

Revision that Works For You



April 2013

Revision Techniques

Remember that different techniques work for different people. You want to understand what will work best for you. You want to know how to revise better, not harder. You want to remember the brain friendly learning techniques you learnt when you did your Amazing Brains course back in September. If you still have your booklet, it will be very helpful at this stage.

When you start revising, you could:

- Read through your text books and notebooks;
- if you don't understand something, ask somebody;
- Choose the memory tricks that work best for you;
- create posters to help you organise information;
- create cards with key points, and practise them;
- use past papers to practise answering questions

Is it just copying out?

Your own notes are best. While revision guides can be useful, the more you personalise your revision the more effective it will be, so the notes you make yourself are the best.

It is the process of **making the notes** that really gets the information and ideas into your head. Once you OWN the information you need to learn and understand it will be much easier to remember.

Make as many versions of your notes as you need to feel really confident that you know your stuff
Suggestions ahead.....

Try Chunking!

Surprise, surprise, chunking means breaking up a big piece of information into smaller chunks and putting the information into a different shape to make it easier to remember. Try this:

The average person can take in **four** numbers or words at a time, can concentrate on revision for a maximum of 45 minutes at a time and remembers information best shortly before bedtime.

Chunked, it looks like this:

- remember 4 words/numbers;
- revision max 45 mins.;
- remember best before bedtime

Or you could just **FREAK OUT** of course!
but don't.....



PLAN YOUR TREATS

You need wee treats to keep you going: we bits of chocolate; big drinks of hot chocolate; biccies; fruit; nuts and gallons of tea. Whatever keeps you going.

You need medium treats to break up the sessions in one evening: ten minute FaceBook after an hours revision; a stiff walk round the block; ten minutes yoga or meditation; running on the spot; bend and stretch.

You need decent, big treats to mark the end of a good week's revision: an evening of murders on the TV; an night out with your mates; an Indian or a Chinese or a curry chip

The best treat of all is going to be this summer!

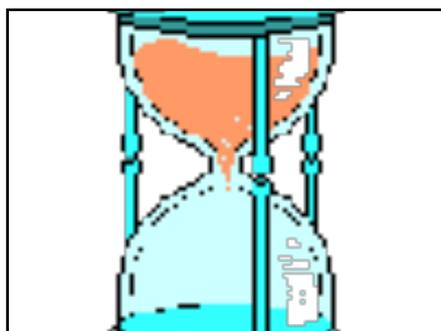
Hide the Phone



There is no way round this. You would need to be superhuman to stay off the phone if its within reach. You will probably be using a computer for your revision if you have one, and FaceBook etc are in there. You will just have to be superhuman to stay off the CandyCrush.

Drivers now have to keep their phone in the boot of the car just in case they give in and answer it while they are driving, and you will have to take equally drastic measures. If you just can't stay off it, you will need to give it to someone in the house for safekeeping. Make sure you give it to someone who understands, and who will let you check in every couple of hours, just to see what you're missing!

Choose Your Spot

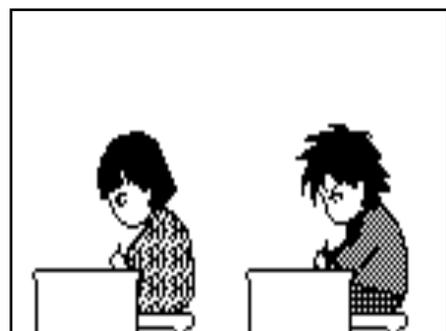


Everyone has to negotiate with their relatives over where they will work. Some lucky people have their own room and can pick and arrange their own stuff. Whatever the situation in your house, DO NOT persuade yourself you can revise in the same room as everyone else, with the TV on and everyone yacking. You might think you are OK at the time, but the human brain just doesn't work like that.

You MUST have peace and quiet, a writing surface and somewhere to curl up for the reading and learning.

Invest in NEW pens, pencils, colours, sharpener, rubber, calculator and maths kit. Don't forget a see through pencil case.

On the Day



Have a great breakfast after a good night's sleep. No compromise.

Guarantee you'll be in the right place a the right time, because you have shared your exam timetable with your relatives.

Have the see through pencil case and full kit with you every time.

Have the non fisseley mints and the water every time.

Be early, not just on time. It's hard to beat a few minutes calm in your seat before it all begins.

Read the instructions, attempt all the questions, use the advice on timing questions, use the mark scheme. Don't rush. A good conclusion is worth gold.



Acronyms

When you've got a list of points to learn, making an Acronym can help you keep your list in mind to carry into the exam in your head.

checklist to help you remember all the points you need to make in your answer, **STICS**:

Subject

Theme

Imagery

Context

Structure

Pick a key word for each point, and then make up a work using the first letter of the key word. eg. For carrying in to your poetry exam, you can make a

Learn by Rote



Some people can learn by reading their notes over again and again and again and again and again and again and again.

