



*'Dunbar Grammar School is
a caring community where
you can RISE to be your best'*

AN INTRODUCTION
TO STUDY SKILLS:
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HELP
YOU REACH YOUR POTENTIAL.

*If you've got the will, but
don't know the way, this
booklet is for you!*



EXAM PREPARATION – Where am I now?

Give yourself a score out of 10 for how satisfied you are with this area of your life.

| |
|-----|
| /10 |
|-----|

Now write down a list of words that would describe how you would feel if you were 10/10 in this area. Write down at least 10 words.

Now write down three or four words that would describe how you would feel if you were 0/10.

EXAM PREPARATION - Where do I want to be?

Circle the words under 10/10 that you feel most positive about and put them together into a statement that will be your goal and vision.



*School life can be so hectic sometimes.
This section will help you get
organised and study well
throughout the year.*

School is a lot easier to manage when you are organised. Here are a few simple tips to help you be more prepared for school:

GET PACKING! Pack your bag at night for the following day, checking with your timetable that you have all the appropriate materials for each class.

DO THE WRITE THING! Always make sure you have a pen/pencil in your bag.

'UMM...THE DOG ATE IT' Always check Show My Homework and Google Classroom for homework deadlines. Do not depend on your memory alone. When there is so much to do for each class it is easy to forget something.

TO DO? TA DA! You may find it useful to write a 'to do' list of realistic tasks that you can complete that day. Always prioritise by putting the tasks that need to be completed first at the top of your list.

UNDER PRESSURE? Don't leave homework until the last minute. It can often take longer than you might think.

IT'S IN THE BAG! Make sure you regularly empty your bag rather than carrying everything round all the time.

FILE DON'T PILE. Try to organise your work into folders. Perhaps even have one for each subject. This will ensure that you can find the information you need easily.

HAKUNA MATATA! Set your alarm clock ten minutes earlier than you really need to get ready so that you aren't rushing to get to school. If you use your mobile as an alarm, set the alarm tone to an energetic song (songs from The Lion King are known to help wake people up!) and put your phone on the other side of your bedroom. This will force you to get out of your bed.

RELEASE THE PRESSURE! It's important to take time to relax but put off fun until after your work is finished. You'll enjoy it much more when you have no deadlines hanging over you.

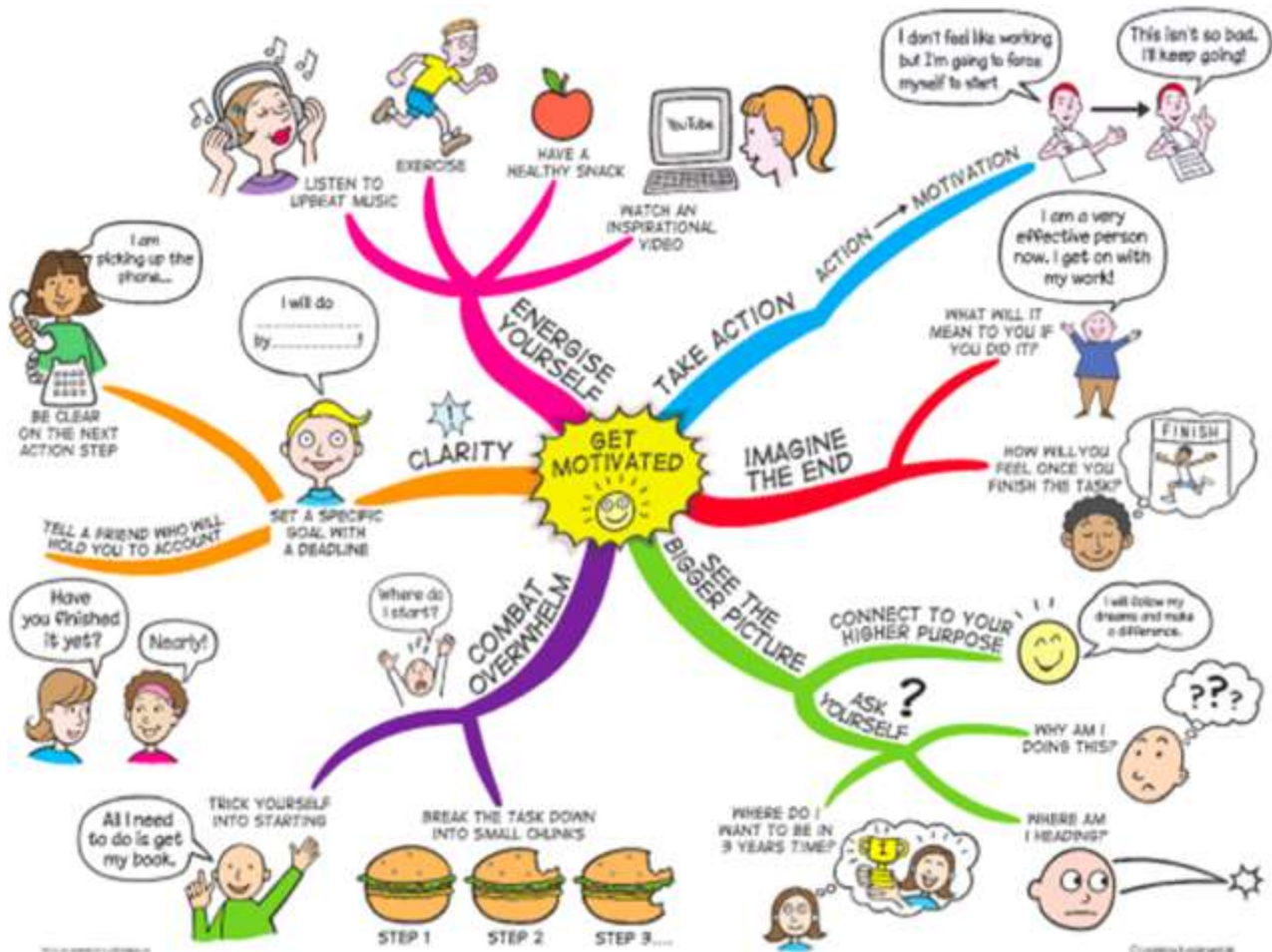
So, it's getting close to the exam, here's the first three steps which will help you get prepared for some serious study.



