



# GCSE STUDY SKILLS NOVEMBER 2021

**Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All**



# WELCOME

Welcome to a study skills, revisiting and exam preparation guide for all Key Stage Four students.



Unfortunately, there is no easy way to pass exams, but we can give you lots of tips on how to use your study time more effectively. This guide has been written to remind students about how to revise and how to learn. Many of the learning and revision strategies in this booklet are applicable to a vocabulary test in Year Seven and to the final examination of a degree level course.

Although this booklet contains superb advice, great tips and fantastic study skills, the guide isn't as important as the person reading it – YOU! It is you who have to put them into practice and apply them to your work. If you do, we're sure that you will improve your performance and your study skills. But to get better at something, you have to practise!



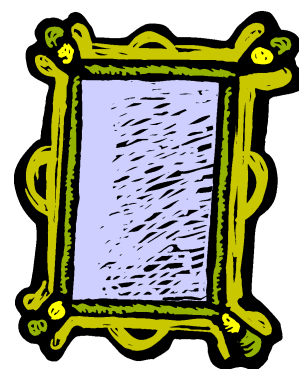
**So, over to you – happy studying and good luck!**



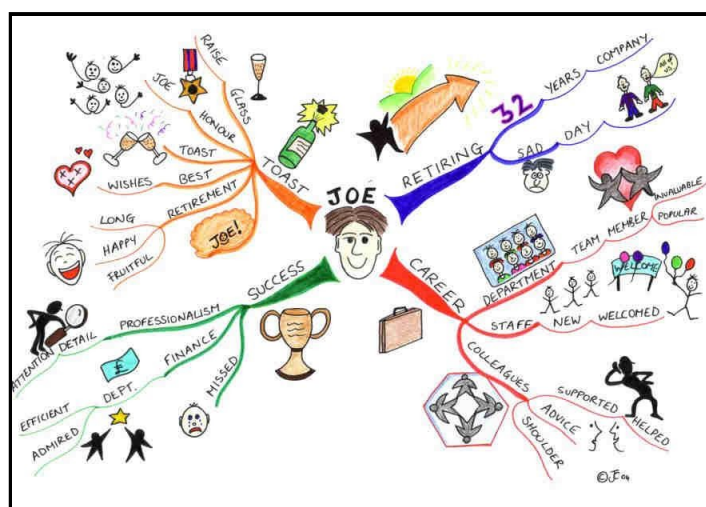


**Re-visiting** means going through your recent class and homework to check you have learnt it. You need to look at things again as part of learning as well as in preparation for exams. But we need **active** ways to do this “looking again”. All of the techniques shared here can be used to revisit your learning through each term as well as revising for a specific test or exam.

**Revision** means “to look at again” ready for a test or exam. Revision also gives time for reflection and learning. You can start to see the big picture, you can add in more details and examples. You may discover something you still don’t understand and you can ask your teacher about it again.



The idea is to “revisit” each section of your work shortly after you have finished it. For instance, you could draw a Mind Map of each topic you cover. Keep the Mind Maps because they will be very useful for revising before exams.



