

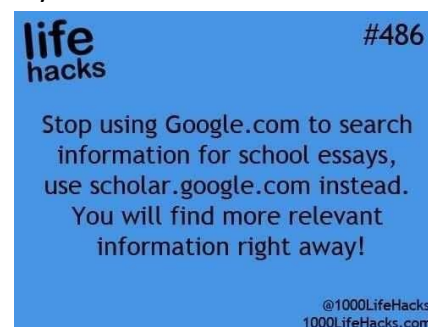
Advice for Parents and Carers – Helping your child prepare for exams.

Providing Support

The best way to support your child during the stress of revision and exams is to make home life as calm and pleasant as possible. It helps if other members of the household are aware that your child may be under pressure and that allowances should be made for this.

Make sure there are plenty of healthy snacks in the fridge and try to provide good, nutritious food at regular intervals. Encourage your child to join family meals, even if it's a busy revision day - it's important to have a change of scene and get away from the books and computer for a while. Also encourage your child to take regular exercise. A brisk walk around the block can help clear the mind before the next revision session. It's important to get a good night's sleep before an exam, so discourage your child from staying up late to cram.

Try not to nag or make too many demands on your child during exam time. Arguments are counter-productive and will only add unnecessary stress and distract from revision. Make sure your child knows you're interested in their work and that you'll be proud if they put in the effort.



Top Tips

- work out a revision timetable
- break revision time into small chunks – 45 minute sessions with short breaks at the end of each session often work well
- make sure your child has all the essential books and materials
- condense notes onto postcards to act as revision prompts
- buy new stationery, highlighters and pens to make revision more interesting
- go through school notes with your child or listen while they revise a topic
- time your child's attempts at practice papers – they can be found free on www.sqa.org.uk/pastpapers, along with marking schemes
- Monitor phone usage

Useful Software

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| SQA My Study Plan | One Note |
| Reviser | Mindnode |
| Quizlet Flashcards | |
| BBC Bitesize | |

SCHOOL HACKS!

1. After writing a paper, copy and paste it on to Google Translate, and listen to it to find mistakes.
2. Download the app PhotoMath! It lets you take pictures of math problems, and teaches you the correct steps to solve the problem.
3. You're more likely to remember something that you wrote in blue ink than in black ink!
4. Peppermint stimulates the brain and helps with concentration.
5. While studying for a certain subject, pretend that you will have to teach the material! It helps you pay more attention!
6. Use wordhippo.com to find words that you can't think of, but can describe.
7. White text with black outline can be read with ANY color background!
8. Studying hard for 30 to 50 minutes at a time with 10 minute breaks in between is the most effective way to study.
9. Eating chocolate while studying will help the brain retain information easily!
10. Writing something out is equivalent to reading it 7 times!

Health and Wellbeing

You and your brain....

You learn by making connections between neurons in your brain. For that reason it makes sense to know how to look after it:

- **Get plenty of exercise:** physical activity boosts oxygen levels in your brain making it work better. Doing some kind of physical activity during your study or breaks can help you learn better. Some people like to pace the room whilst they study, others have a ball they can kick around the room or move between their hands. During breaks you can go for a walk, run or cycle.
- **Eat a healthy diet:** It may be tempting to eat junk food such as sweets and crisps while you study, however, regular nutritious meals are essential for a well-functioning brain – eat your breakfast, take healthy snacks & drink plenty of water. AVOID energy drinks - the sugar and caffeine may keep you awake, but you will only end up with more hours of ineffective revision which won't stick.
- **Keep calm and think positive:** When you are tired or stressed, your brain will start to 'shut down' to protect itself from harm and as a result will not work as well as it could.
- **Relaxation Exercises** can help to keep you calm and motivated:
 - Take deliberate breaths in and out whilst stretching your arms and/or legs
 - Take breaks outside – some fresh air helps you take a fresh perspective
 - Talk it out – not only a good way to relax but also can be used to help consolidate knowledge by saying it aloud
 - Sing! Play a song you like and sing along – proven to de-stress
 - Try some mindfulness techniques: <http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/students/>
- **SLEEP WELL!** Too little or too much sleep will disrupt your study. For advice on sleep hygiene visit the Sleep Council <https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/teach-students-sleep-well-exam-season/>. Your pastoral teacher will also have some additional resources.

Study likes company

Study can sometimes seem like a huge task and sometimes huge tasks are best shared. In the next section you will read about some revision techniques – there is no reason why these techniques could be done in pairs or groups. Working with others can also give you plenty of opportunity to unburden yourself of fears & worries which could otherwise build up.