GET MOTIVATED

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task which needs to be accomplished. This can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, depression and self-doubt among students. Motivating yourself to study is sometimes really difficult, especially when there are so many more fun things to do!

It can be really helpful to your motivation levels if you can keep in mind what it is you want to achieve. For example, I need 2As and a B to get into my course at Uni. Or I must pass four National 4s to start my plumbing apprenticeship. So, what do you want to achieve from your exams? Use the questions in the green branch of the following "Get Motivated" mind map to help you.



CREATE A STUDY TIMETABLE

One of the most important things you can do to manage your time effectively is make up a timetable of when you're going to study and when you are going to relax. Timetables can be done either on an Excel Spreadsheet, Word or you could make your own, like the one below.

SEPTEMBER

Sleeping in is okay. Sleep = better quality study. good!

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---|---|---|--|---|----------------------------|---|
| 10-12 Trigonometry Page 10-25 1-4 Grammar exercises page 5-25 Breakfast with dad. | 9-11 Revise week 10 1-3:30 Read pages 50-150 5pm Netball Dinner w/ mum | 9-12 Write module A essay. Go for a walk 2-5 Group study ALL calculus exercises | 9-midday REHEARSAL 3-6 Practice comprehension on class handout. | 9-10 Exercise ③ pg 11 12-2 Write Module A essay Celebrate Rosie's birthday! | Netball match FUN TIMES | ALL DAY GROUP REHEARSAL |
| 11-1 Revise subjunctive tense 3-5 Learn Module A essay | 9-11 Revise weeks 11-13 & make flash cards. 12-3 pg 10-30 5pm Netball Night off! | ALL DAY GROUP REHEARSAL | 9-11 Practice speech out loud! 12-2 Shorten module A essay. | 9-11 Practice exam 2012 READ TEXT (1 hour) | Take the day off! | 9-12 Revise errors from 2 weeks until exam! |

Be specific

Maths — English — French — Drama —

Colour coding is excellent!

