

January 2024



Helping your child to achieve their best results

Assessment weeks in Cycle 2

Dear parent/carer,

All Year 7 to Year 10 students will be having assessments in all of their lessons from the weeks beginning **5th February 2024 and 12th February 2024. For Year 11, assessments will begin on 2nd February and the final day will be 16th February 2024.** Below is a how to revise guide to support revision at home. Students will practise revision strategies in morning meetings to support the development of revision strategies.

For all students, assessment will assess learning from the current cycle and prior cycles. For Years 8-9, this means will assess what students have learnt in previous academic years. Students in Year 10 will be assessed on the G.C.S.E content they have learnt since Year 10 and prior relevant content from Years 7-9. Assessments will take place in lessons.

Students in Year 11 will be assessed on the G.C.S.E content they have learnt since Year 9. For Year 11, this is a crucial time to revise previously learnt content and to ensure that they confidently know their subject knowledge and can apply it. Students in Year 11 will have their assessments in the Sports Hall at examination desks as they will do in their final G.C.S.E examinations in June 2024. This is to give students the experience of the exam hall and procedures in advance of summer 2024. This means students will continue to develop the routines to ensure strong starts to all Year 11 exam series and allow students to familiarise themselves with this formal exam setting.

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Once students have their assessment timetables, we will use 3 morning meetings to plan revision and practise revision strategies. It is really important that students treat these assessments seriously and prepare for them by doing some revision at home. The information below supports effective revision at home. Students are encouraged to use the Revision Hub which they can access via Pupil Access and their Google classrooms as it provides revision materials for all subjects including modelled questions and answers. Cycle 2 assessment timetables will be shared with students on Monday 22nd January 2024 .

Partnership

We all want your child to achieve the best grades that they can and this can be made possible when there is a partnership between the student, the school and parents. There are a number of simple things that you can do as parents to help your child to be as prepared as possible. Studies show that high parental interest is linked with better exam results than for children whose parents show no interest. This booklet aims to tell you more about what is required to be successful in exams and how you can become involved in the revision process.

Each student has received revision materials and an exam timetable which will be used to record what revision needs to be done and by when. These will be vital in helping students organise their time. There are also revision materials on the Revision Hub and each subject Google classroom.

Research has shown that preparation for examinations needs to be a deliberate and carefully planned experience for students. Prior to exams revision will take place in school.

3 areas of learning

There are 3 areas of learning that you need to be able to master to do well in your exams. They are:

1. Registering – How to take information in
2. Retaining – How to make information stick
3. Recalling – How to make sure you can recall information when you need it

Registering

Three commonly used revision techniques that appear to have very little impact on learning are:

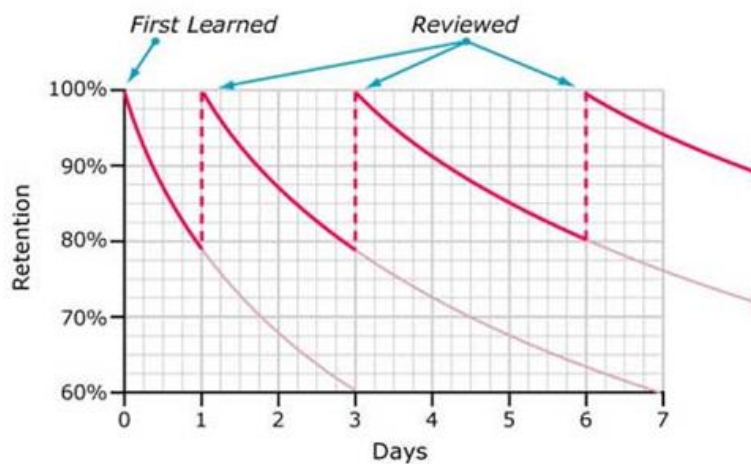
- Highlighting texts
- Re-reading
- Summarising text

The reason these are so ineffective is that they require very little thinking...and it's thinking about things that makes us remember things. It's easy to see why they are popular with students though. They are very low in demand, make the students feel as if they are 'doing revision' and for highlighting and summarising, there is a product for their efforts. They can come bounding downstairs from their bedroom and show you highlighted sheets of text of revision that they have 'done'. Gratifying? Yes. Effective? No.

So what does work?

Distributed Practice. Rather than cramming all of their revision for each subject into one block, it's better to space it out – from now, through to the exams. Why is this better? Bizarrely, because it gives them some forgetting time. This means that when they come back to it a few weeks later, they will have to think harder, which actually helps them to remember it. Furthermore, the more frequently you come back to a topic, the better you remember it.

