



Northgate High School



Working together...

ideas and techniques to help
pupils revise for tests



Why encourage your child to revise?

1. It can reduce panic – gives them control and confidence
2. It means tests reflect what they can do, not what they didn't bother to do.
3. It can help them to identify problem areas.

Where to start? When to do it?

- Help them work out how much time they have, being realistic.
- Get them to take into account their ideal time of day to work – work out when they will revise.
- Break it down to make it seem manageable. 'Revising for French sounds like too much hard work. 'Revising key French verb endings' is do-able.

Organising Your Revision

10 Tips (from other pupils):

1. Allow yourself repeated **short breaks**. After a certain length of time, you won't be able to take any more in. Try to revise sensibly. Break revision slots into half hour chunks. Take a break after each half hour.
2. **Turn off the TV!** Some people like to have suitable music playing on a low volume in the background but the TV is too big a distraction!
3. **Be focussed** on revision. You've got to want to learn things properly. If you're just passing 30 minutes 'revising' with the real focus in mind of leaving revision as soon as possible to go out you simply will not concentrate properly. **Have clear and specific goals** for each revision period, for example – 'At the end of this session, I will be able to label a diagram of the heart and answer a question on how the heart works.'
6. **Break information into small chunks** which your brain can take in.
7. **Create revision materials** – make summary notes, revision cards, diagrams or Mind Maps.





8. Learn from your revision materials and self-test

The importance of **self-testing** – if you don't test yourself you tend to overestimate how well you are doing.

- Testing tells you what you know and don't know and therefore where to focus further study.
- Recalling what you have learned causes your brain to reconsolidate the memory, which strengthens its connections to what you already know and makes it easier to recall in the future.



9. Don't waste time struggling – note down anything you are finding hard or do not understand when you are revising and take it to your next lesson.



10. Emotional and unusual images lodge more easily in the brain than dry facts. When revising things, associate them with bizarre images or words.



11. Be active not passive. The key to effective revision involves DOING SOMETHING with the information you are trying to learn and remember. This is ESSENTIAL to allow your brain to learn, make connections and remember.



12. The key to successful revision is to keep **reviewing your notes** as many times as possible, checking your answers and correcting your mistakes.

Revision Techniques

Not all the ideas in this guide will be good for you. Pick the ones that you want to try and keep using the ones that you find work.

Here are some comments from pupils who did well in their tests last year about what worked for them:



I needed to be in a quiet place on my own. I used to write a summary of my notes onto small cards. I used the revision cards to test myself.

I used to meet up with friends a couple of times a week to revise together. This really helped because we could discuss things that we were not sure of. It also helped me understand things better when I had to teach my friends something they did not understand.

I highlighted all of the key points in my notes. I then spoke these key points into a microphone and made a podcast on my computer that I could listen to on my I Pod.



Advice on the following **revision techniques** is contained on the L:drive for pupils.

- Create your own **revision cards** with information on one side and questions on the other so you can test yourself
- Use a **summary circle** or mind map
- Draw **diagrams** for revision
- Make up **mnemonics**
- Experiment with '**Mind Pegs**'
A mind peg is information that you already know, on which you can connect new knowledge (that you need to know for the exam).
 - ⇒ Route to school (Key information can be linked to key points on the route to school. Students visualise the ideas as they pass each location.)
 - ⇒ Layout of your house (Imagine the key information on a route through a familiar place like your house. Imagine yourself passing through that space.)
- **Display** key words or processes around your room
- Create a **podcast**
- **Test** yourself and friends
- Be the teacher – **teach someone else** something you're revising
- Use revision **websites** but make sure that they are recommended by your teacher (eg – 'My Maths')

Examples of Revision Strategies



TECHNIQUE: Making study cards

- Take key information from the highlighted text, make yourself a study card on that topic - You only need 20% of the words
- Use coloured pens/ highlighters/ pictures
- **MAKE IT MEMORABLE!**
- *Just MAKING that card is revision and is helping your brain to revise.*

