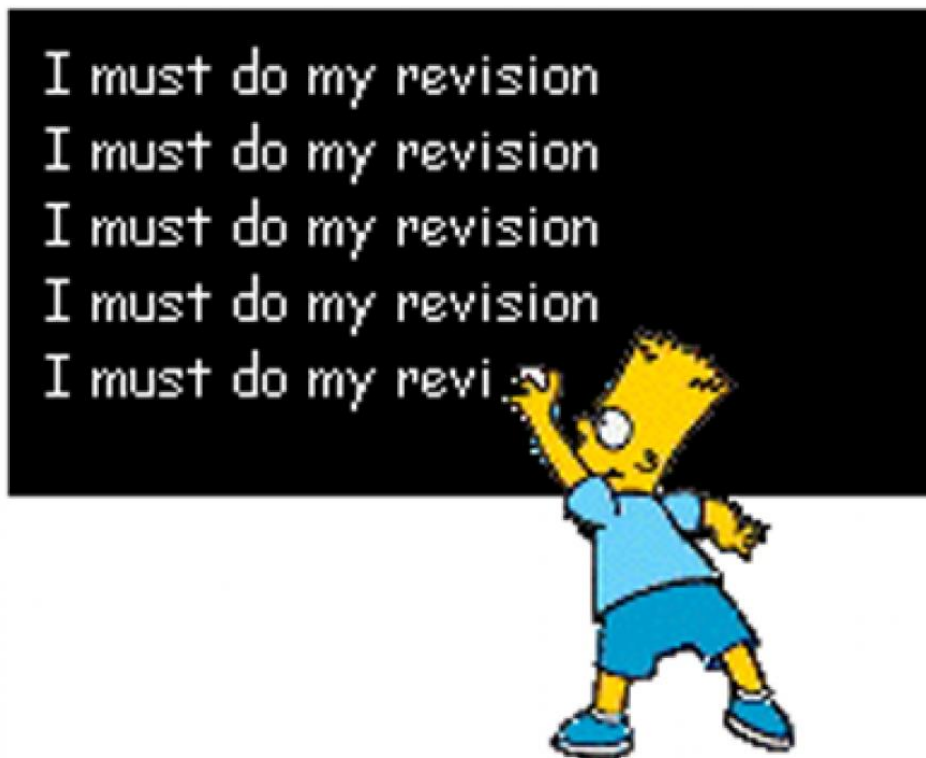


# A Level Revision Tips



.... How to avoid wasting loads of time doing things that aren't actually very effective

Passive  
revision

Vs.

Active  
revision

### Passive revision

= reading through your notes or textbook

- it doesn't help your brain remember stuff
- waste of time
- don't do it!

### Active revision

= doing something new with your notes to help move the ideas into your **long-term memory**

- eg. Flashcards, mind-maps, self-tests, discussing with friend, recording on a phone

**10 minutes spent doing active revision is worth hours and hours spent on passive revision.**

**It's a no-brainer!**

# Help your brain

There are some really effective things you can do to help your brain remember the massive amounts of information you need for the exams.

## Revise different subjects in different rooms

The visual memory this creates will help your brain to focus on the right subject's information when you're in each exam.

## Revise different subjects in different colours

Same concept: the visual memory will help your brain to keep the information for each subject separate rather than all mixed together

## Involve all your senses

Smell and taste are among the most powerful memories we can create. Use this to your advantage. If you have something really tricky to remember, why not drink, eat or chew something while revising it, to try to attach the information to that taste-memory?

## Be as active as you can

Use your hands to help you describe what things look like. Walk around while trying to recall details. Swing from a branch while reciting lines of a poem you need to learn. In short, doing anything active and out of the ordinary will help lock the idea in your memory

# Get the basics right

- Before you sit down to revise, make sure you know what your revision plan says you need to do

- Set a finish time for each revision session and stick to it.



- Revise the trickier topics in the mornings – most people’s brains work best in the mornings

- Put your phone in a different room. Behind you isn’t enough – it will still be a distraction.



