

NAME: _____

Tutor Group: _____

The following are some revision strategies which Year 12 and Year 13 have found effective. It must be said that many of our students already have very useful revision techniques and this shouldn't be seen as a mandatory replacement. It is simply to help those students (and parents!) who need help getting started.

1) KNOW YOUR SPECIFICATION

You need to be absolutely clear about:

- what is being covered in the exam
- the rubric of the paper (number of sections/ style of questions/ timings/ assessment objectives and weightings)



eg **Unit Two: Understanding Legal Reasoning, Personnel and Methods**

25% 1½ hours 50 marks (100 UMS)

Candidates answer **two** out of **four** stimulus response questions

Download a copy of the spec (there should be one printed out at the front of each subject file) and save it electronically. Print out the relevant pages and highlight important points.

Most can be found on the subject pages of the exam board website – eg for Law you will find it at <http://www.wjec.co.uk/uploads/publications/1835.pdf>

2) BREAK IT DOWN

Identify all the topics for each exam.

For example:

English Literature LT1

- 1) Drama (Dancing at Lughnasa)
- 2) Poetry (Philip Larkin)

3) PRIORITISE

Rank all the topics according to confidence/ understanding (ie 1 = most confident and then on in descending order)

Assign them to the columns on the PRIORITISING printable (Sheet 3 of the Spreadsheet) with most confident in the ☺ column and least in the ☹ column .

4) GET ORGANISED

- Make sure that your subject files are up to date and organised.
- Use dividers for different topics.
- Separate notes from practice exam questions.
- Identify any gaps and make a list so can fill them in before the Easter holidays.

5) MAKE A TIMETABLE

I've attached a blank proforma on the exams page of the Sixth Form website which some students have found useful. The first worksheet has the exam timetable and the second sheet has a customisable timetable for you to design/ adapt. There are lots of online and interactive alternatives but sometimes basic is best!

You should first put in all of your exams in the first column.

In the second list any diary dates, work commitments, activities etc over the next 8 weeks that will preclude revision. There will (and should!) be some – but not too many!

Most students at A Level find that a 1 ½ hr to 2 hour slot on a particular topic – with a 15 minute break in the middle – is the most effective. In the holidays, you should aim for three of these two hour slots a day. On school days, it will be one and possibly two – but this will be in addition to homework set by your subject teachers. Keep it flexible. It is far better to have something you adapt but still stick to, than quitting because it didn't go according to plan.

6) START REVISING

Get offline! If you did everything in step 1 and 4 correctly, you won't need access to the internet.

Minimise distractions – switch off or hand over your mobile phone. Move away from a room with a television.

Work in your room if you can focus or elsewhere in the house if there are too many distractions there.

BE ACTIVE when you are revising. Reading through notes is passive and will not help you retain the information.

Many students have found the following helpful:

- i) copy and paste the exam unit from the spec into WORD.
- ii) Sort out the formatting if necessary – it sometimes gets a bit wobbly from a PDF.
- iii) Divide it up into subheadings for the various topics within the unit.
- iv) Type up your notes under each of the subheadings using
 - a. spider diagrams
 - b. mind maps
 - c. tables
 - d. flowcharts
 - e. bullet points
 - f. numbered points

Be as brief but clear as possible.

If you find a gap (ie you don't know what to put under a specific subheading), put a big asterisk next to it and see your teacher immediately to check.

Maybe do points that you are not sure about/ need more explanation on in a different colour? So you can check in lessons.

Save your word document as you go along and SAVE IT IN TWO PLACES (to be safe!) when you have finished.

- v) Then SAVE AS and make an exact copy but call this one LAW REVISION for example.

Go through and DELETE ALL YOUR NOTES! Just leave the subheading and maybe the number of bullet points etc.

Now you have ready made testing material to give to your parents, a friend, record to your IPOD etc. Evernote also has a great app called PEEK <http://www.evernote.com/peek/> which automatically turns your notes, audio and images into study materials.

And no – this doesn't mean you *HAVE TO* have an iPad to revise!

- vi) You can then start to do past papers. Most can be found here: <http://www.wjec.co.uk/index.php?nav=107>

Start with your notes in front of you.

Then repeat in a few days without notes.

Use unlimited time and then use the time you will be allowed in the exam.

Make sure you are confident at identifying the key words in the question and understanding what they are asking you to do.

