



**Stokesley School  
& Sixth Form College**

Being the best we can be

# **The Revising guide**

Tried and tested revision strategies

## General rules for revision

### 1. Find out what you don't know.

*There is no point revising the content you are familiar with. Make sure you have a breakdown of what you need to know for each exam. Highlight what you don't know and focus on that.*



### 2. Create a quiet and calm space for revision.



*Create an area where you can concentrate, away from distractions. You might need to have a place to lock away your phone, or give it to a family member while you are revising.*

### 3. Plan your time in detail.

*Create a revision timetable (use the guidance in this booklet) and ensure you plan specifically what you are going to revise. Don't just write 'English'. Ensure you cover all of each course in your timetable, only missing out anything you are 100% confident you already know!*



### 4. Build in rest breaks and rewards for yourself.



*Humans can only concentrate for a certain amount of time, on average 45 minutes. Consider this when planning your revision. Changing what topic you are revising and building in deserved rest breaks can help. Make sure you plan to do something you enjoy or will relax you as a reward for all your hard work!*

### 5. Create 'desirable difficulties'

*The harder you work, the more your brain will retain that information. Forcing yourself to try and recap as much information as possible will strengthen those electrical connections in your brain that help us recall information (essentially improving your memory). Spending 20 minutes quizzing yourself (using one of the strategies in this booklet) will help you remember more than spending 3 hours reading and highlighting your notes or copying up information.*



## Strategy 1: Creating a revision timetable

Creating a revision timetable is vital for organising your time and ensuring you are revising everything you need to before your exams. This is especially important when you have a lot of exams in a short space of time.

### Tips for designing your timetable:

#### 1. Interleave your revision

*Mix up your revision, research shows it helps with retention. Revise some geography, then some maths and then some science. Even mix up topics.*

#### 2. Be specific

*Don't just write 'Science' as what you are going to revise. Be specific about what topic (or even part of a topic) you are going to focus on.*

#### 3. Don't revise solidly for hours.

*Your brain will stop taking in information. Research shows that revising in blocks with breaks in between is the best. Some people work best in ten minute intervals but you should work for no more than 45 minutes without a 10-15 minute break. Build in rewards to give you something to work towards*

#### 4. Start early but don't plan too far in advance.

*The more you recap something the more able you are to remember, little and often now will be better than hours of cramming just before the exam. Also only plan a week or two in advance. Plans can change!*

| Time    | Mon                                | Tues                            | Wed                             | Thurs                           | Fri                             |
|---------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 3 - 4pm | Geog: Plate tectonics              | History: Causes of WW2          | PE: Anatomy                     | English Lit: Macbeth            | Maths: Formulas (memorise)      |
| 4 - 5pm | Dinner / spend time with family    | Dinner / spend time with family | Dinner / spend time with family | Dinner / spend time with family | Dinner / spend time with family |
| 5 - 6pm | History: People's Health           | PE: Sports Psychology           | English Lit: Unseen poetry      | Maths: probability              | Meet friends                    |
| 6 - 7pm | English Language: Writing practise | Maths: Quadratic equations      | Football practice               | Geog: Earthquake case studies   | Meet friends                    |
| 7 - 8pm | Watch TV                           | Meet friends                    | Football practice               | Watch TV                        | Meet friends                    |
| 8 - 9pm | Play on phone                      | Meet friends                    | Watch TV                        | Play on phone                   | Meet friends                    |

