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## Revision & Exam Preparation

As you know, a good set of GCSE / BTEC grades will provide you with a passport to the Sixth Form and further education.

In addition good grades give a **strong sense of self confidence** that you can revise and study effectively. This will remain with you for the rest of your life.



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# Introduction

It is therefore really worth preparing for your GCSEs – by starting your revision earlier rather than later, by staying positive and by developing better study skills, for instance :-

- Time management
- Stress management
- Reading and note-taking techniques
- Revising with friends

Always remember, study skills are meant to make learning more effective and more satisfying. We all have unique learning styles, and you will need to try out different approaches and find out which ones help you most.

Of course your teachers will help you and will guide your revision in each subject. You will find work will get harder, but you must keep up with it. Its only a short time and studying gets easier the more you get into it.

## Focus on rewards

5 or more A-C grades gets you into the Sixth Form or college.  
Better results give you more choices later in life

Take the L out of Learning and  
what have you got? 'Earning'

The following booklet is designed to take you through the whole revision process. You should read it carefully and start using it straight away. It consists of the following sections :

## Organising and Planning

- What makes a good revision session
- Time management

## Study Skills

- Reading
- Note-taking
- Mind mapping
- Mnemonics
- Examination Questions
- Learning vocabulary & key words
- Revising vocabulary
- Sequencing information

## Exam Preparation

- Leading up to the exam
- Things to remember
- Finally

## Useful links

# Jump to:

## Organising and Planning

- What makes a good revision session
- Time management

## Study Skills

- Reading
- Note-taking
- Mind mapping
- Mnemonics
- Examination questions
- Learning vocabulary & key words
- Revising vocabulary
- Sequencing information

## Exam Preparation

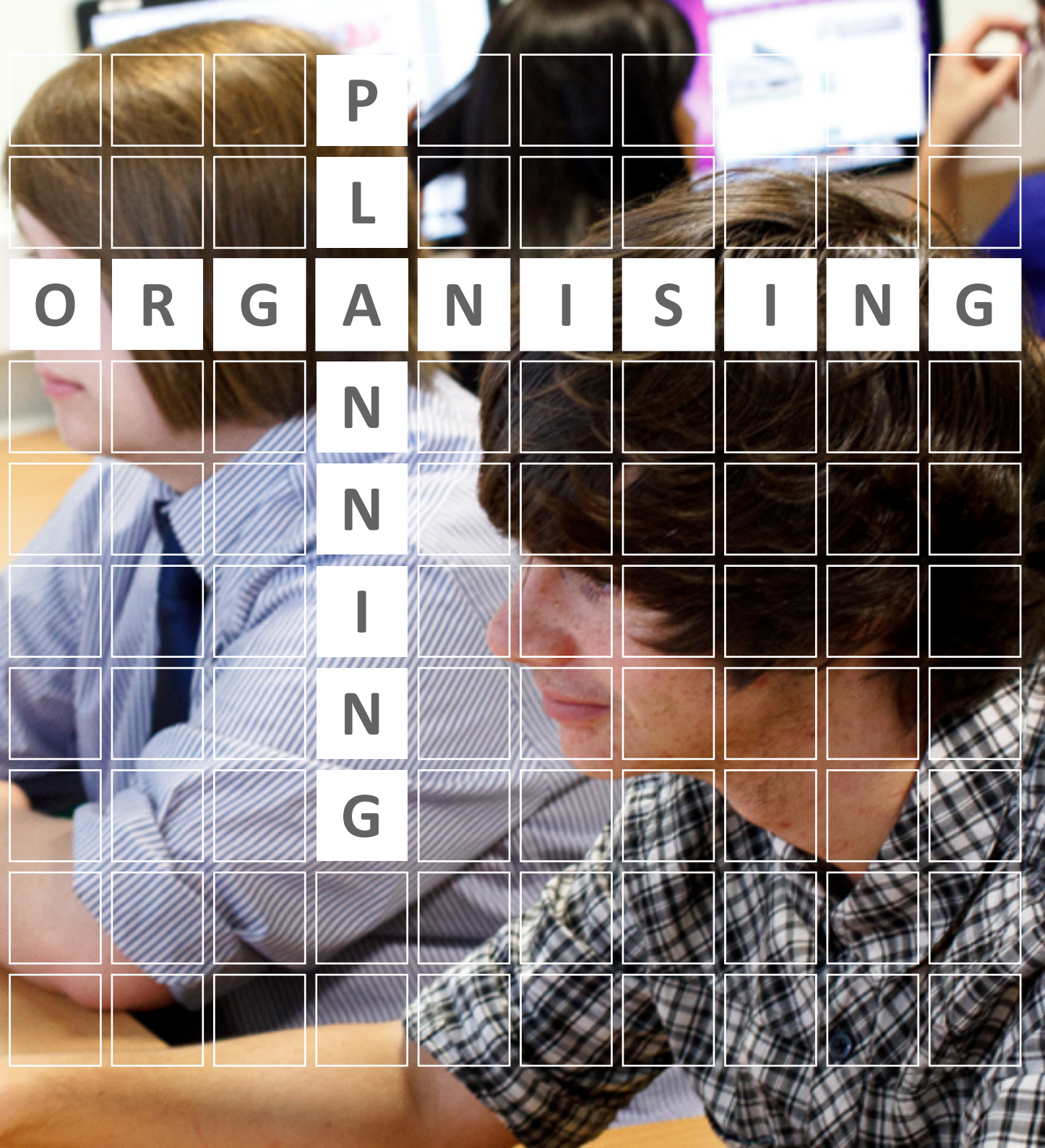
- Leading up to the exam
- Things to remember
- Finally

