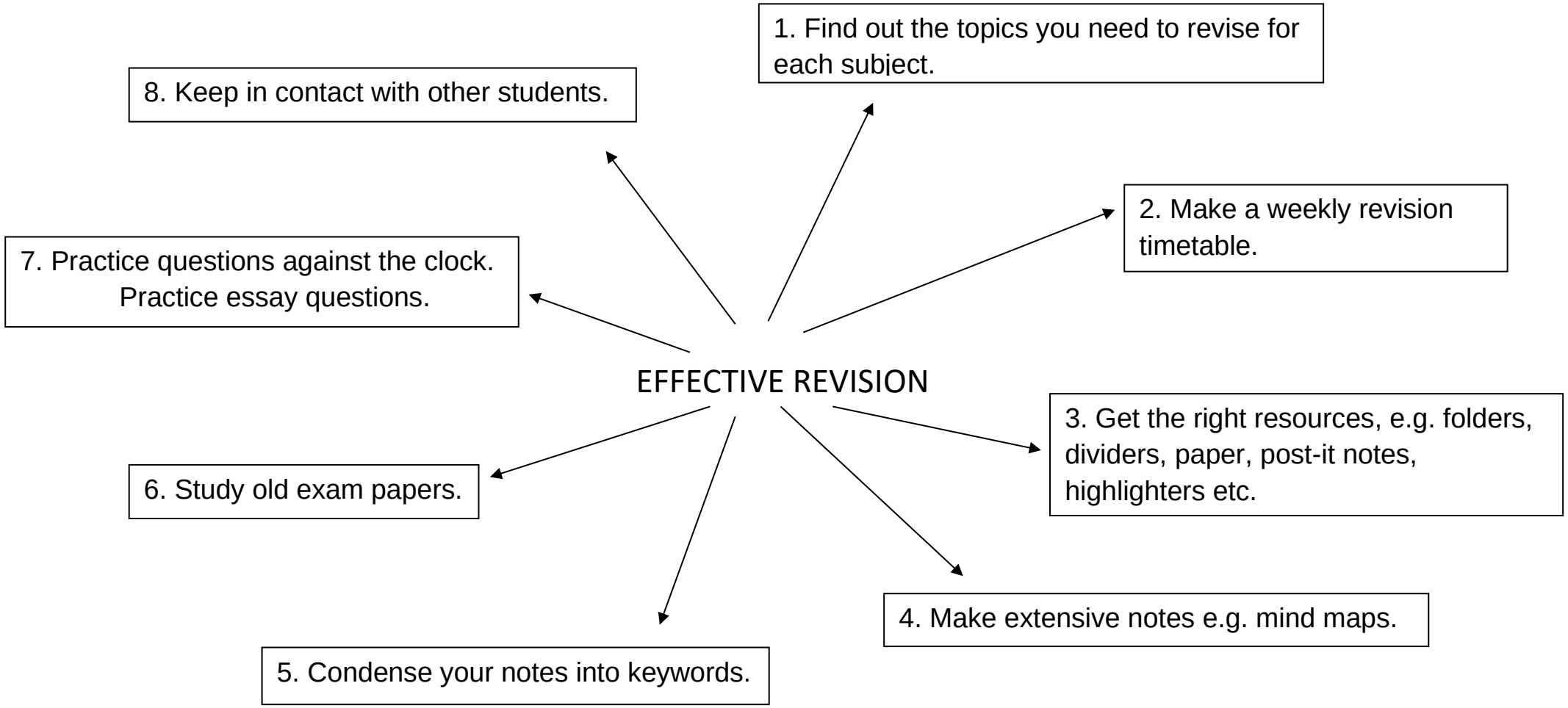
BELVOIR
A PRIORY ACADEMY

GCSE Exams Revision Support Guide

The Rules!

- Your teachers will help you fill in this revision timetable with which topics to study on which days. Do your best to stick to it.
- Each session should be around ***50 minutes*** with NO distractions. Put your phone in another room, turn the TV off and tell your family you are revising.
- Recommended structure of a revision session
  - 5 mins - self quizzing from last session
  - 40 mins – cognitively active revision
  - 5 mins – write a quiz for next session
- After each session, have a ***20 minute break***. Do something different – go outside, talk to your family, eat a snack, get a drink.
- Revision sessions need to be active. This means NOT just reading and highlighting. Do something with the information – turn it into pictures, summarise it onto revision cards, test yourself or get someone to test you.
- This timetable gives you Saturday off every week. If a different day off revision is better for you, swap it so that you are revising on the Saturday instead. Remember this can be flexible each week depending on your plans, but you should be ***revising for six out of seven days.***


EFFECTIVE REVISION
1. Find out the topics you need to revise for each subject.
2. Make a weekly revision timetable.
3. Get the right resources, e.g. folders, dividers, paper, post-it notes, highlighters etc.
4. Make extensive notes e.g. mind maps.
5. Condense your notes into keywords.
6. Study old exam papers.
7. Practice questions against the clock. Practice essay questions.
8. Keep in contact with other students.

