

ENGLISH REVISION

How to revise
efficiently and
effectively.

When someone asks you how
revision is going





Recognition vs Recall

Think about your favourite film.

You can probably imagine some of your favourite characters, the plot, the best scenes, some of the dialogue. Could you remember when it was in the cinema? If you heard some dialogue could you confidently say if it came from your film or not?



Recognition

In the same way that you can recognise your favourite film from a poster you can probably recognise some of the main ideas from a text when you see them.

Recall

Think about your film again.

Can you remember all the lines in the best scene?

Do you know what each character was wearing at the start of the film?

Can you remember the director, cinematographer, casting director, makeup artist?



RECALL is more taxing because you have to remember without the prompts.

Recall or Recognition?

Passive revision techniques only aid your **RECOGNITION**: they are useless for recall and should be **avoided**.

- Reading through your notes.
- Typing out / re-writing your notes.
- Highlighting information.
- Listening to recordings of texts or lectures.

All of these things make you feel busy. But you're not having to engage with anything!



Active revision strategies

Yes you are going to have to read your texts again, but it's what you do with the knowledge you've accumulated that counts.

Active revision engages your brain, and helps you to train your memory to recall the facts you need when you need them.

Recognition is no longer enough, so how do we train ourselves to RECALL?



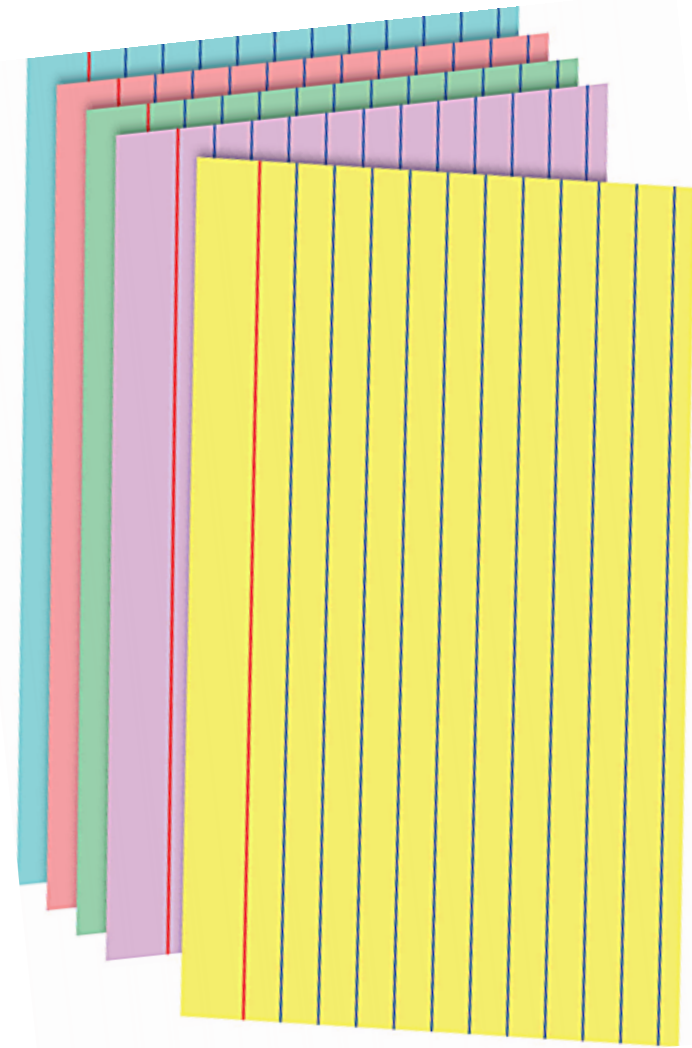
Strategy #1 - Flashcards

- Flashcards allow you to practise **summarising information** and can help you **identify any gaps** in your learning. You can:
- Condense notes about a specific theme or character on to a card.
- Write a term on one side and a definition the other.
- Write a question on one side and the answer on the other.