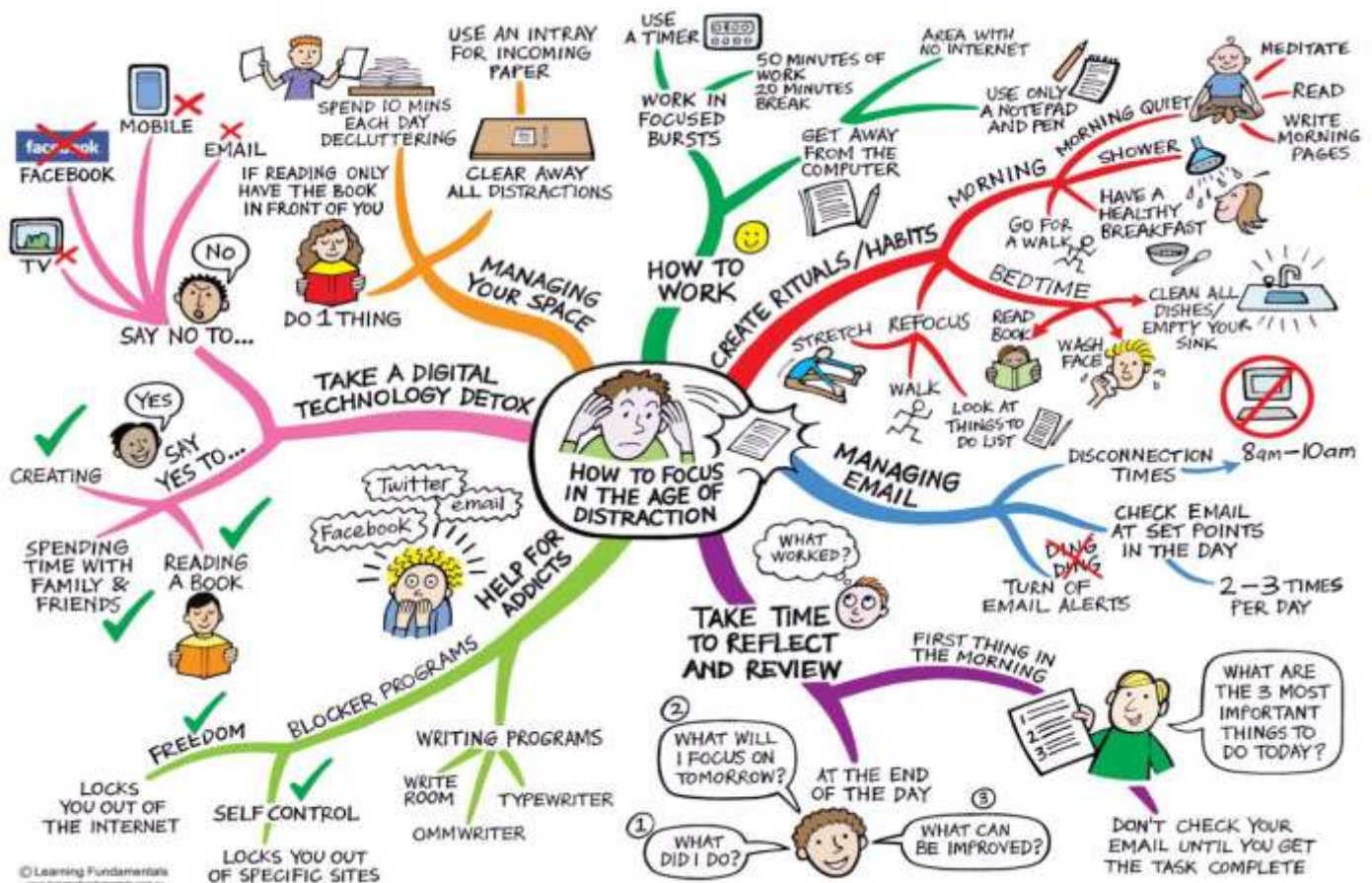
This is okay!

Of course, a study timetable like the one above is only of use if it is put into practice. So, make yourself a study timetable – and stick to it!

REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

Once you have set aside time to do some work, you need to make sure you're not distracted in any way. Your phone, television and your tablet/computer are the main ways in which you can be distracted. GET RID OF THEM! Looking at your phone for 5-10 minutes can be your reward for doing 45 minutes of revision.





Have a look over the diagram above to discover new ways to reduce distractions during your study time.



Okay! So now you are organised, free from distractions and ready to revise, you may be thinking 'how do I revise?'. The first task is to ensure that you have at hand all the information you are required to learn and to organise it in a format that will make it easier for you to understand and remember. For that to happen you need to be skilled in the art of note taking!

Note taking is an essential part of many classes and revision. Here are a few different ways you can take notes that will help you get the most out of the information you've been given.

LINEAR NOTES

By following these simple techniques, you will ensure that you are creating notes that will be more easily remembered:

- Give your notes headings and sub-headings;
- Take notes in a logical order, not all over the page;
- Use letters, numbers or bullet points to organise notes;
- Use CAPITAL LETTERS for important points OR go over the important points with a highlighter pen.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------|------------|--------|-------------|
| & + | and | ↓ | decrease | imp. | important |
| - | minus, without | ∴ | therefore | Govt. | Government |
| = | equals | # | number | Info. | information |
| ≠ | does not equal to, not the same as | @ | at | mngmt. | management |
| ≈ c | approximately, similar to | vs | against | popn. | population |
| < | less than | e.g. | forexample | C | century |
| > | greater than | w | with | +ive | positive |
| ↑ | increase | w/ | without | -ive | negative |

Abbreviations, such as those shown above, can help to speed up your note taking. Both statements below say the same thing, it's just one was written much quicker!

At the end of the twentieth century the United Kingdom's population, at around sixty million, was similar to that of Italy, but Italy's population was shrinking because its birth rate had fallen below its death rate. The UK's population was still growing, albeit very slowly – at a rate of 0.09% between 1995 and 2000.

End 20 UK popn c60m ≈ I. BUT I. ↓ due BR < DR – cf. UK ↑ slow i.e. 0.09% 95–2K.

