

## **Revision Techniques**

### **Where to study**

Creating good conditions to study in can help you make the most of the time you spend revising. Here are some suggestions:

1. Find a quiet place to study and make sure you are sitting comfortably
2. Make sure your desk is well lit
3. Keep background noise to a minimum
4. Avoid studying in an area where there will be distractions (like television!)
5. Have everything you need to do your revision to hand before you start

### **How to study**

There is no 'right way' to revise, as long as the method you choose enables you to gain a solid grasp of key facts and consolidate your knowledge. Some students are happy to read their classroom notes from start to finish, others prefer to simplify the information as much as possible, turning everything into skeleton notes, diagrams or mnemonics. In practice, most students find that mixing techniques suits the varied nature of the subjects being revised, and provides essential variety when studying.

### **Turn your notes into revision tools;**

- write ideas and facts on to cards to use as 'prompts'
- create memory aids such as diagrams or mnemonics (e.g. initial letters to make a word you need to remember or SMART objectives: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Targets). These will help you remember key facts
- write key facts/notes out and display these around the house where you will see them
- record yourself reading notes to listen to
- Study with a friend and test each other's knowledge, but remember you are meeting to revise rather than to chat!
- Work through past question papers – and use a watch to time them so that you can practise timing your answers.
- Choose study and revision guides sensibly. It's not hard to find help with revision – as well as established published revision guides, there are hundreds of websites offering help and advice. The problem is not how to find such help, but how to judge which is the best source for your needs. Save valuable time and get recommendations from your teachers
- Remember course notes are also a valuable source of extra help
- Keep yourself more alert by changing revision methods during a session. For instance, try switching from note taking to memorising; from reading to asking someone to test you
- Attend any revision classes that your teachers may be running at school and get their advice on revision methods

- Look after yourself – Sometimes revision can become a competition – who stayed up latest, who worked longest, who's worrying the most. But the more tired you are the less efficiently you'll work. You need to rest as well as study, eat well, drink lots of water and make sure you pace yourself. Don't rush, and equally don't over-revise by doing too much too soon

### **Six simple revision techniques**

Condense – fitting notes on one side of paper makes it easier to learn

Highlight – target key areas using colour and symbols. Visuals stimulate the brain

Record – put important points onto tape, listen to them and they will sink in

Talk – read your notes out aloud

Test – what can you remember without notes. Use spider diagrams to map out what you know

Time – in a quiet place go through past papers

### **Revision techniques**

There are countless ways of revising. The least effective ways are those that involve just reading through notes over and over. The most effective ways are those where you interact with the material, making it meaningful to yourself, for example:

1. Using your material to answer a question or address a problem you have not previously tackled.
2. Reworking the material into a chart or diagram.
3. Summarising material under headings onto index cards.
4. Discussing the material with other people.
5. Make links, comparisons and contrasts between different areas of your programme.
6. Evaluate different theories.

A good starting point is to summarise the notes you have on each topic. Reduce your notes to key words and phrases. This will form the basis of your revision notes. You can reduce your notes further so that information fits on one side of A4 Use diagrammatical notes if you memorise material more easily in a visual form. Use colours, highlighting or different coloured paper to make the notes distinctive.

You can try to rebuild your notes from memory. You can save time writing by using a tape recorder or speak to someone. Use your original revision notes to check where there are gaps in your notes. Check your answers by using the original notes. Fill in forgotten facts with another colour pen. Repeat the process until all the gaps have disappeared.

Another idea is to discuss the revision topic with other students on your course.

Explaining concepts to others and checking their understanding helps to reinforce the knowledge in your mind. Once the knowledge begins to sink in try to answer questions on past papers. Practise writing essay plans for past exam questions (takes less time than writing full answers). Set yourself one or two mock exams to practise writing for a set time. You can examine past exam questions with others on your course.

Think positive! Remember Preparation + Practise = Pass!!!