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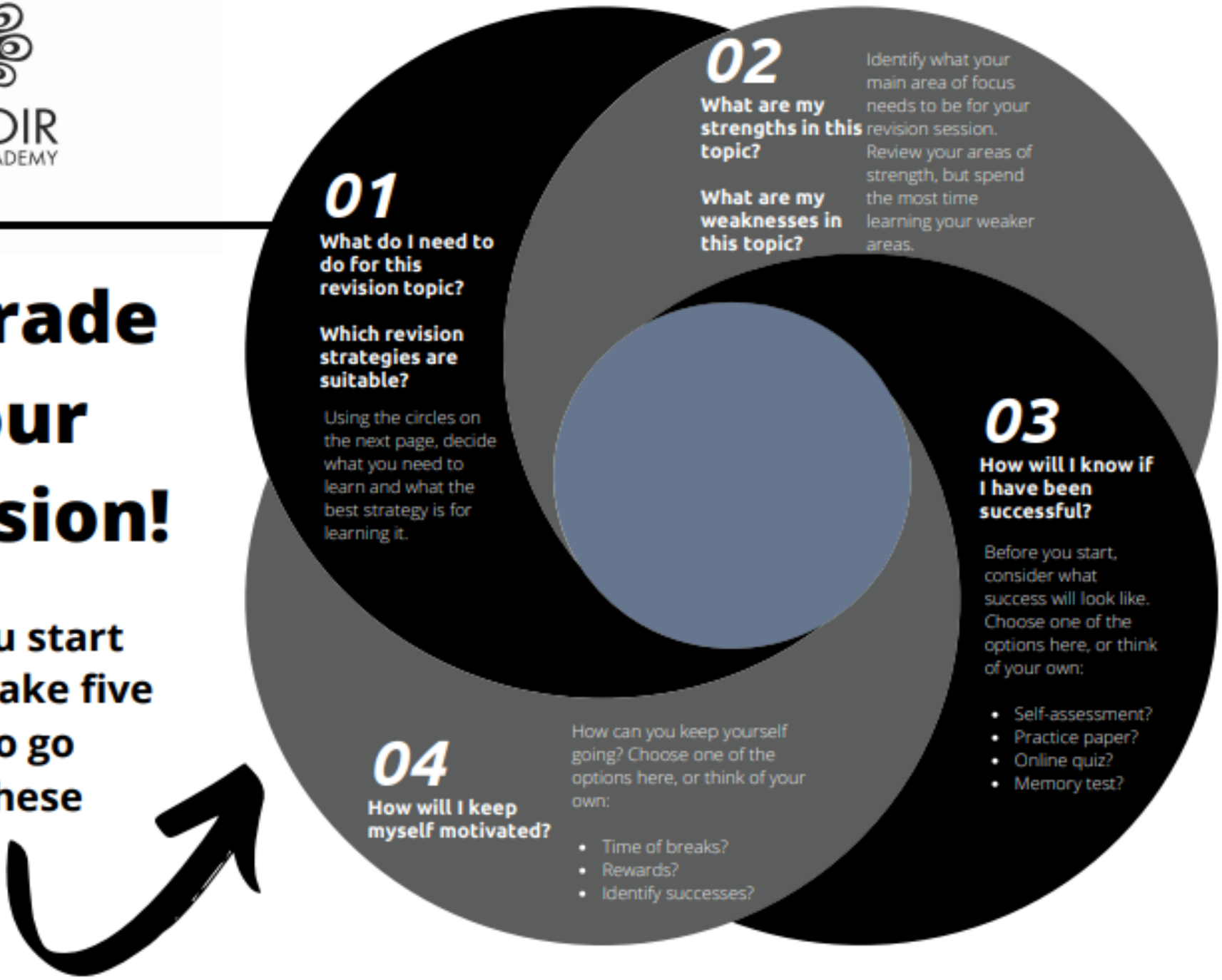
Upgrade Your Revision!