MIND MAPS

Minds maps are summaries of important information that are also easy to remember. Grab a piece of blank paper and start summarising any notes you may have into important chunks. Mind maps can be basic -

Presentations

Exam Skills

Basic Maths

Group work

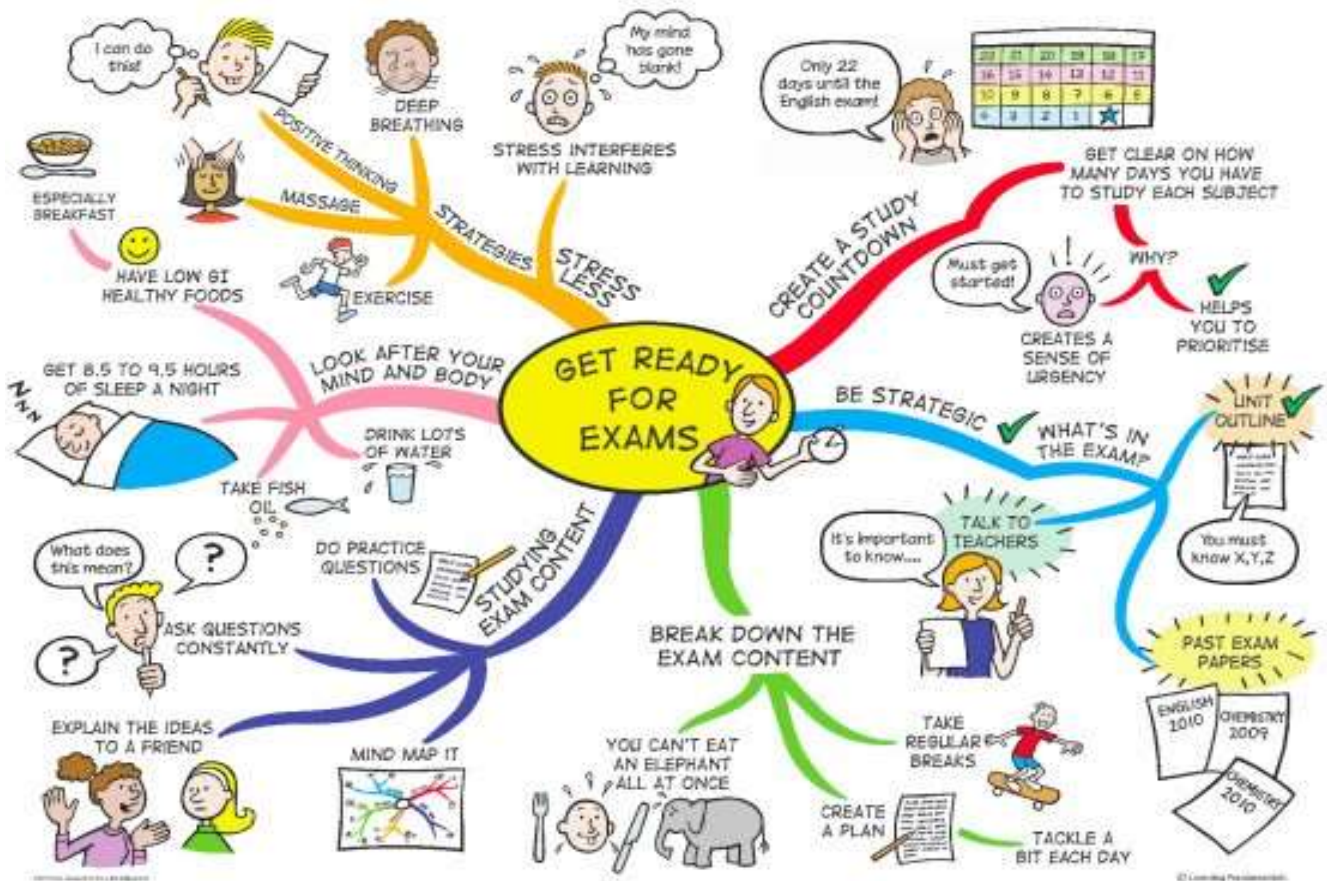
Study Skills Workshops

Essay Writing

Reading & Note-Taking

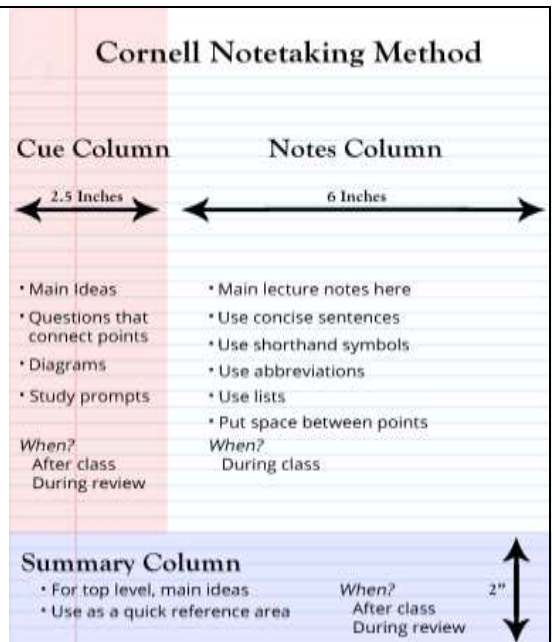
Report Writing

Or mind maps can be a bit more elaborate with pictures and colour which will help to stimulate your memory -