**HOT TIP: be active and change the way you think**



## Revisiting Your Learning - Thinking Hard Strategies

### A. Knowledge and understanding

1. Reduce
2. Transform
3. Deconstruct
4. Derive

### C. Flexibility of thinking

10. Make connections
11. Compare
12. Extend
13. Create

### B. Analysis and application

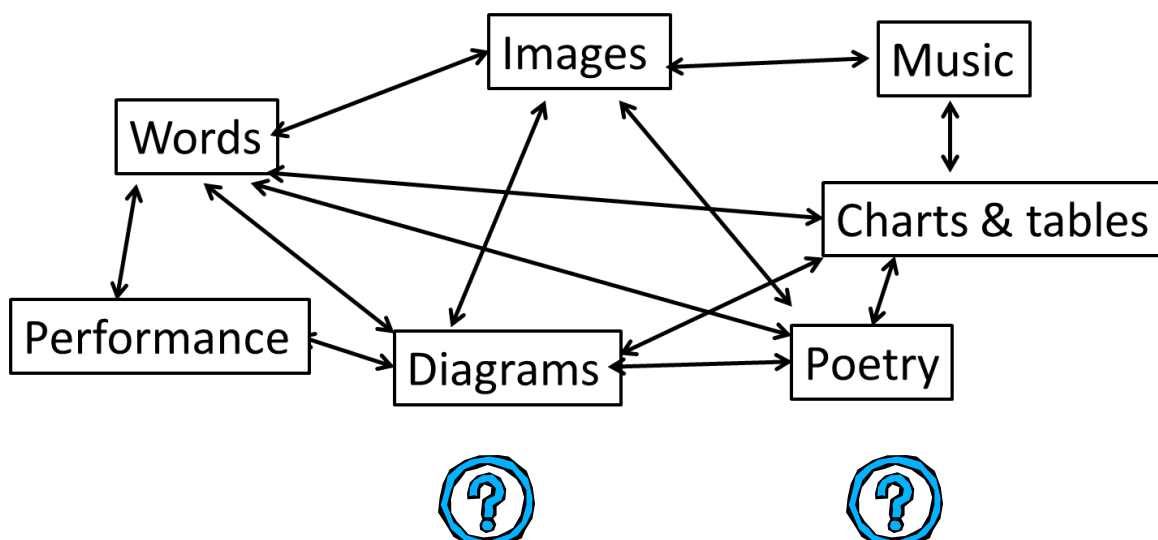
5. Prioritise
6. Categorise
7. Criticise
8. Trends and patterns
9. Practise

### **REDUCE:**

Look at your classwork / homework / study guide:

- Reduce the text into 10 main points/problems.
- Write a summary of the text, maximum 25 words.
- Write 5 questions which the text answers.
- Reduce the content of the text/video clip into 5 main bullet points.
- Pick out the positive/negative statements made.
- Write a heading which sums up the content of the text.

### **TRANSFORM:**





## WHY?

1. Revision helps learning
2. Revision increases your achievement in exams
3. Achievement in exams gives you wider choices later on
4. Achievement will make everyone proud of you!
5. You will feel great!



It is important to be positive about yourself because people who think they can do well find it easier to learn.

Think about five things which you felt good about doing – scoring a goal, asking someone out ... think about how you felt when you did those things....and get yourself into a positive frame of mind.

**HOT TIP: get yourself a vision of success**



## WHEN?



Make sure you know when your exams are. Teachers will revise with you and give you advice about how much revision to do, what you should revise and many will give you special notes to help with revising.

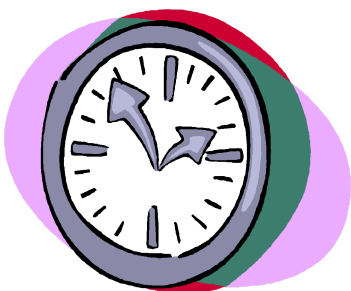
Make yourself a **revision timetable**.



- ★ Fill in leisure, relaxation and family commitments
- ★ Put in some sessions that you can devote to revision
- ★ Share out the available revision sessions between your subjects
- ★ Allow extra sessions if you know some subjects will take longer than others
- ★ Vary the subjects – don't do all your Maths revision on day one!
- ★ Here's an example for *one* weekend:

	Morning	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Saturday	Football	Maths; geography	Science; RE	Video
Sunday	English; tech	Lunch at gran's	Still at gran's	French; history

The ideal length to revise one topic is **20 to 25 minutes** at a time.



You remember more at the beginnings and the ends of sessions, so create more beginnings and ends by stopping for a brief break or doing a brain gym exercise.

**HOT TIP: stop and start – create brief breaks**



## WHERE?

The ideal study room is light, airy and quiet, with shelves and a desk. Some people are lucky enough to have this and enjoy working in it. Don't worry if you haven't got this. You can still try to get some of the elements.

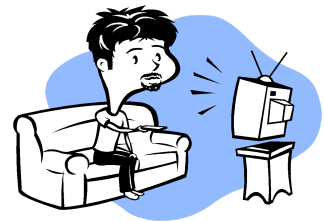


Vary your revision place. It's a good idea to put up posters, lists and post-it notes in other places in the house.



