

# Are You Exam Ready?

## REVISION TECHNIQUES

### Look, Cover, Write and Check

Tried and tested technique that works for many people.

- Revise a section of work.
- Cover it up or put it aside.
- Write down or record as much as you can remember.
- Check against the original
- Highlight anything you got wrong or forgot.
- Prioritise these areas for future revision.

**Highlight:** Target key areas using colours and symbols. Visuals will help you to remember the facts.

**Condense:** Fitting your notes onto one side makes it easier to stomach; remember to rewrite and cut down as you go.

**Talk:** Read your notes out loud. Try explaining a process or scenario to someone else, who can ask you questions about information you missed. This works great with someone revising the same subject.

**Record:** Try recording audio of yourself (or a friend or family member) saying important points, quotes or formulae. Also try listening to your recording as you read your notes to help it sink in.

## VISUAL AIDS

### Brainstorms

Useful to do at the beginning of revision. Start by writing the name of a topic in the middle of a page (not a whole subject!), and jot down everything you know around it. Using your notes, add in another colour or round the edge of the page things you missed. This should help identify what you know already, and what you need to focus your revision on.

### Posters and Diagrams

Take a topic and turn it into a poster or annotated diagram with lots of illustration and colour. Display your posters and diagrams around your home where you're likely to see them.

### Mind Maps

A mind map helps you to generate ideas and make associations

- Use key words or images.
- Start from the centre with the big picture and work to organise your ideas into themes.
- Use colour to categorise if it helps.
- Add ideas to the end of each branch.

## FLASH CARDS

- Put a topic heading on the top of the card.
- Write key words or key points under side headings on one side of the card.
- Use the reverse for explanations.
- You can use different colours to group different topics together.
- You can use them anywhere - keep them in your pocket as revision aids.

Other uses for index cards: make key word cards for important definitions or make a card sort to help remember information which goes together.

# IMPROVING MEMORY

## **‘Chunking’**

The average person can only hold seven ‘items’ in short term memory. So grouping items into ‘chunks’ can increase capacity. This is generally used for remembering numbers (think about how you remember telephone numbers by grouping the digits into 2 or 3 ‘chunks’) but can be applied to other listings in various subjects.

## **Application and Association**

The best way to channel material to long-term memory is to organise it into meaningful associations. Link it to existing information and topics and create vivid personal examples which act as ‘mental hooks’ or ‘cues’ for recalling material in the future. If you learn a new formula / verb / rule, try to put it into practice immediately with a relevant example.

## **Mnemonics**

These are various word games which can act as memory aids. Think of **stalaCmites** (**C**ome down from the **C**eiling) and **stalaGmites** (**G**o up from the **G**round; the colours of the rainbow - **Roy G Biv** (**‘Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain’**); or the seven characteristics of living organisms - **MR GRIEF** (**M**ovement, **R**eproduction, **G**rowth, **R**espiration, **I**rritability, **E**xcretion, **F**eeding). Why don’t you try to make up some of your own to help with you to recall items in your subjects.

## **Repetition**

Studies indicate that 66% of material is forgotten within seven days if it is not reviewed or recited again. Make things easier by building in a daily and weekly review of material covered so you don’t have to re-learn material from scratch.

# PAST EXAM QUESTIONS

Do some past exam papers against the clock; it’s a great way of getting up to exam speed.

Complete some past exam questions. Mark your answers. Fill in the answers you missed. Go through the paper and colour code each topic (Red - need to revise. Amber - need to go over a few bits again. Green - I’ve got it). Use it to test your ability to: recall the information you have revised, to answer the question asked, not just write down everything you know, and to follow the command words in an exam.

# ONLINE RESOURCES