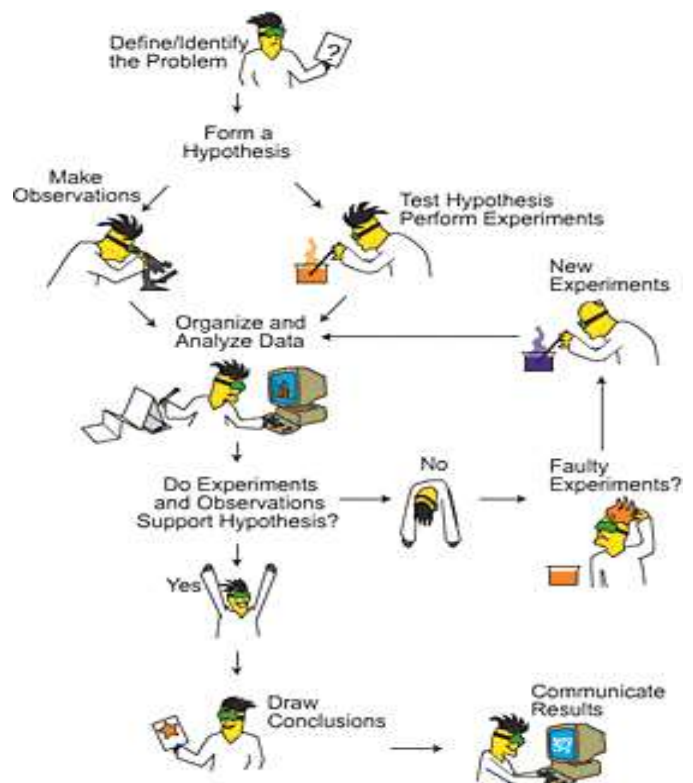
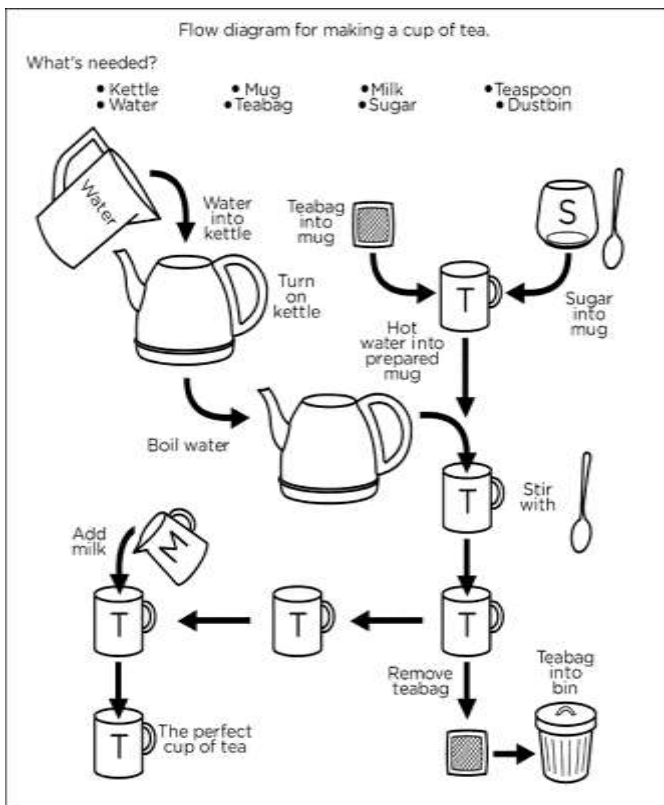
THE CORNELL NOTE SYSTEM

The Cornell Note System is superior to others and science has proven that it is not only more efficient, but also makes it a lot easier to review notes, for example when preparing for an exam. The system involves students dividing a page in their exercise book into three sections; a thin column on the left (the margin might just about do) the majority on the right and a box at the bottom. Students complete their work as normal in the large right-hand column. The magic comes after the lesson when they first sum up what they have learned in the box at the bottom of the page and then write quiz questions about the work in the column on the left. Now, when they come to revise, rather than reading through their notes (and re-studying) they can answer their pre-prepared quiz questions about the work and use their power of recall instead.



FLOW DIAGRAMS

Flow diagrams are useful for illustrating processes such as the rain cycle or for labelling features on a diagram. Make sure when doing these diagrams, they are large enough for labels to be clear. The following two diagrams are good examples –