Some students find they revise well with friends and it is a good idea to do this sometimes as a bit of variety and fun.

Ban mobile phones, television AND computer games! They are too distracting, so make sure they are turned off when you are working. Remember to keep a space in your revision timetable for your social media, favourite programmes or gaming.



Lots of students find that some background music helps the revision process. Classical music such as Mozart can help to stimulate your brain waves. Avoid music with lyrics as you are likely to concentrate on these rather than your work!

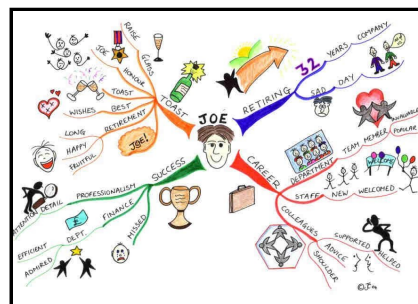
**HOT TIP: don't forget the Homework Club in room 25 too!**



## HOW?

There are three easy steps to doing revision well:

- ★ Change
- ★ Challenge
- ★ Treats



Mind Map

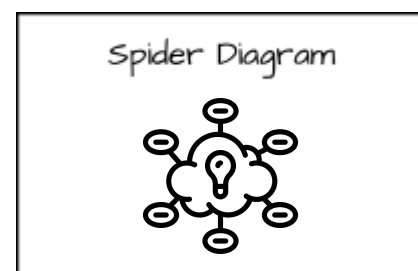
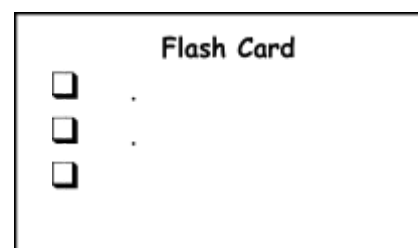
**The 5 ways that Middlewich High School recommends you revise are:**

1. Subject booklets
2. Flashcards
3. Pre-populated retrieval grids e.g. revision clocks, cornell notes, mind maps
4. Past Papers
5. Online platforms eg GCSEPod, SENECA, Hegarty Maths

The first step is to try to **reduce** or **transform (change)**. By changing what is in our exercise books or textbooks into a different form, we kick start our brains into action – we start thinking about new ways of presenting and digesting the information and start learning.

Ways to change information for retrieval grids:

- ☐ Make diagrams
- ☐ Labelled drawings
- ☐ Time-lines (for history)
- ☐ Mind maps
- ☐ Charts and flowcharts (for processes)
- ☐ Audio recordings (great for languages)
- ☐ Flash cards
- ☐ Mnemonics



**HOT TIP: Flick through flash cards before the test**

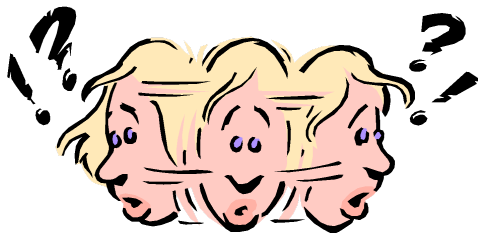




We work best when we are faced with a **challenge**.

Challenge yourself to really sort out a topic that you have found difficult.

- ❑ Will taking a new approach and turning it into a chart, diagram or mind map help?
- ❑ Get someone to test you after you have learned something new.
- ❑ We learn extremely well when we have to teach someone else – why not try teaching one of your parents, a brother or sister, your grandparents or even your friends?
- ❑ Get them to ask you questions about what you have just taught them – can you answer their questions?



**HOT TIP: Believe in yourself – you CAN do it!**



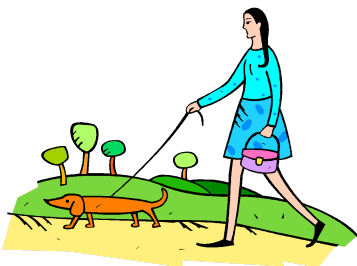
Don't forget to allow yourself some **treats**. Break up your revision sessions and plan some treats to look forward to: fruit, chocolate, a drink, ten minutes in the garden, glancing at a magazine, going for a walk...whatever will motivate you.