The most important use of flashcards is to **test yourself!** Don't just read them, actively hide the answers so you are practising recall.

Ask your friends and family to test you.

Include colours and images to improve your memory, but don't spend more time making them pretty than testing your recall of the information.



Strategy #2 – Stories and Mnemonics

- Use songs, rhymes or stories to learn facts, e.g. *“Strange pas-de-deux --- his Romeo to her Juliet, her sleeping draught his poisoned regret”* Jethro Tull.
- Mnemonics can also be a helpful way to memorise facts. Use the first letter of a series of words to create a phrase that is easy to remember. For example, the list of techniques for persuasion is **DAAFORREST**.





Sticky notes are good for summarising information and remembering key details or quotes.

Strategy #3 – Sticky notes

Use colours to identify themes and stick them around your home - but move them regularly so you don't get used to having them in a specific place.

You can use the lock screen on your phone like a sticky note – change it regularly!

Strategy #4 – Practice Questions

Working through these is a great way to test your knowledge, either by writing plans or full answers - you can find lots online, in revision guides or you can even write your own now you know the format of the exams.

First, try answering the questions without looking at your notes, to get an idea of which areas need more work.

Then, with your notes, practise planning the framework for your answers.

Finally, come back and answer the question again without your notes

Anchor point –
what is the key
similarity /
difference?



How is this key idea or
theme explored in BOTH
poems?



Overall, what is the
key message the
writer is trying to
emphasise?



The conflict in
doing your 'duty'.



War Photog – he feels he
must, but no one cares.
COTLB – they don't have a
choice but to do their
duty.



The futility of
action – doing
your duty doesn't
resolve anything.



Strategy #5 – Timeline, mind-map, then test.



Strategy #6 – Study groups

A great way to share resources, tackle difficult topics, and, most importantly, **TEST TEST TEST!**

You don't have to do it face to face, you could do it via snapchat, tockchat or even facewomble – the trick is to set a regular time and stick to it!

When your friend who came for group study actually starts studying



We don't do that here

Strategy #7 – Daily, Weekly, Monthly Review.

It has been well researched that regularly reviewing learning frees up working memory and enhances RECALL. Combining flash cards with the LEITNER METHOD will help you review your learning.

All cards start in Box 1.

- Box One is reviewed DAILY.
- Box Two every 2nd day.
- Box Three every 3rd day.
- Box Four is reviewed WEEKLY.
- Box Five is reviewed MONTHLY.



Each time a card is answered correctly it moves to the next box.

Any card that is answered incorrectly moves back to Box One.

9 Top Tips

for improving your exam revision



...EAT BREAKFAST

An estimated 27% of boys and 39% of girls skip breakfast some or all the time. It's not called the most important meal of the day for nothing: research has found that skipping this meal significantly reduces students' attention and ability to recall information. Simply having a bowl of cereal will give you the concentration and memory boost you need.



...PUT YOUR PHONE AWAY

Evidence shows that if you spend more time texting and using social media, you'll get lower grades. Researchers found that the mere sight of a phone was enough to reduce a person's ability to focus. OUT OF SIGHT IS OUT OF MIND.



...START EARLY

Committing something to memory takes time. Spreading out your revision sessions on a particular topic (eg one-hour sessions over 10 days) is more effective than spending the same amount of time in one go (ie 10 hours in one day). This effect, known as 'spacing' helps because it allows time in between revision sessions to forget and re-learn the material.



...TEST YOURSELF

Testing yourself is one of the most effective ways to improve your ability to recall information. Testing yourself also helps you check for any gaps in your knowledge. Practice papers provide a good starting point, as well as quizzing yourself at the end of your revision session.



...SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

After you have tested yourself, teach the material to someone else. This has been found to help aid memory and recall: it is known as "the Protégé Effect". Teaching someone else requires you to learn and organise your knowledge in a clear and structured manner.



