

Gleniffer High School



A Revision Guide for your SQA
examinations

This study guide is to help you study for your exams. You will find all the key information you will need to revise effectively for your exams.



Starting Revision

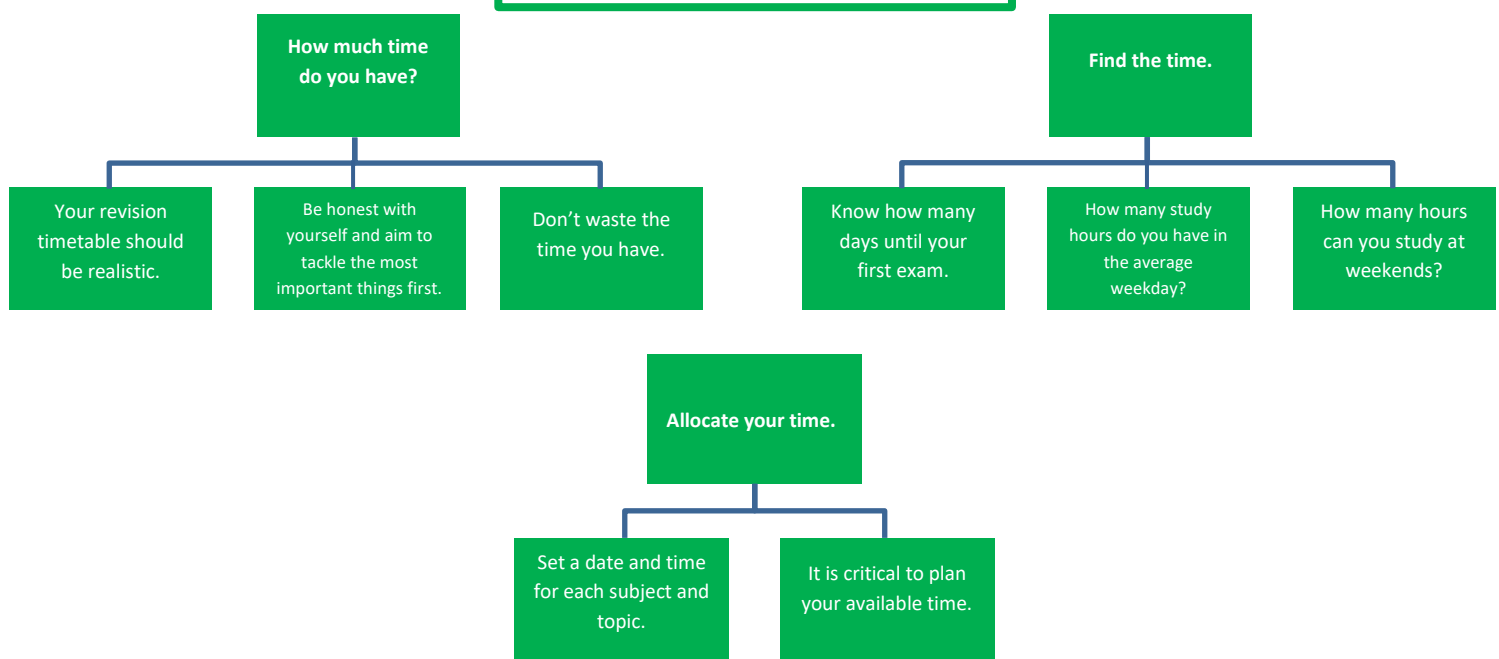
Before you can start you need to know what you've got to cover, what your strengths and weaknesses are and what you need to help you revise. To do this well you'll need to go through each subject in turn, working out:

- ✓ What you need to cover
- ✓ Your current level of understanding
- ✓ What you are going to need to revise in that area

Once you have all this information, you can start to plan your revision timetable. Planning your revision is the key to success.



Preparing the Basics



The right space to work in...

Make sure you've got the following:

- ✓ Comfortable chair and desk
- ✓ Good light and comfortable temperature
- ✓ Revision timetable/planner
- ✓ Storage to keep your revision space tidy
- ✓ Revision kit

Remove Distractions

- ✓ Let your family know your study timetable so you are not distracted
- ✓ Remember that useful concentration only lasts about 30-40 minutes
- ✓ Take breaks of 5-10 minutes
- ✓ Like anything, concentration improves with practice

Complete Revision Kit

- Pencils, highlighters and pens
- Paper
- Folders and dividers
- Post-it notes
- Summary Notes.
- Text books & Revision guides



Have you got a Study Partner?