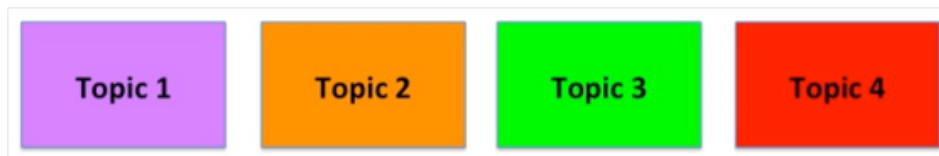
Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



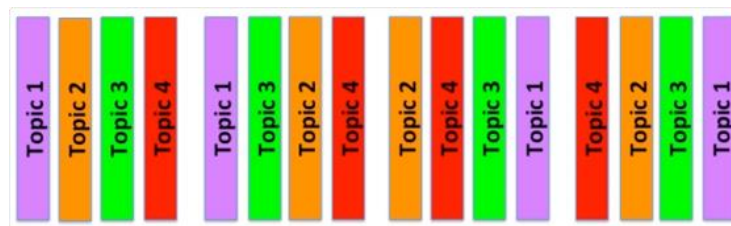
The graph above demonstrates this, by returning to a topic and reviewing it, you remember it for longer. It has been shown that you can forget up to 80% of what you have learned after 24 hours. The way to combat this is through reviewing the learning.

Interleaved Practice

When students are revising a subject, the temptation is to do it in 'blocks' of topics. Like below:



The problem with this is that it doesn't support the importance of repetition – which is so important to learning. So rather than revising in 'topic blocks' it's better to chunk these topics up in their revision programme and interleave them:



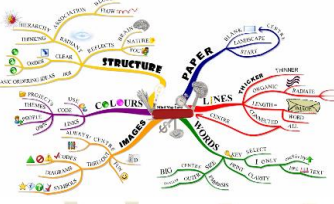




HOW TO REVISE

Skimming	Slicing	Simplifying
<p>When you are first looking at your revision material take time to skim through the information you are trying to learn. So for example with a book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start by reading through the chapter headings. • Flick through the pages allowing your eyes to wander over the pages. • Repeat this process from the back to the front of the book. 	<p>The easiest way to take information in is to slice it up into pieces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a big paragraph and rule off and number it into smaller sections. • Group similar sections of information together. <p>*eg:sections of the KO</p>	<p>Often there are too many words for the message to get through. Simplifying allows you to deal with the problem of 'spare' words.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scribble them out with a pencil • Rewrite the text in your own words (use abbreviations, for example dev.t for development) • Highlight the key words • Create bullet point lists of key ideas

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stick five or six markers in the sections that are relevant to you. 		
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There are key techniques that we use to revise using skimming, slicing and simplifying and these are set out below.

Revision Strategies		
<p>The Revision Hub has videos to support revision https://sites.google.com/tanfieldschool.co.uk/how-to-revise/home</p>		
<p>Look, cover, write, check</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at a small section that you are trying to learn (read it over and over in your head.) Cover the one side you have been reading. Write as much as you can remember of the whole section without looking back. Check to ensure 100% accuracy of spellings and content. Add any missing information in a different colour pen. 	
<p>Flash Cards</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one side of the card, write a key term or question. On the other side of the card, write the answer or a definition for the term. Now try to answer the questions on each card, before checking the answer on the back. <p>This clip shows you how to make flashcards https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV308sfXcfM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Leitner Method <p>This clip shows you how to revise using flashcards https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELfmNHepPuA</p>	
<p>Mind Maps</p> 	<p>Mind Mapping is a useful technique that supports learning, improves information recording and shows how different facts and ideas are related.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn a large piece of blank paper landscape. Design an icon or logo that sums up the subject you are studying in the middle of the sheet. Draw a number of branches coming off that central icon to represent the different topics. 	

	<p>Make the branches curved and write the topics along them in big bold block capital letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only write along the branches, not at the end. • Each main branch should have smaller sub branches coming off. • Make sure each main branch has a different colour. • Create pictures for each piece of information that are colourful and fun. <p>Here is clip showing you how to create a mindmap https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YtguHuelGo</p>
<p>Cornell note taking</p> 	<p>The Cornell System is a system of note taking that allows students to visually organise your notes and quiz yourself on the material later on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule a line straight down your page, about 6-7 cm in from the left-hand side. • Write any notes on the right-hand side. • Create questions on the left-hand side based on your notes. • Cover up your notes on the right side with a piece of paper and try to answer the questions you wrote. • Or use the Tanfield Active Notes. <p>This clip shows you how to create Tanfield Active notes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3eTFnC5KAo</p>
<p>Quizzing</p> 	<p>This technique is pretty straightforward – students keep testing themselves (or each other) on what they have got to learn. This technique has been shown to have the highest impact in terms of supporting student learning. Some ways in which students can do this easily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test yourself using flashcards, online quizzing or quiz sheets that you have made • Revisit the questions that you could not answer until you can • Ask someone else to quiz you on what you know. • Again, revisit questions that you do not know. • Work through past exam papers – many can be acquired through exam board websites and teachers will be giving them to students. • Create ‘fill the gap’ exercises to complete.



