



# Revision Techniques

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

This study skills guide will focus on information relating to revision techniques and how you can prepare for examinations which will take place for you over the next 1-2 years.

For most students, the thought of sitting an exam will not fill you with a warm feeling but more one of dread! What this guide will do is show you that most pupils have the same worries towards exams and steps you can start taking now to improve your revision for a better exam performance.

First, you need to understand what exams involve and what you will be expected to do.

Exams are not just a memory test, where you are expected to regurgitate everything, you have learnt in years 10 & 11. What you are expected to do is organise your knowledge, recall this information and structure it to answer the question asked.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## **Create a timetable**

- The aim is to plan your time, based around what commitments you already have. School, sports clubs, family etc are unavoidable and should not be cancelled, you need to find a workable balance.
- Make a note of your exam dates and times. You will be notified in advance of your examinations and your teachers will inform you of any classroom based assessments in advance.
- Manage your time and prepare your mind to work regularly. On average, it takes two months before a new behaviour to become automatic.
- Last minute cramming does not help and can stress you out more. Think of revision as part of your course and start as early as possible.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## Time

- Revision is more effective in small blocks of time rather than a long revision session. Your concentration will lapse after 1 hour so 30-40 minutes will be effective.
- Factor in breaks into your timetable, breaks do not need to be longer than 5-10 minutes, grab a snack or move away from your revision area to stretch your legs is sufficient.
- Work out when the best time of day is for you to concentrate.
- Find a routine that works for you and stick to it.
- Feeling tired? Then stop! You will struggle to recall information when you are tired.
- Differentiate between feeling tired and feeling bored. Do not use this as an excuse to avoid difficult topics.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## Distractions and Concentration

- Find yourself a suitable environment. The school or local library, will offer internet access for research, books and journals. Not everyone can revise at home, find somewhere that works for you.
- Do not try to revise too many subjects in a revision session. This may cause confusion and a sense you are not progressing.
- Consider setting up a study group. It is proven that if you teach someone else a topic or talk about it, you will retain this information better than simply reading it from a book. It will make revision more interesting, you can discuss topics etc.
- Learn to live without background noise and your phone.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## Revision

- Make your own revision notes as you will remember what you have written better than a printout given to you.
- Flash cards containing topic key words or dates. You can keep these with you as they are pocket size.
- Record yourself reading your notes and listen to them on your way to school etc.
- Develop good habits such as highlighting key information, ask family or friends to test you. Nobody is going to laugh but it will highlight areas that may need improving.
- Ask your teacher - if you feel uncomfortable asking in class, email your teacher if you are unsure on a topic.
- Find a variety of revision techniques – Keep it interesting, this will keep the boredom away.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## Common exam mistakes.

- Not reading the question – is your answer relevant to the question being asked and not a pre-set answer for that topic?
- Not completing the paper – You must discipline yourself with timings.
- Repetition – Do not repeat yourself, you will only receive the mark once. Re-read your answers.
- Not answering the correct questions – the front of your question paper will explain if you are to answer all questions, certain questions from sections etc.
- Maintain focus – It doesn't matter who is near you, you are all that matters, ignore the people near you.
- Post exam analysis – Do not feel you have to discuss your paper with others, engaging in such discussions could have a negative impact on you and have an impact on your remaining study/exams.

# Study Skills and Exam Guidance

## Mock Exams / Interims / End of topic tests

- These are useful practice – learn from your mistakes and find the gaps in your knowledge.
- They will give you an insight into how questions are worded, phrases used and how questions are scored/weighted.
- Learn how to time yourself. How much time should be allocated to higher scoring essay questions?
- Practice past papers and time yourself completing them. Exam board websites provide access to papers for students to download.
- If your course is new, ask your teacher to provide you with sample questions.
- Learn how to make essay plans. How should you start, develop and end an essay.