Before you start revising, take five minutes to go through these steps...



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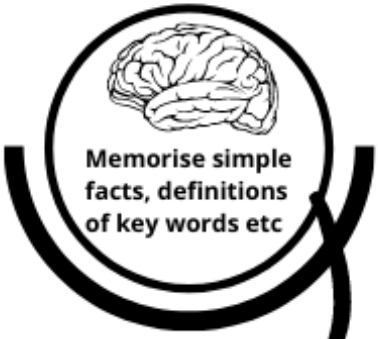
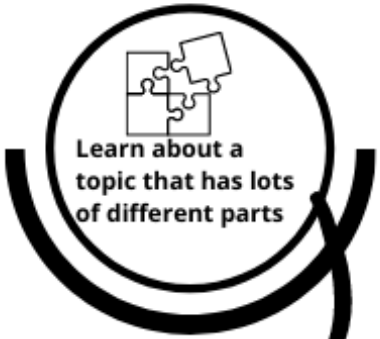
What do I need to do for this revision topic?



Memorise simple facts, definitions of key words etc

- Dual coding
- Revision cards
- Post-it notes
- Copy Cover Check



Learn about a topic that has lots of different parts

- Graphic organisers
- Mind maps
- Self-quizzing

Explore two or more sides of an argument / topic

- Cornell note making
- Post-it notes
- Self-quizzing

Memorise processes, cause and effect, procedures

- Flash cards
- Graphic organisers
- Post-it notes
- Online

Learn how to answer a specific style of exam question

- Self-quizzing
- Practice papers

Develop deeper understanding of WHY or HOW

- Self-quizzing
- Cornell note making
- Thought shower

Basics about Revision

- We forget 80% of what we have learnt within 24 hours
- We need to revise, revise and revise to retain the information
- We remember from the beginning and end of an experience
- So revise for 45 minutes at a time then take a break
- Information is remembered best when it is chunked into small pieces.

Revision Materials

- Make sure you know all the units and sub-units for the subject
- Check that you have the necessary revision materials for each sub-unit
- See teacher for the right revision guide, text book or where to buy revision guide
- Begin to revise each sub-topic from every subject, using long term timetable
- Other recommended equipment includes the following: highlighters, coloured pens/pencils, revision cards, lined paper, plain paper.

Recommended Structure of a Revision Session

45 minutes per session

- 5 mins – Upgrade Your Revision (page 3)
- 5 mins - self quizzing from last session
- 30 mins – cognitively active revision
- 5 mins – write a quiz for next session

Which revision method should I use?

1	**Memorise simple facts, definitions of key words etc**	Dual coding, revision cards using the Leitner method (p10, p12), post-it notes (p10, 12), Copy Cover Check (p12)
2	**Memorise processes, cause and effect, procedures**	Revision cards (p10, p12, p14), graphic organisers (p8 & 9), post-it notes (p10, p12), online resources (p12, topics booklet)
3	**Learn about a topic that has lots of different parts**	Graphic organisers (p8 & 9), mind maps (p12, p14), self-quizzing (p7)
4	**Learn how to answer a specific style of exam question**	Self-quizzing (p7), practice papers (p12, 16, topics booklet)
5	**Explore two sides of an argument/topic**	Cornell note making (p15), post-it notes (p10, p12), self-quizzing (p7)
6	**Develop a deeper understanding of WHY or HOW**	Self-quizzing (p7), Cornell note making (p15), mind maps (p12, p14)

Cognitively Active Revision

Cognitively active revision is where the revision activities you are doing make your brain work. They require you to think about the information, to recall it and to actively do something with it. Cognitively passive strategies like highlighting are much less effective because you are not doing anything with the information.