Remember, breaking up your revision gives you more stops and starts and more stops and starts increase your learning.

Relaxation is important to help you stop feeling the pressure of exams and getting stressed. Find a simple technique that works for you and practice using it when you are stressed or can't sleep. Have you tried:

- ☐ A warm bath
- ☐ Visualising yourself passing the exam
- ☐ Brain gym exercises
- ☐ Walking/stroking a pet
- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Meditating
- ☐ Going for a walk
- ☐ Asking someone to give you a head massage
- ☐ Yoga
- ☐ Losing yourself in some soft music?



**HOT TIP: Feed your brain! Fresh fruit, water, fish and vegetables give you brain power!**



## How do we revise?



Three common revision techniques that are **LEAST** effective in helping you revise are:

- Highlighting texts
- Re-reading
- Summarising text



Whilst these methods may feel like you are revising, there are many better methods to help you revise.



### Flashcards

Simply create with questions on side and answers on the other side. You can colour code for specific topics and quiz yourself or others.



Post its can be also useful for key words and timelines

There are a variety of ways to use flashcards in revision for the skills you need...

### Using Flashcards



Using the Leitner Method, using the video below [VIDEO CLIP](#)

You can also create excellent flashcards online or on your phone using Quizlet which also had an app.

### How to use

#### Key Terms

Create for key words and terms



#### Causation

Create for the causes of events or progress



#### Judgments

Create an agree or disagree argument against a quote



#### Narrative

Create to show a narrative of events in order



### Retrieval Practice

Testing what you know is a powerful tool in revision, the effort to remember something really strengthens your memory

Apps such as Memrise and Quizlet allow you to use or create your own quizzes based on topics.

Create them, test yourself or get someone to test you, it's works!

### How to use

#### Spaced

Test on old and new topics mixed up

#### Knowledge Organisers

Use to create 'must know' quizzes for a topic

#### Factors/Causes/Consequences

To identify 2-3 factors, causes of an event/person e.g. The rising against Tostig

### Types

There are a number of types you can create:

- Multiple Choice Questions
- True or False
- Short Explanation Questions
- Odd One Out
- If this is the answer then what is the question



#### Examples

'Give two examples of.....'

### Transform It

Graphic organisers are a great way of 'transforming' your notes/information into visual revision topics.

They can be used to create links, show a narrative, identify the causes/consequences and importance of something.

### How to use

- **Causation** – Create a visual flow diagram of the chronological events in a time period e.g. XXX
- **Change and Continuity** – Create a Venn diagram to show what changed and did not in medical time period
- **Concept Mapping**– At the end of a week, mind map all you can remember about a topic and link area together. Then add to your mind map using a different colour using notes

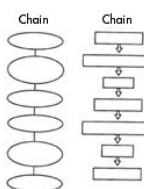
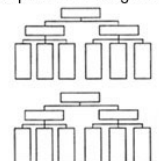
Venn Diagram



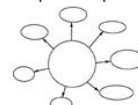
Sequential Thinking Model



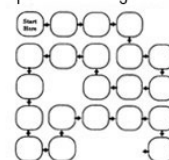
Sequential Thinking Model



Spider Map



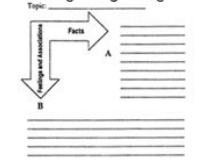
Sequential Thinking Model



Web



Thinking at Right Angles



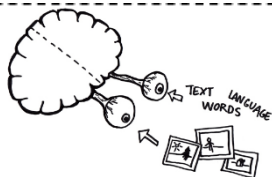
Mind Map





## How to:

- Use simple drawings with matching simple descriptions
- The drawing should represent your understanding of the topic
- Try to draw links between images



## Dual Coding

Dual coding' is the method of putting your knowledge into visual form alongside words. It increases the chances of you remembering it.