PICTURE PERFECT

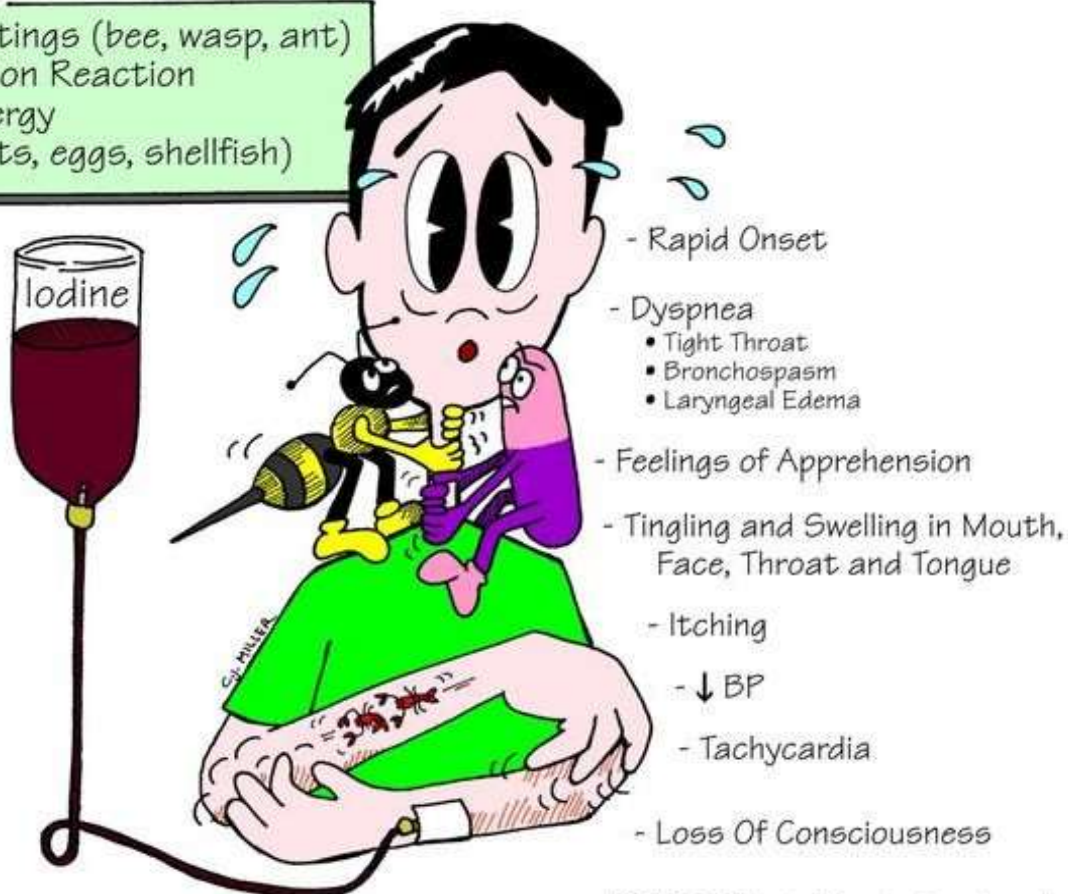
If you are more of a visual learner and like to draw, use your abilities to help you take notes which will make it easier to revise and memorise information.

Below is an example of how the power of pictures could be used to help remember the causes and symptoms of anaphylactic reactions -

ANAPHYLACTIC REACTION

Causes:

- Insect Stings (bee, wasp, ant)
- Medication Reaction
- Food Allergy
(peanuts, eggs, shellfish)



 ©2007 Nursing Education Consultants, Inc.

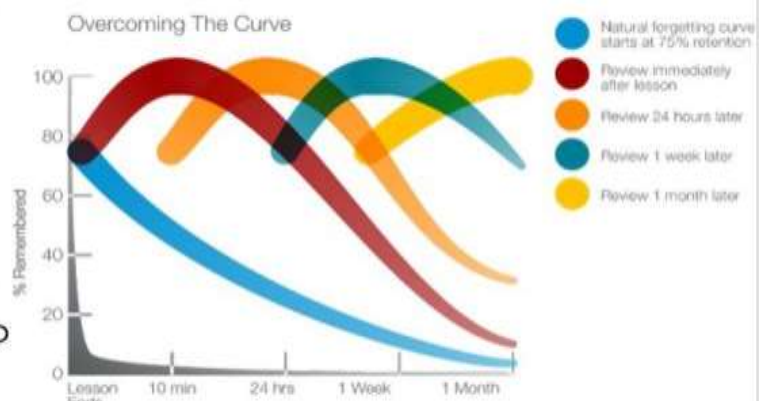
Good job! In creating such excellent notes you've already given yourself a head start in the process of remembering all that information for the day of the exam. Now it's time to study smart! Try out the following tried, and tested techniques and you should find that you can learn information quicker (and be able to remember it for longer) than ever before.



Revision is a long term process

80% of what you learn today will be forgotten within 24 hours if you do not make a conscious effort to remember it.

It is important to regularly review acquired knowledge; this is how things move from short-term to long term memory and become easier to recall at speed.



Steel, S (2014) The Impactful 'Curve of Forgetting' [Online]

Effective revision is an on-going process.

TEACH A FRIEND

The very best way to consolidate your understanding of a topic is by teaching it to someone else. Set up some time with a friend (someone that has absolutely no knowledge of the topic is best) and teach them everything you know. Your friend will no doubt ask some very good questions and highlight any areas you may need to study more. It has been proven that this method can help you remember 90% of the information you need.

STUDY GROUP WITH FRIENDS

Studying with friends can be very effective if done properly. Don't fool yourself that just because you met up with friends and got your work out

that you have actually studied! Try to keep the group size to no more than four people, keep the session fairly short and allocate one person to lead the group. Have a plan of what you are going to study and try your best to stick to this as much as possible. HIDE YOUR PHONES IN ANOTHER ROOM!