Read each of the activities in the table below. If it is **cognitively active**, tick it. If it is **cognitively passive**, add a revision technique to make it **active.**

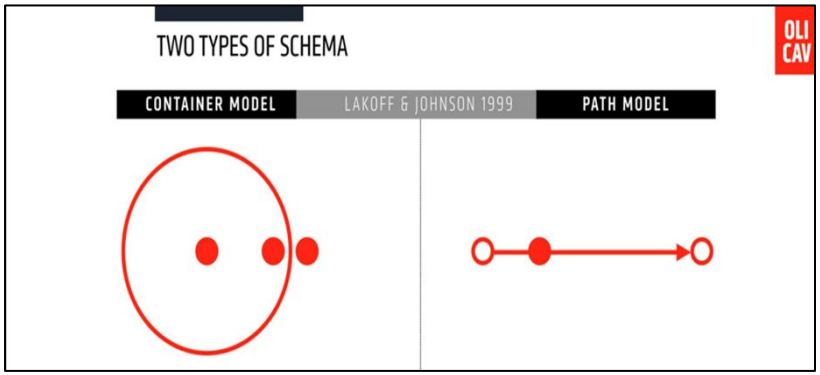
Watch a YouTube video and turn the key info into a mindmap	**Look at the text book**	**Making flow charts or drawing diagrams to connect pieces of info**	**Read example answers from teachers**
Reread your exercise book	**Summarise core information onto a revision card, then test your memory of them**	**Dual coding – drawing pictures to illustrate key points**	**Copy out an essay plan**
Copy out a mind map	**Write own study questions and use notes to write perfect answers**	**Reread and highlight the text**	**Use a graphic organiser to reorganise the information into a different format**
Copy, cover, check a section from a textbook to see if you can memorise it	**Looked through your exercise book and tried to improve on some of the answers or tasks**	**Created a mindmap to make links between different topics or themes**	**Look at an exam paper**

List here the revision strategies you like to use.

Are they **cognitively active**? If not, what can you add to them to ensure that you are actively engaging with the material?

Factual	Predictive	Analytical	Application/Synthesis

	Is/Are	Did/Do	Can	Would/Should	Will	Might/Could
What						
Where						
When						
Who						
Why						
How						



CONTAINER = INFORMATION THAT STAYS THE SAME = CHUNK or COMPARE MODELS

Classify, compare, categorise, concept, explain, describe

PATH = INFORMATION CHANGES OVER TIME = SEQUENCE or CAUSE AND EFFECT MODELS

Sequence, cause and effect, episodes, procedure, process

TOPIC/TASK	CONTAINER		PATH	
	CHUNK	COMPARE	SEQUENCE	CAUSE AND EFFECT
How does oxygen flow from the air into the blood?				
Acid reactions and products when making salts				
Ionic bonding vs covalent bonding				
Process of natural selection				
Units of weight, temperature, mass etc				
The four different food tests				
Different types of renewable and non-renewable energy				
The impact of humans on the environment				

Graphic Organisers

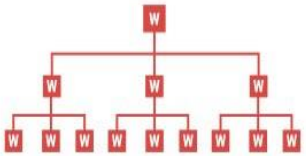
Container – info that stays the same (compare, describe, explain)

Path – info that changes (process, cause and effect, time sequence)