Having a Study Partner means questions and answers. Working with your study partner helps outline what information you know and what you need to work on.

Your partner will also motivate you to study. It tends to be easier to stay in and study if someone else is doing it with you - It's always better if someone else is testing you, rather than testing yourself.

- Pick someone who is **reliable** and who you **like and trust**
- **Plan in advance** what you're going to discuss
- Share your **summary sheets, mnemonics** and other **methods of remembering information.**

Working with your Study Partner:

- **Structure** your meetings: **Study, Discuss, Study, Discuss**
- Teach your Study Partner a subject, then have them teach it back to you
- **Stay in touch** by phone and messaging, **support** each other
- Check your revision planner for **areas to focus on** and plan for
- Don't get side-tracked – **stay on track!**

Flash Cards

Flash cards are a good way of turning lesson notes into a precise way to study.

Good flash cards should:

- ✓ Contain all the key points of a topic
- ✓ Be clear and concise
- ✓ Be a condensed version of your study notes
- ✓ Allow you to take in the information at a glance
- ✓ Not have loads of detail

By transferring information from notes to the flash card, you are re-learning what you have covered in class. You have to be able to understand it in order to put the information in your own words!

If you get to a flash Card and you don't understand it, go back to your detailed study notes to revise and re-write it in a form you understand.

Mnemonics

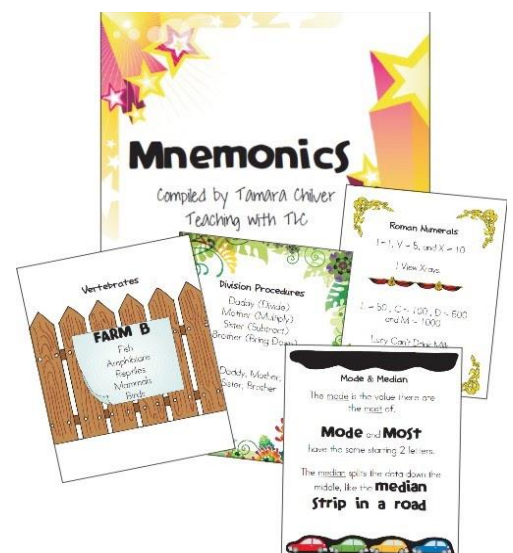
For some learners, where there is an order or a long list to learn mnemonics are very helpful.

The idea of learning

My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas might seem odd, in fact the stranger the phrase the more likely you are to learn it, but consider that it stands for:

Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune (and Pluto)

You learn the planets and their order, all through a silly sentence!