Study card example

Key facts - plants:

Need food  **and light.** 

Plants need:

Nitrogen
Hydrogen
Oxygen
Carbon

↓

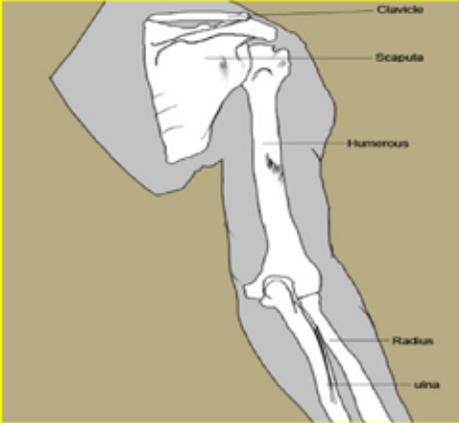
Never Hide Our Car



TECHNIQUE: Making mnemonics

- Mnemonics that you probably already know:**
- Never Eat Shredded Wheat
(North, East, South, West on a compass)
- Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet colours of the rainbow)
- Why and How?!**
- Mnemonics give your brain a 'hook' to hang a memory on.
 - You use the first letter of each word that you need to remember to make up a memorable catchphrase
 - Try to make up a mnemonic to help you remember all the bones of the arm in order

The sections of the arm – use a mnemonic to learn them



C _____
S _____
H _____
R _____
U _____

How about using 'CRUSH'?

Making Mind Maps

Mind maps are a way of organising ideas about a topic. A mind map usually starts with a central idea with a series of branches, each relating to one aspect of the main idea. These lead to other branches and so it goes on.

A mind map allows you to see the whole topic on one sheet of paper. And making the mind map helps you learn both the detail and the big picture of a topic.

There are some excellent software packages for creating mind maps – many of them free – but creating your own by hand is just as good.

Five things to do with mind maps

1 Stick them up somewhere in your house where you sit and dream – maybe your bedroom walls or ceiling – even the toilet!

3 Spend some time learning the mind map, turn the paper the other way up and see if you can remember it well enough to copy.