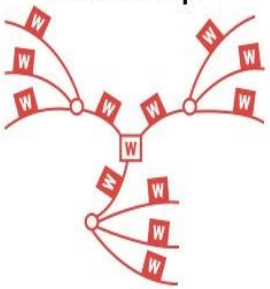
CONTAINER MODEL

CHUNK

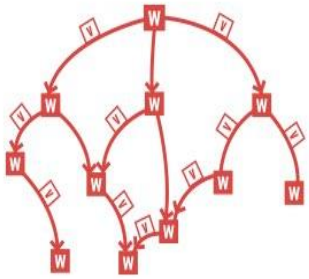
Tree Diagram



Mind Map



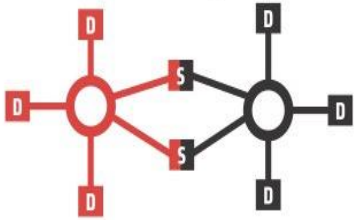
Concept Map



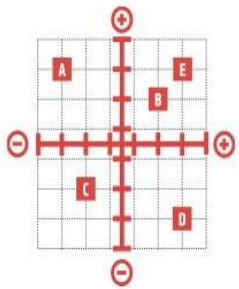
COMPARE

Venn Diagram

Double Spray



Crossed Continua

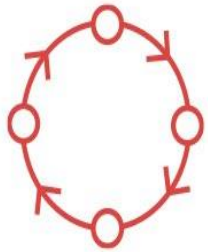


PATH MODEL

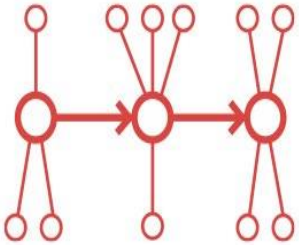
SEQUENCE

Flow Chart

Cycle

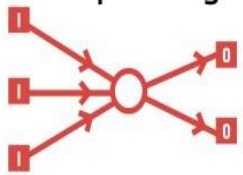


Flow Spray

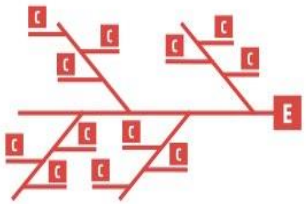


CAUSE & EFFECT

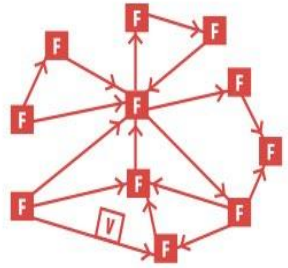
Input-Output Diagram



Fishbone Diagram



Relations Diagram



Post-It Notes

Sorting activity – write range of ideas/quotes/facts/ points onto post-its and then sort them into different groups.	Matching activity – write questions on one card and answers on another, then try to pair them up after a gap of time (eg, the week after you write them).	

Revision Cards

Leitner model – questions on one side, answers on the other side. Quiz yourself daily, every other day and weekly depending on how often you get them right.	Hole punch and link with string to create links between ideas and flow diagrams to illustrate a process.	

How Do I Revise?

1. Space your practice

People who leave gaps between practice attempts go on to score higher. In fact, the longer the gaps, the higher the scores. The difference is huge: people who leave more than 24 hours between their first five attempts at a test/revision activity and their second five attempts score as highly, on average, as people who have practiced 50% more than them.

Research confirms this theory: if you want to study effectively, you should spread out your revision rather than cramming. This is easier said than done, but if you are organised enough, you can spend less time revising and remember more.

2. Make sure you fail occasionally

People who are most inconsistent when they first start have better scores later on. These people are pushing themselves to learn new things and make links with their existing knowledge which improves their overall memory and understanding.

The moral is clear: invest some time in trying things out, which may mean failing occasionally, if you want to maximise learning in the long run.

3. Practise the WAY you'll be tested as well as the information

The big mistake many students make is not practising the thing they will be tested on. If your exam involves writing an essay, you need to practise essay-writing. Merely memorising the material is not enough.

Writing exam answers is a skill, just like playing an online game is a skill. You wouldn't try and improve at a game by trying to memorise moves, you'd practise making them. Other research confirms that practising retrieving information is one of the best ways to ensure you remember it.

4. Structure information, don't try to remember it

Trying to remember something has been shown to have almost no effect on whether you do remember it. The implication for revision is clear: just looking at your notes won't help you learn them.

Instead, you need to reorganise or rewrite the information in some way – whether by making notes of your notes, thinking about how what you're reading relates to other material, or practising writing answers.

5. Rest and sleep

A full night's sleep helps you learn new skills or retain information. Staying up all night to revise will increase your stress levels and cramming will not help your memory in the long term (see number 1).

How Do I Revise?

Mind maps	**Revision Cards**
• Start with a large piece of paper. • Revise a topic or a sub-topic. • Use a selection of words and diagrams. • Use colour, shapes, symbols, pictures and cuttings to bring the information to life. • Use lines and arrows to connect ideas. • Stick your learning map on your wall/door, anywhere it can be seen easily and often.	• Reduce the information from one sub-topic to key points/bullet points. This could build up into a little booklet that you can carry wherever you are. Put the key points on one side and the detail on the other side. • Use the Leitner method to help you memorise your cards (search for Leitner method on Youtube). • Create a quiz for yourself. For example, write key words on one side of your revision cards and definitions on the other side.
Copy, Cover, Check	**Post-It Notes**
• Divide your page into three columns. • Write key information in the left-hand column. • Go back to the top of your page. Cover the left-hand column and see how much you can remember to write into the middle column. Uncover and check your answers. Correct any mistakes. • Do it again! Cover both columns and try to recall more information to write into the final column. Check and correct.	• Create your own sorting activity. For example, write parts of a cycle or important dates on separate post-it notes and then try to organise them into the correct order. Do this a few times over a number of days. • Decorate your bedroom (or even your house!) with key information, facts, definitions etc that you need to know so that you are seeing them all the time.
Online	**Practice Papers**
• Ask your teacher for any key websites that might be useful to help you revise. • BBC Bitesize, GCSEPod, and the Learning Zone on the school website are great places to start as they cover lots of different subjects. • Go on Youtube sites set up by teachers and watch and listen to the information. Search for the topic you want to revise and find a presentation.	• Ask your teacher for a practice paper that you can try out at home. • Look through your exercise book for questions similar to the ones on your exam paper. Try to rewrite your answers, improving them and following any teacher feedback. • Create your own exam-style questions including mark-scheme, then swap with a partner.