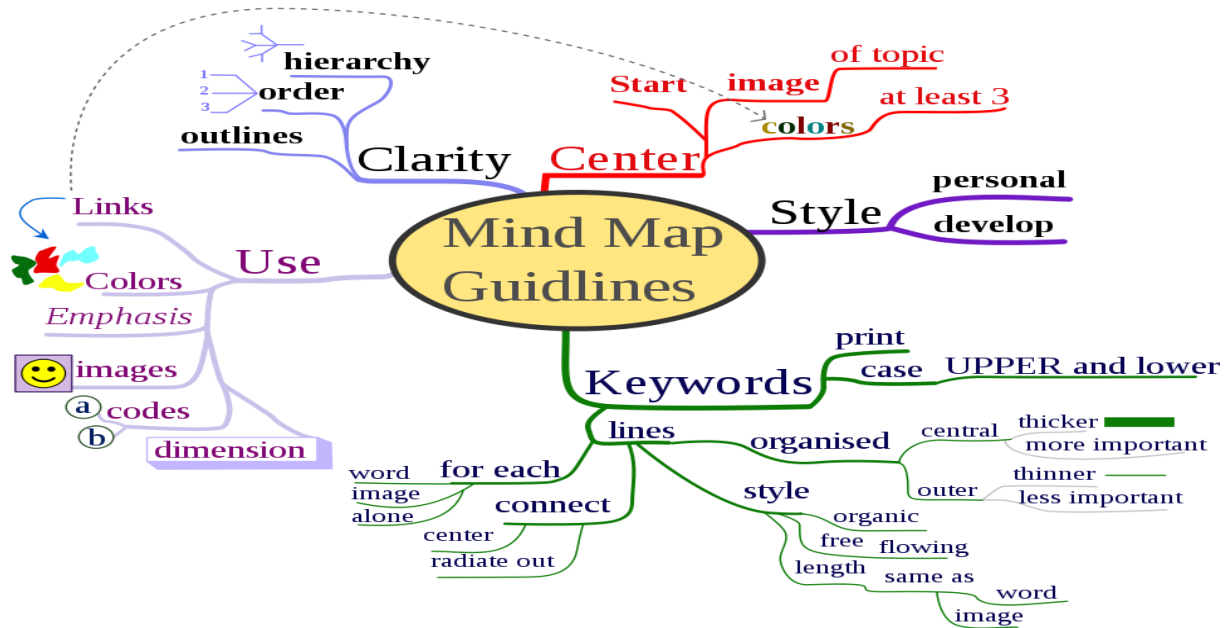


Mind Mapping

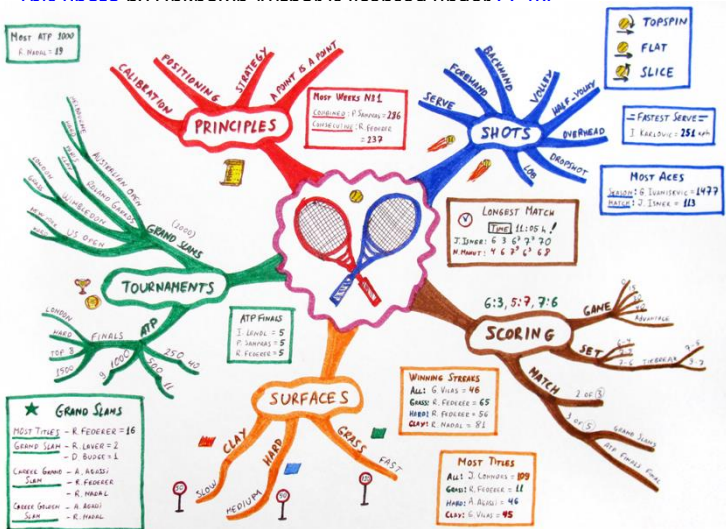
Mind mapping is useful for listing lots of ideas and connecting them together. You can use Mind Maps to record information as you are revising OR you can use it to see how much you know or remember about a subject or topic.

How to mind map:

- ✓ Use **key words** or **images**
- ✓ Start in the **centre** of the page and work out
- ✓ Make the centre a **clear visual image** that represents the general theme of the map
- ✓ Put key words on lines. This reinforces the structure of the notes
- ✓ Use **colour** to portray themes, associations and to make things stand out
- ✓ Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind
- ✓ Use **arrows, icons or other visual aids** to show links between different elements
- ✓ Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit
- ✓ **Break boundaries.** If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map
- ✓ **Be creative!**



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Doodles

Create a drawing to help fix key points in your mind. Most information can be presented visually – use your imagination! You don't have to be able to draw well – scribbling or stick figures will be just as effective.

Key Words to Learn

Command words are words in an exam paper which tell you what to do. It is extremely important that you understand what each one means.

Analyse	Look very closely at the detail
Comment on	Give your opinions or point of view, with reasons
Compare	Say how things are the same and how things are different
Contrast	Say how things are different
Describe	Write about in detail
Discuss	Give the main reasons for and against, come to a conclusion
Estimate	Give a rough idea, with evidence
Explain	Give reasons for
Illustrate	Give examples that make the point clear – it can include diagrams, figures or drawings
Interpret	Explain the meaning in your own words
Justify	Give reasons to support an argument or action
Outline	Give only the most important details
State	Write briefly the main point
Summarise	Bring together the main points

Plan your Answers using the WILT Approach!

W	What is Wanted?	Look at the command words – what do they mean? What other key information is there in the question?
I	What should it Include?	What is really needed for the answer?
L	How Long should I spend on it? How Long should the answer be?	Look at the number of marks awarded – if it's only a few, the answer does not need to be very long.
T	What Type of answer is needed? What form should it take?	Should it be a letter, diagram, explanation, essay, etc.?

Useful Strategies

Annotation

When you read books, you should have questions in your mind. As you read you should be looking for the answers to these questions.

Have a pencil handy so that you can 'annotate' your text.

Unlike highlighting, the process of annotating helps you to stay focused and involved with your book. You'll find that the process of taking notes as you read will help you concentrate better. It will also help you to monitor and improve your understanding.

List of some techniques that you can use to annotate text:

- ✓ Underline important terms
- ✓ Circle definitions and meanings
- ✓ Write key words and definitions in the margin
- ✓ Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin
- ✓ Write short summaries in margin at the end of sub-units
- ✓ Write the questions in the margin next to the section where the answer is found
- ✓ Indicate steps in a process by using numbers in the margin
- ✓ Draw pictures to represent key ideas

QUALITY ANNOTATIONS

Summarize

Ask a question

Offer a new perspective

Make a connection

ANNOTATION
STARTERS

This section discusses...