Be Assessment Fit

Stress-busting

You may find that even though you have used the registering techniques and retained the information you cannot recall the information when it comes to the exam. This is often because you are stressed. When you get stressed your brain starts to 'shut down' and the thinking part of your brain no longer works.

Leading up to exams there are ways you can manage your stress levels. These include:

- Sleep, diet and exercise
- Practising self-belief techniques
- Relaxation techniques
- Visualising
- Tricks of the trade
- Preparation and planning

Be prepared

The best way to avoid stress is to be prepared. The best way to make sure you are adequately prepared (and believe it) is to know that you have revised effectively. Therefore, make sure you use the techniques mentioned in this booklet.

Structure and preparation

- Organise your working area.
- Have all the equipment you will need handy.
- Gather up all your relevant exercise books and files and read through them. If things are missing, get replacements. Mark the main sections.
- Decorate your room with images of success to focus your mind.

Creating a SMART revision plan

- Find out the order of your exams and decide the order in which you will revise your subjects. You will do this in a morning meeting with your advisor filling in your SMART revision plan which is in your Knowledge Organiser for Cycle 2.
- Build in spare time for things you might need more work on.
- Follow Time Plans guidance in creating your SMART revision plan.

Time Plans

Time plans

Now you need to sort out a time plan. Three things are important to remember at this stage:

1. The human brain works best for **one and a half hours at a time**.
2. You can focus in a concentrated fashion for periods of about **20 to 25 minutes**.
3. You remain much more focused if you have a reward waiting for you at the end of the work. This is called the **Test/Reward model** and is unlike the Reward/Test model used by most people, eg 'I will start my homework after I have eaten my tea'. You should be working first and then having a reward.

Information ret. need

20 Mins

Break 5 mins

20 Mins

Break 5 mins

20 Mins

Break 5 mins

Test/Reward

Test/Reward

Test

Reward

Time spent revising

1.5 hours

Plan your work and work your plan!

-
- Revise when you say you are going to
- Don't find excuses
- Get rid of distractions
- Test yourself

The Basics

The following things are vital for effective learning and to ensure students are assessment fit.

- Sleep
- Switching off
- Food, drink, oxygen
- Positive beliefs

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Sleep

The right quantity of good quality sleep is essential to being able to learn. For most teenagers eight hours is normally enough.

Switching Off

If you are going to bed at the right times but still feel tired when you wake up then you are probably stressed. Practising relaxation techniques can help, such as the 'seven eleven' breathing method. Breathe in to a count of seven and out to a count of eleven.

Give yourself time to switch off before you go to bed.

Food and drink

It is important that you eat the right types of food and drink as this will vastly improve the performance of your brain.

Fruit, salads and oily fish (tuna and sardines) will help boost your brainpower more than sweet, sugary foods. Water is also better for your brain function than fizzy drinks which have the opposite effect.

Enough Oxygen

Your brain requires 25% of your blood and oxygen. **Sitting for too long and your brain starts to switch off.** Simply by standing up you increase the blood flow to the brain by 15%. Exercise oxygenates the brain; therefore, try to do some exercise in between revision sessions.

Belief

Henry Ford once said "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are probably right". If you say that you can't do something often enough your brain starts to believe it. You need to have a positive frame of mind to do well in exams. Try **visualising** pictures of yourself being successful. Famous athletes such as Johnny Wilkinson visualise themselves being successful. So Johnny visualises himself kicking the ball over the posts. They do not focus on failure.

Don't spend your life comparing yourself with other people as you will always find people who are better or worse than you. Be clear about what you want from your life, what you want to achieve and say to yourself **you can**.

PRACTICAL WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP

1. Encourage your child to attend all extra revision sessions;
2. Help your child to follow their SMART revision timetable;
3. Monitor the use of the revision notebooks;
4. Provide a quiet, well lit working space;
5. Encourage your child to have a healthy lifestyle, including 8 hours sleep per night;
6. Be sensitive to the pressure and stress that your teenager may be experiencing. Encourage them to speak to you about it;
7. Make sure that time is built in for exercise and recreation;
8. Respect their growing independence. Ask them how you can best support them.

Finally

All of the staff at Tanfield are here to support you and your child. There are:

- Revision classes;
- Revision materials;
- Learning conversations between your child and their teachers;
- Parents evenings
- Mock examinations

in place to help your child to achieve their best.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact year managers, or any of your child's teachers.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clough and Mrs Stephenson

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