**Top tip:** You can download timetabling apps for your phone or tablet! Search for 'Adapt' in your app store!

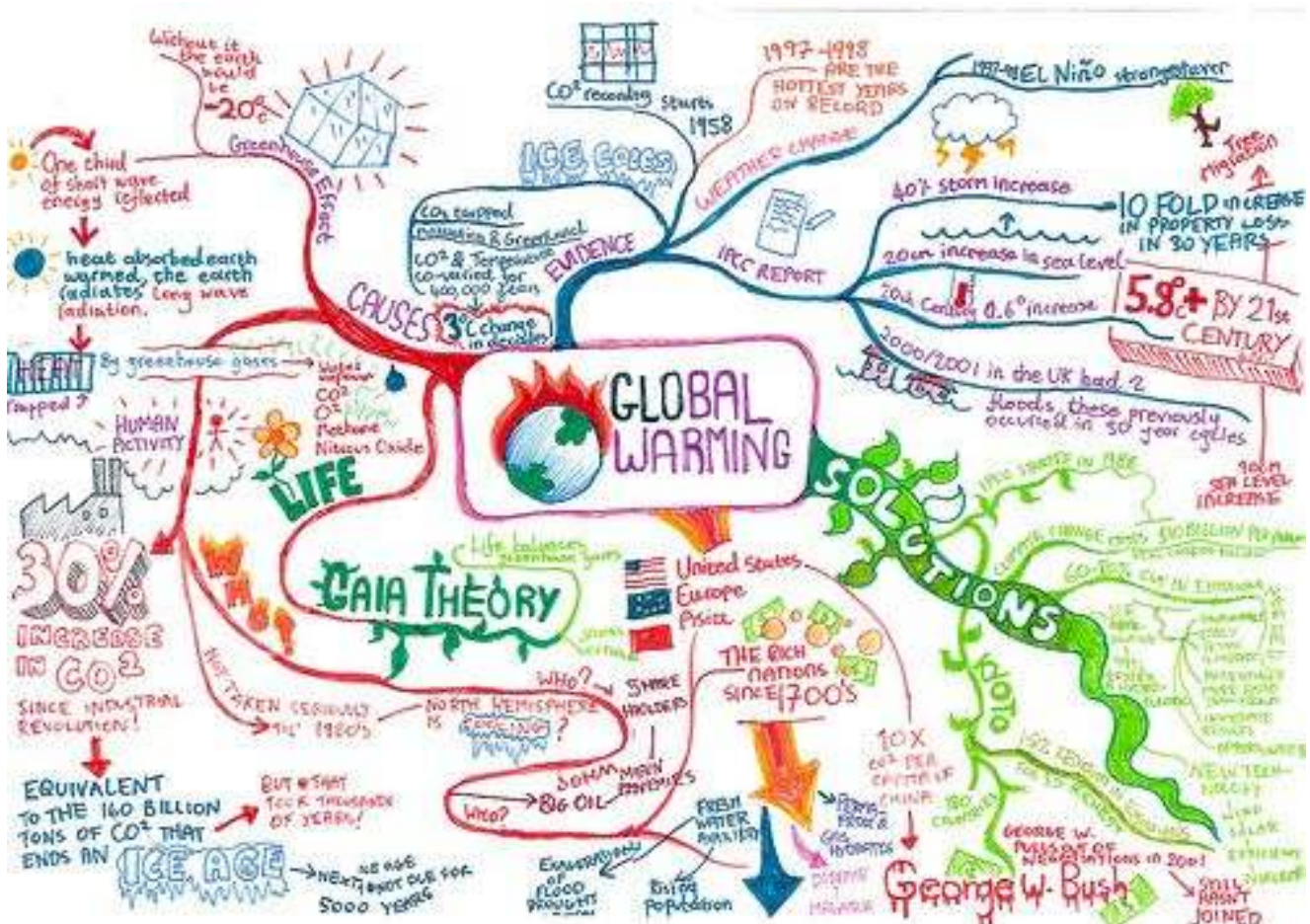
## Strategy 2: Mind mapping

A Mind map is a type of diagram. It's a visual way to organise information. One mind map usually represents one topic. The name of the topic goes in the middle, with sub-topics and further details added around it. The details that you add need to be short and to the point. To make certain information stand out you might use boxes, bubbles, colour and images.

Mind maps are really useful for subjects where there are lots of links between ideas (e.g. English, history or geography) but less useful for learning a list of formula or a vocab list.

### Creating 'Desirable difficulties' while mind mapping

1. Create a 'skeleton' (main topic and subtopics)
2. Try to complete it from memory.
3. Go back and revise your notes to see what is missing, try to memorise it!
4. Remove your notes and try to fill in the blanks from your short term memory.
5. This process of using your short term memory will help you remember more!



**Top Tip:** Do step 4 in a different colour, this means you will know which parts you initially forgot - meaning you can focus on these areas in the future



## Strategy 3: Knowledge organisers

Knowledge organisers are pages filled with the key knowledge you need for topics in your subject. These can be used in a range of ways and you can use complete or incomplete ones to revise effectively!

### With complete ones:

1. Highlight the information you don't know.
2. Create flash cards (see next strategy) or quizzes to test yourself on the information you have highlighted.
3. Give the knowledge organiser to a parent or friend - ask them to test you.