HOW TO LEARN

The KEY: Revise the right stuff

Break the subject down into **topics**, then **sub-topics**, and then revise the information for just one small part of the course at a time. You can find out all the sub-topics by looking in a revision guide.

For example: Subject = Science (Chemistry)

Topics

1. Fundamental Ideas
2. Rocks and Building Materials
3. **Metals and their use**
4. Crude Oil and fuels

Sub-Topics of Metal and their Uses

- Extracting Metals
- **Iron and Steels**
- Aluminium and Titanium

Information about Irons and Steels that I need to learn:

- Carbon Steel
    - Small amount of carbon in iron = carbon steel
    - High carbon steel = hard
    - Low carbon steel = soft
- Alloy Steels
    - Low alloy steel = 1%- 5% other metals
    - High alloy steel = 5%+ other metals
    - Stainless steel = chromium/ nickel in them

Audio / Visual/Interactive

- Listen to GCSEPod on your phone – remember, listen to the topics and subtopics that are relevant.
- Go to the various 'online sites' that your teachers direct you to – e.g. BBC Bitesize.
- These sites will be in the topics booklet on the Priory Belvoir website (Learning Zone).
- Go on Youtube sites set up by teachers and watch and listen to the information.
- If teacher doesn't have a YouTube site, search for the topic you want to revise. Lots of teachers from other schools have created presentations and videos to illustrate and explain key GCSE topics.

HOW TO LEARN

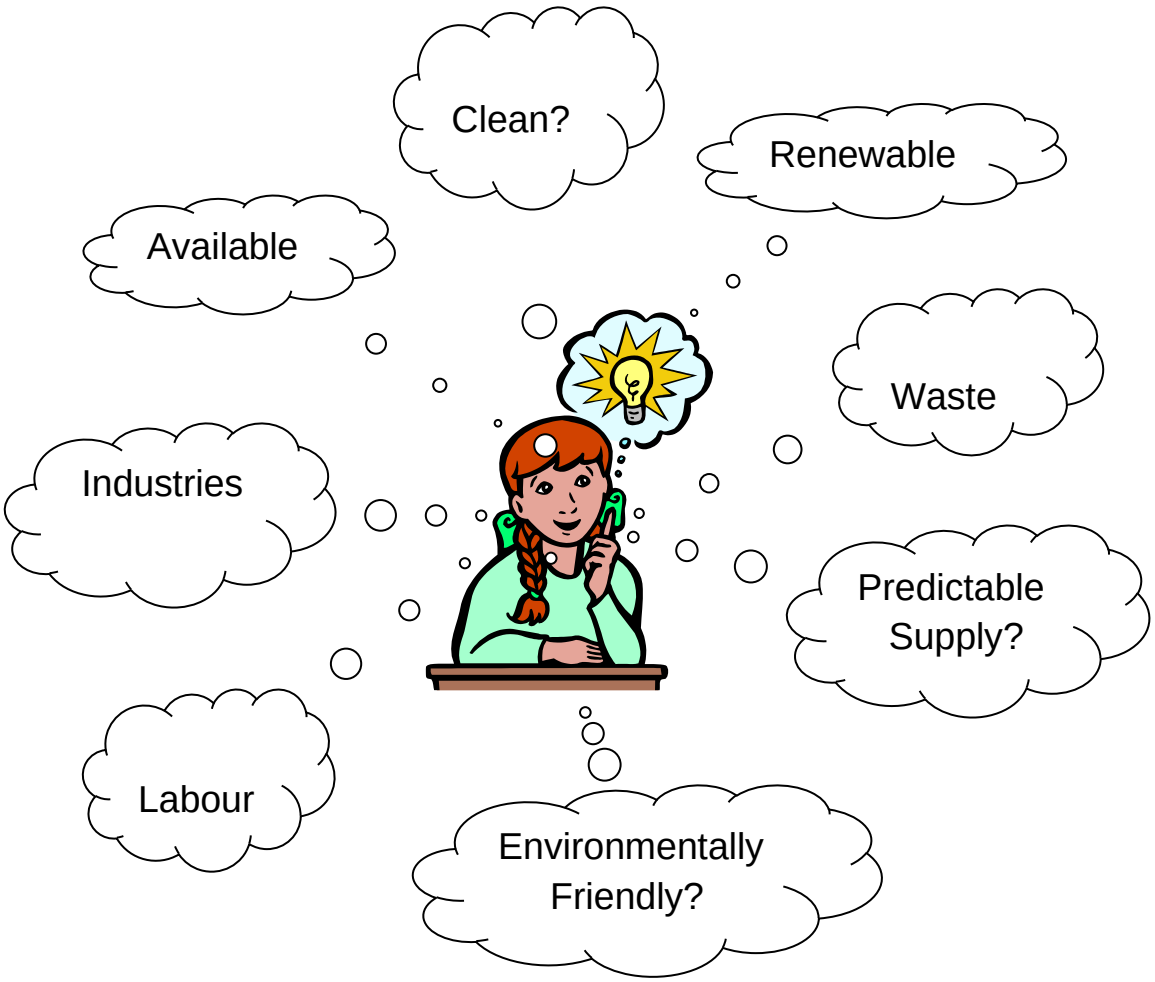
Brainstorming – Thought Shower – Spider Graph

