



A LEADING EDGE SCHOOL WITH A SPECIALISM IN THE PERFORMING ARTS

Student Steps to Success

Examination preparation

THE FOUR STEPS TO SUCCESS



Just like many things in life, learning is much easier when you take it one step at a time. It is a simple process. In order to learn anything efficiently, all you need to do is:

1. Understand it
2. Condense it
3. Memorise it
4. Review it

PLAN YOUR REVISION

If you have not already done so, plan your revision.

Think about revision in 20-30 minute time slots.

Map out a rota for revising all of your subjects

In the evenings on school days ideally restrict yourself to two subjects for revision. Decide how much time you will spend revising on Saturdays and Sundays and stick to your plan

When planning, write in each subject against a date with specific topics that you intend to cover in that revision slot.

As far as possible, link this revision slot to any revision sessions on offer within school

Leave some dates clear for extra time for some topics that you find more challenging. You could use a traffic light system to identify topics you find more difficult. Do not leave them all to the end in a big red cluster! Try to alternate red topics with green



Have a good look at the whole plan. If possible, share it with one of your parents or an older brother or sister who has been through GCSE's already

Together check that:



You have enough time to revise everything and go over topics more than once	
You are not taking on too much at any one time	
The revision times take into consideration your examination dates	
Just before each exam you have enough time to go over that subject	
Have you planned rewards for yourself as part of the process	

Try to stick to your revision plan, but remember you can adjust it as you go along, as long as adjusting does not mean skipping bits



Fuel Your Brain!

To work effectively, your brain needs water, oxygen and glucose

Low concentrations of water slow down the passage of signals from one brain cell to the next. This slows your thinking down. The more challenging the learning task the brain is involved in, the more water is required for efficient processing. **Drink plenty of water during your revision sessions!**

Feed your brain more oxygen! Even standing up and stretching now and again can boost your learning. Standing increases your heartbeat. This sends more blood and therefore more oxygen to your brain. On average there's an increase of 5-15% blood flow to your brain when standing

Take regular breaks. Your short term memory can only process information effectively for an average of 20 minutes. After that you need to take a short break or change the method you are using e.g from mind mapping to chanting.

Build in review sessions. Otherwise your brain is like a bath that is being filled up without the plug in and you forget what you have revised.

Try reviewing sessions with your peers as an additional activity, test one another and review as you go.

What If IT All Goes Wrong?



Bored?

Take a break. When you return go to a part of the topic you find more interesting. Re-visit the boring bit when you're feeling fresher and more motivated

Struggling?

Your brain functions less effectively if you are stressed or panicking. If you are really stuck and don't understand a bit, mark it in the margin and move onto something else. Ask your teacher or friend for help, and then go back to it.

Distracted?

Are rogue thoughts making your mind wander? Acknowledge them. Stand up, move around, give that thought your full attention, and breathe deeply. Then imagine that thought is a balloon. Let it go and watch it drift away from you. Then get back to work! This is the only chance you get so focus and if you can't – run, jog or walk, drink lots of water and start afresh.



How to Succeed in Exams!

The day before the exam:

Check the exam date, time and place.

Check how long the exam is.

Check you have all the necessary equipment ready, e.g pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, annotated text, calculator where allowed etc.

Avoid cramming last minute revision in late at night. Instead read through your final “checklist” before you go to bed.

Go to bed at a sensible time. You need sleep to perform well.

Before the Exam:

Have a good breakfast/lunch!

Drink plenty of fluids.

Arrive in plenty of time.

Make sure you have been to the toilet before the exam.

Avoid getting “worked up” with friends who may be over excited and nervous.

You need to compose yourself. Use meditation or breathing exercises beforehand if you know that you are likely to become anxious.

Be positive. You’ve revised thoroughly. You will be successful.



In the Exam.....

In the Exam I will:

Read the instructions carefully, several times.

Check how many questions I have to answer.

Check how many marks each question is worth.

Read questions carefully, highlighting the key words such as “Discuss”, “Compare” and “Explain”.

Divide up my time sensibly, spending longest on the answer worth the most marks.

Select relevant evidence to back up my points.

Answer the question that is being asked, rather than trying to put everything I know into the answer.

Show I understand technical terms.

Leave time to read through my answers and check for errors.