...GO HIGHLIGHTER CRAZY!

Quite often, students end up highlighting whole chunks and passages of text, which can give the appearance of having worked hard, but research suggests it is of little value. You'll learn and recall information better if you connect it to other pieces of information. Highlighters don't do this, they isolate single pieces of information.



...LISTEN TO MUSIC

If you study in a quiet environment, you'll be able to recall more than if you revise while listening to music. Extroverts, and those with an exceptional ability to control their attention, are not negatively affected as much: but it doesn't help. At best, for these students, it just doesn't hinder them as much as everyone else.



...GET FRESH AIR & EXERCISE

You cannot work all day, every day. Nor should you! Revision has to be about quality, as well as quantity. Going outside and getting some fresh air helps you feel refreshed and better able to focus afterwards. Doing a little bit of exercise helps you deal better with stressful situations, reducing anxiety and increasing self-esteem.



...GET PLENTY OF ZZZs

You are encouraged to work hard and revise a lot before exams: however, there comes a time when you need to stop and go to sleep. Knowing when can be tricky. Keep regular bedtimes. Don't go on your mobile phone in bed, but if you do, turn down the backlight.

Top Tips

- Keep in mind throughout the year that what you learn, you will need to revise later. Make sure your notes are clear and memorable. Make flashcards as you go rather than just in the revision period. The earlier you start, the less you will have to do later.
- Build up how many hours you spend revising in a day.
- Vary the material you revise from the difficult to the more familiar. This makes it more interesting, and small chunks are easier to remember.
- Vary your methods of revision. Making endless flashcards can be disheartening and overwhelming.
- Aim to revise for short 45-minute sessions followed by a 15-minute break. Reward yourself with fun stuff in your break so you will be more likely to stick to your schedule!
- Even when you are on a break, your mind will keep working - often sorting out complex ideas!
- Be strict about returning to your revision after a break.

Top Tips

- If you're revising independently at home, it can be a struggle to remain productive. It is important to establish a routine - set an alarm, get dressed and eat breakfast as you normally would to prepare for the day.
- Studying with other people can really help keep up motivation. Just be sure to stick to revision and not distract each other!
- Keep notes and flashcards with you at all times, so in short moments at the bus stop or waiting in a queue you can test yourself for a minute or two.
- Challenge yourself to remember 10 facts from your revision session the day before. Build up this number over time.
- Make sure you are sleeping and eating well and getting time away from revision so that you are stronger and more motivated when you return.

Ten Top Tips For Revision Success!



Before you start, plan

We've all done it, spent so long revising the really tough stuff leaving no time for the remaining 90% of our revision. Plan, stick to it and don't panic!



Be realistic

We'd all love to be Superman and get our revision done in 5 minutes but it isn't going to happen. Working 24 hours a day won't help either. Make sure your plan is manageable in the real world not Metropolis!



The early bird...

Catches the worm, or at least has a sensible revision plan. The earlier you start, the less you'll have to do in each block.



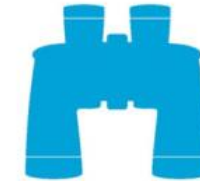
A Room of One's Own

Or corner, or desk, or sofa... Find a good place to revise, whatever works for you, be that a quiet library, your desk, or under a tree.



Mix it up a bit

There are different ways of revising like there are different ways of memorising information. Rather than just copying out, try drawing diagrams, reading aloud, sticking it on post-its on the wall. Whatever helps!



Look to the past

This doesn't involve a time machine, just checking out old exam papers. It can help you plan, revise, and calm you down!



Take regular breaks!

Don't head for information overload. We're not designed to work flat-out and work far more efficiently if we take regular breaks. Try to get up and move around, have a dance if you want. Don't just close the book; make the most of that time off!



Feed & water regularly

Like a car, if you run out of petrol you're not going to get very far. A fed and watered revision brain, is a happy, efficient revision brain revving its highly tuned engine!



