get parents or siblings to test you. As time goes by you will remember more content and spend more time on the things you don't know.

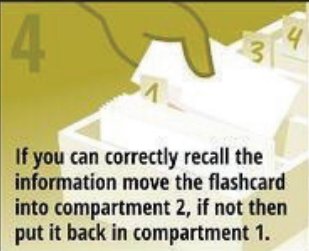
USING FLASHCARDS TO REVISE

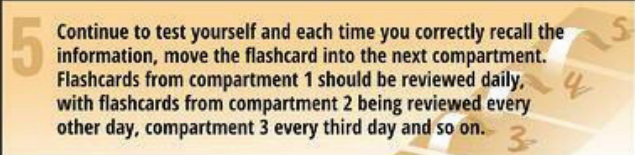
by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk


- 

1 Split a box into 5 different compartments and label them 1 to 5.
- 

2 Place all your flashcards in compartment 1.
- 

3 Test yourself on a flashcard
- 

4 If you can correctly recall the information move the flashcard into compartment 2, if not then put it back in compartment 1.
- 

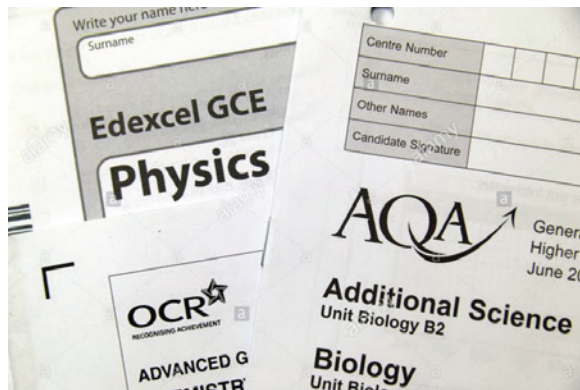
5 Continue to test yourself and each time you correctly recall the information, move the flashcard into the next compartment. Flashcards from compartment 1 should be reviewed daily, with flashcards from compartment 2 being reviewed every other day, compartment 3 every third day and so on.
- 

6 Eventually, all your flashcards will have been transferred to compartment 5 and the information they contain stored in your long-term memory.

Other Tips

Past Papers

The most useful tool at your disposal are past papers. You will get these in class as the year goes on but there are so many places online that you can access them and in revision books and guides too. Always mark your own papers so you see what the mark scheme is asking you to write so you get used to what examiners are looking for.



Exam Specifications

One crucial tip is to print off the exam specifications for each of your subjects to act as a comprehensive revision list. An exam specification is a list of all the topics that can come up in a particular exam paper. And the very best students follow it to the letter.

To access these specifications, you just need to go on the examining body website and download the relevant PDF files (a full list of subjects and examining bodies are below)



Subjects and Exam Boards

Subject	Exam Board	Link
Art & Design	AQA	Art and Design
Biology	AQA	Biology
Chemistry	AQA	Chemistry
English Language	AQA	English Language
English Literature	AQA	English Literature
Geography	AQA	Geography
French	AQA	French
German	AQA	German
Music	AQA	Music
Physics	AQA	Physics
Science	AQA	Science: Trilogy
Spanish	AQA	Spanish
Drama	EDUQAS	Drama
Music Technology	NCFE	Music Tech
Computer Science	OCR	Computer Science
Economics	OCR	Economics
Enterprise and Marketing	OCR	Enterprise and Marketing
ICT	OCR	ICT
Psychology	OCR	Psychology
Health & Social Care	Pearson BTEC	Health & Social Care
History	Pearson Edexcel	History
Mathematics	Pearson Edexcel	Mathematics
Sports Studies	Pearson Edexcel	Sports Studies
Statistics	Pearson Edexcel	Statistics
Travel & Tourism	Pearson BTEC	Travel & Tourism
Design Technology	WJEC	Built Environment
Hospitality & Catering	WJEC	Hospitality & Catering

The links in the right hand column will take you directly to a page that you can download and print the course specifications from. An excellent tool to guide your revision

Resources

Teachers Top Tips

The next few pages are from your teachers at Penketh High School.
We asked your teachers what does a good student do?
How do they do well in tests?
How do they get the most out of their lessons?
How do you get the very best GCSE results at the end of Year 11.

Here are some top tips from lots of your subject teachers to give you an edge in lessons, when you are doing your revision and ultimately, in your exams.



PENKETH HIGH SCHOOL

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Do Q5 (both papers) first! This is worth 50% of the overall paper!