Relaxation Tips for stress

Relaxation can help to relieve the symptoms of stress. It can help you calm down and take a step back from a stressful situation.

Although the cause of the anxiety won't disappear, you will probably feel more able to deal with it once you've released the tension in your body and cleared your thoughts.

All relaxation techniques combine breathing more deeply with relaxing the muscles.

Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax at first. It's a skill that needs to be learned and it will come with practice.

Yoga and tai chi are both good ways to improve breathing and relaxation.



Relaxed breathing

Practise deep breathing at a regular time and in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Loosen or remove any tight clothes, such as shoes or jackets. Be completely comfortable.

Sit in a comfy chair which supports your head or lie on the floor or bed. Place your arms on the chair arms, or flat on the floor or bed, a little bit away from the side of your body with the palms up. If you're lying down, stretch out your legs, keeping them hip-width apart or slightly wider. If you're sitting in a chair, don't cross your legs.

Good relaxation always starts with focusing on your breathing. The way to do it is to breathe in and out slowly and in a regular rhythm as this will help you to calm down.

Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you're filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don't worry if you can't reach five at first).

Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.

Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

Practise this relaxed breathing for three to five minutes, two to three times a day (or whenever you feel stressed).

Deep muscle relaxation

This technique takes around 20 minutes. It stretches different muscles in turn and then relaxes them, to release tension from the body and relax your mind.

Find a warm, quiet place with no distractions. Get completely comfortable, either sitting or lying down. Close your eyes and begin by focusing on your breathing; breathing slowly and deeply, as described above.

If you have pain in certain muscles, or if there are muscles that you find it difficult to focus on, spend more time on relaxing other parts.

You may want to play some soothing music to help relaxation. As with all relaxation techniques, deep muscle relaxation will require a bit of practice before you start feeling its benefits.

For each exercise, hold the stretch for a few seconds, and then relax. Repeat it a couple of times. It's useful to keep to the same order as you work through the muscle groups:

Face: push the eyebrows together, as though frowning, then release.

Neck: gently tilt the head forwards, pushing chin down towards chest, and then slowly lift again.

Shoulders: pull them up towards the ears (shrug), and then relax them down towards the feet.

Chest: breathe slowly and deeply into the diaphragm (below your bottom rib) so that you're using the whole of the lungs. Then breathe slowly out, allowing the belly to deflate as all the air is exhaled.

Arms: stretch the arms away from the body, reach, then relax.

Legs: push the toes away from the body, then pull them towards body, then relax.

Wrists and hands: stretch the wrist by pulling the hand up towards you, and stretch out the fingers and thumbs, then relax.

Spend some time lying quietly after your relaxation with your eyes closed. When you feel ready, stretch and get up slowly.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Stressmanagement/Pages/Relaxation.aspx

Revision Websites and Podcasts

General

www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize www.samlearning.com www.topmarks.co.uk
http://getrevising.co.uk/ www.revisionworld.co.uk www.o2learn.co.uk
www.s-cool.co.uk www.examtime.com and then go to subject specific sections

GCSE Pods on school website and on Awarding Body websites (below). Also please check relevant subject areas on the School, Awarding Body and subject related websites or speak directly to your subject teachers.

Awarding body websites are good for downloading past papers also – follow links

www.aga.org.uk www.edexcel.org.uk www.ocr.org.uk

English

www.englishbiz.co.uk www.geoffbarton.co.uk/student-resources.php

www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl

Humanities

Log into VLE from the school website and access the revision materials produced by teachers History – Medicine and Germany exam – use GCSE pod for Edexcel History B spec.

IT

http://www.memrise.com/course/161825/ocr-gcse-ict-b061/

www.teach-ict.com www.zzed.co.uk/b063-2015 GCSEpod.com

Maths

www.mathsrevision.net www.mymaths.co.uk www.kerboodle.co.uk

MFL

www.linguascope.com www.languagesonline.org.uk

P.E.

www.teachpe.com/gcse/; www.o2learn.co.uk/pe www.s-cool.co.uk/gcse/pe

Science

Gojimo app; www.kerboodle.com; [www.cgpbooks.co.uk/interative gcse science](http://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/interative_gcse_science) or **CGP app**; [www.youtube.com/user/my GCSEscience](http://www.youtube.com/user/my_GCSEscience); www.kscience.co.uk