- Read the text you are revising carefully. Now cover it up and write down all the information you can remember as fast as you can in any order.

- Look at the text again and add bits you missed.

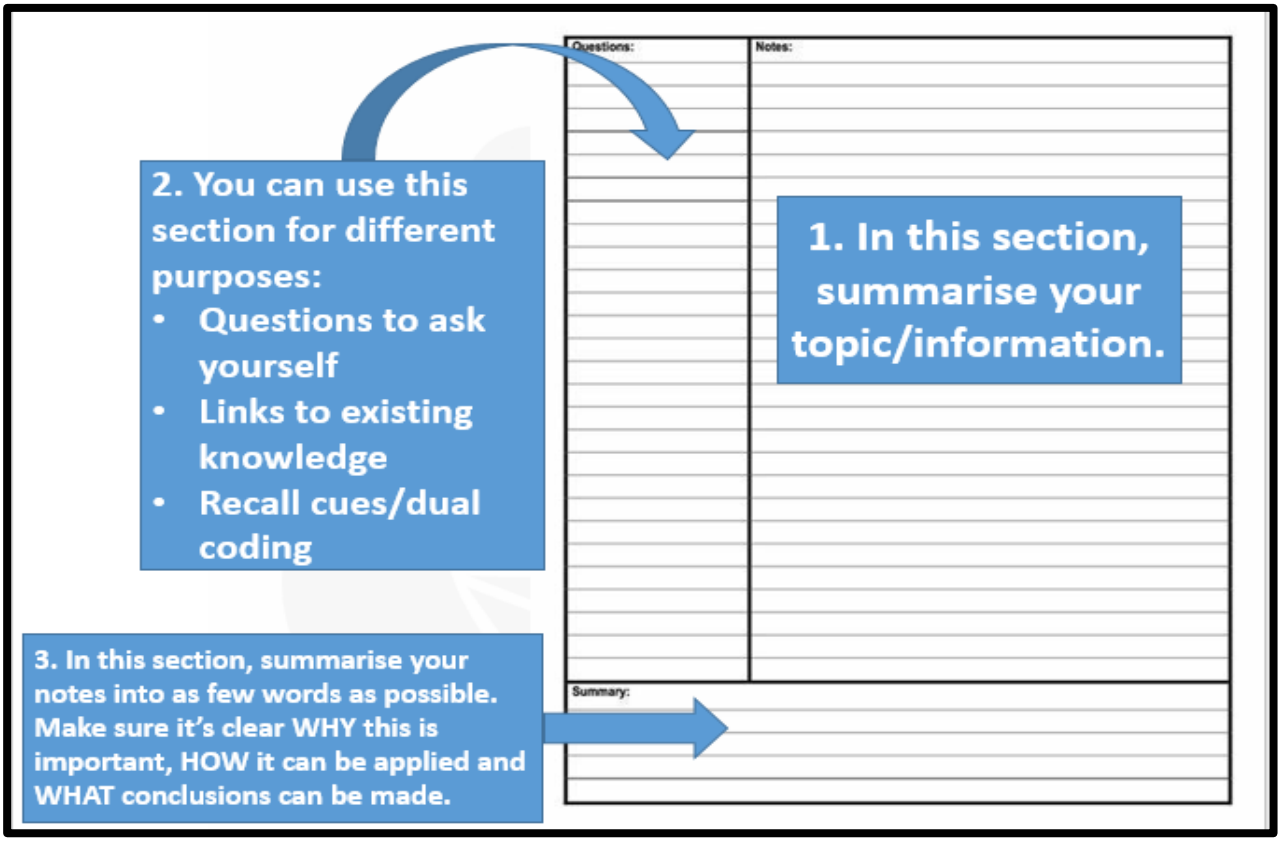
- This is a good technique for remembering key information, BUT NOT for ordering your thoughts.