- Sit at a clear desk, with only your revision work on it.

- If you listen to music when revising, pick something simple. Don’t expect your brain to cope with learning new stuff at the same time as deciphering words in a song.



# Learning checklists

Specification and content	Covered	RAG	RAG
<b>What are the global patterns of disease and can factors be identified that determine these?</b>			
<b>Diseases can be classified and their patterns mapped. The spread of diseases is complex and influenced by a number of factors.</b>			
How diseases can be classified, including infectious and non-infectious, communicable and noncommunicable, contagious and non-contagious, epidemic, endemic and pandemic.			
Patterns of diseases, including global distributions of malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, diabetes and cardio-vascular disease.			
The role of international organisations, such as the World Health Organization, in			

- You can't start revising until you know what you actually need to learn.
- Divide the exam board specification for each subject into tiny, bite-sized chunks of things you need to learn. Your teachers may already have given you documents which do this for you.
- Then decide at the start of each revision session, which of the bite-sized chunks you're going to learn in that hour. Don't try to do too much, or you'll only scratch the surface.
- Use the checklist to keep a record of which parts of the specification you are happy with, which need a bit of work, and which are your weakest areas.

# Revision timetables

In general terms, having any kind of revision timetable is better than having none. It will help you to...

- ... share your time fairly between your subjects
- ... make sure you build in some leisure time, so you don't burn out
- ... avoid wasting time deciding what to do each time you sit down to do some revision
- ... make you revisit topics (aim to revisit a topic one week and then two weeks after you first revise it)

There are 3 different formats of revision timetable available up in the Loft. If none of these works for you, talk to the Sixth Form team for more ideas.

# How much time?

In the run-up to exams, you'll need to spend several hours every day training your brain to hold all of the information you need. However, don't expect your brain to take on too much information in one go.

40-minute bursts are far more effective than slogging away at it for hours on end. Try to structure your revision time, so you can switch between subjects or topics every 30-40 minutes.



## Try changing the style of learning regularly:

Eg. 30 minutes creating flashcards of a topic  
+  
10 minutes writing a self-test on the topic  
+  
20 minutes doing a “memory walk” around garden  
+  
10 minutes completing the self-test you made

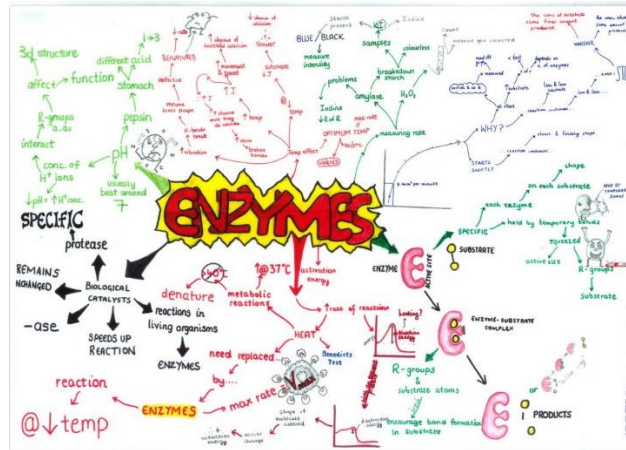
# Revision technique: **Flashcards**



- The most used revision technique at A Level
- Turn 1 or 2 pages of notes into a single, small index card. By trimming it down, you force your brain to engage with what is and isn't important and how ideas fit together.
- Leave lots of white space around each idea, to help the visual memory.
- Ideally, use different coloured cards for each subject (A5 and A6 card is available in the Loft)
- The valuable bit is making the cards; not what you then do with them. To be really effective, you could try to re-make the same cards two weeks later, from memory.