By all means do that if it works for you. Try reading out loud if you find your concentration slipping. Your relatives will think you have gone quite mad, but who cares!

Reading stuff aloud to yourself just before you go to bed can be really effective. Sleep with it under your pillow for maximum effect!!!

But for most people, learning by rote is just too boring for real concentration.

Best to combine learning by rote with other techniques.

Acrostics



Acrostics work rather like Acronyms. When you have your list of key words you want to remember, make a sentence using the first letter of each word. The dafter the sentence is, the more memorable it will be:

For example, to remember the names of the planets, someone made up:

My Very Enthusiastic Mother
Just Served Us Pine Nuts

which reminded them of:
Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mercury,
Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Pluto,
Neptune.

Other people's acrostics never work as well as making up your own.

Story Mnemonics



For more complicated lists, or for lists that are taking too much time to make words from their initial letters, you can try a story mnemonic. If you are trying to remember the details of a case study in geography, use a highlighter to pick out the key words. Then make up a story, as daft, as rude, as unbelievable as you like, which uses all the words.

"I woke up to find ..., followed by... Then a ... appeared, pursued by a ...

Lots of Other Things

Don't forget the humble PostIt. Write information, or better still questions, on PostIts and place them round the walls, the doors, the staircase etc. Or stick them all onto a huge sheet of paper, then take an exam question and move the PostIts round the paper to structure the very best answer, including all the essential points. You can use PostIts to group ideas together, to organise into

Recording



Use your phone to make recordings or podcasts for yourself. It could be you reading your notes out. It could be you singing your notes. It could be you reading your notes out and then stopping to summarise what you have read, shouting out the key words, ideas, phrases and quotation. Of course recordings are the very best way to practise your languages.

Really useful is a recording of questions on last night's work for you to listen to and inwardly answer last thing before sleep, or first thing on the bus next morning or on the walk to school.

Visuals



Make good use of drawings and diagrams in your revision. Remember that changing the format really helps remember and explain: write a description of what is going on in a diagram, or draw a diagram to demonstrate how a process or a poem works.

Use different colours

Make revision posters for yourself and plaster the house with them.

Keep Reworking



Keep reworking those notes. As you re-read them, use different coloured highlighters to pick out key terms, themes, ideas and points. If you print out from a revision website, do the same - tackle them with the highlighters and very wee PostIts.

Use every sort of underlining: big thick lines, wiggles, shading, stripey, dots ... Make a key and do it again with better organisation now you know your stuff.

REWRITE THE TOPIC IN YOUR OWN WORDS!



Using Cards to Learn Key Facts

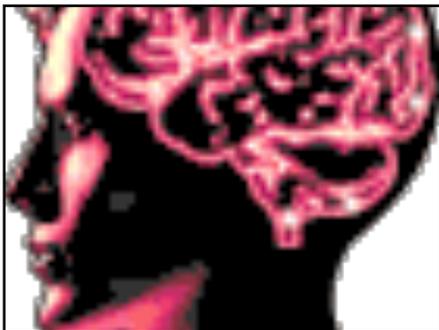
This is real revision for stuff you understand and just need to learn off.

1. Write a question for yourself on one side of the card, and all the points needed for the answer on

the other side. Then use the card to test yourself, or get someone else to test you.

2. List on the card all the points you are trying to remember. Then take a piece of paper, cover your card, ask yourself the question, give your answer point by point, sliding the paper down the card to that you can check as you go that you are remember accurately. Read, cover, test!
3. Carry the cards with you. They are perfect for the bus, or the bus stop, or the car or for sitting

Loci (places)



This works for some people, for remembering a whole sequence of events. Might suit for when you have a whole historical incident to outline. Or if you need to outline the whole process of a science experiment. The trick relies on your imagination combined with your memory.

The idea is that you walk yourself along a journey you are very familiar with, eg up the promenade or main street. You attach the steps in the story or process you are trying to remember to each of the landmarks you pass. Then, when you are in the exam trying to remember, you take yourself mentally through the walk, with your memory triggered by each landmark.

Order and Sequence



Redo your notes by going through your textbooks and notebooks, and then reworking the notes by ordering and sequencing them to make a new version. Now that you are at the end of your course, you will spot connections and sequences that weren't necessarily clear to you at the time.

Create your own ideal revision guide for the subjects. Include well sequenced notes, the most useful diagrams, use colour and highlighters to emphasise the bits that you now know are the most important.

Include mind maps or concept maps if you think they would help your alter ego revise.

Brain Friendly Stuff



Work on computer to change key words in your topic for pictures or clip art. Or use symbols or abbreviations. Bullet point and highlight, stick borders round.

Make quizzes, sets of questions and answers and round up somebody to test or to test you.

Try a sequence of questions based on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, where the questions are graded according to the difficulty you or your revision victim choose.

Brains like looking for answers. Set yourself higher order questions based on asking **why**. You want to prompt yourself to explain, analyse and explore.