5 Get together with a friend and make mind maps together using lots of colour and pictures.

2 Illustrate some of the points on your mind map with some silly pictures – they will help you remember the point.

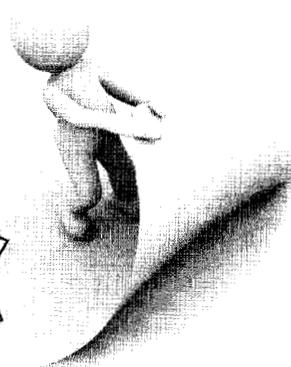
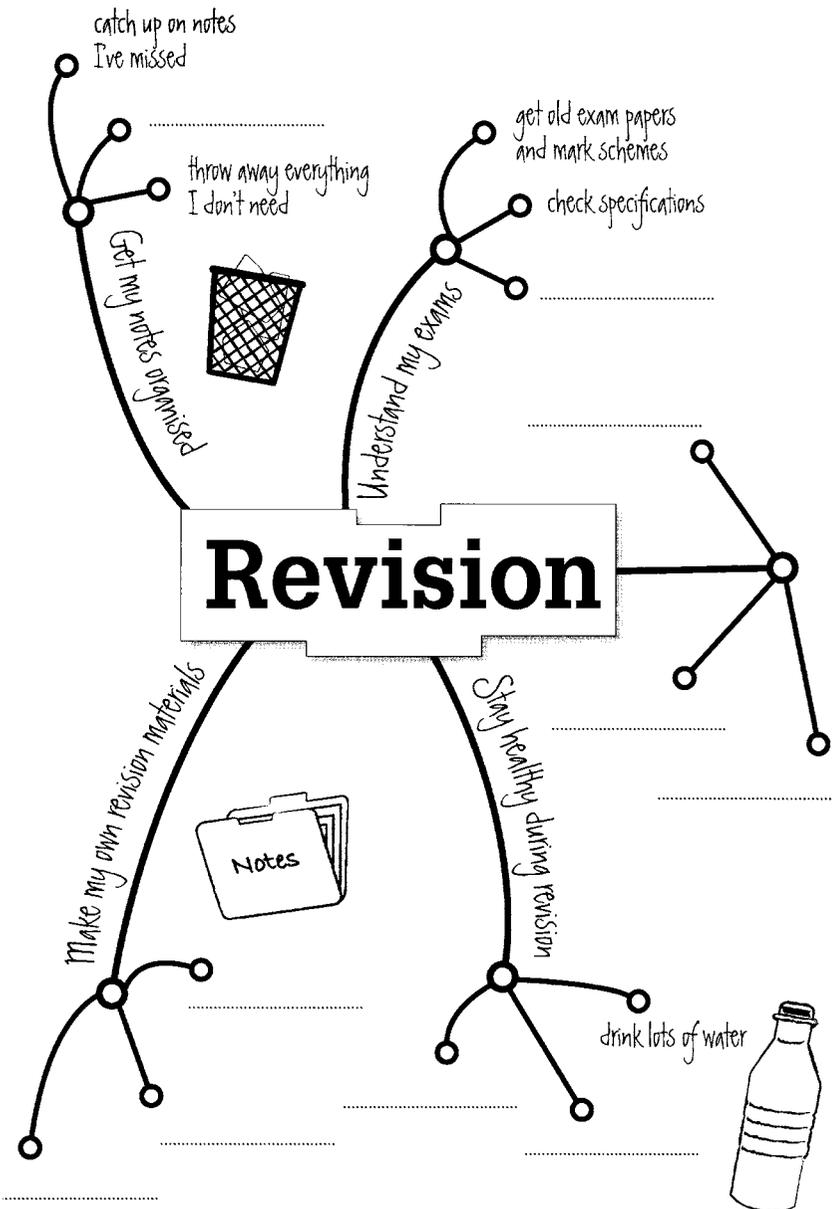
4 Use mind maps to plan essays – put the title in the centre, then have one branch for each key point and use further branches to develop those points.

use the biggest sheet of paper you can get

Using different colours can make them easier to remember.



► What are mind maps and how can they be used for revision?





Remember

1. Revise in an active way

You don't engage the mind by reading a text over and over again or by passively watching PowerPoint slides.

You engage it by:

- making the effort to explain the material yourself, in your own words
- making it vivid
- connecting the facts - relating it to what you already know