### With incomplete ones:

1. Fill in what you can from memory.
2. Go back and revise your notes to see what is missing, try to memorise it!
3. Remove your notes and try to fill in the blanks from your short term memory.
4. This process of using your short term memory will help you remember more!

| Biology 2: Organisation                                   |   | Section 5a: Human Digestive Enzymes  |  |  |                            |
|---|---|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Section 1: Organisation</b>                            |   | <b>Enzyme</b>  | <b>Function</b>  | <b>Sites of production</b>                     | <b>Sites of action</b>     |
| 1 Tissue  | A group of cells with a similar structure and function e.g. muscle tissue   | 13 Amylase   | Breaks starch into sugars.   | Salivary glands<br>Pancreas<br>Small intestine | Mouth<br>Small intestine   |
| 2 Organ   | A group of tissues performing a specific function e.g. heart, leaf  | 14 Protease  | Breaks proteins into amino acids.  | Stomach<br>Pancreas<br>Small intestine         | Stomach<br>Small intestine |
| 3 Organ System  | A group of organs that perform a specific function e.g. digestive system.   | 15 Lipase  | Breaks lipids (fats) into fatty acids and glycerol.  | Pancreas<br>Small intestine                    | Small intestine            |
| <b>Section 2: Human Digestive System</b>                  |   | <b>Section 5b: Other Chemicals</b>   |  |  |                            |
| 4 Order of movement of food through the digestive system: |   | 16 Hydrochloric Acid   | Acid with pH of 2 produced by the stomach. <b>Unravels proteins.</b>   |  |                            |
| Mouth   | Many  | 17 Bile  | Emulsifies fats (turns them into droplets to give a greater surface area). It is alkaline so neutralises acid from the stomach. <b>Produced in liver, stored in gall bladder and is released into the small intestine.</b> |  |                            |
| Oesophagus  | Ordinary  | <b>Section 6: Heart and Lungs</b><br>Orders of numbers is the way in which blood flows through the heart <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> </div> |  |  |                            |
| Stomach   | Students  |  |  |  |                            |
| Small intestine   | Struggle  |  |  |  |                            |
| Large intestine   | Learning and  |  |  |  |                            |
| Rectum  | Remembering   |  |  |  |                            |
| Anus  | Answers   |  |  |  |                            |
| <b>Section 3: Enzymes Key Terms</b>                       |   | <b>Section 6a: Structures in the Heart</b>   |  |  |                            |
| 5 Enzyme  | A biological catalyst that can speed up the rate of reaction without being used itself. Made of a large protein molecule.                 | 27 Pacemaker   | Group of cells in the <b>right atrium</b> that controls <b>resting heart rate.</b>   |  |                            |
| 6 Substrate   | The chemical that fits into the active site of an enzyme.   | 28 Right ventricle   | Pumps <b>deoxygenated blood</b> to the <b>lungs</b> for <b>gas exchange.</b>   |  |                            |
| 7 Lock and Key Model                                      | Only <b>one type</b> of substrate can fit into the active site of an enzyme, like a key fits into a lock.                                 | 29 Left ventricle  | Pumps <b>oxygenated blood</b> to the <b>body.</b> <b>Thick, muscular wall.</b>   |  |                            |
| 8 Denatured   | When the <b>active site</b> of an enzyme changes shape and the <b>substrate</b> can no longer fit in. Can be caused by pH or temperature. | 30 Valve   | Stops blood flowing the <b>wrong way</b> / leaking.  |  |                            |
| <b>Section 4: Testing for Biological Molecules</b>        |   | <b>Section 6b: Structures in the Lungs</b>   |  |  |                            |
| <b>Molecule</b>   | <b>Chemical Test</b>  | <b>Positive Result</b>   |  |  |                            |
| 9 Starch  | Add orange/brown iodine solution.   | Colour turns to blue/black.  |  |  |                            |

**Top Tip:** See if you can create your own knowledge organisers from memory. Compare them to the complete ones and see what you missed!

## Strategy 4: Flash cards

Flashcards are one of the simplest, but most effective, revision tools. They're small cards with a **question** or **prompt** on one side and the **answer** or **information** on the other side. They're a great way to test yourself and to **find gaps in your knowledge**. Flash cards are useful for learning things like:

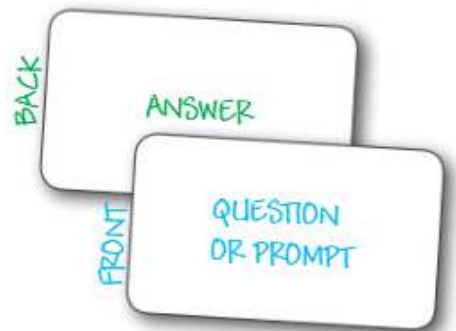
- Important dates in history
- Language vocabulary
- Key words and definitions
- Formulae
- Labelled diagrams

There are lots of flashcards available online but it's a good idea to **make your own**. Working through your notes and picking out key information is part of the process of revision.

