

Revising is easy isn't it?

6 weeks to exam time!



How to revise like a Jedi...

- 1 Work out how much time you have to revise.
- 2 Draw the plan - one week per A4 sheet of paper or on large calendar and locate in your room
- 3 On the plan enter the fixed events which you have to attend: e.g. birthday party, Youth Club, Saturday job etc.
- 4 Divide the remaining time into morning, afternoon, and evening sessions of about 3 hours each, e.g. 9-12 a.m.; 2-4 p.m.; 7-9 p.m.
- 5 On separate pieces of paper take each of your subjects and make a list of all the topics for each one.
- 6 On another piece of paper re-list the topics in order of difficulty - most difficult at the top.
- 7 On the plan enter 3 topics for each session, one from each subject, most difficult first.

This plan should not take you more than one session to construct. Seeing your task laid out like this should help to give you the confidence of knowing that everything's in its place - remember you have control over what you do, not the work.

By starting with the most difficult topics you should be able to get them out of the way at the beginning of the revision period. It means that you have an incentive in that it can only get easier as you work towards the examinations - light at the end of the tunnel.

Don't try to do topics from the same subject in the same session.

You are unlikely to be able to concentrate for longer than an hour on any one topic, so break the revision into 20 minute slots with 5 minute breaks. By changing topics you'll be fresher than doing a long stint on the same thing.

Knowing that a particular pain will end after an hour is better than feeling that it's going to go on for ever - then you can switch to a different subject and a different kind of pain; variety is the spice of revision.

By the end of the first week you should have revised the most difficult of your topics, after which it can only get easier, and you'll have a sense of achievement - crossing the topics off the plan as you complete them can be very satisfying!

Are you sitting comfortably?

The environment where you are working must be appropriate for the task. As far as possible make sure that there are no distractions - no-one else should be in the room, no TV or other noise.

Opinion is divided on whether background music is beneficial, but radio is definitely out (DJ interruptions might distract).

Don't 'loungue around'. Lying on your bed with books propped up on pillows isn't going to work - you can't write properly like this anyway. Sit in a proper chair and use a desk or table. If you can't find an appropriate place at home, try the local library - or even come into school (!) and try to find a quiet space. It's probably best not to go to a friend's house because the temptation to chat might be too distracting.

Revision is not a another word for 'reading'

Whatever you do when you revise, don't just read through your notes.

It is scientifically proven that active learning is much more effective than passive learning, so when you revise don't just sit there, do something.

Here are some suggestions:

First of all condense your notes by making shorter, more concise ones.

Use some of the ideas on the right with this new set of notes:

- Bullet points
- Highlighting
- Underlining
- Coloured pencils - a colour for each type of information perhaps
- Put important terms onto Post-It notes - stick them around the house
- Make up a rhyme, mnemonic, song or mime (!) to aid recall
- Try teaching a particular topic to a relative or friend - (you have to understand it before you can teach it)
- Make up index cards of important terms - carry them around with you
- Record (Most Phones now have a recording feature) yourself reciting information - (do a 'karaoke' with yourself, leave gaps for you to fill in)
- Practice drawing a diagram
- Draw a spider's web of topic relationships

Give yourself a break

In fact, give yourself lots of breaks - at least two an hour - before carrying on with your revision. Breaking the work up like this will make it much more manageable, and give you an incentive at the same time - ten to fifteen minutes is about the right length.

The break need not simply be stopping work. You could have a cup of tea, plan to watch your favourite sit-com or soap (no longer than half an hour, though) or have what the Americans call some 'quality time' with a parent or other relative.

You could pre-arrange this before you start revising, e.g. "I'm going to work for an hour, Mum, then perhaps we could have a short chat over some tea and biscuits." Mum can make the tea! Try to chat about something unrelated to your work.

Another possibility is to ring a friend, but pre-arrange it with them and don't talk for longer than 10-15 minutes. It'll give you something to look forward to.

Within the hour's revision you could also give yourself a little reward such as a 'Smartie' every twenty minutes or when you've revised a particular section of a topic - anything which will make it all a bit more bearable.

And finally...

Don't panic. Be realistic about your plan and what you can achieve in the time available.

Try to stick to the plan, but if (perhaps inevitably) you get out of step with it, then revise the plan and readjust it.

Pay no attention to what your friends say they have or have not revised - it's not a competition.