I do not understand...

I dis / agree, because...

This reminds me of...

KARIN SCHREIBER HALLETT 2012

Post It Notes

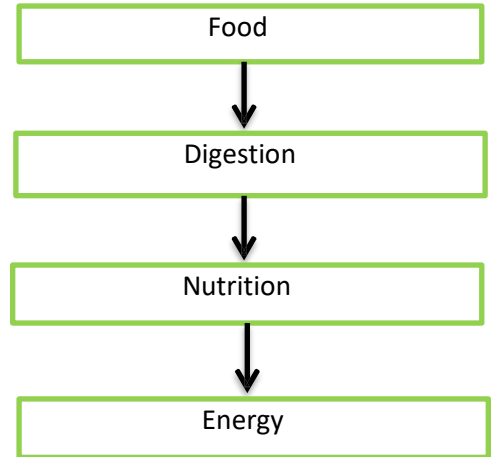
Write information onto post it notes and stick it where you will see it often.

You could use them to learn key quotations in English, key dates in history, or formula in maths. The possibilities are endless!

Try removing a post it note and see if you can remember what it says.

Simple Flow Charts

If your mind works in a straight line, try creating a list of connecting ideas:



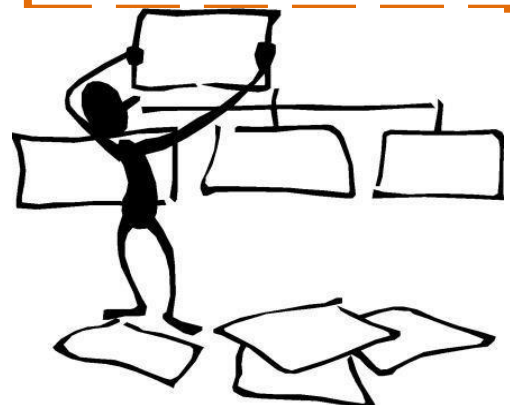
Timeline

A timeline is a good example of a visual organiser. It works in most subjects.

Examples of when you could use a timeline:

- ✓ Steps in a scientific experiment
- ✓ Significant moments in a novel
- ✓ Stages in a process in technology
- ✓ Dates/events in a historical period

timetoast.com



Colour Code

- ✓ Write key points on coloured card, post it notes or paper.
- ✓ Use different colours for different topics
- ✓ Turn pieces of paper over to use as flash cards and test yourself.



But I LOVE this paragraph. How can I delete it? It's some of my best writing ever! Ok, maybe it doesn't contribute to the overall story but I spent so long writing it! If single paragraphs could win the Pulitzer, this paragraph would win, for sure. Revision is overrated, and since I spent so much time on this paragraph. Why do I have to get rid of something that I can't make more words? This paragraph is too good!

Revision Angst

INKYGIRL.COM: Daily Diversions For Writers
Copyright ©2009 Debbie Ripath CA

Complex Flow Charts

Sometimes the connections between ideas are too complicated to be shown in a straight line. Here is an example of a more complex flow chart.



Created by Edraw



Revise!

Using Past Papers

Exams are like anything – the more practice you have, the better you get. This is why past papers are so important to your exam preparation.

Get to know:

- ✓ Their layout, names/numbers of questions
- ✓ The format of instructions
- ✓ The range of questions: multiple choice, short answers, essays etc.
- ✓ What is required in your answers
- ✓ The marking scheme
- ✓ What really good answers actually look like

Successful Revision: Ten Steps to success

1. Find a good environment in which to revise (comfortable, quiet and no distractions)
2. Make a realistic revision timetable; mark subjects and topics on it
3. Know your strengths and weaknesses in each subject – mix them up on your timetable so you cover everything in turn.
4. Always make your own revision notes – you will learn as you write!
5. Stay focused – stick to the important bits)
6. Use types of revision techniques that suit you
7. Tick off topics when you've revised them; feel good about it!
8. Split your revision into 10, 20 and 30 minute long sessions. At the beginning of the session test yourself on what you learned in your last session.
9. Have a short break between revision sessions to unwind
10. Keep reminding yourself of how useful your revision is, and look back at what you've achieved so far.