Finally, don't forget the basics! In many subjects, the accuracy of written expression and your spelling of key vocabulary are important. In English, it will make up 25% of your grade. So make a spelling list of key terms and test yourself. Brush up on your use of the apostrophe and punctuating complex sentences so you don't lose valuable marks.

Finally ... work hard.... stay calm ... and good luck!

Revision questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is for us to gain information about your strengths and weakness when it comes to revision, so that we can then help you most effectively prepare for your next exams.

When answering these questions, please think about the last set of examinations you took, whether that was last summer's GCSEs, last summer's AS exams, or January entries.

1. How do you feel when you think about *revision* itself?

- Panicked
 - Guilty
 - Worried
 - Confident
 - Organised
 - Positive
 - Other (Please state)
-

2. Thinking about the last exam (s) you sat, rate how effectively you think you revised (with 1 being not effectively at all and 10 being extremely effectively?)

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 -10

Please give one reason for your answer

3. Why wasn't your revision as effective as you would have liked? (If you chose 5 or below, please read the following statements and tick as many as apply to you.)

- I revised the things I felt most confident about first, and then didn't leave enough time to do the harder bits.
- I revised by reading things through but often found I couldn't remember things when I got into the exam.
- The thought of making a revision timetable put me off, as I don't know how to do it properly.
- I couldn't find ways of revising that actually helped me remember.

- There were some subjects that I just didn't know what I was supposed to revise.
- I didn't have a clear idea of which topics would come up in the exam.
- I left revision too late, and didn't have enough time to fit it all in.
- Other. Please state _____

4. Which one of these statements best describes how you feel about revision? (Please tick the one which most closely applies.)

- I don't have a clue how to go about revising the information I need for exams
- I try to revise but often find I don't remember as much as I need to in the exam itself.
- I try to revise (for example) by reading things through, but am not really sure it works for me.
- Other than by reading things through and by writing notes, I am not sure how else I can revise effectively.
- I know a range of different ways to revise but am not always sure which one will work best for each topic / for me.
- I know a range of different ways to revise and feel confident that my revision skills are Ok.
- My revision skills are good: I know how to revise most effectively for me, and revision itself doesn't cause me any problems.

5. Which one of these statements best describes how you feel about preparing for exams? (Please tick the one which most closely applies.)

- I don't even know how to go about organising myself so I can start revision.
- I struggle to get organised: I have good intentions about revision but it doesn't always happen.
- I get organised and make a timetable in good time, but don't actually stick to it.
- I get organised and make a timetable in good time, but find it really difficult to motivate myself to get started.
- I do revise, but I find it difficult to plan it carefully in advance.
- I am fairly organised: I roughly plan how much revision I am going to do and of what, and generally stick to it.
- I am really organised: I plan exactly what, when, where and how I am going to revise and then stick to it.

6. What techniques do you find useful when revising? Please tick as many as apply to you.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ○ Summarising key ideas | ○ Making up questions to answer yourself at a later point |
| ○ Writing out key points over and over again | ○ Putting key words / vocabulary on post-it notes |
| ○ Using programs such as Bite Size | ○ Mind maps / spider diagrams |
| ○ Re-reading several times | ○ Other (please specify) |
| ○ Doing past papers | |
| ○ Being tested by someone | |
| ○ Revising with a friend and testing each other | |

7. Are there any subjects which you feel you know what you should revise but genuinely don't know **how** to revise?
8. Are there any subjects which you feel you don't know **what** information you should revise?
9. Would you like some help to teach you how to revise more effectively?

Yes

No

10. What would be most helpful to prepare more effectively for exams?

- Help with planning a revision timetable
- Help with deciding what needs revising for each subject
- Help to find out where resources are that are useful for revising
- Help to organise the best environment to revise in
- Help with finding out different ways to revise
- Help with deciding how to revise each subject effectively
- Nothing – I feel totally confident in my ability to prepare effectively

All resources saved: Sixth Form website (Results and Exams) and saved in 'Student Shared'

Mock results not what you hoped?

It could be for one or more of the following reasons:

a) You didn't put in enough time.

SOLUTIONS: You should be spending at least 4 hours per week per subject

- i) Make a study schedule. Stick to it!
- ii) Make better use of your frees. Find somewhere quiet to study in school.

b) You're not 'working smart'. You spend a lot of time 'looking at your books' but not much learning is happening.

SOLUTIONS:

- i) Complete a learning questionnaire and see how you learn and revise best.
- ii) Make your learning and revision ACTIVE. Don't just read or copy out your notes. Use mind maps/ acronyms/ double sided revision cards.
- iii) Get rid of distractions. You don't need your phone or even (often) a computer to get your work done.

c) You find it difficult to apply your notes to the questions that come up in exams.