Testing times

Don't just input, check what you know. You can do this with friends, family, or on your own. Testing is a great way of combating those nerves by confirming what you know, and filling in the gaps!



Early to bed

It's the night before the exam. Now you've done all that work it's time to give your brain a rest, so you're in tip-top condition for sitting that exam. **Good luck!**



THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

NAMED AFTER THE ITALIAN WORD FOR TOMATO SINCE THE TIMER USED BY THE TECHNIQUE'S CREATOR WAS SHAPED AS A TOMATO

PICK A TASK
A list should be planned ahead of time.

SET THE TIMER TO 25 MINUTES
Although a mechanical timer is suggested (like this tomato-shaped kitchen timer), any type will do.

GET TO WORK
NO DISTRACTIONS ALLOWED

STOP WHEN TIME IS UP
This block of work time is called a POMODORO.

RECORD PROGRESS
Make note of anything that could aid future improvement.

TAKE A FIVE MINUTE BREAK
Breaks keep you fresh.

GET BACK TO WORK
AND REPEAT PREVIOUS STEPS

AFTER THE FOURTH POMODORO TAKE A LONGER BREAK (15 - 30 MINUTES)
Squeeze in mindless chores for increased productivity.

CONTINUE LIKEWISE UNTIL CALLING IT A DAY
With such focus and flow, time is used more efficiently while reducing mental fatigue.

The Pomodoro technique

A great way to revise if you are:

- Easily distracted by small things.
- Work past the point of optimal productivity.
- Have lots of open ended work.
- Really like tomatoes.

- 1) Pick a task.
- 2) Set a 25 minute timer.
- 3) Work until the time is up.
- 4) Take a 5min break.
- 5) Go again.

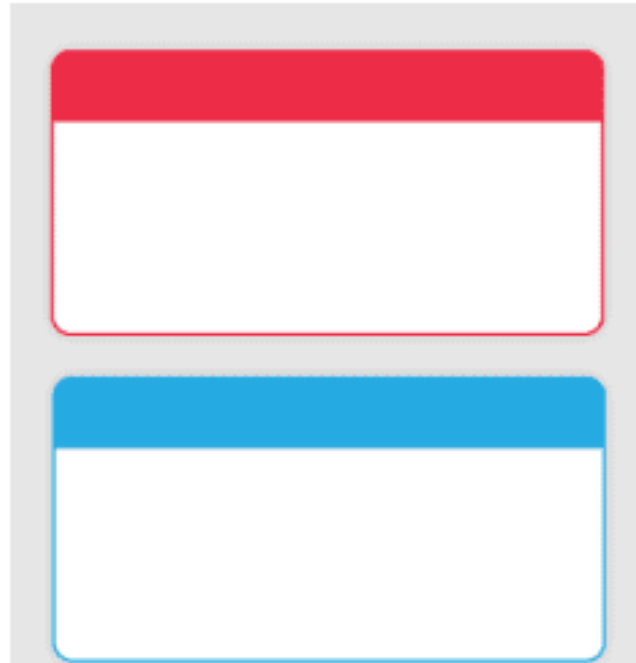
Every 4 podomoros, take a 15-30min break.



To Do



In Progress



Done



Kanban Boards

A project managers tool.

Write out all your tasks.

Put them in the columns.

Keep a maximum of three 'In Progress'

Good habits to get into...

- 1) **Do one task immediately; do the most important task first.**
- 2) **Set yourself mini-deadlines** – ‘By 5pm I will...’
- 3) **Good location, best time** – when and where are you at your best?
- 4) **Reduce digital distractions** – restrict your web access, leave the phone outside.
- 5) **Sounds can help** – music without lyrics such as movie soundtracks or classical can help you concentrate,
- 6) **Take advantage of social pressure** – set goals with your friends and compete to complete!
- 7) **Reflect** – whether you revised well or poorly reflect on why this was. What do you need to change and what do you need to hang on to?