ACROSTICS

If you have a list of words to remember in order, then using acrostics can help. This is where you use the first letter of each word in the list to create another word that is easier to remember. One example is when trying to remember the points on a compass – north, east, south and west. This is commonly remembered by the acrostic 'Never Eat Shredded Wheat.

ACRONYMS

You probably use acronyms all the time without realising, particularly when you are texting or chatting online. LOL and YOLO are commonly used acronyms. They are abbreviations that are created by using the first letters of a series of words. Each letter is a cue, or suggests, an item you need to remember. You have no doubt come across SOHCAHTOA in Maths, but there are lots of other opportunities in other subjects to use acronyms for revision purposes. Try to come up with a few your own.

JOURNEY AND PEG

Revision can take place at any time and the journey to and from school is an ideal opportunity to do this. Or maybe even the route you take from your bedroom to the front door. Think of a familiar journey and write down all the landmarks you pass in order on a piece of paper, each on a separate line. Now pick some information that you need to learn and write down each piece of information next to the landmark.

If the journey you are thinking about is in your home, you could use post-it notes to stick the information you need to memorise to each landmark. Now imagine yourself making the journey and passing each piece of information pegged to each landmark. This will help you recall the details easily.

MEMORY FLASHING

Read over and try to memorise the information you want to recall, and then turn the page upside down so you can't see it. Now, try to rewrite it from memory. Once you have done this check to see if you remembered it all. Repeat this exercise several times until you know it perfectly. It is important

to review the information the next day and a week later to check you can still recall it.

RECORD YOURSELF

Most mobile phones have the facility to record voices now. Read (or sing!) your revision notes and record yourself doing it. Listen to your recording on the bus, walking to school or before you fall asleep. You will remember information with very little effort.

BRAINSTORM

Read the text you are revising carefully. Now cover it up and brainstorm - write down all the bits of information you can remember as fast as you can in any order. Look at your text again; add any bits you missed to your brainstorm and alter any bits you got wrong.

USE TECHNOLOGY

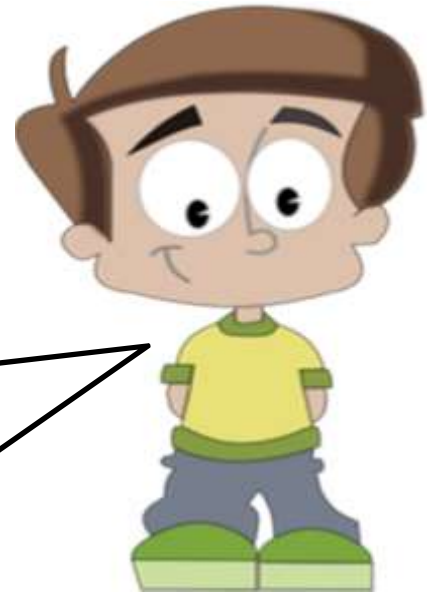
There are so many different websites and applications that can help study you now. Have a look at some of these suggestions to see if they suit your revision needs –

BRAIN BLAST
ONLINE STUDY TOOLS

- 1 MINIMAL WRITING TOOLS**
Calmly Writer & ZenPen have minimal designs so students can write without distraction.
- 2 ONLINE CORKBOARDS**
Padlet and Lino are online corkboard spaces for posting multi-media note cards.
- 3 POWER THESAURUS**
This tool is crowdsourced & features 902K terms.
- 4 MATHWAY**
Mathway is a free online calculator for basic math, algebra, trig., statistics, chemistry, & more.
- 5 E.GG TIMER**
E.gg Timer is an elegant tool for tracking study time.
- 6 CITATION TOOLS**
CiteThisForMe.com & BibMe.org are excellent citation generators.
- 7 CHECKLISTS**
Tick-Tick & Wunderlist are cross-platform checklist tools.
- 8 TEXT-TO-SPEECH**
Naturalreaders.com converts text to speech, using different speeds and accents.
- 9 WRITING REVISER TOOL**
SAS's free Google Docs add-on, Writing Reviser, diagnoses learners' writing errors.
- 10 CLOUD STORAGE**
Evernote, Dropbox, MS OneNote, & Google Drive make it difficult to lose assignments.
- 11 NOISLI**
Noisli plays ambient sounds to block out noise.
- 12 STUDY ORGANIZER**
Set up an online study cockpit with Start.me to access materials quickly.
- 13 TIMETABLE**
"Timetable plots learners' homework & exam times & syncs to all Android devices. During study periods, the app mutes students' phones.

TODD-FINLEY.COM

Phew! With all that studying, you should certainly know your stuff. However, an exam is not just a test of memory. A further key to success is the ability to recognise types of questions and how to answer them. And for that, practice makes perfect!



PAST PAPERS

Practicing past paper questions is essential when revising. The more you do the more prepared and ultimately the more successful you will be in your final exam. Your teacher will be able to give you questions to do, but you can also access more on the SQA website (see below). The website also has the marking instructions for you to check your answers. Or you may prefer to get someone at home to mark it for you.

Once you become more confident with the questions you should start to time yourself doing them. Remember! Many exams are a time test, so you should get in to the habit of setting a timer every time you do a question.