# Revision technique: **Mind-maps**



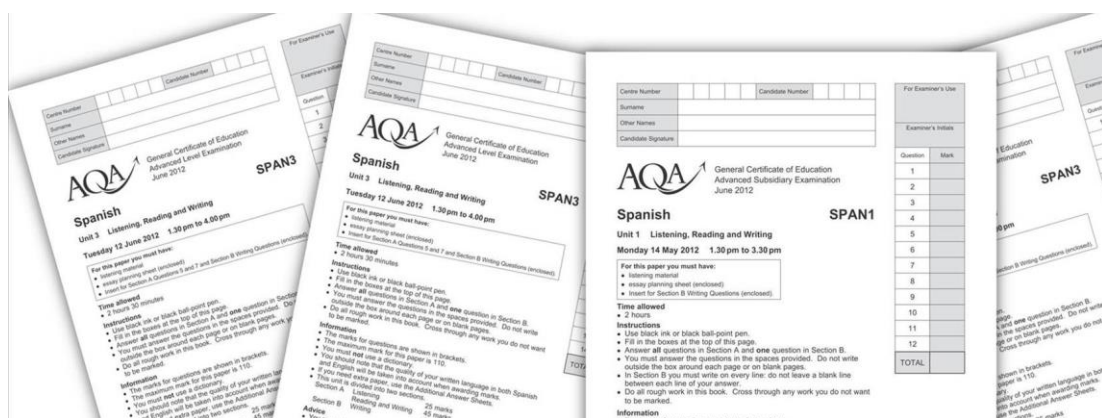
- Really popular and quick method
- Pick a “big concept” (eg. Enzymes) and use mind-map to show how the issues within it are linked together.
- The key is to not worry about getting it beautifully structured – just fill up the A3 sheet with connections between issues.
- Come back to it a day later, and then a week later, to add extra things you’d left out

# Revision technique: **Self-tests**



- After a session of revision, write yourself 5 questions you expect to be able to answer on that topic in one week's time
- If you do this each time you revise, you'll be in the great habit of revisiting work regularly, rather than looking at a topic once and then forgetting about it again.

# Revision technique: **Past papers**



- Revising the subject content is half the battle: getting used to the style of questions in the exam is just as important.
- Research shows that **3 is the magic number**: students who complete at least three past papers before an exam do significantly better than those who haven't given themselves the practice.
- All departments will be able to tell you how to access past papers for your courses.
- No need to do the whole past paper in one go
- As you get closer to the exam, try to do the questions in the correct amount of time, so you don't get a false sense of how much you can write.

# Revision technique: **Memory walks**



- Once you've spent time revising a topic, go for a 10 minute walk around the garden. Try to recall the information you have learned.
- Sounds wacky, but it really works. Physically moving around while recalling information really helps your brain to remember it in the longer-term.
- Focus on just one small topic per learning walk.
- Even more effective if you explain the ideas to someone else while you walk (or record yourself on your phone and then save as a podcast to listen to again later)

# Revision technique: **Examiners' reports**



- After each summer's A Level exams, the examiners write a report to say how well students answered each question. They tell you very clearly how students missed marks (eg. by failing to define the specialist terms they use).
- If you're aiming for top grades, you might as well find out how the examiners want you to do it.
- Download previous year's examiner's reports and go through with a highlighter to pick out their key advice.

# Revision technique: **Teach it**



- Every research study that has ever been done into how people learn things has always reached the same conclusion: the single most effective way to learn something is to teach it to someone else.
- Lots of students choose to make “study groups” with other people in their classes, so they can each prepare notes on different topics and teach them to each other. It really works ... try it!

# Coping with stress

Exams are not worth damaging your health over.  
Look after yourself during the revision process by ...

... **talking about stress openly.** Everyone suffers with stress at times, and the more we talk about it, the less scary it seems.

... **taking time out to have fun.** Give yourself proper down-time to take your mind off your studies

... **eating well.** Healthy body, healthy mind.

... **doing some exercise.** This will release the muscle tension that builds up during revision and help you get a better night's sleep.

... **using breathing techniques.** If you start to get anxious, try breathing in and out to the count of ten.