

AYLESTONE SCHOOL

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The Big Revision Guide

A guide for students and parents

This guide contains:

- **Revision preparation**
(a place to study and production of revision timetables)
- **Effective revision habits and strategies**
(and the Science behind them)
- **Successful Revision Steps**
(summary of key revision points)
- **Active revision techniques**
(a range of different revision techniques)
- **Exam vocabulary**
(useful command word list when answering exam questions)
- **Exam advice**
(what to do in exams and how to stay healthy)

Revision preparation

A Place to Study

Make sure you have the following:

- A dedicated, quiet space away from distractions
- A comfortable chair and desk (table)
- Good light, comfortable temperature
- Revision timetable
- Storage to keep the space tidy
- Complete revision kit :

pens, pencils, highlighters, calculator, paper, dividers and folders, post its, card, revision guides, text books, dictionary, thesaurus



Revision Timetables

Timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

These are useful and effective tools that can help you prepare for exams and achieve the grades you deserve. Some people prefer A4 sized daily or weekly timetables whilst others prefer larger wall sized charts that cover a month long period. You should choose whatever works best for you. There are example revision timetable templates on the website which you can use to help organise your revision periods. There are also lots of online revision timetables and Apps that you could use.

Tips on making a revision timetable:

- When compiling a schedule try to be as realistic as possible. Do not try to do too much in your day with a timetable that you have no real chance of completing.
- Make a list of the subjects that you need to revise for between now and your exams.
- Work out which subjects have the most content that needs to be revised.
- Concentrate on those specific topics or modules that you have the most difficulty with.
- Break down major revision subjects into smaller parts; this can help you make your studying more precise.
- Use a variety of revision techniques
- Ensure that you include break times during the day, these are important to help you unwind and to make sure you don't burn yourself out.
- Work out when you 'study best', for instance some people are able to concentrate better in the morning. Then use these times to study those topics that require the most effort and energy.
- Do not leave your most difficult or hardest subjects till the end of the day. Instead try to get these out of the way early on.
- After completing a revision period cross it off from your timetable. This will help you to feel a sense of achievement.
- At the end of each week assess your performance and change your plans accordingly.
- Consider using different coloured pens to highlight specific classes or rank subjects according to importance. However if you feel you may be changing things around then use a simple pencil.
- Keep your timetable flexible and be ready to change it if circumstances change.
- Try not to spend the whole day revising one subject.
- Most experts suggest studying in slots of 20-30 minutes and then taking a break before your next session.

***There are examples of revision timetables which can be downloaded from the Aylestone School website**

Effective revision habits and strategies

Retrieval Practice

What is retrieval practice?

“Retrieval practice is a learning strategy where we focus on getting information out. Through the act of retrieval, or calling information to mind, our memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. Retrieval practice is a powerful tool for improving learning.”

Use your class notes & textbooks to make a list of the important information & content that you need to know across different subjects.

Then close your books & test yourself. You can create quizzes, use flashcards or complete past exam papers. Make sure you don't use your notes!

Retrieve as much information as you can then check your answers. It's important to know what you know and what you don't know ... yet!

Use your answers to inform the next stage of your revision, focus on the areas that you struggled to recall from memory.

Spaced practice

What is spaced practice?

“Start planning early for exams and set aside a little bit of time everyday. Five hours spread out over two weeks is better than the same five hours all at once.” This is spaced practice & it is regarded as one of the most effective revision strategies

Divide up your revision into short manageable chunks of time. When revising aim for 20 - 30 minutes per session.

Mass practice or cramming is not effective & can be stressful. This is when you study for a very intense period of time just before the exam.

You need to plan your time carefully to ensure all subjects & topics are covered in shorter chunks over a longer period of time.

Dividing up your revision into smaller, manageable sections will benefit you in the long term - the revision you do for mocks will stick for the final exams!

Interleaving

What is interleaving?

“Interleaving is a process where students mix & combine multiple subjects & topics while they study in order to improve their learning. Blocked practice on the other hand, involves studying one topic very thoroughly before moving to another. Interleaving has been shown to be far more effective than blocked practice leading to better long-term retention.”

<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tues</u>	<u>Weds</u>	<u>Thurs</u>	<u>Fri</u>
Algebra	Ratio	Statistics	Ratio	Algebra
Geometry	Statistics	Algebra	Geometry	Statistics

Dual coding

What is dual coding?

“Dual coding is the process of combining verbal materials with visual materials. There are many ways to visually represent materials, such as with infographics, timelines, cartoon/comic strips, diagrams and graphic organisers.”

Dual coding involves you the learner drawing images, graphs, diagrams or timelines to support your revision notes.

When you are revising using your class materials find or create visuals that link with the information. Compare & combine the visuals with the words.