## Useful links



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# Organising & Planning



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# What makes a good revision session?

- A good revision session will last approximately 2 hours broken up into four or five 15 to 20 minute sessions with breaks built in
- You will need to set tasks for each revision session you have planned - use your revision planner
- Each session should involve different subjects or topics
- Use your favourite study skills methods
- The diagram below shows how you can break up a one hour session
- After a session always review
- Keep all your revision materials in a safe place
- Put some in a prominent place where you can see them, so they will catch your eye

**REMEMBER – 80% OF WHAT YOU LEARN IS FORGOTTEN IN 24 HOURS** - You are at your best for 20 minutes of each session - have a break, a drink, fresh air and then restart.

5	20	5	15	5	10
E X E R C I S E	Mind Map  Notes	D R I N K	Reading Highlight Keywords Post it notes OR Review previous summary work	R E L A X	Review Test Yourself Check
0-5 mins	5-25 mins	25-30	30-45 mins	45-50	50-60 mins

# Time Management

Revising for GCSEs is best viewed as a project that needs to be managed.

An important management skill is the ability to create good plans. This means creating good revision timetables.

Planning your work means you are likely to revise all of your work properly. Another bonus is that good planning always reduces stress and boosts confidence.

## The Weekly Revision Planner

The weekly planner is designed to help you structure your time. A minimum of 15 hours a week revision can seem daunting. But the weekly planner will help you structure your time so that you can easily achieve it and have plenty of time to socialise and enjoy yourself.



## Guidelines for revision:

- **15 hours of revision each week** is a minimum requirement, you can do more
- Set aside time each day for **relaxation and fun**. Give yourself the odd night off
- Timetables reduce stress levels by putting you in control
- Make a list of all the topics you need to revise in each subject – a chance to do a subject mind map – this will give you an overall picture on what you have to revise
- Give more time to subject topics you're not sure about
- Don't be put off by the amount of work – good planning puts everything in perspective

**Activity:**  
Fill out your Weekly  
Revision Planner  
sheets now





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# Study Skills



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# Study Skills: Reading

You will obviously have to read through your class notes, revision guides and textbooks during the run-up to your exams. Here are some of the key principles of effective reading:

## Reading Exercises

### Use a Reading Guide:

Always use a pen to guide your eyes across the page, your eyes will move more smoothly this way. Don't use a bookmark, because we subconsciously read a few lines ahead.

### Skim Reading

This is when you read a lot of information quickly.