If you miss this question out it is **GAME OVER!**

ELEMENTS OF OPINION WRITING

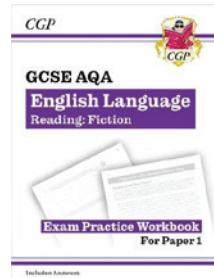
1. Has 3 supportive reasons.
2. Uses an expert or important person's quote or experience.
3. Adds statistics.
4. Includes researched facts.
5. Reaches the readers' emotions.
6. Proves to be a trustworthy source.
7. Explains the importance to act now.
8. Has a believable impression.
9. Shows how it will benefit the reader.
10. Avoids threatening.



When asked **HOW** in any question you must find a **quotation**, discuss **METHODS** in those quotations: juxtaposition metaphors, adjectives, similes structural features etc. and the **effect** of these.



When choosing quotations make sure they can be **pulled apart** and **explored** in as much **detail** as possible. (are they judicious "**juicy**" quotes?)



For Q5 Paper 1 **it is about quality, not quantity!** Split the image up into **quarters** and pick 3 or 4 things you plan to write about. You must use **methods**, similes, personification, metaphors, adjectives etc. Remember to explore the **5 senses**. Think about your **structure**, you must paragraph



For Q5 Paper 2 learn 'The Grid'

If you don't know what the grid is I suggest you speak with your English teacher right now!!

ENTERPRISE & MARKETING

Use the revision guide to revise and answer the exam questions

Make sure you mark those too and green pen points that you missed – those bits become your revision focus



Keep up to date with current affairs!
Marketing and Business is all around us. The more you know the more you can write about and make your answers stand out from the crowd.



Watch 'Dragons Den' and 'The Apprentice'
Really good, low-stakes way of extending your vocabulary and understanding of key terminology used in the world of business



Use the knowledge organisers – fill in the blank ones using the information.

Again – the ones you don't know become a revision focus.



If you know someone who has their own business, ask lots of questions about how they started, survive and plans for the future.

GEOGRAPHY

Master the case studies:

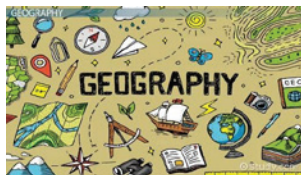
- Have you seen a map of the place?
- Find newspaper articles
- Watch videos on You Tube for better understanding and interesting quotes
- If it's a local one go and visit the place!



Learn the key vocabulary

Here is a fab glossary of every word you would need to know for Geography GCSE success

[Geography Vocab](#)



Practice your extended responses- develop your points.

Use ADELE!

- A – Accurate Knowledge
- D – Detailed Understanding
- E – Examples
- L – Links
- E – Evaluations



Become familiar with past paper questions- practice your timing!

Use revision guides and resources to pad out your answers and then try and answer questions without these nearer the exam.



Know your Geography 'COMMAND' words.

If you know what the exam is asking you to do you have a much better chance of success right?!

Follow this useful link

[Geography Command Words](#)

HISTORY

Knowledge organisers to make flash cards for quizzing

Knowledge Organisers are always in your booklets and on Teams



Practising exam style questions under timed conditions.

Get used to the timings of each questions to make sure you always finish.



Use the recommended skill techniques that you have been taught when answering exam questions.



Use scholarship, podcasts, documentary lists from your booklets to widen the scope of your revision.

Top grades come when you write something different to the rest of the county sitting the exam



Get feedback from your History teacher on your exam style answers you have completed independently.

Get as much as you can from your teachers or somebody else will!

HOSPITALITY & CATERING

Complete revision homework every week using your revision guide

Consistency is key – do a little but often.



Read and practice your recipes at home

Can you recreate that dish at home and make tea for everyone?



Add to your story any extra information you find out during lessons

Do this no more than 24-48 hours after the lesson while it is still fresh in your mind



If absent from lessons always complete the lesson on teams to prevent you missing key knowledge.

Sometimes absence really can't be helped but your attitude to it is crucial



Revise the key terms for your unit 1 exam or unit 2 controlled assessment every week when asked using your knowledge organiser

MFL

Get an AQA workbook and work through it at home. The best way to improve your listening and reading skills is to do a couple of tasks regularly. The answers are all in the back.



Complete Languageut homework thoroughly and see it as a low-stake practice of exam questions.



Engage with the practice of sentence builders, it's never too late to improve your understanding of how sounds and spellings are related.



Be patient with listening tasks as they are harder. Don't just rely on your knowledge of Spanish vocabulary, also use your knowledge of English (cognates) and look for context.