SQA

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/>



Okay, so the exam's tomorrow. What should you do?

EAT WELL!

It's a proven fact that what you eat will have an effect on your physical and mental performance. Officially in order for you to perform to the best of your ability you need to avoid coffee, doughnuts, pizza and coke the night before a test. Grilled fish with steamed vegetables on the side, mixed fruit for dessert, and caffeine-free beverages throughout would be perfect. However, we realise that this is not always realistic, so eat something that makes you happy!

GET READY FOR THE MORNING

Make sure you have all the materials that you're taking into the test ready. If a laptop or calculator is allowed, have it on the charger. Have more than one pencil or pen in hand. Pack a bottle of water for the nervous dry-mouth that can set in before an exam. Gather all your stuff together and have it ready to go the night before.

LAY OUT YOUR SCHOOL UNIFORM

Choose an outfit that is layered and lay it out before you go to sleep. You won't have any control over the temperature of the exam room, so be prepared to add or take off layers so you can be comfortable during the exam.

LAUGH!

Do one fun thing like watching a funny programme, having a kickabout or fiddling around with photos on Instagram. Laughing will relax you, lower stress and help you get a good night's sleep.

BED TIME RE-CAP

The few minutes before you switch your light off are actually really effective for memorisation. So, tuck yourself up in bed, have a quick read through of the most important facts, equations or vocabulary, and then switch off.

VISUALISE A POSITIVE OUTCOME

Attitude affects exam results. Even with proper planning, too many people affect their performance on a test because they just *know* that they're going to fail. Think positively and don't think failure is going to be an outcome. Don't think that you might fail, know that you will succeed, and your performance will be better for it.

SET THE ALARM

It may sound daft, but you'd be surprised how often people sleep in on the day of the exam. Don't rely on others to wake you up!

EXERCISE BEFORE SLEEPING

A little light stretching, and exercise will help you fall asleep faster and sleep soundly through the night. It also works out the tension you may be carrying after a day of studying and test prep. If you go to bed tense, you may wake up with a backache or headache – definitely not what you need on the day of an exam.

GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Don't burn the midnight oil the night before a test. The extra effort put into late-night studying will be offset by reduced mental performance due to lost sleep. It won't help, so don't try it. Call it a night and go to bed.

REWARD YOURSELF

Treat yourself right. Remember to schedule a little post-exam celebration or another kind of reward for all your hard work preparing for the exams. Make it special. After all, you *are* worth it!



TAKE 10 MINUTES TO TREAT YOURSELF AND HAVE A LAUGH. LOOK UP THE OUTTAKES TO YOUR FAVOURITE PROGRAMME OR EVEN JUST WATCH SOME FUNNY CAT CLIPS!

*The exams are finally here!
Here are some tips to help you
perform to the best of your
ability during the exam.*



EXAM TIP #1

Wake up early so that you do not need to rush through having breakfast and getting ready.

EXAM TIP #2

Check the venue and time of the exam to make sure that you have not confused the day/time/venue.

EXAM TIP #3

Have a balanced breakfast and eat nothing risky (probably not the best day to have a super-hot curry!). Bananas are always a good option.

EXAM TIP #4

Before leaving home, check that you have everything that you will need – ID, pens, watch, calculator etc.

EXAM TIP #5

Head off to the exam with plenty of time. A lot of unexpected events can happen on your way there and you do not want to be late!

EXAM TIP #6

If there are people around who are panicking, avoid them. They are not doing you any favours!

EXAM TIP #7

Go to the toilet before the exam starts. Exams can be quite long and there is no time to waste.

EXAM TIP #8

Remember to take your time to complete your details at the front of your answer sheet properly.

EXAM TIP #9

When in the exam room, sit comfortably and spread out. It's proven that when we physically make ourselves larger by spreading our arms or leaning back on the chair, this releases a type of hormone which makes you more confident and depresses the release of stress hormones. It works!

EXAM TIP #10

If your brain freezes, just start writing anything and you will soon start remembering more details.

EXAM TIP #11

Don't spend more time than you planned on a particular section/question or you might run out of time to answer other questions and gain those extra marks! Also, leave any questions that you are unsure about for the end.

EXAM TIP #12

Stay calm, you have done your homework and have nothing to fear!

EXAM TIP #13

Proofread your work to ensure that it is of the best of your ability. You should check for any missing words, accurate spelling and punctuation and ensure that you have written in full sentences where appropriate.



EXAM PREPARATION – what can I do to improve?

How can you get to 10/10?

Think carefully about all you have learned.

If your memory needs refreshed, the mind map on page 8 is very useful when thinking about how best to prepare for exams. Look carefully at every point mentioned in it and consider how you can apply each of them to your own preparation.

Now take these ideas and prioritise them. Put them into an order that makes most sense to you, so that you have six steps to success to follow -

My Six Steps to Success

Step 1: I will.....

Step 2: I will.....

Step 3: I will.....

Step 4: I will.....

Step 5: I will.....

Step 6: I will.....