Don't worry if you don't consider yourself an artist - it isn't about the quality of your illustrations, the focus is to improve and deepen your understanding.

Make sure your images/diagrams are relevant. Be careful when using photos as too many background images can detract from the main points.

Elaboration

What is elaboration?

“The term elaboration can be used to mean a lot of different things. However, when we are talking about studying using elaboration, it involves explaining and describing ideas with many details. Elaboration also involves making connections among ideas you are trying to learn.”

Elaboration involves asking further questions & making links to help you connect new information with what you already know.

Ask yourself questions about a topic to delve deeper. The more information you have about a specific topic the stronger your grasp & ability to recall.

When you learn about the causes of WW1 you could ask which causes are linked together? Which causes are short or long term? What was the major cause?

Another way to elaborate is to take two ideas or concepts & think about the various ways they are similar & how they are different.

Successful Revision Steps

1. 25-30 minute sessions
2. Plan when you will revise, it will become habitual
3. Use flashcards - don't just keep re-reading.
4. Set achievable goals-revise small sections at a time.
5. Revise the topic as if you were going to teach it to a peer/family member
6. Practice past paper questions as much as you can.
7. Have a designated area of study with all of the study equipment you might need.
8. Avoid all distractions-music doesn't help-it distracts!
9. Put away your phone!

Active revision techniques

Revision Cards

A very good way to turn lesson notes into a form that is more manageable when you come to revise is to make a set of REVISION CARDS. A good revision card should contain all the KEY POINTS on a topic in a clear and concise way. It should be a condensed version of whatever you have in your notes and you should be able to take in the information on the cards at a glance. By transferring information from your notes to the revision card you are re-learning what you have covered in class. This is because you have to put information in your own words, and to do that you have to understand it!

A revision card should just have the key points on it. It should not have loads and loads of detail. If you come back to a revision card and you do not understand it, use your more detailed class notes to recap and re-write it in a form which you do understand.

Podcasts

A great way to learn is to record your notes on to MP3 and listen to them on your mobile phone or iPod. There are also some podcasts for your subjects to download from the Learning Platform.



Mnemonics

Mnemonics are really simple but very useful for revision. You can use them to remember a sequence of events, a list of facts or parts of a process. To create a Mnemonic all you have to do is write down a list of facts or information. Here is an example designed to help remember the order of the planets that circle our sun. The first thing to do is write them down in order.

Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune Pluto

M V E M J S U N P

Then you create a memorable sentence or phrase that uses each of the letters above in turn as the first letter of each word in a new sentence.

My Very Early Morning Jam Sandwich Usually Nauseates People

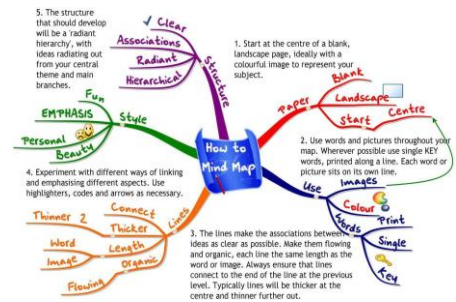
Doing this helps you to create something memorable that you can decode when you need to.

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is really useful for listing lots of ideas and connecting them together. Some research shows that mind maps are the best way of learning. You can use this technique to record information as you are revising or you can use it to see how much you know or have remembered about a topic, area or subject.

Top Tip

If you make revision posters or mind maps a good place to put them up is next to your bed, next to the mirror, above the toilet or on the back of the bathroom door. Alternatively, stick your revision cards on the fridge door!



mindmeister.com

How to mind map:

Start from the centre of the page and work out.

Make the centre a clear and strong visual image that depicts the general theme of the map.

Put key words on lines. This reinforces the structure of the notes.

Print rather than write the script. It makes them more readable and memorable.

Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case.

Use colour to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out.

Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind.

Think three-dimensionally.

Use arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links between different elements.

Do not get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.

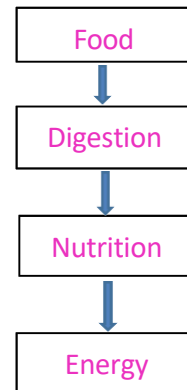
Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Do not judge or hold back.

Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map.

Be creative! Creativity aids memory.