An example activity you can do is creating a comic strip to represent the events of the Battle of Hastings

## Deliberate Practice

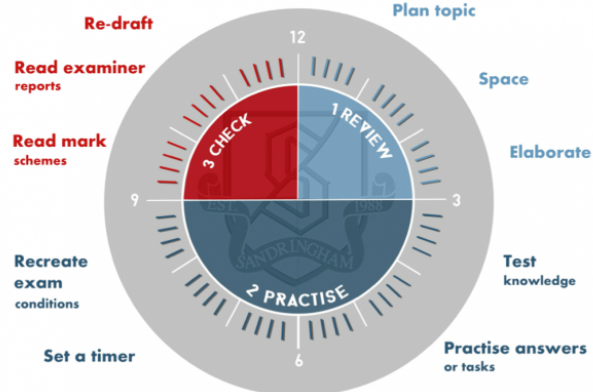
Set aside time to practice improving your knowledge or skills. Choose what you need to do, it must be tough enough to challenge you, and practice, practice, practice!

You should focus on something that you are *almost* able to do but *not just yet!*

### How to use

- Use a model answer from the teacher, pull it apart and identify the key parts. Then answer a similar question and try to replicate
  - Study material, complete practice questions in timed conditions. Then use your notes to correct / improve your answer.
- A week later, redo a similar question. Repeat as necessary.

### THE MEMORY CLOCK



## The Cornell Method

This method can be used in your revision books as a great method to get you to 'think' about your revision. Simply split your page into 3 sections as shown on the diagram on the left:

- Note Taking
- Cues
- Summary

### How to use

Use it to summarise a whole topic or theme, for example

- How did XXX change or continue over time?
- Methods used by XXX to XXX
- How XXX became XXX

Cornell Notes	
Class: _____	
Date: _____	
Cue Column	Note-taking Column
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key words</li> <li>- Key questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key ideas</li> <li>- Important dates, people, places</li> <li>- Diagrams and pictures</li> <li>- Formulas</li> <li>- Repeated (stressed) information</li> </ul>
<b>Summary</b> - Summary of your notes in your own words	

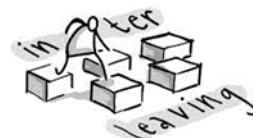


## Interleaving and Spacing

Don't revise your all topics in one go (cramming), you should revise 'chunks' of a topic for small amounts of time (15 minutes) and then move onto another 'chunk' from a different topic.

This will improve your memory!

e.g. 15 minutes on XXX, then YYY then ZZZ



### How to use

- Create a revision plan to cover topics you need to cover (least confident first!) and then go back over them again later. Spread your learning in small sections, 5 hours to 5 x 1 hour
- Use your flashcards to self-test yourself on old and new topics, self-testing across these



## The Big Picture

The best way to aid your understanding of a subject is to make sure you are confident with the big 'overview' story before you begin revising individual topics.



### How to use

- Create a timeline to identify the key events in a topic and colour code the themes
- Mapping out what you can remember about a topic before you start

## The basics

Simply, make sure you eat, sleep and take time out!



Limit distractions



Find a nice space to revise in



The more you put in the more you get out!



Create and use a revision planner



Set an alarm and start early!



Revise, Repeat, Remember



## 10 Exam Preparation Websites

Try these websites for useful advice about preparing for your exams...

1. [Get Revising!](#)
2. [BBC Bitesize](#)
3. [Top 10 exam tips](#)
4. [The Day of The Exam - How To Boost Performance](#)
5. [BBC News Top Exam Tips](#)
6. [Exam Preparation - 10 Study Tips](#)
7. [Last Minute Revision Tips](#)
8. [Prospects - How To Revise For Exams](#)
9. [Revision World](#)
10. [Gojimo App](#)





### **Middlewich High School GCSE Support:**

1. Use your subject learning maps to target revision on areas requiring improvement (exploring and securing)
2. Use the Knowledge Organisers for each subject – to guide revision
3. Use of i-Time feedback which you should act upon, including corrections/improvement to trial exam papers
4. Use '[Exam Busters](#)' section on school website for guidance
5. Use [GCSEPod](#), [Hegarty Maths](#) and [Seneca Learning](#)
6. Google Classrooms – all your lesson resources – no more missed work!