In the First Few Minutes of the Exam

- ✗ Always read the instructions carefully
- ✗ As you read through the examination paper, circle the questions you want to answer
- ✗ Make sure you read through the whole paper before you start to write
- ✗ Check how many marks are given for each questions – this gives a clue of how much information is required and how much time you allocate to the question.
- ✗ Stay calm, don't panic. Counting to ten or breathing deeply may help if your mind goes blank
- ✗ Before you start writing, work out how much time you have for each question. Don't spend too long on one question!

Examination Advice

- ✓ Check your timetable. They do not all have the same start time!
- ✓ Know when and where your exams are going to be
- ✓ Know your candidate number
- ✓ Arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of exam
- ✓ Attend masterclass revision with your teachers
- ✓ Do not be late! If you are late you may not be allowed to sit your exam
- ✓ Do not communicate with any student whilst you are in the exam room. If you do, you may be disqualified from your exams
- ✓ No mobile phones/electronic devices
- ✓ Bring a spare pens!
- ✓ If you are allowed to use a calculator in your exams, make sure the batteries are working
- ✓ Listen and follow ALL instructions carefully



Don't Forget Revision Sessions!!

Don't forget to check when each of your subject teachers are holding masterclass sessions. Try to attend as many as you can – your teachers are experts at preparing students for exams and have lots of past papers for you to try.

How Parents Can Help

It goes without saying that all students are different, so it follows that there is no single approach to how a parent can help out, but here are some suggestions.

Don't compare your own experiences of exams and revision with that of your children's!

Do

- ✓ Discuss with your child what will be involved in the revision period and what your role could be.
- ✓ Provide the environment necessary for success. Ideally, they need a quiet, well-lit place to study with interruptions kept to a minimum when they are working.
- ✓ Respond positively when they ask for help. Ask exactly how you can help and if you can't help immediately say when it's convenient.
- ✓ Give plenty of praise and encouragement, stay calm and don't expect too much.
- ✓ Keep them well supplied with food and drinks.
- ✓ Keep a low profile.
- ✓ Be prepared to listen when they want to talk about a problem as everything becomes more emotional and heightened during the exam period.
- ✓ Encourage them to take regular breaks during long periods of revision.
- ✓ Encourage morning revision when the brain is more receptive and discourage studying right up to bedtime.

Don't

- ✗ Make comparisons with brothers, sisters, their friends and so on.
- ✗ Unintentionally add to their worries by constantly mentioning the exams.
- ✗ Relate too much to when you were sitting your exams at school or how you did your revision.
- ✗ Worry if their revision techniques seem strange or unusual.
- ✗ Make an argument out of whether or not they listen to music when doing their revision.
- ✗ Distract them unnecessarily.
- ✗ Expect them to study all the time as taking some time out to relax will have a positive effect on their work and overall success.

Exam Stress

Do you feel your stomach in knots when you think of your upcoming SQA exams?

You're not alone, every year students worry about their exams but it's important to understand **how to deal with stress** so that it won't negatively affect your performance. A little bit of stress can motivate you to work harder but excessive anxiety can cause:

- Lack of sleep
- Poor appetite
- Increased heart rate
- Migraines or headaches

Let's put those harmful feelings to one side and focus on **revision tips** that can help you control your stress levels. Here are some **practical tips to help you revise for exams** without the pressure:

- ✓ Try to get enough sleep – get between 6-8 hours a night to help keep you focused and concentrate better. Turn off digital devices/phones at least half an hour before bed and try unwinding by reading a book, relaxing or chatting to family.
- ✓ Use Mobile Apps to relax like Headspace
- ✓ Practice timing your past paper questions to get you used to exam conditions and practice working in silence!
- ✓ Eat the right foods- follow a healthy diet and avoid stimulants such as coffee or energy drinks
- ✓ Get organised! Make a revision timetable and outline short term goals and tick them off when you achieve them!
- ✓ Avoid negative people
- ✓ Listen to music –music can fight boredom and motivate you to continue studying
- ✓ Get some exercise – exercising during study breaks can boost brain activity and improve memory. It can also allow you to switch off, letting your brain have some down time.
- ✓ Fit fun into your study routine – test yourself with interactive online quizzes or watch academic videos on YouTube
- ✓ Keep your end goal in mind – write the end date of your exams so you know that this is the final push and you will soon reach the final goal of results day when all of your hard work will pay off.



**KEEP CALM
AND**

ALL THE BEST

**IN YOUR
EXAMS**

Revision Timetable

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					

Saturday					
Sunday					

Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					

Saturday					
Sunday					

Notes: Please note any coursework deadlines, homework, practice exams, masterclasses