- Set a time limit. If doing an hour's revision session then spend the first 5 minutes skim reading
- Levels of comprehension go down when people read too slowly. So read quickly when skim-reading
- Skip over difficult parts – come back to these later on
- Underline sub-headings and brief parts you feel are important
- Put it into your own words – A brief summary will reinforce your knowledge and understanding

### Close Analysis (take a closer more careful look)

After having skim read a topic:

- Annotate the text - underline key words (no more than 2 or 3 in each paragraph), draw symbols in the margins as reminders
- Pick out the key issues / themes of this particular topic / text

# Study Skills: Note-Taking

There are lots of different note-taking techniques and different ones suit different people, but here are a few of the key points:

- a) Colour helps to highlight, group and contrast information.  
Use colour to highlight important information in a way that suits you e.g. red for very important, blue for important
- b) Key words – make them big and bold
- c) Revising using key words. Study the example below from a Geography unit on coasts:

Now cover up the right hand column and use the key words in the left-hand column to help you remember what each sentence said.

Key Words	Sentences
Erosion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hydraulic Action</li><li>Solution</li><li>Abrasion</li><li>Attrition</li></ul>	The wearing away of rock, stones soil <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hydraulic Action – Water forced under pressure into cracks in rock, explosion...</li><li>Solution – Water dissolves soluble material from the rock</li><li>Abrasion – Waves throw sand, pebbles and large stones against the rock</li><li>Attrition – Rocks get knocked together and worn into smaller bits.</li></ul>
Transport	The carrying away of eroded material e.g. by waves. Some is carried along the coastline by Long Shore Drift (LSD)
Deposition	When material is dropped. When there is not enough energy to keep material / load in suspension then it is deposited.

Experiment with different ways of summarising a passage of information, using:

- a list
- a summary map / mind map
- post it notes
- symbols – the brain remembers pictures far better than words

When taking notes, try to work towards developing a portfolio of summary sheets for each subject. For each topic you revise you should aim to make a summary sheet.

## Activity:

Click here to see an example of a poem highlighted and annotated by one of our students.





# Study Skills: Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping forms a visual mnemonic – many students who use them have been able to see a map in their mind's eye in test and exam conditions. It makes it easy to remember all the details in a topic.



## How to do mind mapping

- Have your paper in a landscape position – easier to read
- Start in the middle of the page with a coloured image - this is the central idea / theme/ topic / question
- Now add the main themes on thick 'branches' coming off your central image
- Draw a simple picture or symbol, or print a word along each branch to label it
- Now you can take it further by putting thinner lines – new smaller branches to show how the main themes and ideas link – make sure all your branches link to the main branch
- Label every branch / line – using an image or a word
- Always print key words to make them stand out
- Use images whenever possible to emphasise ideas or replace words – they are eye catching and easily remembered
- Use a colour key – colours stimulate the brain, enhance the memory and please the eye
- Use mind mapping to review topics regularly – add to them at any time
- Cover them up and try to remember the branches and links

**Activity:**  
Make a mind map for a suitable topic / subject



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# Study Skills: Mnemonics

Mnemonics are things that help you to remember information and therefore they can be a great help when revising. They are good for memorising information but not necessarily for understanding. Try to keep them simple, clear and vivid.

## Rhymes

Set what you need to remember to a common rhyme. One example is: "In fourteen hundred and ninety-two Columbus sailed the ocean blue."

## Acronyms and Acrostics

Use acronyms to help you remember lists of words. The first letter from each word in a list forms a key word, name, or sentence. One example in music is, "every good boy deserves food" are the lines on the treble clef (EGBDF). FACE stands for the spaces on the treble clef. My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nachos is a helpful way of remembering the order of the planets: Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune.

## Visual Association

Association involves linking two ideas. When you are memorizing lists of words, you can link words by using images. The PEG system allows you to remember sequences of ten unrelated items in the appropriate order. It requires you to first remember 10 "peg words."

