

# Effective revision hacks and habits: A guide for students and parents.



This booklet gives students and parents some guidance and advice on how to best utilise revision time and for improving their working memory. It is based on research and what actually work- rather than what students think works!

Various researched based methods are explained along with some simple bookmarks and advice to help - Thank you to [www.learningscientists.org](http://www.learningscientists.org)

Retrieval practice  
Spaced Practice  
Concrete examples  
Elaboration  
Interleaving  
Dual Coding  
Exam Vocabulary  
Well being strategies & revision tools  
Bookmarks and hack sheets



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

- Highlighting texts
- Re-reading
- Summarising text



**I know the highlighter is your weapon of choice! Put it down and try something else. (Ref: Kent State University in 2013 Dunlosky et al Association for Psychological Science. )**







## TRY THESE INSTEAD

# 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.”



## What you need to do.

-  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.



# What are concrete examples?

“Students often gain a false sense of confidence in their abilities to memorise new material. Using concrete, relevant, real life examples can help students understand abstract ideas and extend information retention.”



## What you need to do.



Concrete examples involves finding & using specific examples to help develop & deepen understanding of abstract ideas.



Abstract ideas can be difficult to understand & explain. Our memories find it easier to remember concrete examples better than abstract information.



Foreshadowing can be explained with a very specific concrete example - in Romeo & Juliet the tragic ending is subtly foreshadowed in the very first act of the play.



Look through your books & class notes searching for concrete examples that are relevant to the idea you are studying or create your own if you can.



Notes, ideas or doodles here...

# 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.”



## What you need to do.

- 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.

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

**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



# 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 more effective than blocked practice leading to better long-term retention.”



## What you need to do.



Switch between ideas during a study session. Don't study one idea for too long.



Make links between different ideas as you switch between them.



Go back over the ideas again in different orders to strengthen your understanding.



While it's good to switch between ideas, don't switch too often, or spend too little time on any one idea; you need to make sure you understand them.



Interleaving will feel harder than studying the same thing for a long time. But don't worry - this is actually helpful to your learning!

## BLOCKED AND INTERLEAVING STUDY SAMPLES

In the 'interleaved' sequence, each instance of item 'A' is surrounded by different items; this contrasts with a 'blocked' presentation, where similar items appear together

Interleaved



START

ABCABCACBABCABC



END

Blocked



AAAAABBBBBBCCCCC



# 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.”



## What you need to do.



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.

# Exam vocabulary-command or trigger words

There will be subject specific key terms that you need to learn for each subject. Below are a range of command words that could be used in your exams. Do you understand what the exam question is asking you? Command words can vary slightly across different subjects so it is important you understand the command words in the exam question & in the correct context.

**Analyse** - Examine something in detail and try 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.

**Compare** - Give a point by point identification of similarities and differences.

**Define** - This means what is meant by ... give the precise meaning of a term or concept.

**Describe** - Provide an account in detail of an event/individual/concept etc.

**Discuss** - Set out both sides of an argument & reach a conclusion, including evidence.

**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- Provide a detailed description or interpretation of a term/concept etc.

**Identify** - Point out & name from a number of possibilities.

**Illustrate** - Refer to a specific case study or example (not illustrate as in draw).

**Label** - Point out specific features on a diagram, image or piece of text.

**Justify** - Explain why your selected choice/judgement is better than other options.

**Summarise** - Sum up the main points/arguments this can be the similar to outline text



# Well being



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.



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.



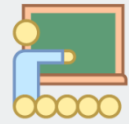









Relax during the exam period? Yes! It is essential that you do make time to switch off & have a break. Watch Netflix, read or talk to friends.



Notes, ideas or doodles here...

