



**Wimbledon
College**

GCSE Revision Guide



what's it all for?

Exam results matter.

Your GCSE grades will determine which pathways are open to you after Y11 and which are closed off.

So much depends on your GCSE results that it is worth getting some serious revision done now. Don't put yourself in the position when you get your GCSE results in August of regretting not working now!



nobody likes revising



Nobody likes revising!

You just have to face it and get on with it.

Good revision = Good GCSEs. In the long run, it is worth the effort. So stop putting it off and get down to it! NOW!

Once you get into it, you will feel a sense of achievement and your confidence about the exams will grow.

planning your revision



You need two things to plan your revision:

- a **topic list**
- a **revision schedule**

Your teacher should have given you a **topic list** (or *course outline* or *syllabus*) at the beginning of the course. Ask if you have not received it. You can also access the GCSE syllabuses online by going to the websites of the exam boards – but make sure you know which boards you are sitting. Exam boards use the word *specifications* to mean syllabuses.

Plan your revision by creating a revision schedule like this:

	subject 1	subject 2	subject 3	subject 4
Monday	Maths • fractions • percentages	French • clothing • -re verbs	Science • atoms • molecules	Geography • glaciation
Tuesday	ICT • spreadsheets	English		
Wednesday				

etc.

Plan to cover four subjects each day. Use your topic list to break up subjects into smaller topics to revise each day. Allow about 20-minutes worth of revision for each subject. When you get through the topic list, start again at the beginning. You should plan to look at each topic at least three times before the exam.

the right conditions for study



It is important to study in the right conditions. Often people forget this and try to revise in the wrong conditions and are surprised when they don't get much work done!

The room where you revise needs to be:

quiet you can't study if there are noisy distractions – try to make the room as quiet as possible – if you must have music then play it softly – if it is loud it demands attention from your brain which takes your mind away from revision

well lit make sure you have good lighting on the books and notes you are reading and writing – if the light is poor, your eyes get tired – if you get tired, revision becomes a waste of time

cool if the room is too hot you won't get much done – most people have the heating on too high – the room should be cool (no more than 20 degrees – and open a window for fresh air

free of distractions

don't have the TV on - don't have music playing unless it really is quietly in the background - don't have younger brothers or sisters getting in the way

properly equipped

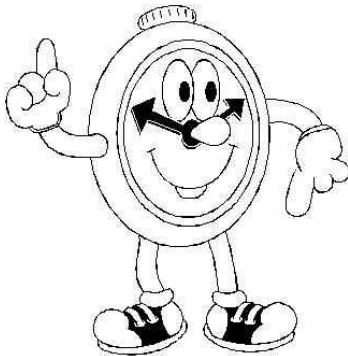
make sure you have topic lists, text books, exercise books, notes, handouts, pens, pencils and paper, drinking water – keep everything you need for revision organised – then you won't waste time getting sorted out every evening!

If it is impossible to get good conditions at home, think about using the school IT Centre, or ask your Head of Line to make a room available to you, or use your local library.

using revision time well

It's no good starting revision at any old time, picking a subject at random, and finishing when you are bored!

Work out a revision timetable for yourself and stick to it. Something like this:



7.00 revise subject 1
7.20 take a break
7.30 revise subject 2
7.50 break
8.00 revise subject 3
8.20 break
8.30 revise subject 4
8.50 stop

Do the same each day. Cover all your subjects in strict rotation. Don't spend more time on one subject than others.

At weekends have at least two revision sessions (of 2 hours each) on Saturday and another two on Sunday.

how to revise

We are all different and learn and revise in different ways.

But there are some tried and tested ways which have been shown to work.



The biggest mistake that most people make is to think that revision means sitting down with a textbook or notes and reading through them. Scientists have shown that we retain less than 10% of information this way. So reading your notes is an almost total waste of time.

By writing things down, we remember around 80% of what we learn.

So the trick is . . . **TAKE NOTES!**



Something lots of people have found helpful is to get some **index cards** (sometimes called library cards). You can buy index cards in WH Smith and Rymans. If they are too expensive then just cut paper into small sheets.

Use one card per topic.

Then write **bullet points** on the card for the main things you need to know.

As you write out the cards, you are revising. You can then use the cards like flash cards for further revision. Keep them in your pocket and do bits of revision on the bus, at lunchtime, and any spare moment.

Some people find **mind maps** and **spider diagrams** a useful way of revising. The important thing is to find a way of revising that works for you. But be honest about it – don't take the lazy way and just sit there gazing at a book!

revision online



There are lots of resources for revision online.

The best is probably the BBC Bitesize website which has revision notes, self-tests and even podcasts to download:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize

Another good revision website is www.gcse.com

Some subject websites are listed below:

biology	www.purchon.com/biology/revision.htm
geography	www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/gcse/revision.html
history	www.schoolhistory.co.uk/revision/
maths	www.mathsrevision.net/gcse/index.php
re	www.gcsere.org.uk/
sports studies	www.s-cool.co.uk/topic_index.asp?subject_id=28

other opportunities for revision

Teachers often offer **revision classes** at lunchtimes and after school – listen for announcements, read your line noticeboard and check the school website.

The Knowledge section of the school website has revision guides in some subjects.