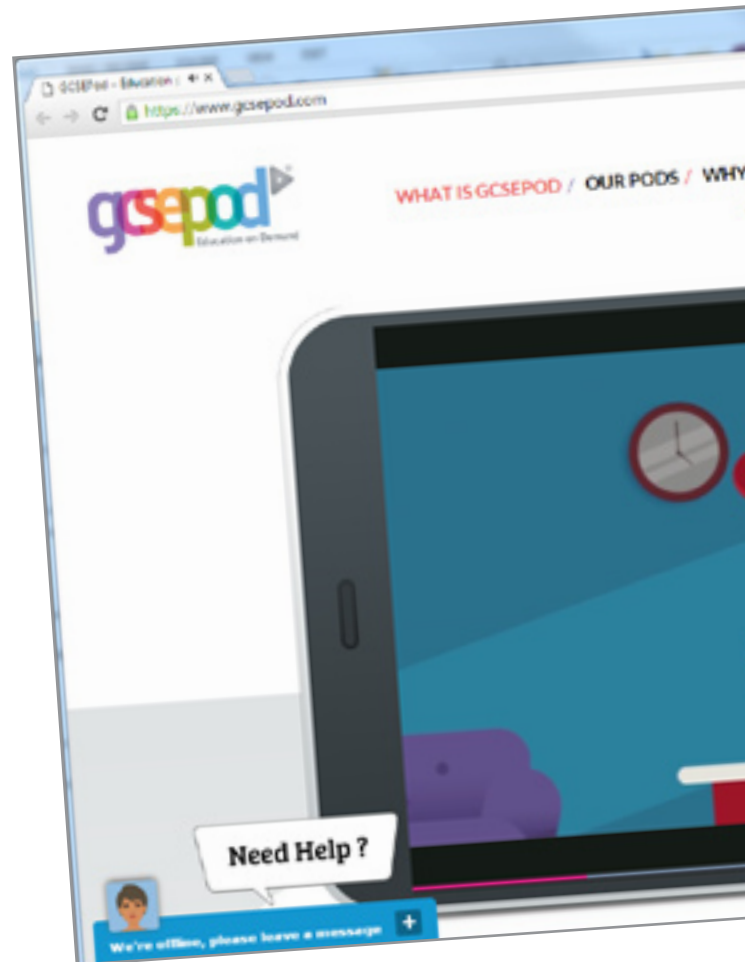
**one = bun**  
**two = shoe**  
**three = tree**  
**four = door**  
**five = hive**  
**six = sticks**  
**seven = heaven**  
**eight = gate**  
**nine = wine**  
**ten = hen**

If you have ten words that you need to remember you visualise each word interacting with the "peg word" that you already know.

# Study Skills: Examination Questions

Practising examination questions is a very good use of your time.

- Exam questions help you remember important points in your revision
- Examiners have a limited way of asking questions, so the more practice you get the less likely you are to be caught out by an unfamiliar question
- Practice helps you understand how many questions you have to answer on each paper and how many each mark carries
- Practising questions helps you to work out how long different questions take to answer
- Practising longer essay type questions will help you score the best marks
- GCSEPod is an excellent website that allows you to tackle exam style questions for most subjects. <https://www.gcsepod.com/>
- Your teacher will also be able to provide you with access to exam questions that are appropriate in terms of the particular module / tier of entry and so forth



**Activity:**  
Visit GCSEPod and  
start raising your  
grades now!

# Study Skills: Learning vocabulary

For many subjects there is a lot of vocabulary to learn. Languages are a good example of this.

Study the brief table of phrases below:

French	English
à cause de	because of
à la fin	in the end
à mon avis	in my opinion
ainsi	thus, in this way
alors	then, so
après cela	after that
assez	quite, fairly
assez	enough
au début	at the beginning
aussi	also, too

Now cover up one of the columns and try to state the correct phrase in the other language. Another approach is to study the vocabulary for a minute or two and then get a friend / sibling / parent to test you.

**Activity:**  
See left.





# Study Skills: Revising Vocabulary

In many subjects you need to learn the translation of a word or phrase, or perhaps the definition of a particular word.

In German for example you need to learn vocabulary such as the following:

Side A <b>Umweltschutz</b>	Side A <b>Schulzeugnis</b>	Side A <b>Mietwohnung</b>
Side B <b>Environmental protection</b>	Side B <b>School report</b>	Side B <b>Rented flat</b>

Side A <b>Mülleimer</b>	Side A <b>Freizeitmöglichkeiten</b>	Side A <b>Gepäckaufwahrung</b>
Side B <b>Rubbish bin</b>	Side B <b>Free time opportunities</b>	Side B <b>Left Luggage Office</b>

## Task:

1. Using small pieces of paper or card put a word or phrase on one side and the translation or definition on the other
2. Lay all of the cards a particular way up e.g. the German translation face up
3. Try to give the translation / definition for a particular card and then turn it over to check
4. Put all of the cards you get correct in one pile and lay out again the ones you got wrong. Keep going until you get them all correct

**Hint:** You don't need to spend a long time creating the cards, just tear up a piece of A4 into smaller pieces and hold them all together with a paper clip.