### Flash cards are easy to make

Anyone can make good flash cards, here's how:

1. Write a **question** or **prompt** on one side of the card.
2. Add **colour** and any **quick pictures** that might help you to recall the information.
3. Complete the other side with the **answer** or **piece of information**.
4. Keep your flash cards **simple** and stick to **one piece of information per card**.
5. **Use them to test yourself!**



### How to use your flash cards effectively:

- **Say your answers out loud** - this forces you to answer the questions properly.
- **Test yourself until you get them all correct** - make a pile of any cards that you get wrong and then go over them until you know them all.
- **Make sure you test yourself both ways** - e.g. you need to know vocabulary translations from English to French and French to English.
- **Ask someone else to test you** - it removes the temptation to check the other side before answering.

**Top Tip:** Use Quizlet to create your own online flashcards. You can play different games with them to help make your revision more engaging!

## Strategy 5: Low stakes quizzes



Repeatedly quizzing yourself is an excellent way to help remember those key facts and pieces of information.

You can create quizzes yourself or your teachers may have some for you to use.

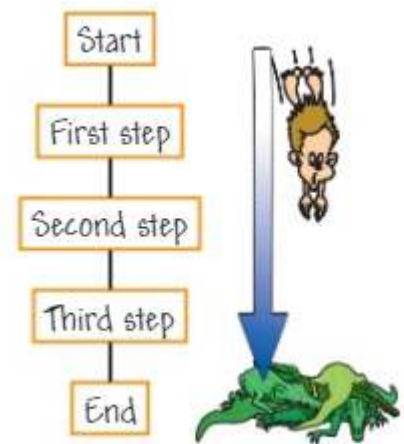
When revising in a group you could quiz each other and you can even make it competitive and see who can get the most right!

## Strategy 6: Flowcharts

Flow charts take topic **step by step**. They are a type of **diagram** that shows a **process** from beginning to end. They **organise information clearly** - you can use both **words** and **images** to show what happens when. It's tempting to spend ages making your flow charts look perfect but as long as they're **clear and easy to use**, they don't need to be fancy.

### **Start at the start**

- It might sound obvious, but **order** is really important in flow charts.
- Write the **first step** of the process at the **top** of the page and work **downwards**.
- Flow charts highlight the main steps in a process, but if it helps, **you can add key points about the different steps** to jog your memory - keep them **short and concise** though.



### **They're useful for lots of subjects**

Flow charts show how different **stages** or events are **linked** together, so they're useful for subjects that include **sequences** or **processes**. Here are a few examples of when you might use them:

**Business studies** - to show the different stages within a supply chain

**History** - a timeline of the events that led to the Great Depression

**Chemistry** - to set out the steps of a practical experiment

**Geography** - to explain the formation of different landforms (headlands and bays).

**Biology** - to show how food passes through the digestive system.

## Strategy 7: Memory techniques

There are several different memory strategies that you can use to help you to remember and recall key information.

### A mnemonic is a memory device

- A mnemonic is a way of remembering facts or information in a **certain order**.
- The **first letters** of the words you need to know become the **first letters** of a sentence, song or rhyme - e.g. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain' to remember the colours of the rainbow.
- A mnemonic can be **anything**, as long as it **makes sense to you**. However, funny or rude mnemonics tend to be easier to remember.
- This example shows a mnemonic to help you remember the electromagnetic spectrum in order of frequency:

Radio waves, Microwaves, Infrared, Visible light, Ultraviolet, X-rays, Gamma-rays

Raccoons May Injure Very Unfortunate EX - Golfers

### Memory journeys link information to certain places

A **memory journey** is a way of **linking information with landmarks on a journey**. As you walk through the journey in your mind, you'll pass by all the information you need in the **correct order**. Here's how to get started making one:

1. Write down the **key points** you need to learn.
2. Choose a **journey** you know well and **pick your landmarks**. Pick as many landmarks as the number of key points for the topic. Jot them down.
3. Assign the key points to the landmarks in order.
4. Then, **make links between them**. This is the fun part! Use your imagination - the wackier the link, the more memorable it is.
5. Practise walking the journey in your mind, learning the information as you go.

Memory journeys are useful for learning all sorts of things, for example processes in science or sequence of events in history.