Look at the skills set often as they are the blueprint to successful writing. Before starting a task, go list the skills you will use either mentally or jot them down.

PE

Ensure that you are fully organised with your full PE kit ready for the activity you are currently completing in PE.



Try your best!

Come to PE with your best attitude ready to learn and try to improve in all activities covered in the PE curriculum (even if it's not your favourite sport!)



Ask your teacher for help if you are unsure of a certain task, technique or tactic.



Ensure you communicate with your fellow pupils properly so you can complete skills and tasks to the best of your ability when working in groups.

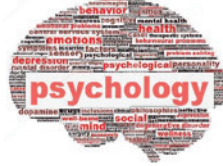


Take part in as many PE related enrichments as you possibly can!

You never know what you'll like or what you'll be good at till you give it a go!

PSYCHOLOGY

Buy the OCR GCSE Psychology Revision guide and use it, throughout the course, revising and practicing exam questions with it.



Learn the 12 key studies in 100% APFCC detail.

These are absolutely crucial to your understanding and success

Psychology-Related Jobs



Know ALL your research methods, be able to apply them and evaluate them.

Learn the structure for answering 13 mark extended answer exam questions, so that you can apply it to access the marks in your GCSE exams.



Learn the different issues and debates within psychology so you can write about them in your 13 mark extended answer question answers.



For application questions write your answer within the context of the question stem/scenario, don't write a general answer as you won't access the marks.

RE

Watch the news, read the newspapers, find out what's going on locally, nationally and internationally, build an awareness and listen to the different points of view/perspectives on them, this will help you build your own world view.

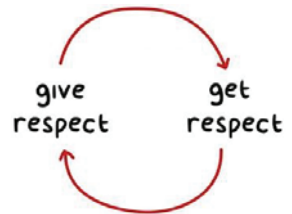
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

When answering a question (written or verbal), think about why to hold that opinion and explain the reasons - it's important to say why, provide justification.

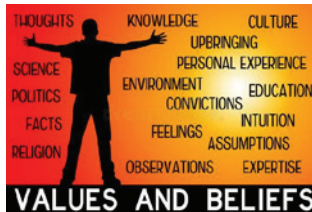


Remember that RE is about opinion as well as fact.

RE is one of the only subjects that you can enter into a really good debate in so use this as an opportunity to explore those dual curriculum skills



Remember religious teachings and texts were in some case written thousands of years ago but still hold messages some people choose to live by, but they don't have to be taken literally and can be interpreted and applied to how people live their lives in a number of different ways.



Remember the importance of other people's points of view and personal beliefs.

Sometimes they won't be the same as yours but need to be respected.

SCIENCE

Free Science Lessons man is your friend! If you're revising a topic, start with his video - they are clear, concise, and matched directly to your specification. Find him on YouTube or at www.freesciencelessons.co.uk



Mastering calculations in Physics is important. Use flashcards and 23 equations app to learn your equations and units. Practice calculations questions showing your full working out and checking for unit conversions.



Use the pupil checklists at the end of each unit - then you can catch up anything you have missed before you have to revise.

Plan your revision to cover all three specialisms - it's better to do some of everything rather than all of one!



Science has a lot of content - shorten it down by making mind maps and flashcards as you finish each topic, so it doesn't look as much!

Always have a calculator! 10% biology, 20% chemistry and 30% physics marks are from maths!



Practice your 6 markers. Most of these can be split into 2 or 3 shorter questions - if you answer this way it's easier to get the marks.

Subject Checklist: Maths

We've started this topic planner for you because we're nice like that! Just grab your maths revision list and finish this off. Then tick or cross the red, amber or green traffic light for how you feel about each topic. You can do this for each of your subjects, it really helps to see where you need to do extra work.

TOPIC			
Multiples , Factors and & Primes			
Fractions			
Decimals			
Percentages			
Rounding & Estimating			
Powers & Roots			
Expanding Brackets			
Factorising			

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:		
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Date:						
Monday						
Tuesday						
wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:		
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:		
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Date:						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:		
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Date:						
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:		
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	
Monday						
Tuesday						
Wednesday						
Thursday						
Friday						
Saturday						
Sunday						

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Date:					
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Revision Timetables

Month:				Weeks to go:	
Time: Date:	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					



PENKETH HIGH SCHOOL

Heath Road, Warrington WA5 2BY

Phone: 01925 722298

Email: info@penkethhigh.org

 [@PenkethSchool](https://twitter.com/PenkethSchool)

www.penkethhigh.org