**Activity:**  
See left.

# Study Skills: Sequencing information

In many subjects you need to learn information in a particular sequence.

In History for example you may need to learn the following as part of Medicine Through Time:

- 1543 Andreas Vesalius published The Fabric of Human Body
- 1798 Edward Jenner discovered Vaccination
- 1847 James Simpson discovered Chloroform
- 1850 Louis Pasteur discovered the germ theory
- 1895 Wilhelm Rontgen discovered X-rays

Separate the information onto post-it notes or pieces of card as shown below:

1543	1798	1847	1850	1895
Andreas Vesalius published The Fabric of Human Body	Edward Jenner discovered Vaccination	James Simpson discovered Chloroform	Louis Pasteur discovered the germ theory	Wilhelm Rontgen discovered X-rays

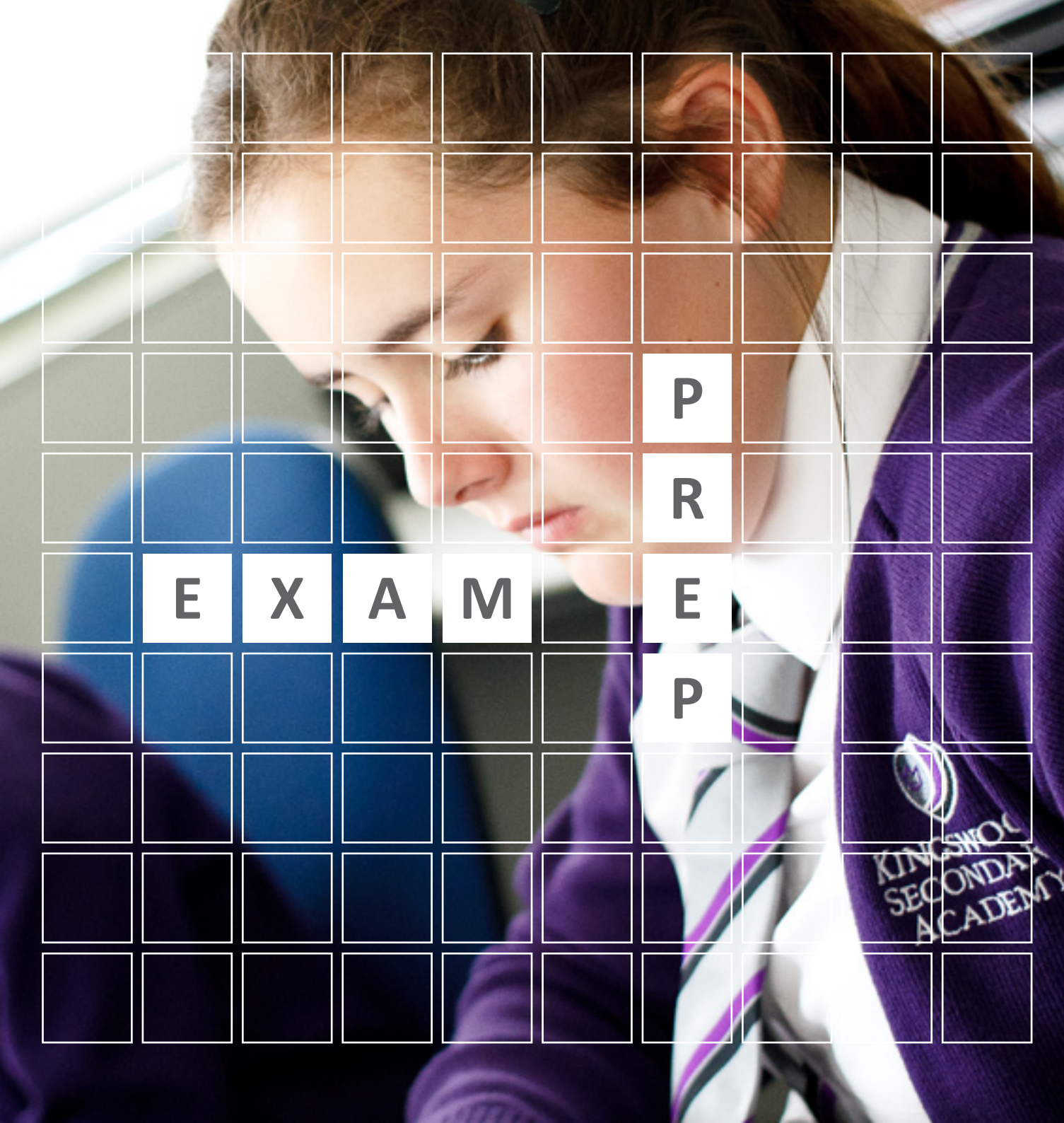
Task:

1. Study the information for a couple of minutes and try to memorise it
2. Shuffle all of your post-it notes / cards and try to put them into the right order
3. Check your answers
4. Keep going until you can get it in the correct order

**Tip:** Keep your cards together with an elastic band or paper clip and it will be a very quick way of revising next time you sit down to look at this topic.

**Activity:**  
See left.





# Exam Preparation



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# Exam Preparation

## The week before your exams:

You have revised properly, you will have worked hard and are now ready. Keep visualising yourself sitting in the Hall/Sports Hall – relaxed, confident – you've done the work you can be nothing but successful. The week before the exams start you can ease off a little. As a result, you will be fresh and those topics you thought you could not remember will come flooding back.

## During that week:

- make sure that you get plenty of exercise and sleep
- use some of the time to refresh your memory on a few of the difficult or essential points from the key notes/mind maps etc you've made

## The day before:

- Flick through your notes (e.g. the summary sheets you have made while revising ) and test yourself the night and morning before exams

## The night before your first exam:

- Make sure you have all your equipment ready – two pens, pencil, rubber, ruler, and calculator
- Check your timetable – what time do you have to be there?
- Set aside time to relax – get some fresh air, have a bath, listen to music
- Use the relaxation techniques you have been shown
- Try to get an early night



# Exam Preparation

## Remember to do the following:

- It's normal to be nervous about exams, but as you start the exam they'll disappear
- Check you have the right paper, then check the number of questions you have to answer
- Listen carefully to instructions
- Give yourself 5 minutes to read through the paper – underline the command words and important points in the questions as you read them – use a highlighter
- Allocate the time you wish to allow for each question
- Only answer what is required for a particular question and no more
- Look at the marks awarded to each question and ensure you have enough points to gain full marks
- Do not give a one word answer where there is more than one mark on offer
- Make sure you use all the time available – pace yourself and give yourself 5 mins to check your work
- Make sure you answer every question – do not leave blanks

## What to do between exams:

- Only revise your summary notes and things you're not sure about for the next exam
- At the end of each exam, try not to talk to your friends too much about how you've done. Start to think about your next exam. That one is finished!

# Exam Preparation

## Finally:

- If you have worked consistently and revised sensibly, no-one could ask more of you than you have done – your confidence will be high – you have nothing to worry about
- Don't try to do too much at once, set realistic targets for your revision time and stick to them
- You can always ask for help from your teachers, mentors and friends

Good grades = success = choice

# Weekly Revision Planner

(For a normal school week)

Weeks remaining  
until exams start:

7

## How to use this planner:

1. Enter in your targets for each particular subject (the boxes shaded in light blue)
2. For each day enter in your regular activities - meals, clubs, jobs etc
3. Allocate different targets / tasks to particular time slots (Minimum 15 hours per week).
4. Don't forget to leave time for rest and relaxation.

[Back to Time Management page](#)

## Targets : What I want to achieve this week

Subject	Target			Subject	Target		
Business	Complete powerpoint on "Codes of Practice"			English	Redo original writing coursework		
Geography	Background notes re: controlled assessment			Maths	My maths on-line		
PE	Complete PE P.E.P. coursework			Science	Revise tasks on Sam Learning		
	4-5 pm	5-6 pm	6-7 pm	7-8 pm	8-9 pm	9-10 pm	10-11 pm
Monday	PE	Break	Dinner	Break	Geography	Break	Sleep
Tuesday	Break	English	Dinner	Rugby Training	Rugby Training	Break	Geography
Wednesday	Gym	Business	Dinner	Science	English	Break	Sleep
Thursday	PE	Maths	Dinner	Rugby Training	Rugby Training	Break	Business
Friday	Gym	Science	Dinner	Maths	Geography	Break	Out
	9-11am	11am-1pm	1-3 pm	3-5 pm	5-7 pm	7-9 pm	9-11 pm
Saturday	Sleep or Maths	Lunch	Out	Rugby Training	Dinner	Out	Out
Sunday	Sleep or Science	Lunch	Geography	English	Dinner	Break	PE

# Weekly Revision Planner

(For a week when on Study Leave)

Weeks remaining  
until exams start:

2

## How to use this planner:

1. Enter in your targets for each particular subject (the boxes shaded in light blue)
2. For each day enter in your regular activities - meals, clubs, jobs etc
3. Allocate different targets / tasks to particular time slots (Minimum 15 hours per week).
4. Don't forget to leave time for rest and relaxation.