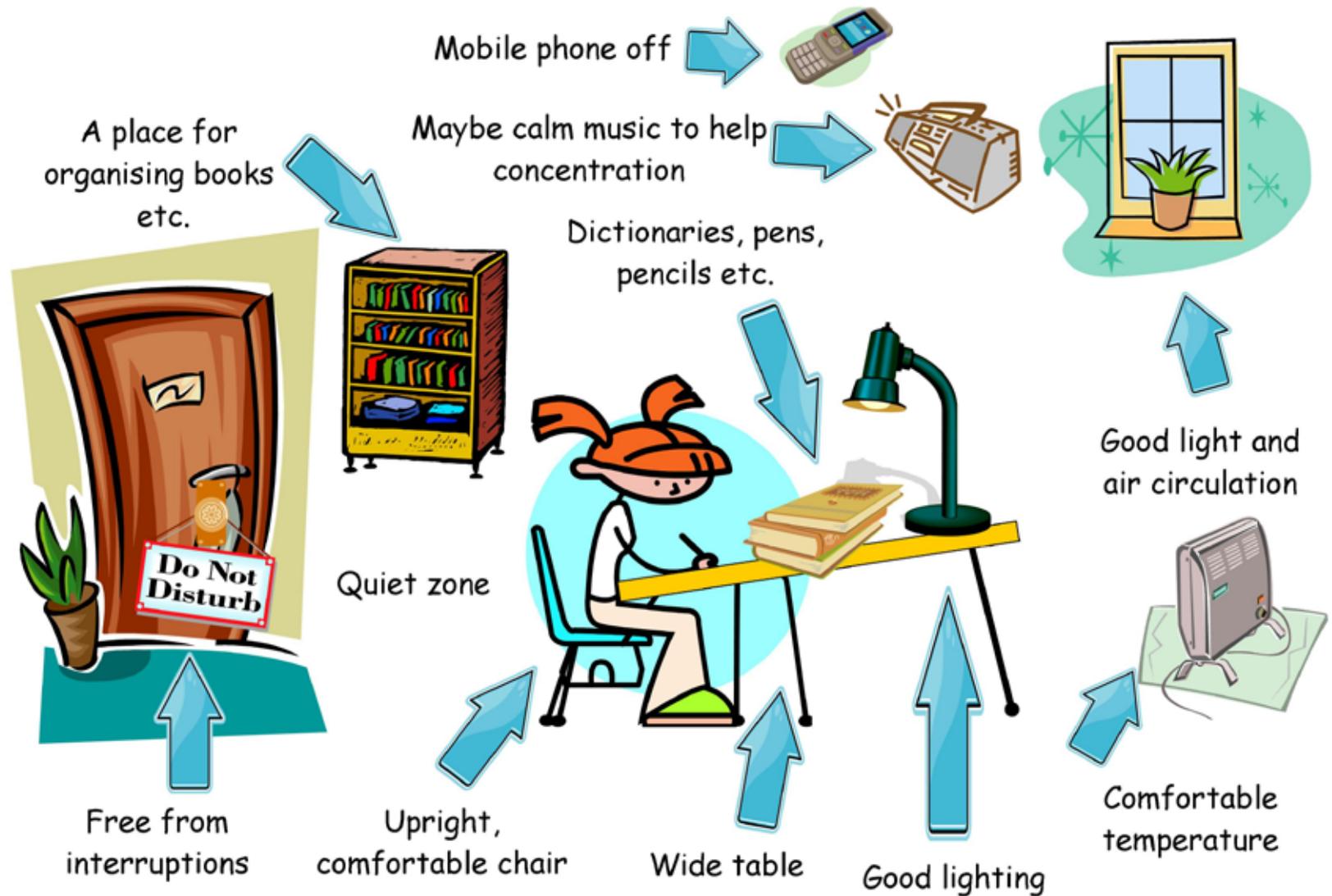
2. Spaced Practice is important

This means studying information more than once but leaving some time between practice sessions:

- New material may need to be revisited within a day or so of your first encounter
- Then perhaps not for a few days
- When you are feeling confident - once a week
- Do not stop quizzing yourself- remember the importance of self-testing
- Do not leave it until the night before!

Hints for an Ideal Revision Area

providing some of these will go a long way to helping your child...





What can parents do to help?

What causes problems for pupils?

- Criticism
- Low confidence
- Frustration – feeling that you are not getting anywhere
- Lack of praise
- Too much pressure to do well



7 tips from other parents

1. Work with your child to put together a realistic homework timetable. Marathon revision sessions are not effective. Little and often is usually best.
2. Support your child in sticking to the homework plan and keeping to the start and finishing times they have agreed.
3. Keep it positive, tick off revision tasks that have been completed.
4. Show an interest in how the revision is going, talk through any difficulties and be prepared to help them reschedule their planning as necessary.
5. Encourage your child to attend extra revision sessions after school.
6. Talk to your child about what their subjects are about, what they to do in them, what they feel confident/less confident about. Talking to you about their learning will help them to think about their learning needs. Encourage your child to talk through their learning needs with the teacher.
7. Make sure that their social life is not interfering with their studying. They need rest and sleep to make sure that their brains are active and open to learning.
8. Encourage your child to keep a positive perspective.