SOLUTIONS

- i) Make sure you have printed out a copy of your syllabus and you understand how your notes and class work fit into the specification. See your teacher if you aren't sure.
- ii) Go back over your notes. Make sure they are clear (legible!), key terms are underlined and important points are highlighted or bullet pointed.

DON'T PUT IN
1/2 OF THE
EFFORT
UNLESS YOU'RE
OKAY WITH
1/2 OF THE
RESULTS

iii) Start revision early and do lots of past papers which you can peer or self assess.

d) You are not organised.

SOLUTIONS

- i) Have a separate folder for each subject with dividers for different teachers/ topics if necessary. Print out a copy of the syllabus and put it at the front of the folder along with the assessment objectives and important dates and deadlines.
- ii) Make sure you use headings and subheadings in your notes and important points are clearly identified.
- iii) Date each piece of work and try to use headings which help you identify which part of the syllabus it relates to.
- iv) Copy up any missed work and make sure you get any class notes / presentations. Most work will be on the shared area. See Mrs Driver Williams and she will help you catch up/ copy missed notes if necessary. Go back over the work and see your teacher if there is anything you don't understand.
- v) Empty your bag and file any loose pieces of paper at least once a week.
- vi) Use a planner/ mobile phone app/ diary to keep track of homework and deadlines. DO NOT leave coursework or portfolios to the last minute. Staff will issue interim deadlines – stick to them as this will avoid rushed and poor quality work as well as giving you the opportunity to receive staff feedback and improve your work.



"IF YOU FOCUS ON RESULTS, YOU WILL NEVER CHANGE. IF YOU FOCUS ON CHANGE, YOU WILL GET RESULTS." - JACK DIXON

e) You don't understand the work

SOLUTIONS:

- i) Go back over the work. Try to work out exactly which bit you don't understand. See if you can understand it better if you do further research on the internet or through text books. Perseverance and working something out for yourself can be far more effective in the long run.
- ii) Ask a friend or someone in your class to go through it with you. Sometimes it just needs a different way of explaining it.
- iii) Attend a study group. There are subject ambassadors for every subject and they will be happy to go through it with you or run a revision session for a group. See Mrs Driver Williams for details.
- iv) Ask for help – if it is a specific subject issue, see the class teacher. If you are struggling overall with a subject, talk to your tutor, Mrs Driver Williams, Mrs Thomas or Mr Clarke.

f) You struggle with exam technique.

SOLUTIONS:

- i) Make sure you understand all the key question terms for your subject – eg DESCRIBE, EXPLAIN, IDENTIFY, DISCUSS.
- ii) Practise past papers under timed conditions (with and without notes) so you know how you cope with time pressure.
- iii) Use effective revision strategies to ensure that material goes into your long term memory and stays there!
- iv) Get your paper back. There is a cost implication but it is worth it to see where you lost marks (often unnecessarily). Your subject teacher will go through it with you.
- v) If you get very stressed in exams, see a member of the Sixth Form team for further help with addressing this.

g) You don't feel motivated/ you don't enjoy your studies.

SOLUTION:

i) Are A Levels for you? They are only one type of Level 3 qualification and there are others such as the BTEC extended diploma which have excellent progression rates to HE and are assessed through practical activities and portfolios.

ii) Where do you want A Levels to get you? You can see them as a means to an end and the necessary stepping stone to your future career. If this is the case, knuckling down and 'keeping your eye on the prize' is the key. There will always be things in life which you don't necessarily enjoy but you need to do to achieve your goal. If you are not sure where you want your life to take you, research it! Explore ideas ... talk to people – staff, other students, friends, family. Read the news. Look at the world and imagine what part you want to play in it. What are your natural talents? What do you enjoy? What would you do if you weren't even being paid to do it? Work from there.



iii) How are things outside school? Sometimes other issues take up so much of your headspace that academic studies don't stand a chance. Talk to a member of the Sixth Form team. Don't suffer in silence.

Revision Action Plan

Date	Action	Complete Subject 1	Complete Subject 2	Complete Subject 3	Complete Subject 4
	KNOW YOUR SPECIFICATION				
	BREAK IT DOWN				
	PRIORITISE				
	GET ORGANISED				
	MAKE A TIMETABLE				
	START REVISING				
	PAST PAPERS/ EXAMINERS' REPORTS				
	TESTING/ RECAP				