[Back to Time Management page](#)

## Targets : What I want to achieve this week

Subject	Target			Subject	Target		
French	Revise home environment & local area			English	Revise all poems of "place" for literature		
Maths	Revise number, algebra, shape & space			Geography	Revise population & settlement		
PE	Revise cardiovascular system			Science	Revise homeostasis & do activities on Sam Learning		
	9-11am	11am-1pm	1-3 pm	3-5 pm	5-7 pm	7-9 pm	9-11 pm
Monday	Sleep	Lunch	French	English / Break	Geography	Dinner	Science
Tuesday	Geography	Lunch	PE	Maths / Break	Science	Dinner	French
Wednesday	PE	Lunch	Maths	French / Break	English	Dinner	Science
Thursday	Break	Lunch	Break	Break	Break	Dinner	Break
Friday	French	Lunch	Science	Maths / Break	Geography	Dinner	PE
Saturday	English	Lunch	PE	Maths / Break	Science	Dinner	Out
Sunday	Maths	Lunch	French	English / Break	Geography	Dinner	Sleep



# ANECDOTAL PIECE ABOUT AN IMAGINARY TOURIST + OLD WOMAN

Narrator is not poet, but imaginary tourist

## An Old Woman

Present tense immediately sounds anecdotal  
An old woman grabs hold of your sleeve and tags along  
2nd person pronoun for tourist - anecdotal - puts reader in place  
3rd person pronoun for woman - she is different, foreign  
She wants a fifty paise coin - Indian coin - less than a penny  
She says she will take you to the horseshoe shrine - Sacred place (tourist attraction)

Woman is imitating  
You've seen it already - Boredom / impatience  
She hobbles along anyway and tightens her grip on your shirt.

Dismissive complacent  
10 She won't let you go.  
You know how old women are.  
They stick to you like a burr. - Smile

Only image in poem  
You turn round and face her with an air of finality. - absurd, pointless  
15 You want to end the farce.

Section 2  
When you hear her say,  
'What else can an old woman do on hills as wretched as these?'

Narrators feelings start to alter  
You look right at the sky. Language becomes richer  
20 Clear through the bullet holes she has for her eyes.

'And' gives quality of speech  
And as you look on, empty spaces, nothing behind  
the cracks that begin round her eyes spread beyond her skin - she is rooted in her culture etc  
And the hills crack.  
And the temples crack.  
And the sky falls

Internal rhyme  
with a plate-glass clatter round the shatter-proof crone almost magical  
30 who stands alone.

Only 2 rhyming lines  
And you are reduced to Tourists

## Hurricane Hits England (from experience)

It took a hurricane, to bring her closer  
To the landscape.  
Half the night she lay awake,  
The howling ship of the wind,  
5 Its gathering rage,  
Like some dark ancestral spectre.

Talk to me Huracan  
Talk to me Oya  
Talk to me Shango  
10 And Hattie,  
My sweeping, back-home cousin.

Tell me why you visit  
An English coast?  
What is the meaning  
15 Of old tongues  
Reaping havoc  
In new places?

The blinding illumination,  
Even as you short-  
20 Circuit us  
Into further darkness?

What is the meaning of trees  
Falling heavy as whales  
Their crusted roots  
25 Their cratered graves?

## Study Skills: Note-Taking

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# Useful links

We will be building on this list of useful internet links in the following subjects:

Art  
Dance/ Drama  
English  
French  
Geography  
German

ICT <http://www.reviseict.co.uk/>

Latin <http://cambridgescp.com/>

Music

History

Maths

PE

RS

Science

Technology

- Food

- Textiles

- Resistant Materials

- Graphics

Health & Social

Business

Child Development

Leisure & Tourism

Media

## Other ways:

GCSEPod <https://www.gcsepod.com/>

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**Activity:**  
See left.



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