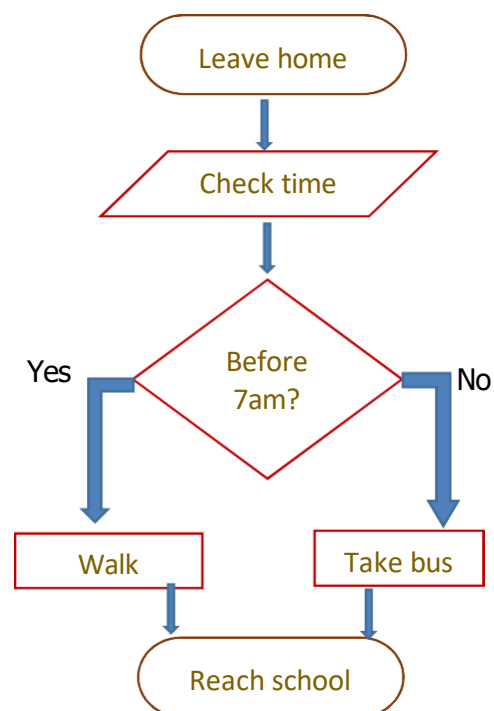
Simple Flow Charts

If your mind works in a straight line try creating a list of connecting ideas.



Complex Flow Charts

Sometimes the connections between ideas are too complicated to be shown in a straight line. Here is an example of a more complex flow chart.



Post It



Write information onto post it notes. Put each post it in a place where you will see it often.

You could use them to learn key quotations in English, key dates in History or formula in Maths. The possibilities are endless.

You can put the post it notes into a logical pattern of key points.

You could write down all the things you haven't fully understood on individual post it notes and stick them to an area of wall. Remove them from the wall as you sort out your difficulties.

Try removing a post it and see if you can remember what it says.

Colour Code

Write key points on coloured card or paper.
Use different colours for different aspects of the topic.

Turn pieces of paper over to use as flash cards and test yourself.

quizlet.com



Musical Mind

Turn the information into the lyrics of a song.

Create a rhythm to help you remember important points—a sequence of words that can be tapped out.

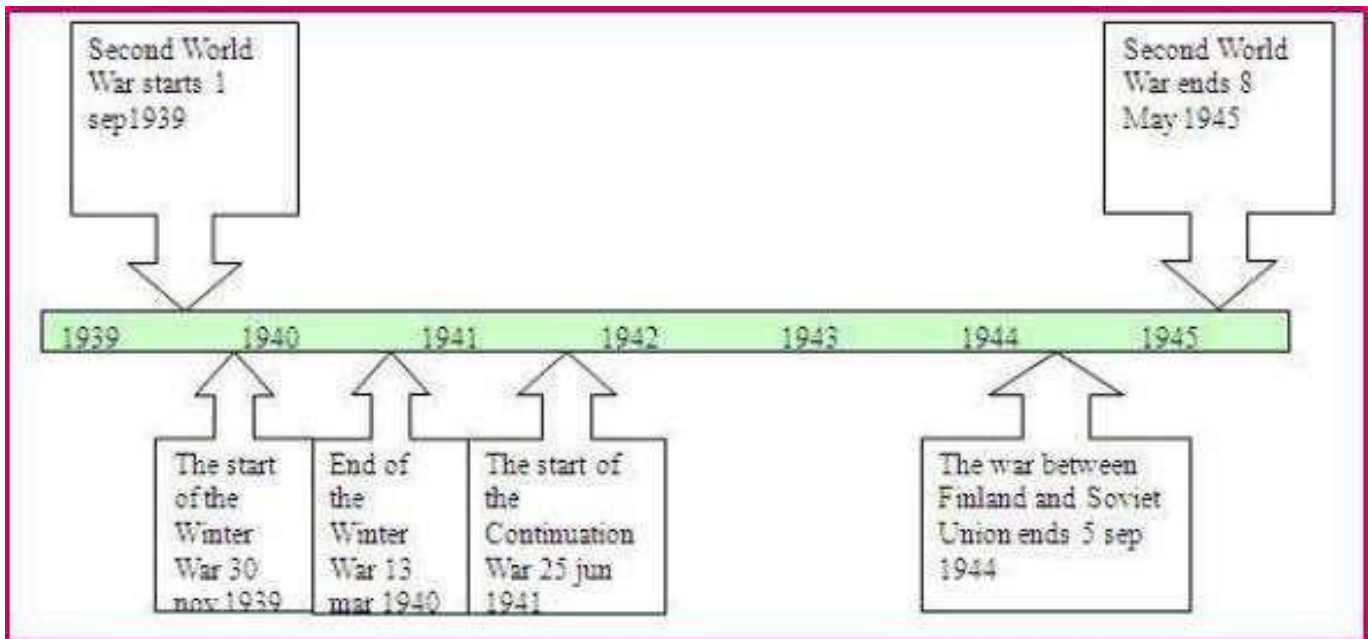
Play the same piece of background music every time you study a particular topic.

Timeline

A timeline is a good example of a visual organiser. It works in most subjects.

For example, you could use it to remember steps in a scientific experiment; significant moments in a novel; the life of Jesus; stages in a process in technology or dates and events in a historical period.

timetoast.com



Retrieval Practice

Carefully read the text you are revising.