How to Revise

Getting ready:

- **Make a Space** - Find a space to study free from distractions. If you can't find a place at home, use the school or public library or ask a teacher if you can use one of the rooms in school.
- **Make a Plan** - Use your prelim analysis sheets to help identify areas of difficulty, make a study timetable so you know what you are studying and when
- **Make a Start** – have your timetable and all your materials for each subject in one place (textbook/study guides/notes/past papers)

Use **ACTIVE** Revision techniques:

Reading through notes is the least effective form of revision. Knowledge used actively is six times more likely to be retained. Revision is not meant to be easy. Don't avoid attempting difficult questions – refer back to your notes and try again. Some examples of active revision techniques are given below:

Chunk it down

- Look at what you have been asked to do
- Put the tasks into smaller units
- Do these in order and have a break between each unit

Q & A Revision Cards

- Write a question on one side and an answer on the other
- Put questions from old test papers on the cards
- Pencil in answers to questions which you are not sure about

Memory Mapping

Memory maps are a visual summary of the most important information. Good memory maps use space, show relationships and:

- Have the key ideas growing from the centre
- Link ideas together using summary words – use colour to help distinguish between units

Crunching Notes

This technique can be used to help make revision cards for use with other techniques such as Memory Mapping

- Use your class notes/textbook/revision guide to write your own note on one particular piece of knowledge (tick lists are good for identifying a particular section of work)
- The next time you review/use this knowledge, try and 'crunch' your note, reducing it to a few simple sentences/diagrams
- Next try to crunch your notes again to fit on to a postcard, using only key words/diagrams.

Glossaries

This is another form of 'crunching' notes where you take a list of key terms and write a short explanation of each. Tick lists or the index at the back of your text book can help make the list. Finished glossaries can be used to make flash cards.

Read, Test, Check Repeat...

This is a useful technique to use to check you have consolidated your learning in a particular area from your revision list.

- Step 1: Use your study material / revision cards to review a piece of knowledge
- Step 2: Select a past paper question or **Q & A Revision Card** (preferably one you have not done before)
- Step 3: Attempt the question
- Step 4: Check the answers against solutions provided
- If you get the right answer move on to the next piece of knowledge
- If you get the wrong answer go back to the first step

Study plans

A **study plan** is an essential tool to make sure you are studying the right things at the right time. A good study plan breaks up your week(s) into chunks of learning allowing time for essential breaks.

When making a study plan try following some simple guidelines:

- Include extra-curricular activities in your plan first – that way you won't feel like you are missing out because you are making these a priority (for good mental health). This can include breaks for a favourite tv program or football training.
- Try to split up your study with regular breaks – a change can be as good as a break so try to avoid long blocks of one subject.
- Divide your time evenly amongst your subjects, that way you avoid the feeling that you are prioritising one subject too much over another.
- Include supported study or any tutoring in your plan as these count towards your overall time for each subject.
- Avoid general terms like 'Physics' on your timetable – be specific. Study guides can help you by providing topic lists which you can 'tick off' as you go.
- Don't study too late – allow **at least an hour** of free time before going to bed – half an hour or so to use your phone or tablet and another half hour to prepare for bed. Using your phone just before bed stimulates your brain too much and you won't be able to sleep well

Example study timetable

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|---------|---|--|---|--|---|-----------------|---|
| AM | School | School | School | School | School | Game 8am - 12pm | Lie in |
| PM | School 3.50pm N5 Maths Supported Study (1hr) | School 4pm Homework (1hr) | School 3pm N5 Biology Supported Study (1hr) | School 4pm Homework (1hr) | School 4pm Biology Photosynthesis | Relaxing | 1pm English - Close Reading (+5 mins) 2pm Graphics Folio (+5 mins) 3pm Chemistry Molar Calculations (+5 mins) |
| EVENING | 7pm English Poetry 8pm Biology Cells | Training 6.30pm-9pm | 6pm Chemistry Metals and Bases 7pm History Causes of WW1 8pm Maths Factorising | Training 6.30pm-9pm | Cinema | With friends | 7pm-8.30pm Homework |
| Notes | Need to work on theme of poem. Find examples of trig graphs. | Finished homework early so did 30 mins sketching for Graphics folio. | Finding trinomial factorisation really hard. | Need to finish re- drafting English essay this weekend. | | | Need teacher to look at Graphics folio and check progress. Finally getting molar calc right. |

This is one example of a study timetable – others may split the day into half hour or hour slots. Several blank and example study timetables are available at:

<http://employgleniffer.weebly.com/revision.html>

This example also includes space to make notes of how successful the revision has been and any areas which need greater attention during the next session – it is important to do this to keep track of your progress.