Teachers are always willing to help. If you do not understand something or need some **extra help**, ask! If a group of friends gets together and asks for revision classes so much the better.

what not to do

There are a few bits of good advice about how not to do revision:

- don't leave it to the last minute
- don't be disorganised
- don't just read through your text or exercise books – you must make revision notes
- don't think you can wing it on the day

looking after yourself

If you want your brain to perform well on the day of exams, you must look after it! Your brain depends on your body for its health. So:

eat properly eat healthily in the run up to important exams – make sure you have proper meals and that includes breakfast – eat or drink something to give you energy before you start revision

stay hydrated drink plenty of water – your brain needs it to work properly – especially when you are revising

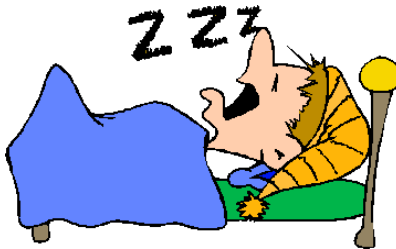
attend school don't make the mistake of taking time off lessons to revise – teachers will be covering more of the course, revising and answering questions and preparing you for the exam

keep up activities just because it is exam time, don't give up your extra-curricular activities – you may need to cut back a little and give priority to revision but don't stop doing things you enjoy – you need a balanced approach to life

exercise if your body is tired and sluggish, your mind won't work too well – make sure you get proper exercise – walk, run, swim, play football – do a little bit every day

sleep 15 and 16 year olds need around 9 hours of sleep each night – that means if you are getting up for school at 7am, you need to be in bed by 10pm – and don't make the mistake of staying up revising the night before the exam – being fresh in the morning is far more likely to benefit you than a bit of rushed last minute revision!

can't sleep? it's quite common for people not to be able to sleep properly when exams are coming up – what to do?



dealing with parents

Exams are a difficult time for parents too.

They want you to do well and sometimes aren't sure how best to help you.

The best way of handling parents is by showing them that you have got revision planned, that you are sticking to your revision timetable, and that you speak to them!



Don't just clam up and go silent – they need to be reassured! Keep them posted on how things are going and chances are they will trust you to get on with it.

mock exams are important

Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking mock exams are not important. Wrong!

Mock exams are important for three reasons:

- 1** If, by any chance, you are ill for the summer exams, or something happens which means you can't sit the exams, the exam board will ask for evidence of your work under exam conditions. The mock exams are about the only thing that will qualify. Every year, a handful of boys rely on their mock exams to give them a grade at GCSE. Don't make the mistake of thinking it couldn't be you.
- 2** Doing proper revision for mocks means you are learning stuff for the summer exams. You may need to remind yourself of it again later but you will be amazed how much you will remember.
- 3** Taking mocks seriously is good practice for the real thing. It will give you confidence. If something is really important (like GCSEs), it has got to be good to have a dry run at it.

You should put as much effort into mocks as you put into the real thing. And remember, the school is not obliged to enter you for any exam. If we think you are simply not doing enough to pass, you will not be entered.

taking exams

There are strict rules for public exams like GCSEs.

If you do not follow the rules, the exam board can fail you and even prevent you from taking other exams at school this year and in the future at college.

Invigilators are the people who run the exams. Your teachers will be there at the start to make sure everything is OK but then the invigilators will take over. You must treat them with respect and do what they tell you. They have the power to remove you from the exam if you do not co-operate.

Some things to remember about exams:

- make sure you **arrive in good time** (you will line up on the Syntax playground)
- make sure you have all the **equipment** you need: pen and pencil, spare pens, ruler, rubber, pencil sharpener, calculator
- pens and pencils must be in a **clear plastic pencil case** or clear plastic bag
- **leave notes, books and revision cards outside** (it is no good saying they were in your pocket and you weren't looking at them)
- **no mobile phones** (there are very strict rules on this – if you bring a mobile phone or any sort of electronic device into the exam you will certainly be disqualified)
- check that you can **see a clock** – or put your watch on the desk
- **no talking** (you must be silent right from the moment you enter the exam hall)
- **don't look around** (it can be construed as cheating)
- **don't disturb others** (this is especially important when you have finished and there is still some time to go – don't get restless and make it difficult for others to concentrate)
- go to the **toilet** before you enter the exam hall – but if you really need to go during the exam, don't be afraid to ask
- **don't start looking at the exam paper** until you are told to do so
- make sure you have the **correct exam paper** (correct subject, level, topics)
- **read the instructions** carefully
- take note of **how many marks** are available for each answer – if there are more marks, you need to provide a fuller answer

- if you have **special needs** (such as extra time, someone who will read the exam paper, or someone who will write for you), make sure the invigilator knows (usually there will be a note on your exam desk which says what special provision is to be made for you)

after the exam



After an exam everyone will be talking about it. And you will get more and more depressed because it will always seem that everyone else knew more than you and did better than you! If you can – don't do a post-mortem!

a prayer for exam time

Lord,

as I prepare for this examination,
let your strength and your wisdom
be present to me.

May I revise my work thoroughly.

May I understand what it is I have to know.

May my memory be reliable and orderly.

May I be calm and focused on the task ahead.

May I know and feel the love and support of my family and friends.

And may you, the author and creator of all things, enlighten me.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



good luck!