# Bookmarks and hack sheets

 <h2>Memory Hacks</h2>	<p><b>1 Record It</b></p>  <p>Record yourself on your phone or tablet reading out the information. These can be listened to when ever you want.</p>
<p><b>2 Teach it!</b></p>  <p>Teach someone your key facts and get them to test you, or even test them.</p>	<p><b>3 Flash Cards</b></p>  <p>Write the key word on one side and the explanation on the other. Test your memory by asking someone to quiz you.</p>
<p><b>4 Read Aloud</b></p>  <p>Simply speak the facts out loud as you read the material-even act some of them out. It helps to remember.</p>	<p><b>5 Sketch it</b></p>  <p>Draw pictures to represent facts. It can be a simple drawing.</p>
<p><b>6 Post its</b></p>  <p>Using a pack of Post-It notes write out as many key words or facts you can remember in 1 minute</p>	<p><b>7 Back to the Front</b></p>  <p>Write down the answers and then write out the questions you may get asked.</p>
<p><b>8 Apps</b></p>  <p>Check out the variety of Apps you can use for flash cards and mind maps.</p>	<p><b>9 Big Picture</b></p>  <p>Make sure you are confident with the overview of the topics you are studying. Keep checking &amp; ask teachers,</p>

## HOW TO STUDY SMART

**1. Get Organized**  
Homework planner helps remind you of homework, projects tests or assignments



**3. Draw Diagrams**  
Drawing will help you to visualise information. This creates a visual memory in your mind



**5. Watch Video**  
Documentaries on the topic you're studying will help you remember key details.



**7. Use Flashcards**  
Test your knowledge of key concepts, definitions, quotes and formulas.



**2. Read Out Loud**  
It helps you remember when you've said it out loud instead of simply reading.



**4. Listen To Music**  
Listening to music may improve your mood and change your whole outlook about studying in general.



**6. Use Google**  
Save time when researching sources online by using the biggest search engine.



**8. Study Breaks**  
Help your brain absorb more information but also to keep you motivated and focused.



# Bookmarks and hack sheets



To really make the most of your flash cards use the **LEITNER METHOD**



## Flash Cards

Simply create cards with questions on one side and the answers on the other side.



Quizlet

Anki

There are some useful apps that have flashcards already created.



**Key Terms**  
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# Bookmarks and hack sheets

## Visual Organisers

INFOGRAPHIC



CARTOON STRIP



DIAGRAM

TIMELINE



GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



## Visual Organisers

Graphic organisers are a great way to transform your notes into visual revision topics. They can create links, show narratives, identify a cause and consequence and the importance of something.



Notes, ideas or doodles here...

# Cornell Notes: A guide

This is a simple and effective way of making notes of your own notes/ video/ podcast or book- Remember to use key words or even images to help you in the cue column

**Cornell Notes** Class: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Cue Column	Note-taking Column
- Key words	- Key ideas
- Key questions	- Important dates, people, places
	- Diagrams and pictures
	- Formulas
	- Repeated (stressed) information

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**Summary**  
- Summary of your notes in your own words

## Cornell Notes: A guide

- 1 Divide your paper into 3 sections. Draw a horizontal line about 5 lines from the bottom and a vertical one 2 inches from left side.
- 2 The larger box to the right is for notes. Skip a line between ideas and topics. Don't use complete sentences. Use abbreviations eg & not and!
- 3 Review and Clarify the notes. Pull out the main ideas, key points and write these in the left hand column- the cue column
- 4 Write a summary of the main ideas, in your own words, at the bottom of the page
- 5 Study your notes by re-reading the right hand column. However SPEND most of you time looking at the left column and the summary at the bottom.
- 6 Adding a picture or a visual organiser can really help lock in the notes and provide a trigger to help you retrieve the information.

# Useful websites & Apps

The internet can be a great source of revision support. For subject specific examples of useful websites and YouTube videos ask your teachers for recommendations because the quality of revision materials online varies considerably.



<https://hegartymaths.com/>



<https://www.senecalearning.com/>



<https://www.memrise.com/>



<https://apps.ankiweb.net/>

**Quizlet**

<https://quizlet.com/en-gb>



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