Now cover it up and brainstorm— write down all the bits of information you remember as fast as you can in any order.

Look at the text again. Add any bits you have missed and alter any bits you got wrong.

The brainstorm is good for remembering information, but not for putting it in a correct order.

So now use the words to create a bookmark, a keyword plan or any other method to help you organise your ideas.

Using Past Papers

How do past papers improve your exam technique?

Exams are like anything else—the more you do, the better you get. That is why past papers are so important to your exam preparation.

Get to know:

- Their layout, names/numbers of questions.
- The format of instructions.
- The range of questions: multiple choice, short answers, essays etc.
- What is required in your answers to different kinds of questions.
- The marking scheme.
- What really good answers actually look like.

Exam vocabulary

Key Command Words to Learn

Command words are the words in an exam question which tell you what to do. It is vital that you understand what each one means.

Analyse	Comment on something in detail, trying to explain or interpret it
Annotate	Add to a diagram, image or piece of text to illustrate or describe features rather than just identify them (which is labelling).
Assess	Consider different options/arguments/factors and weigh them up to reach a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.
Calculate	Work out the value of something.
Clarify	Say a bit more by giving a simple and clear explanation.
Comment on	Give your opinions or point of view.
Compare	Say how things are the same and different.
Consider	Take into account and give your thoughts on something.
Contrast	Show how things are different.
Define	This means what is meant by ... give the precise meaning of a term or concept.
Demonstrate	Show using lots of examples.
Describe	Give a detailed account of something as it is. You do not need to give your opinion on it.
Discuss	Give important reasons for and against and come to some conclusion from these.
Evaluate	Consider different options/factors & reach a conclusion about their importance/impact/value/worth.
Examine	Consider carefully & provide a detailed account of the topic.
Explain	Make the information clear by giving reasons for it.
Identify	Point out & name from a number of possibilities.
Illustrate	Give examples to make your points clear. It can also mean to use diagrams, drawings or figures to support your answer.
Justify	Explain why your selected choice/judgement is better than other options.
Label	Point out specific features on a diagram, image or piece of text.
Outline	Describe without too much detail.
Review	Go over the whole thing picking out important parts to give your opinion on.
State	Present information clearly but briefly.
Summarise	Using your own words to bring together the main points without including details or examples.

Exams advice

Examination Rules

Examinations have really strict rules. If they are not followed, in a worst case scenario, a learner can be disqualified. This section outlines the basic examination rules laid down by the JCQ (the joint council that oversees external examinations).

Examination Advice:

Check your timetable. Exams do NOT always have the same start time!

Know when and where your exams are going to take place.

Know your candidate number.

Arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of your exam.

Do not be late! If you are late you MAY not be allowed to sit your exam.

If you are unwell on the day of an exam and you cannot attend you must call in as soon as possible. In order to apply for consideration you will need to supply a doctors' note.

Do not communicate with any student while you are in the exam room. If you do, you may be disqualified from your exams.

No mobile phones/iPods/MP3 players or Watches on your person.

No correcting fluid/pens.

Pencil cases must be transparent.

Bring a spare BLACK pen. You can only use black ink in exams.

Make sure you bring a calculator to any examinations they are required for.

Listen and follow all instructions carefully

In the first few minutes of the exam

Always read the instructions carefully.

As you read through the examination paper, circle the questions you want to answer. Make sure you read through the whole paper before you start to write.

Check how many marks are given for each question. This gives important information about how much detail is required.

Stay calm, don't panic. Counting to ten or breathing deeply may help if your mind goes blank.

Before you start writing, work out how much time you have for each question. Don't spend too long on one question!

Don't forget revision and warm up sessions at campus! You are expected to attend.

Your teachers are experts at preparing learners for exams. They have lots of past papers for you to try as well as important tips on achieving the best grades in the exam.

Well-being during the exam period

The exam period can be stressful that is why it's very important that you revise & prepare as this can help to reduce exam anxiety. In addition to revising there are other strategies you can do to look after your mental & physical health.

Eat. Diet is important so don't neglect it during the exam period. Don't skip meals, stay consistent with a healthy balance of meals & stay hydrated.

Sleep. Staying up late to revise is a bad idea! Sleep deprivation can have a very negative impact on concentration, performance & memory.

Exercise. Take regular breaks from revision with exercise. Take part in a sport you enjoy, go for a walk or any activity that is active & part of your daily routine.

Relax. Relax during the exam period? Yes! It is essential that you do make time to switch off & have a break. Watch Netflix, read or talk to friends.



**KEEP
CALM
AND JUST
BE THE BEST
YOU CAN BE**

We hope you have found this booklet useful.

For more guidance or support please see or contact any member of staff on campus.

Exams Contacts:

Exams Officer:	:	Mr Cotton	PCotton@aylestone.hereford.sch.uk
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