- It is a good technique to get you going – but you must now 'order' your thoughts using either a mind map or flash cards.



HOW TO LEARN

CORNELL NOTE MAKING



Title: The Plot of *Macbeth* Act 1

Questions:	Notes:
1. Who are the witches? Do they really know the future? 2. 3. How far would M have gone without LM? 4. 5. 6. 7.	1. Macbeth and Banquo meet witches – prophecies given 2. Duncan makes M Thane of Cawdor 3. M writes to Lady Macbeth – she starts the plot to kill 4. 5. 6. 7.

Summary:

- Importance of Act 1 – introduction of characters – M weak, LM strong, B good, D good
- Impact of the supernatural – catalyst, drives whole play
- Fate vs free will – is this a self-fulfilling prophecy?

HOW TO LEARN

Flash Cards

Reduce the information from one sub-topic to key points/bullet points. This could build up into a little booklet that you can carry wherever you are. You can put the key points on one side and the detail on the other if you want.

For Example:

Social Injustice –When a group of people are treated badly like women or poor people. Examples of social injustice : Racism, Sexism, Poverty

- **Why fight against injustice?**

1. Conscience
2. Treat others as ….
3. Love your neighbour – good Samaritan

- **Who has fought Injustice?**

1. Martin Luther King – Racism in USA
2. Elizabeth Fry – Prison Conditions 1800's
3. William Wilberforce – Slavery 1800's

- **How do people fight Injustice**?

1. Protests
2. Disobeying unjust laws
3. Giving money to charity like Amn Int.

- Hide and Seek – Try to memorise the key points. Hide them and see if you write them out.
- Expand the **reason** behind each point. This is the real learning!
- Ask someone else to ask you questions:
  - The basic facts
  - The deeper point behind each point, get them to ask: Why?

Practice Papers

- Do lots of past papers.
- For longer style answers, do a plan first.
- Get the papers from your teacher or from the exam board website (See topics booklet for link to past papers).

EXAM TECHNIQUE

Answering the question

Pupils often fail to answer the exam question properly. They put what they think it is asking, not what 'it is' asking. Below are three activities that help pupils to answer the questions properly:

a. BUG the question

B = Bracket the command word (this is the verb, the doing word)
U = Underline the key terms (this is the topic)
G = Glance at the time given or the marks available (this tells you how much to write)

b. Put the question in the answer

This activity helps pupils to keep focused on the question and avoid going off on a tangent.
eg. Q – What are the effects of steroids on muscle growth?
A – The effects of steroids on muscle growth are.....

c. Say it again!

When revising, look at an exam question and rewrite it in your own words. This helps you to think about what exam questions are really wanting from you.
E.g. "The death sentence is the only way to reduce serious crime in the UK" - discuss.
To: "Are there other ways to reduce serious crime in the UK apart from the death penalty?"

Answering the question – How to expand

The next problem that pupils have is expanding their answers and providing enough detail. The activities below encourage pupils to transfer skills from other subjects and develop a longer answer.

a. PEE

Point – Make your point
Evidence – Back it up with some evidence. Something from the text or a quote
Explain – Explain the text or quote, fact or figure

b. This means.....

Simply using phrases such as "This means", "This tells us" and "This could suggest" are excellent ways to show the examiner that you understand the passage, poem, script, chart or graph.

c. Because..... However..... Because

The last activity helps pupils to justify opinions and show a different perspective on an issue.
Pupils often miss out on the top marks because they fail to explain their thinking and also fail to show a different opinion. If you can make sure you include:
".....because..... however..... because....." in your answer you are on the way to getting great marks.
.....I think the UK should invest more money in wind farms **BECAUSE** wind farms are a renewable source of energy production **HOWEVER,** the wind farms are not popular with conservationists **BECAUSE** they are an eyesore